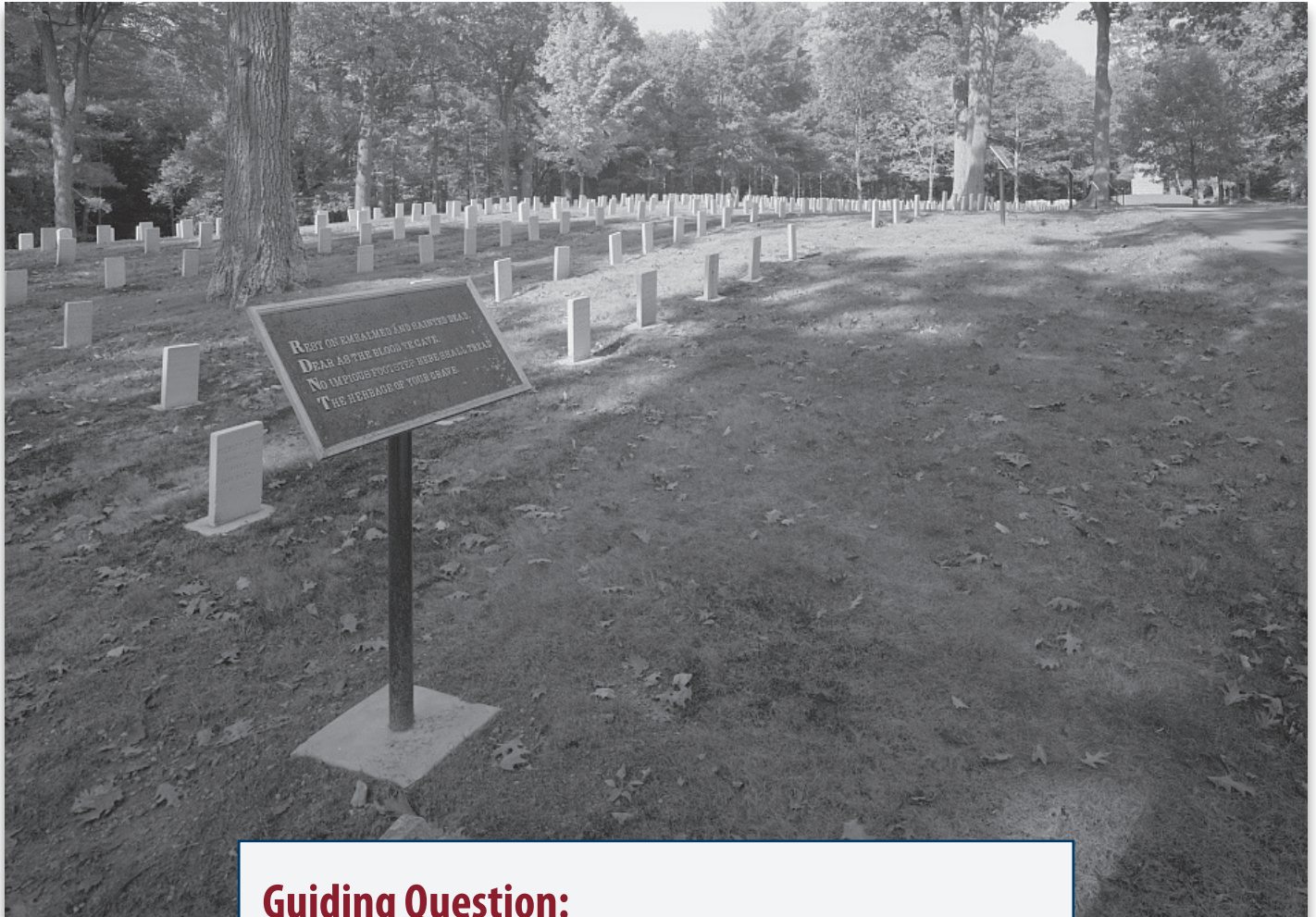


“The Bivouac of the Dead”:

Images from the Togus National Cemetery

DEVELOPED BY ERICA SWENSON



Guiding Question:

What are some of the ways we memorialize our veterans?



Overview

Students will identify text from the poem, "Bivouac of the Dead," that best honors a deceased veteran. They will then create a photograph or sketch of a memorial or part of the cemetery that connects with this chosen phrase. Finally, students will write a caption for their image.

