

## An Eye-Opening Experience

By Jenna Lo

Learning about the Vietnam War from a textbook is one thing, but meeting a living soul who experienced the war is another. Last week, 10 veterans came to GWA throughout the week and told their Vietnam War stories to the students and faculty. GWA welcomed Bob Babcock, Steve Blanton, Gary Price, Grady Vines, Brian Settles, Jim Howell, Sonny Dellinger, Wayne Waddell, and cousins Terald and Tommy Odum. The veterans shared stories and gave advice based on their experiences throughout their lives and the war.



One piece of advice that Mr. Howell gave was this: “There is no time or place you will ever be able to remain the same. Be cognizant of that dictate on life and make your movement forward... and enjoyable.”



Learning from the veterans transformed the way that many students felt about the war. “The veterans changed my view of the war because they showed the good and not the bad, and how much people blew the war out of proportion,” said sophomore Maddie Brucker.

These talks also helped students humanize the war. “It was an eye opener,” said eighth-grade student Nicholas Lo. “I hadn’t ever encountered a veteran who had talked that in depth about their experience. I learned not to take life for granted.”

Not only did students learn more about the Vietnam War, but they also learned and understood more about the individuals behind the war. After meeting the heroes in person and listening to what they had to say, students were able to give their thanks and appreciation face-to-face to a veteran who served our country. “The thing I remember most was the look on the veteran’s face when I thanked him for his service. He looked so grateful for something as simple as ‘thank you for your service’,” said sophomore Elizabeth Carter, “I realized how much it means to them to simply see that we appreciate them.”

