

National History Day Collaborates with 61 Educators to Tell the Stories of America's Silent Heroes

COLLEGE PARK, MD – October 7, 2025 – [National History Day](http://nhd.org)® (NHD) is proud to announce the 61 teachers selected for its *Researching Silent Heroes* program, sponsored by the [American Battle Monuments Commission](http://abmc.org) (ABMC). Educators selected for this cost-free learning opportunity receive hands-on training to research and create a profile for a [Silent Hero](http://nhd.org)®, an individual who served in the United States military. The men and women researched for this series died during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War and are buried or memorialized in an American military cemetery cared for by the ABMC.

Now until March 2026, teachers will meet monthly with both a historian and a research specialist to set their Silent Heroes into historical context and learn strategies to research their lives. They discuss effective research strategies and learn how to deal with roadblocks that historical research creates, such as missing or incomplete records, alternate spellings, or reconciling memories with the historical record. When the teachers complete their research, they will write a profile for NHD's [Silent Heroes](http://nhd.org) website. This work will be shared with the American Battle Monuments Commission for future use in their educational materials.

"National History Day's *Researching Silent Heroes* program is essential to our work to improve the teaching and learning of history," said Cathy Gorn, Ph.D., Executive Director of National History Day. "Thanks to the ABMC, teachers are exposed to unique primary source research about the lives of service members from twentieth-century conflicts. I look forward to the powerful profiles the teachers will write and how this learning will impact the way they teach their students about war and sacrifice."

The 61 educators selected for this program represent 31 states and one international school. The Silent Heroes they have selected are buried or memorialized at 19 ABMC cemeteries. NHD honors the following teachers participating in this program and the Silent Heroes they chose to research:

World War I Service Members

Silent Hero	Teacher and School
Aisne-Marne American Cemetery	
U.S. Army Private Joseph Bird Gatewood	Mrs. Laura Channing Stone Bridge High School Ashburn, Virginia
U.S. Army First Lieutenant Parr Hooper	Mr. Coby Treadway St. Mary's Ryken High School Leonardtown, Maryland

Silent Hero	Teacher and School
Brookwood American Cemetery	
U.S. Navy Seaman Francis L. Wilkes	Ms. Kierstyn Bohl Mashpee Middle-High School Mashpee, Massachusetts
U.S. Army Private Morris Herman Walker	Mrs. Erin Curry Stone Bridge High School Ashburn, Virginia
Flanders Field American Cemetery	
U.S. Army Private First Class Wesley Neil Lambert	Ms. Melissa Lawson Cordova High School Rancho Cordova, California
Meuse Argonne American Cemetery	
U.S. Army Musician Third Class Gaylord Anderson Bradley	Dr. Krista Grensavitch National History Day College Park, Maryland
U.S. Army First Lieutenant John F. McCormick	Mrs. Michelle Rafach Hancock High School Kiln, Mississippi
Oise Aisne American Cemetery	
U.S. Army Private Patrick H. Buckley	Ms. Tami Redinger Davey Elementary School Havre, Montana
U.S. Army Corporal Willie W. Shankle	Mrs. Cheryl Murray Pine Springs Blended Academy Apex, North Carolina
Somme American Cemetery	
U.S. Army Private John Hess	Mrs. Jamie Adams-Granato Pueblo County High School Pueblo, Colorado
U.S. Army Private First Class Edward F. Rielly	Mr. Sean McGill Horace Greeley High School Chappaqua, New York

Silent Hero	Teacher and School
St. Mihiel American Cemetery	
U.S. Army Private Richard Lee Green	Mrs. Karen Richey Toby Johnson Middle School Elk Grove, California
U.S. Army Captain Joseph James Loughlin	Mrs. Maggie Swanson North Gaston High School Gastonia, North Carolina
Suresnes American Cemetery	
U.S. Marine Corps Private Philip Biondi	Mr. Christopher Doyle Bronxville High School Bronxville, New York
U.S. Army Private Walter Nagel	Mrs. Marsha Washburn Ashbrook Independent School Corvallis, Oregon

