



Vietnam veteran Randy Kautto of Chatham speaks to TVHS students about the experiences of soldiers and their acclimation back to civilian life during class Feb. 4.

## Tech Valley students investigate: What cost of war is borne by soldiers?

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EAST GREENBUSH — Tech Valley High School juniors — some of whom are close to the age of the men and women fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan — are answering a tough question as part of their latest project — What are the costs of war for soldiers returning home?

The students heard from veterans of a variety of wars and studied known troubled areas for veterans, such as unemployment, finances, medical and mental health and family problems. They then used the information to write collective creative articles that demonstrate their understanding of a veteran's perspective and ways of coping with the demands of life when they return from duty, said teacher Mary VanHoomissen. Veterans were in

school talking with students through February.

The students, VanHoomissen said, have seen the one-man production about the troubles of a returning veteran, "The Things They Carried," and read the novel of the same title by Tim O'Brien.

Students talked with the creators of the renowned Soldier Billboard Project and developed ideas for projects that can raise awareness of the plight of veterans locally.

Almost all of the students who took part in the project know someone directly who has served in the military and been deployed.

"There is a great complexity involved with modern warfare and the toll it takes on many people," said VanHoomissen.

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