

Virtual Capitol Lessons

Honoring Nebraskans for Their Service

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Grade Level	Fourth
Class Period(s)	2

This lesson is designed to precede or follow a field trip to Lincoln or a virtual field trip (<http://nebraskavirtualcapitol.org>) to the Nebraska Capitol.

Nebraska Social Studies Standards (2019)

SS 4.4.1 Investigate patterns of continuity and change over time in Nebraska.

SS 4.4.1.a Analyze the chronology of key state and/or regional events and communicate their impact on the past, present, and future.

SS 4.4.2 Analyze and explain multiple perspectives of events in Nebraska, including historically marginalized and underrepresented groups.

SS 4.4.2.a Compare and contrast primary and secondary sources to better understand multiple perspectives of the same event.

SS 4.4.3 Analyze past and current events throughout Nebraska history.

SS 4.4.3.b Identify key events in American history that shaped or were shaped by Nebraskans.

Nebraska Language Arts Standards

LA 4.1.5 Vocabulary: Students will build and use conversational, academic, and content-specific grade level vocabulary.

LA 4.1.5.c Acquire new academic and content-specific grade-level vocabulary, relate to prior knowledge, and apply in new situations.

LA 4.1.6 Comprehension: Students will construct meaning by using prior

knowledge and text information while reading grade-level literary and informational text.

LA 4.1.6.e Determine main ideas and supporting details from informational text and/or media.

Nebraska Fine and Performing Art Standards

FA 5.2.4 Students will examine contemporary, historical, and cultural context in art and life.

FA 5.2.4.a Identify ways that artists influence lives and communities.

FA 5.2.4.d Explore how images and objects are used to convey a story, familiar experience, or connection to the world.

Overview

Throughout history our military members have been called upon to help gain, maintain, and/or protect our freedom and sometimes to help our allies or protectorates do the same thing. Individuals and countries have heroes who are courageous and willing to stand up and help others—sometimes even to risk his or her life. In the military (and in some other occupations), such heroes are said to have “gone above and beyond the call of duty.” America has had many heroes who have done just that. As a result, some of those members of our military have received our country’s highest award—The Medal of Honor (sometimes called The Congressional Medal of Honor)—including some military heroes from Nebraska.

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Key Vocabulary

- **Chamber**-a room
- **Commemorate**-to celebrate, honor, and remember someone or something very special
- **Congress**-group name for federal government officials called Senators and/or Representatives; also the place where those officials work in Washington D.C.
- **Duty**-something that a person is expected or required to do
- **Hero**-someone who does extraordinary things for others
- **Heroism**-the quality of being a hero
- **Medal of Honor**-the highest honor awarded by Congress to U.S. military members for bravery and going above and beyond the call of duty (sometimes called the Congressional Medal of Honor)
- **Memorial**-in memory of (or in honor of) someone or something special
- **Memorial chamber**-a room or place where someone or something special is honored, celebrated, or remembered
- **Military**-a word relating to the armed forces of a country (e.g., in the U.S., the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard)
- **Monument**- a sculpture or statue meant to honor a person, place, or event
- **Mural**-a painting applied directly to a wall
- **Plaque**-metal plate attached to a wall or to a monument, often used to display information or list names of people to be remembered in history
- **Posthumous**-after death
- **Recipient**-someone who receives something

Materials

<http://nebraskavirtualcapitol.org/>
Virtual Capitol Tour Website

Procedures

*****Many of our students have connections to deployed or previously deployed service members, some of whom have/have had illness or injuries as a result. In any case, be aware of these circumstances before teaching this lesson.**

SESSION ONE

1. Begin the lesson by accessing Virtual Capitol Tour and visiting the Memorial Chamber. Note that it is "dedicated to the forms of heroism called for in the public service and in devotion to humanity". Select the "The Ideal of International Law" mural which "shows a human timeline of Nebraskans who served in the U.S. military." Read the description with students. Share the list of Medal of Honor recipients from Nebraska and the wars in which they performed their heroic actions. Which wars/time periods are not represented in the mural? (Civil War, Indian Campaigns, War with Spain, years 1901-1911) Why do you think the artist arranged the service members in chronological order from the background to the foreground? (distant past to the present) What might you infer from their facial expressions? (Their jobs are serious and important which is reflected in their demeanor.) One service member is holding a medal. Can you tell what it is? (The Purple Heart) Explain that there are *many* awards that can be earned by service members depending on their actions and the branch of service. The Medal of Honor is the *highest* award however. (There is a Medal of Honor plaque in the Memorial Chamber. You might share the article about the unveiling of the updated plaque on Veterans Day in 2013.)