World War II Service Members

Silent Hero	Teacher and School
East Coast Memorial	
U.S. Navy Seaman Second Class Joseph Del Vecchio, Jr.	Mrs. DanaAnn Landesman Bronxville High School Bronxville, New York
Epinal American Cemetery	
U.S. Army Air Forces Technical Sergeant Thomas J. Walker	Mrs. Donna Gustafson Santan Junior High School Chandler, Arizona
Florence American Cemetery	
U.S. Army Sergeant Ruffus Buster Pitts	Dr. Michelle Pope Landrum High School Campobello, South Carolina
Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery	
U.S. Army Sergeant Halsey J. Miller	Ms. Marissa LaSala Woodrow Wilson Middle School Edison, New Jersey

Silent Hero	Teacher and School
Honolulu Memorial	
U.S. Navy Fire Controlman Third Class Leo Karl Ballenger, Jr.	Ms. Rebecca Scott Riverstone International School Boise, Idaho
U.S. Army Private First Class Luis Sanchez	Ms. Julietta Rojas Valle Verde Early College High School El Paso, Texas
U.S. Navy Seaman Second Class James N. Stapley	Mrs. Ellen Miller Aspire Academy at Arredondo Tempe, Arizona
Lorraine American Cemetery	
U.S. Army Captain James Alvin Timberman	Ms. Nia Taliaferro James McHenry Elementary Middle School Baltimore, Maryland
Manila American Cemetery	
U.S. Army Air Forces First Lieutenant Harry Chapman Franklin	Mrs. Isobel Ramsey Holliston High School Holliston, Massachusetts
U.S. Merchant Marine Merchant Seaman James Linton Robison	Mr. Matthew Cameron Chiang Mai International School Chiang Mai, Thailand
U.S. Army Private Anthony P. Testa	Mrs. Deborah Alberti Jefferson Middle School Albuquerque, New Mexico
U.S. Army First Lieutenant Henry Ashton	Mx. Jamie Tadrzynski Canyon Springs High School and the Leadership and Law Prep Academy North Las Vegas, Nevada
Netherlands American Cemetery	
U.S. Army Technician Fifth Class Walter Burtis Harper	Ms. Elizabeth Borrowman Kennedy Elementary School Butte, Montana
North Africa American Cemetery	
U.S. Army Private Margarito R. Hernandez	Dr. Roberto Baeza Badger Ridge Middle School Verona, Wisconsin
Sicily-Rome American Cemetery	
U.S. Army Private Clarence H. Overby	Mr. Zach Hochhalter Fargo North High School Fargo, North Dakota
West Coast Memorial	
U.S. Coast Guard Aviation Machinist's Mate First Class Warren W. Engelhardt	Mrs. Katherine Grider Ector School Ector, Texas

Korean War Service Members

Silent Hero	Teacher and School
Honolulu Memorial	
U.S. Army Corporal Jacob W. Allmaras	Ms. Morgan Keena Heritage Middle School Horace, North Dakota
U.S. Army Corporal Billy W. Beaverson	Ms. Jeana Gump Scappoose Middle School Scappoose, Oregon
U.S. Marine Corps First Lieutenant Roger Baron Beem	Mr. Jason Robbins Ohio Virtual Academy Maumee, Ohio
U.S. Air Force First Lieutenant Robert Durham Canfield, Jr.	Mr. Thomas Garrett Canyon View High School Waddell, Arizona
U.S. Army Private First Class James W. Corbin	Ms. Karen Stevens Cane River Middle School Burnsville, North Carolina
U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel George Andrew Davis, Jr.	Ms. Nichole Ritchie Llano Junior High School Llano, Texas
U.S. Air Force First Lieutenant James Franklin Davis	Mr. Connor Fahy Green Charter Schools - Spartanburg Spartanburg, South Carolina
U.S. Army Corporal Charles L. Johnson	Dr. Jacqueline Grant Gulliver Prep School Pinecrest, Florida
U.S. Marine Corps First Lieutenant James Lowman Frazier	Mrs. Marjorie DeNeal Harrisburg High School Harrisburg, Illinois
U.S. Army Corporal Charles Eugene Marco	Mrs. Emily Barker Beverly Elementary School Beverly, West Virginia
U.S. Air Force Staff Sergeant Clifford Henry Mast	Ms. Beth Doughty Chief Umtuch Middle School Battle Ground, Washington
U.S. Army Master Sergeant Robert L. McCole	Ms. Yacqueline Uribe Perez Clauss Luke C. Moore Opportunity Academy Washington, D.C.
U.S. Army Private First Class John Thomas Sharp	Mrs. Jenny Puente Reginald F. Lewis High School Baltimore, Maryland

