

NHD
NATIONAL
HISTORY DAY

4511 Knox Road
Suite 205
College Park, MD 20740
Voice (301) 314-9739
Fax (301) 314-9767
www.nhd.org

**Heroes Who Made a Difference:
Memorializing a Distinguished Service
Cross Award Recipient**

Ron Hustvedt, Jr.
Salk Middle School STEM
Pre-Engineering Magnet Program
Elk River, Minnesota

Grade Level:

6 – 8

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

- Examine the requirements to earn the Distinguished Service Cross
- Select and research a recipient of the medal during World War I
- Write a newspaper editorial commemorating that soldier

Guiding Question:

What does distinguished service to your country in a time of war look like? How does a medal serve as a symbol of the extraordinary service of an otherwise ordinary individual? How do we honor those individuals a century later?

Connections to Common Core:

CCSS.ELA–Literacy.RH.6–8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Connections to C3 Framework:

D2.His.3.6–8. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.

Documents Used:**Secondary Sources:**

Distinguished Service Cross: Artifact photograph and explanation

<http://historyexplorer.si.edu/resource/?key=4186>

Object Record: Distinguished Service Cross

<http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/collection/object.asp?ID=424>

Lesson Description:

Overview: Students put actual names and individual actions to the larger events of World War I by learning about the Distinguished Service Cross and honoring a soldier from the United States who earned one. Students research a recipient of the medal and write an editorial commemorating that soldier. This can be kept within the classroom, but also has the opportunity for community outreach if there are local honorees. This lesson can serve as a concluding activity for a unit on World War I or a launch into a World War I unit.

Time: One to four days (depends on how much choice a teacher gives to students and how much research is expected).

Materials:

- Devices with internet access
- Source Analysis: Distinguished Service Cross Medal
- Get to Know your Soldier
- Editorial Outline
- Writing utensils

Lesson Preparation:

- Make one copy of each handout per student.
- Students need to have access to the websites listed and teacher should navigate the websites ahead of time. Students may select a soldier of his or her choosing or the teacher can narrow it down to a limited number of soldiers.

Day 1 Procedure:

- Go to <http://historyexplorer.si.edu/artifacts> and in the Search History Explorer box type “Distinguished Service Cross.” In the Search Results box click on the photograph and read about the medal. Be sure to enlarge the image.
- Teachers can choose to have students work alone, in small groups, or as an entire class. Either way, students should individually complete the Source Analysis worksheet using the medal and the website as a guide.
- Go to <http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/collection/> and click “Search by Keyword.” Type “Distinguished Service Cross” and click on the medal in the search results. Finish the Source Analysis worksheet using the additional details listed here.
- Using the listed websites on page two of the Get to know your soldier organizer, and other reliable online sources, select a soldier from World War I who was a recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross. Complete page one of the Get to know your soldier organizer the best you can with the available sources.

Day 2 Procedure:

- Finalize the “Get to know your soldier” organizer.
- Complete the “Editorial Outline” using the information collected. Use it to write the final editorial.

Assessment Materials:

- Source Analysis sheet
- Get to know your Soldier organizer
- Editorial outline
- completed editorial

Methods for Extension:

- Read “The Shock of War” and add several sentences to your letter about the impact of the war on soldiers. Write in general terms like “Many soldiers in World War I...” Be careful not to make assumptions about the impact on your specific soldier.
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-shock-of-war-55376701/>
- Contact your local newspaper and submit your editorial for publication.
- Create a class website or blog and electronically publish your editorials.

Adaptations:

- Complete only the “Editorial Outline” instead of writing the actual editorial.
- Teacher pre-searches for several soldiers with lots of information and provides students with the necessary information for the “Get to know your soldier” organizer.

Bibliography

Primary Source

"Distinguished Service Cross Medal." Smithsonian National Museum of American History. Accessed February 13, 2014. <http://historyexplorer.si.edu/resource/?key=4186>.

Secondary Sources

Alexander, Caroline. "The Shock of War." *Smithsonian Magazine*, (September 2010). Accessed February 13, 2014. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-shock-of-war-55376701/>.

