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Sherrie Taylor/The Register-Mail

AIWood graduate and National Guardsman Seth Malcolm talks Friday to kindergarten students at AIWood. The students corresponded with him during his year tour of duty in Iraq.

AIWood students quiz Guardsman

Kids corresponded with soldier in Iraq

Saturday, May 7, 2005

Alpha - AIWood kindergarten students greeted their pen pal

Friday. The students corresponded with Seth Malcolm, a member of the Galva National Guard Unit, while he was stationed in Iraq.

Malcolm, an AIWood graduate, spent a year in Iraq. Now that he's home, he visited students at AIWood High School and the elementary school.

Kindergarten students wanted to know how he got to Iraq, and they learned he took a bus to the airport and flew from there.

He also fielded questions about driving a tank, what he ate and drank, if he rode a helicopter and if he saw a camel.

Malcolm said he never drove a tank, but did drive a Hummer and trucks, and he rode in a helicopter a few times.

Food mostly came from a cafeteria much like the school cafeteria, he said, and they had lots of bottled water.

"We stayed in trailers. We had two-man rooms and our own beds. It was pretty nice where we were," Malcolm said.

Asked what he did while he was there, Malcolm said his unit drove up and down roads to check for safety for the convoys; only one person in his unit was injured.

"The weather was really hot; it gets to 120 degrees in the summer, and the winter there is like our fall or spring," Malcom told the students.

"We saw lots of dogs and chickens, and the Army dogs were used to locate bombs and guns. Those dogs wore bullet-proof vests," Malcom said.

Asked about the children there, Malcolm said the soldiers visited schools and handed out supplies that had been sent.

"We also gave money to build a school," Malcolm said.

One kindergarten student said he plans to be a soldier when he grows up, and Malcolm said he should graduate from high school first and even attend college.

Malcolm will attend Southern Illinois University in the fall. In the meantime he is looking forward to a family trip to Germany for the wedding of a family friend.

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