<http://capitol.nebraska.gov/index.php/news/blog/medal-of-honor-plaque-unveiling-on-veterans-day>

2. Move around the Chamber to view the mural for "The Ideal of Universal Peace." Read the description and study the art. Note the differences in the two murals, especially the roles of service members. Compare to

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police officers who may be involved in dangerous confrontations but spend most of their hours in crime prevention by patrolling and being available to the public for problem-solving. Explain that most of us may not be viewed as “heroes” and will not receive such meritorious awards in our lives. However, if we fulfill our roles as responsible members of our society, all people in our world (family, school, community, etc.) will benefit. Compare to a team where perhaps only one or two players are celebrated for their scoring ability, but they are supported and defended by team members who are essential but may not be as recognized.

SESSION TWO

1. Share the article from the Lincoln Journal Star about Donald K. Schwab. Because of its length, complexity, and some graphic details, you may want to summarize the information or read/display excerpts for the class. Why was the Medal of Honor awarded to him (posthumously) after so many years?

“The unusual historical accounting that will lead to the new medals began in 2002 when Congress, as part of the military spending bill, ordered the Pentagon to look into whether Jewish and Hispanic service members had been passed over unfairly for the nation’s highest military honor.

Defense Department officials said there was specific evidence to suggest such discrimination may have existed in the ranks, including instances in which Hispanic and Jewish soldiers apparently changed their names to hide their ethnicity.”

http://journalstar.com/news/local/nebraska-veteran-to-receive-medal-of-honor/article_51d60f2e-ed12-59e2-82ef-67f973380005.html

Why is it important to recognize individuals, even after their deaths? (It shows respect and appreciation for their actions and acknowledges their families. We can correct misinformation.) This is a good opportunity to reinforce why it is important to study history. (New information emerges, we interpret historical information differently, we have the opportunity to redress errors from the past.)

Assessment

Quick write-

- Explain the meaning and purpose of “The Ideal of International Law” and “The Ideal of Universal Peace” murals in the Memorial Chamber.
- Why is the Medal of Honor such an important award?

Ask students to define any of the vocabulary words that were especially relevant to your discussions.

Extensions

1. Is there a Nebraska Medal of Honor recipient from your hometown? Assign each student several names from the Medal of Honor Recipients list in the *Nebraska Blue Book*. They should go to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society’s web page archive at <http://www.cmohs.org/recipient-archive.php> Enter the names of the recipients and view the biographies to see how they are affiliated with Nebraska. If you find a hometown winner, conduct additional research and determine if s/he has received any local recognition.
2. Research the Congressional Award for 14-23 year-olds <http://congressionalaward.org/about/> and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian award. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/campaign/medal-of-freedom>

Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the two awards or use a 3-way Venn diagram to include the Medal of Honor.

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Sources/Resources

<http://nebraskalegislature.gov/pdf/bluebook/79-80.pdf>

Nebraska Medal of Honor Recipients List from Nebraska Blue Book

<http://nebraskavirtualcapitol.org/>

Virtual Capitol Tour Website

<http://capitol.nebraska.gov/building/rooms/memorial-chamber>

Memorial Chamber art

http://journalstar.com/news/local/nebraska-veteran-to-receive-medal-of-honor/article_51d60f2e-ed12-59e2-82ef-67f973380005.html

Article about Medal of Honor Winner Donald K. Schwab

<http://www.cmohs.org/medal-history.php>

Congressional Medal of Honor Society (optional teacher background, extension activity)

<http://capitol.nebraska.gov/index.php/news/blog/medal-of-honor-plaque-unveiling-on-veterans-day>

Teacher Background on Medal of Honor Plaque

<http://nebraskalegislature.gov/pdf/bluebook/70-78.pdf>

Nebraska Hall of Fame Bios from Nebraska Blue Book (extension activity)

<http://www.nebraskaeducationonlocation.org/nebraska-notables/nebraska-medal-honor-recipients/>

This site provides a list of Nebraska Medal of Honor recipients and the conflicts in which they fought.

<http://themedalofhonor.com/>

The Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation's site has background information about the Medal of Honor, recipients, and lesson plans for character development. It is the teacher's responsibility to preview the lessons and determine their usage as they have not been previewed by the authors or editors of this project.