Legion of Valor of the United States of America. "Legion of Valor Search." 2014. Accessed February 20, 2014. www.legionofvalor.com/search.php.

"Military Times Hall of Valor." Military Times. 2014. Accessed February 20, 2014. <http://projects.militarytimes.com/citations-medals-awards/search.php?conflict=2>.

"Object Record: Distinguished Service Cross Medal." *The Price of Freedom: Americans at War*, Smithsonian National Museum of American History. Accessed February 13, 2014. <http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/collection/object.asp?ID=424>.

U. S. Army Medical Department. "AMEDD Distinguished Service Cross Recipients of World War I. United States Army. November 4, 2011. Accessed February 20, 2014. <http://ameddregiment.amedd.army.mil/dsc/wwi.html>.

U. S. Department of Defense. "Distinguished Service Cross Recipients, World War I, 1917–1918." Department of Defense. March 29, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2014. <http://valor.defense.gov/Portals/24/Documents/ServiceCross/ArmyDSC-WWI.pdf>.

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Source Analysis

Artifact Title: Distinguished Service Cross Medal

Use the following websites to help you:

<http://historyexplorer.si.edu/resource/?key=4186>

<http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/collection/object.asp?ID=424>

Date established: _____ Established by: _____

Explain the context/significance of that date and individual:

Qualifications of medal recipient:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Artifact Description

Dimensions:

Materials:

Physical Description:

Why were those colors selected for the ribbon?

What is the significance of the symbols on the medal?

Get to know your soldier

Name of soldier: _____

Rank: _____ Service Branch: _____

Company: _____ Regiment: _____

Division: _____

Hometown: _____ State: _____

Date of heroic action: _____

Location of heroic action: _____

Details of heroic actions:

Which Distinguished Service Cross qualifications did your soldier's actions meet?

Connection to broader battle/war and how that battle impacted World War I:

Check off the sources you used (see reverse for help using each source):

- ___ Legion of Valor
- ___ Home Of Heroes
- ___ U.S. Department of Defense
- ___ Military Times Hall of Valor
- ___ U.S. Army Medical Department

Other sources:

A few sources to help select and research a World War I soldier

U.S. Department of Defense

<http://valor.defense.gov/Portals/24/Documents/ServiceCross/ArmyDSC-WWI.pdf>

Search through a list of all World War I medal recipients

U.S. Army Medical Department

<http://ameddregiment.amedd.army.mil/dsc/wwi.html>

Contains a list of Army Medical Department Regiment medal recipients

Legion of Valor

www.legionofvalor.com/search.php

Conduct a search for a specific soldier or create a list to review/select from

You can leave the first and last name blank to find a soldier

Leave the Service Branch blank unless you have a specific branch in mind

For Award Received select "Distinguished Service Cross"

For War Medal Received In select "World War I"

Click on the soldier's name for details. Some have a lot others have very little.

Military Times Hall of Valor

<http://projects.militarytimes.com/citations-medals-awards/search.php?conflict=2>

A good place to go once you have a soldier selected

Search by name, award, and conflict

Main page at www.militarytimes.com

Editorial Outline – A recommended “flow” for your editorial

Directions: You are going to write an editorial for a local newspaper explaining to readers what the distinguished service cross is, the soldier you researched, their specific actions, the impact that battle had on the overall war, and the need to remember the heroic actions of your soldier almost a century ago.

Introduction sentence: Start off naming your soldier, their rank and hometown, the date they conducted the heroic action, location of that action, and their status as a Distinguished Service Cross award recipient.

Next two to four sentences: Tell the story of your soldier’s heroic actions that day. Be specific and be accurate.

Next two to three sentences: Explain the battle this heroic action took place in and the significance of that battle in World War I.

Next two to four sentences: Explain the Distinguished Service Cross award and the qualifications to receive the award. Be sure to explain how specifically your soldier met the award requirements.

Conclusion: Explain how the actions of your soldier are historically significant and a personal statement regarding why the people of this community should remember your soldier.