

# Local soldiers recognized

“Operation Local Soldier” was held May 19 at the Merton Williams Middle School in Hilton and it turned out to be very successful. Chaired by Christie Vileria and assisted by Patricia Pirnie, a teacher at Village Elementary School, and Elena Pelcher, a teacher at Northwood School, the purpose was, in Vileria’s words: “Getting to know each other and do something meaningful for the community.” Students from the three elementary schools spent several hours together writing letters and cards of appreciation to area soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan and presented a plaque to the Hilton Fire Department in memory of Hilton High School graduate Jason Hasenauer. A replica plaque was presented to Jason’s family. In addition, the students made crafts for Iraqi and Afghani children, swam in the pool and played on the rock climbing wall.



Members of the Hasenauer family **Dan, Rita, Danny and Eric**, (Jeremy was unavailable), pose with the replica plaque with members of the Hilton Fire Department.



The Hamlin VFW, Post 6703, led by Senior Commander **Dan Urdike**, enters the Merton Williams auditorium.



Hilton Fire Department Inc. president **David C. Zajoncowski** and Past Chief **James Hare** hold the plaque which memorializes former fire department member Jason Hasenauer. Reading parts of the plaque were Student Council officers **Dylan Phillips**, Village Elementary Vice-President, **Cody Whiting**, Northwood Elementary President and **Kate Steger**, Quest President.

Hilton High School teacher **Brad Helmer**, currently serving as a Captain in the 78th U.S. Army Reserve, came back from Iraq last year and is training soldiers at Fort Indian Gap in Pennsylvania as an OCT, an observer, controller, trainer. Captain Helmer talked to the students and displayed some of the MRE (meals ready to eat) packages.

Photos by Walter Horylev

