

Veterans Share Truth Of War With Students

By Jacqueline Birzon

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Students from Half Hollow Hills, Cold Spring Harbor, Commack and Bay Shore High Schools joined older war veterans at a Commack assisted living center on Dec. 12 to talk about their experiences during World War II and time in the service at an intergenerational panel.

The veterans served in various capacities during the war, including the military police, the Air Force and the Navy.

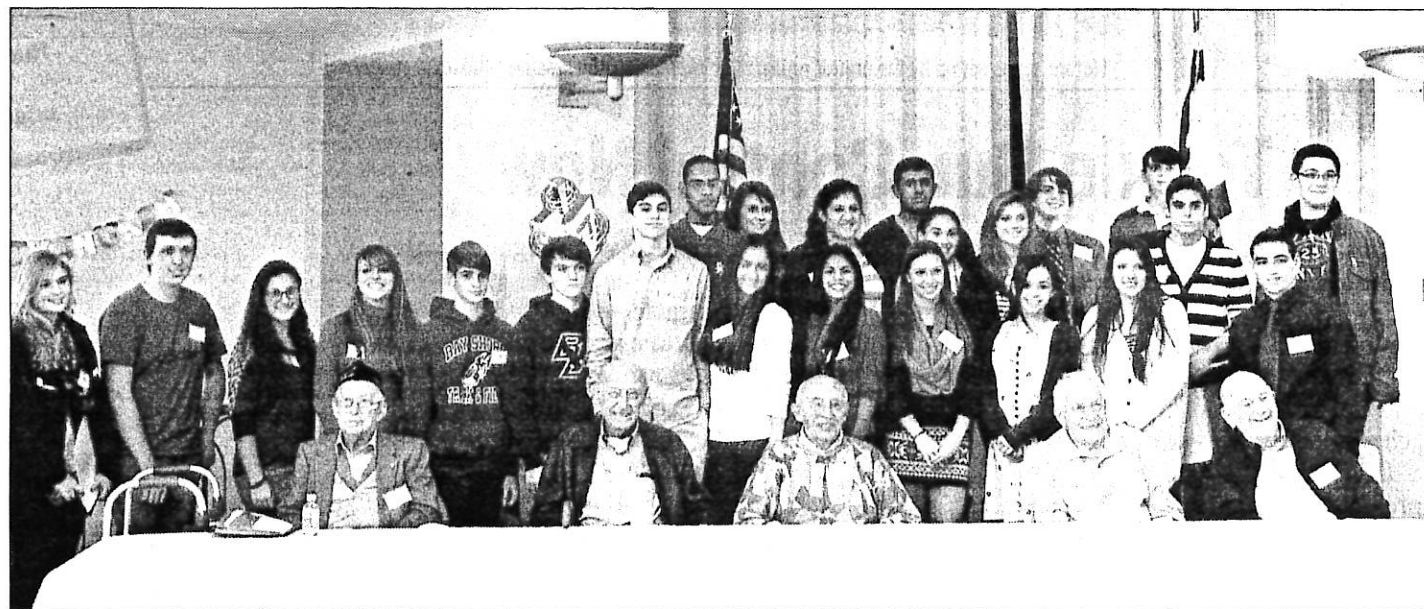
Students gathered into small breakout groups to question each panelist about memories from their time of service. Students also asked residents about differences in wars between the 1940's and now.

Many of the panelists expressed concerns over avoiding war altogether, also highlighting what they learned from their years in the service.

Sidney Fox, a Manhattan native, was drafted at the age of 25 and went to serve as Master Sergeant in the Air Force. Fox remembers "such scenes of brutality; you have no idea," and urged students to do whatever possible to prevent war altogether as "nobody wins."

"War built my personality. I was able to face all my problems, I wasn't afraid of anything," Fox said.

Stanley Diamond served in the Navy, was trained as a Navy Seal, was involved in a mission that captured a German submarine and participated in a search and destroy mission against Japanese war



Long Islander photo/Jacqueline Birzon

Students from Half Hollow Hills, Cold Spring Harbor, Commack and Bay Shore High Schools gather around WWII veterans at Gurwin Jewish Fay J. Lidner Residences following a Dec. 12 panel.

ships. Diamond said "there is nothing glamorous about war."

David Robinson, who was aboard the U.S.S. Ormsby, a ship which carried the atomic bomb, said war and service came with lessons of discipline and taught him how to cope with any life situation that came his way.

Irv Sandberg began his Army training in 1942 in Texas and served in Iran without ever flying on an airplane. Sandberg said that his time in the Army allowed him an opportunity to see the world.

"Aside from missing my wife, it was the greatest experience I ever had. I saw the entire world, and experienced something I never would have [had I not served]," he said.

After the panel was over, Commack senior Gary DePal said it gave him a new appreciation for his grandfather's experience in the navy, and urged him to sit down and listen to his stories.