Objectives

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to:

- Define the term "memorialize";
- Capture an image from the surroundings that connects with their chosen text from "Bivouac of the Dead"; and
- Explain how their chosen image connects to the text and helps memorialize veterans.



One key attribute of the Togus National Cemetery is how designers set a tone by placing stanzas from the poem, "Bivouac of the Dead," along one of the major pathways. I wanted to identify even more of the elements of this cemetery that help us memorialize our veterans.

— Erica Swenson

Swenson teaches at Bruce M. Whittier Middle School in Poland, Maine.

Spotlight: Togus National Cemetery

In 1865, as the Civil War was drawing to a close, President Abraham Lincoln signed an act establishing the National Asylum (later changed to Home) for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. The Eastern Branch at Togus was the first of these facilities to open, in November 1866. The first veteran was admitted to Togus on Nov. 10, 1866.

Togus was a relatively isolated location until 1890, when a narrow-gauge railroad from the Kennebec River in Randolph and an electric trolley line from Augusta were completed. These transportation improvements led to the home becoming a popular excursion destination for Sunday picnics. The grounds featured a zoo, hotel and theater that brought shows directly from Broadway. Band concerts were also held there regularly. The facility became part of the Veterans Administration (VA) in July 1930 when all agencies administering benefits to veterans were consolidated.

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Standards Connections

Connections to Common Core

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.6 Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3.D Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

Documents Used

Primary Sources

Poem, Theodore O'Hara, "Bivouac of the Dead"

National Cemetery Administration

<https://www.cem.va.gov/history/BODpoem.asp>

Secondary Sources

Veteran Profile, Private First Class David L. Knight

National Cemetery Administration

<http://cem.va.gov/legacy/>

Materials

- Memorializing Veterans Packet containing:
 - "Bivouac of the Dead"
 - Memorial Image
- "Bivouac of the Dead" Teacher Example
- Memorial Image Teacher Example

Activity Preparation

- Make one copy of the Memorializing Veterans Packet for each student.
- Read aloud and explain these expectations of cell phone use in a cemetery to students:
 - Silence your cell phone.
 - Use only your camera. Do not go to any other app or send any texts.
 - Do not take any selfies.
 - Do not take photographs of objects, names, or details you find funny. For example, if someone has an unusual name or a statue has an odd expression, please do not take a photograph.
 - Give other visitors their space. You should not be taking photographs of other visitors or ceremonies. This is a space for grieving and/or quiet reflection.
 - Understand that off-task or disrespectful use of your cell phone will result in your not being able to use your cell phone for our activity.

Procedure

Activity One: Introduction to Togus National Cemetery (30 minutes)

- Discuss the surroundings:
 - *What do we see, hear, smell, etc?*
 - *What is the tone of this site?*
 - *Why would the designers of this cemetery want to create this tone?*
 - *What are some ways in which the designers of this cemetery have created a cemetery that preserves the memory of or memorializes deceased veterans?*
- Distribute a Memorializing Veterans Packet to each student.
- Walk through the cemetery to visit each stanza of the poem along the roadway in the old section of the cemetery. Read the stanzas aloud. Ask students to use their "Bivouac of the Dead" handout in their Memorializing Veterans packets to underline or highlight one to two phrases that stand out from each stanza. They should have seven or more phrases underlined or highlighted by the time you complete reading the poem.
- Instruct students to use their "Bivouac of the Dead" handout to identify the one phrase from the poem that most stood out to them and then to answer two follow up questions. The "Bivouac of the Dead" Teacher Example can be used as an example if needed.

Activity Two: Student Memorial Image (15 minutes)

- Allow students to walk through the cemetery and find an image that connects with the theme and message of their one chosen phrase.
- Tell students to take a photo with their cell phone or sketch the image. The Memorial Image Teacher Example can be used as an example if needed.
- Direct students to write a caption for their image that answers the three questions on their handout. Students can take turns presenting their images and captions to the group.

Teacher Tip: *Teachers may decide to have students send them all of their messages or email their photographs to their own school accounts. Teachers might also ask for students to do all of their writing longhand or on their devices.*

Activity Three: Student Discussion (15 minutes)

- Lead the students in a discussion about their impressions of Togus National Cemetery.
 - *What are different ways, both on the small and large scale, in which this cemetery has memorialized members of the military?*
 - *How successful has this cemetery been in memorializing the dead?*
 - *What, in your opinion, are the most powerful ways to memorialize deceased veterans?*
 - *If you were trying to honor deceased military here, what would you do the same way? What would you do differently?*

Assessment

- Teachers can collect and evaluate the Memorial Image activity.