Silent Hero	Teacher and School
U.S. Army Corporal Paul Norman Tremblay	Dr. Christopher Beckvold Winthrop Middle School Winthrop, Massachusetts
U.S. Marine Corps Corporal Frank Earl Yeager	Mrs. Lisa Genton Divine Mercy Academy Monroeville, Pennsylvania

Vietnam War Service Members

Silent Hero	Teacher and School
Honolulu Memorial	
U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Humberto Acosta-Rosario	Mrs. Jennifer Luneau Constitution High School Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Frank Neil Balodati	Ms. Lauren Connolly Kearsarge Regional High School North Sutton, New Hampshire
U.S. Marine Corps Lance Corporal Albert Brigham	Mrs. Stephanie Carr Lithia Springs High School Lithia Springs, Georgia
U.S. Army Private First Class Harold Lee Harris	Ms. Cheryl Chauncey Ben L. Smith High School Greensboro, North Carolina
U.S. Navy Senior Chief Aviation Electronics Technician Reuben Beaumont Harris	Dr. Elise Durkee David H. Ponitz Career Technical Center Dayton, Ohio
U.S. Air Force Captain Vincent Joseph Hickman	Ms. Marci Kivo Jericho Middle School Jericho, New York
U.S. Air Force Colonel Lester Evan Holmes	Ms. Michelle Nystel Turkey Valley Junior/Senior High School Jackson Junction, Iowa
U.S. Marine Corps Private First Class William D. McGonigle	Mr. Jeffrey Schuh Seaman Middle School Topeka, Kansas
U.S. Marine Corps Captain James Dale Mills	Ms. Amy Cunningham Round Rock High School Round Rock, Texas
U.S. Navy Seaman Kylis Therod Payne	Ms. Sonja Hayes The Siena School Silver Spring, Maryland

Silent Hero	Teacher and School
U.S. Marine Corps Captain Larry Fletcher Potts	Mrs. Vanessa Gallaher The Bayard School Wilmington, Delaware
U.S. Navy Radioman Third Class Bruce Allen Timmons	Mrs. Alicia Laufer Spanish River Community High School Boca Raton, Florida
U.S. Marine Corps Private Monek Weitz	Ms. Allison Gibbs Lynn English High School Lynn, Massachusetts
U.S. Marine Corps Lance Corporal Calvin Wayne Wilkins	Mr. James Richardson Tennyson Middle School Waco, Texas
U.S. Air Force Captain Richard Carolinus Yeend	Mrs. Rachel Jernigan Pascagoula High School Pascagoula, Mississippi

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About National History Day (NHD)

NHD is a non-profit organization based in College Park, Maryland, that seeks to improve the teaching and learning of history. The National History Day Contest was established in 1974 and currently engages more than half a million students every year in conducting original research on historical topics of interest. Students present their research as a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website. Projects compete first at the local and affiliate levels, where the top entries are invited to the National Contest at the University of Maryland at College Park. NHD is sponsored in part by the 400 Years of African American History Commission, The Better Angels Society, the Bezos Family Foundation, the Joyful Noise Charitable Foundation, the Behring Global Educational Foundation, and the National Park Service. For more information, visit nhd.org.

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