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Richland District Honors Veterans By Nancy Vines

NOVEMBER 10TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Nationally known US Army veteran Christy Gardner was the keynote speaker at the Veterans' Day Honor Assembly hosted by the Richland School District. Gardner, accompanied by her service dog Moxie, spoke candidly of the life-changing injuries sustained during her tour of duty in Korea.

An All-American Athlete who excelled in field hockey, lacrosse, and track and field, Gardner enlisted in the US Army shortly after graduation from college. She chose to serve in the Military Police because she wanted to "be in the action." While on patrol, she was attacked by a group of Korean civilians who resented the American presence in their country. The brutal assault left her with severe head injuries, seizures, and damage to both legs. Most of her memory and speech were gone, leaving her with about a third-grade knowledge of math, spelling, and grammar. She was told she would never walk again, never live alone again—essentially that life as she had known it was over.

After several years of rehabilitation, Gardner began to build her life again and today is co-captain of the US Women's Para-Ice Hockey Team and assistant captain of the US Army Swimming, Track, and Sitting Volleyball Teams. She has been featured on ESPN's Sports Center and travels the country, along with Moxie, to share her story of courage and inspiration.

Several local veterans attended the Veterans’ Day Honor Assembly, which began with the Poplar Bluff High School ROTC presentation of the Colors. Richland student Kate Wyman sang the National Anthem, followed by the fifth and sixth grade singing “God Bless America.” Each branch of the military was recognized as the veterans received a standing ovation from the crowd. Following the assembly veterans had the opportunity to be photographed with family members who are Richland students, as well as have those students join them for a complimentary breakfast in the cafeteria.

Photo credit Emily Blunt, Richland High School



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