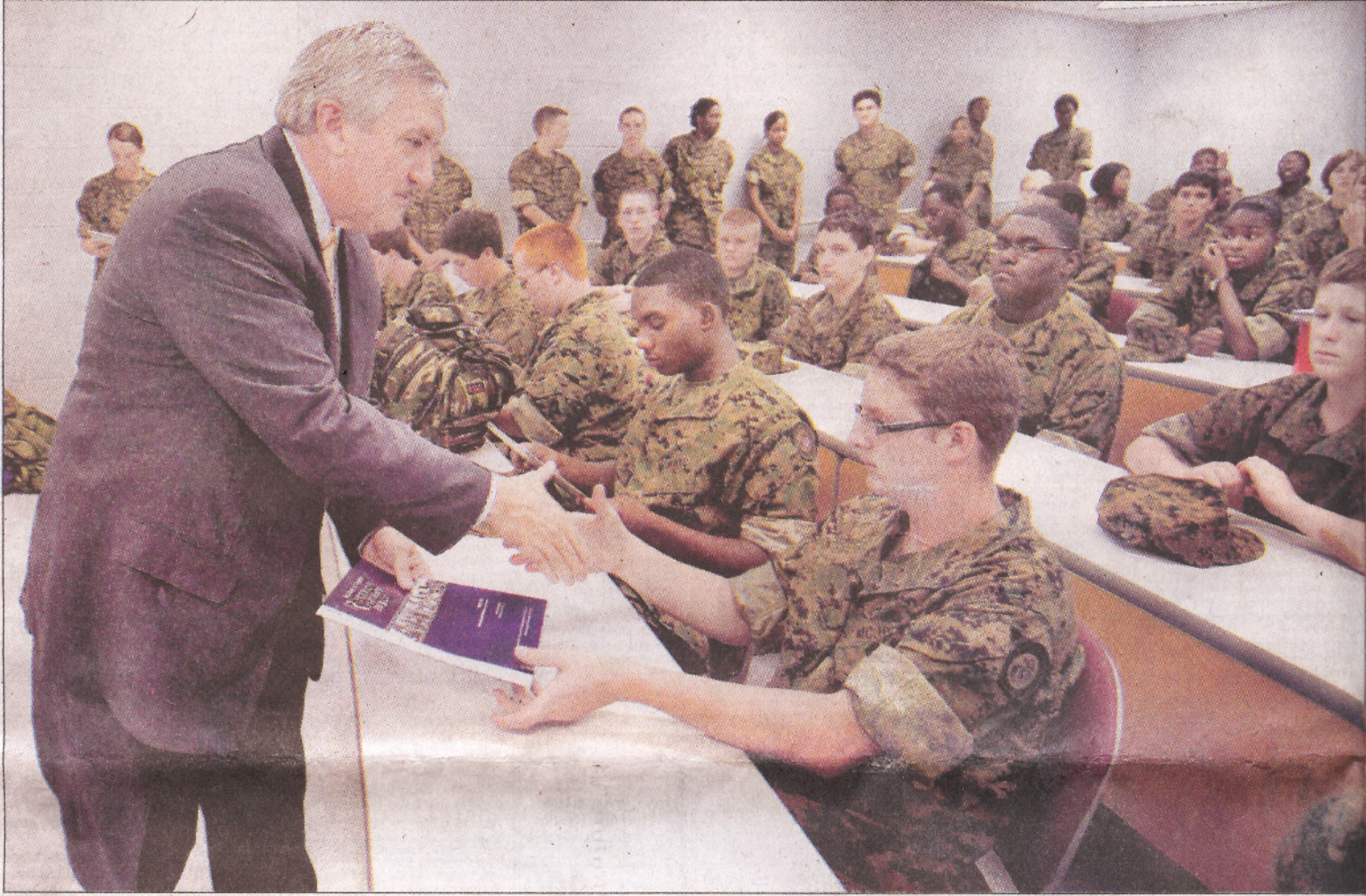


Oral history project



Photos by Stan Carroll/The Commercial Appeal

Rep. Travis Childers made a visit to Horn Lake High School on Monday to help kick off the Veterans History Program. He distributed program packets to JROTC students, including 10th-grader Taylor Odom. Program participants will spend 30 minutes with a veteran.



Erica Horne, a Marine Corps Junior ROTC program participant and 10th-grader at Horn Lake High, listens to Childers as he explains to the class the importance of the oral history project.

Childers asks Horn Lake JROTC to talk to veterans

By CHRIS VAN TUYL / vantuy1@desotoappeal.com

IT'S THE EQUIVALENT of a high school student sitting down to watch the 10 o'clock local news.

Or, his or her favorite sitcom.

Officially, it's called the Veterans History Project, spearheaded by The Library of Congress American Folklife Center, and Rep. Travis Childers, D-Miss., was at Horn Lake High Monday to talk about it.

Please see **VETERANS, DSA2**

VETERANS

Members of the newly formed Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (MCJROTC) were selected to participate.

"I know you've heard of this statistic before: Each day in this country, we lose 1,800 veterans," Childers said. "When we participate in the Veterans History Project, we're able to preserve the experiences of the many veterans who have served in our nation's defense."

The cadets were all offered the chance to meet up with a veteran and conduct a half-hour, oral history interview.

"Some of their stories that you will hear are sad; some funny," Childers said. "But from all of them, we will learn about war firsthand. We'll have accounts of U.S. veterans from World War I,

World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War and the Iraq/Afghanistan conflicts that are still ongoing."

Said Chief Warrant Officer Tyrone Hall: "It's an opportunity to link the past with the present, because otherwise, how can they know? Other than from books.

"The gentlemen can give them real-world experiences of what war feels like, what it tastes like, what it smells like, what it sounds like."

Among the local veterans in attendance were Buddy Hinson and Andy Shook. Both shared their stories, with Hinson, stating that "you'll grow up overnight" upon joining the military. Shook called it a "whole new ball game."

DeSoto County Schools Supt. Milton Kuykendall, Horn Lake Mayor Nat Baker and Horn Lake principal Jim Ferguson dropped by to listen to Childers'

presentation. Cadet Commander Ashley Jackson, a senior, was also all ears.

"I've always wanted to talk with veterans," she said. "I respect them a lot. That's a big reason why I joined the (ROTC)."

Horn Lake is one of three Mississippi high schools to currently have junior Marine programs.

"We're proud to have ROTC here," Kuykendall said. "I've already been whispering in the congressman's ear about getting ROTC at one of the other schools next year and trying to promote ROTC throughout the county."

The online registration process for the Veterans History Projects begins with the Web site: loc.gov/vets.

"I can tell you this," Childers said. "Not only will their lives be enriched, but your lives will be enriched, too."

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