Methods for Extension

- Students could create their own collage of images taken from the cemetery. This might also include text taken from different plaques and/or memorials.
- Students could create their own memorials or designs for a national cemetery.
- Students could create an annotated student map of Togus National Cemetery. For example: "Here we see the statue that is dedicated to . . ."
- Students could investigate the history of the poem, "Biovac of the Dead." This poem has been used throughout many National Cemetery Administration cemeteries, but it is sometimes controversial because its author fought for the Confederacy and the poem has undergone many revisions since its first appearance.

Memorializing Veterans: "Bivouac of the Dead"

Underline or highlight one or two short phrases from each stanza (at least seven total) that stand out to you in Theodore O'Hara's poem, "Bivouac of the Dead."	Your Text
<p>Rest on embalmed and sainted dead! Dear as the blood ye gave; No impious footstep shall here tread The herbage of your grave;</p> <p>The muffled drum's sad roll has beat The soldier's last tattoo; No more on life's parade shall meet That brave and fallen few.</p> <p>No rumor of the foe's advance Now swells upon the wind; Nor troubled thought at midnight haunts Of loved ones left behind;</p> <p>No vision of the morrow's strife The warrior's dream alarms; No braying horn nor screaming fife At dawn shall call to arms.</p> <p>The neighing troop, the flashing blade, The bugle's stirring blast, The charge, the dreadful cannonade, The din and shout, are past;</p> <p>On Fame's eternal camping-ground Their silent tents are spread, And Glory guards, with solemn round, The bivouac of the dead.</p>	<p>1. Choose your text: Of all the text that you chose from the poem, which phrase stands out the most to you?</p> <p>2. What do you think this phrase means (The Theme)?</p> <p>3. How does this phrase show a way to memorialize our deceased veterans (the message)? If it does not, you may want to select a different phrase.</p>

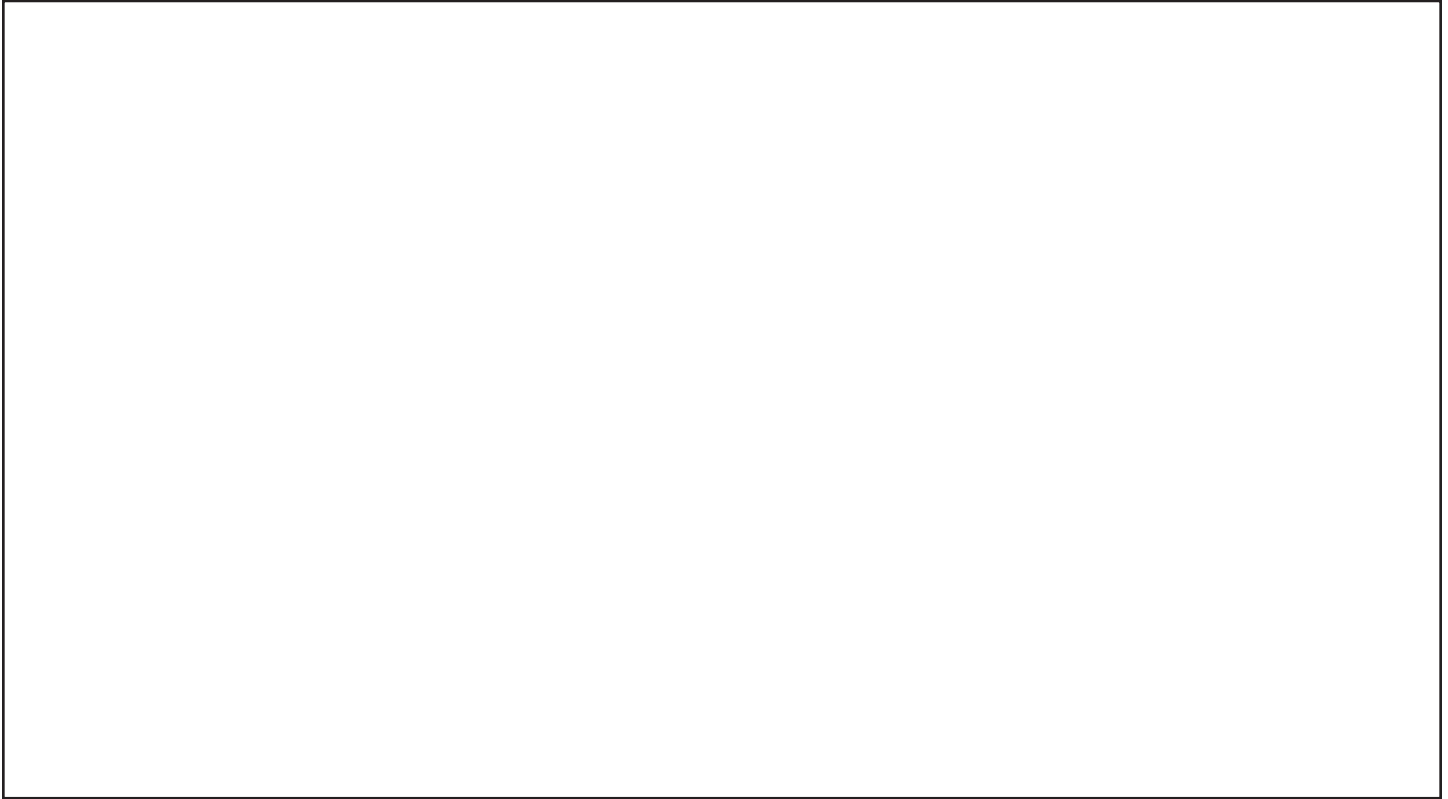
Directions: Write your chosen text and its message on the top of the next page: Memorial Image. Walk through the cemetery and find an image that connects with your text. Please write a caption for your image in which you answer the following three questions:

1. What does your image show?
2. How does your image connect with your chosen text from "Bivouac of the Dead"?
3. How does your image show a way(s) in which we typically memorialize our veterans?

Memorializing Veterans: Memorial Image

Text from the poem: _____

The Message: _____



Caption:

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"Bivouac of the Dead" Teacher Example

Underline or highlight one or two short phrases from each stanza (at least seven total) that stand out to you in Theodore O'Hara's poem, "Bivouac of the Dead."	Your Text
<p>Rest on <u>embalmed and sainted dead!</u> <u>Dear as the blood</u> ye gave; <u>No impious footstep</u> shall here tread The herbage of your grave;</p> <p>The <u>muffled drum's sad roll</u> has beat The soldier's last tattoo; <u>No more on life's parade</u> shall meet That <u>brave and fallen few</u>.</p> <p>No rumor of the foe's advance Now swells upon the wind; <u>Nor troubled thought at midnight haunts</u> <u>Of loved ones left behind;</u></p> <p>No vision of the <u>morrow's strife</u> The <u>warrior's dream</u> alarms; <u>No braying horn nor screaming fife</u> At dawn shall call to arms.</p> <p><u>The neighing troop, the flashing blade,</u> The bugle's stirring blast, The charge, the dreadful cannonade, <u>The din and shout, are past;</u></p> <p>On <u>Fame's eternal camping-ground</u> Their silent tents are spread, And Glory guards, with solemn round, The bivouac of the dead.</p>	<p>1. Choose your text: Of all the text that you chose from the poem, which phrase stands out the most to you?</p> <p><i>"On Fame's eternal camping-ground"</i></p> <p>2. What do you think this phrase means?</p> <p><i>Deceased soldiers will be remembered.</i></p> <p>3. How does this phrase show a way to memorialize our deceased veterans (The Message)? If it doesn't, you may want to select a different phrase.</p> <p><i>It's our task to remember the soldiers who have put their lives at risk for us.</i></p>

Directions: Write your chosen text and its message on the top of the next page: Memorial Image. Walk through the cemetery and find an image that connects with your text. Please write a caption for your image in which you answer the following three questions:

1. What does your image show?
2. How does your image connect with your chosen text from "Bivouac of the Dead"?
3. How does your image show a way(s) in which we typically memorialize our veterans?

Memorial Image Teacher Example

Text from the poem: *"On Fame's Eternal Camping Ground!"*

The Message: *It's our task to remember the soldiers who have put their lives at risk for us.*



Caption:

This image shows specific information about Private First Class David Lee Knight's military service. **The image connects with the phrase** "On Fame's eternal camping ground" because the details shared on this headstone can give us a better sense of Knight's unique experience in the Korean Conflict. **We have memorialized this veteran** by finding a way to remember him as an individual. Furthermore, Knight was willing to risk his life for other Americans, so it is our job to make sure that he has a well-maintained "eternal camping ground."