

Veterans Legacy Program Curricular Materials

Legacy Play

Grade(s):

6-12

Time (minutes):

Five 50 minute class periods

Lesson Overview:

Students will learn prepare a play in order to learn about American Veterans from multiple wars. In preparing these scenes, students will engage with concepts of legacy and will discuss the reasons that veterans decided to serve.

Each monologue can be used on its own, or as part of the entire play.

Relevant Standards:

TH.5.H.2.1 - Recognize theatre works as a reflection of societal beliefs and values.

TH.68.S.1.4 - Discuss the ways in which theatre experiences involve empathy and aesthetic distance

TH.68.H.1.1 - Explore potential differences when performing works set in a variety of historical and cultural contexts

TH.68.H.1.2 - Analyze the impact of ones emotional and social experiences when responding to, or participating in, a play.

TH.68.H.1.4 - Create a monologue or story that reflects ones understanding of an event in a culture different from ones own.

TH.912.H.1.1 - Analyze how playwrights work reflects the cultural and socio-political framework in which it was created.

TH.912.H.1.4 - Interpret a text through different social, cultural, and historical lenses to consider how perspective and context shape a work and its characters.

TH.912.H.2.2 - Research and discuss the effects of personal experience, culture, and current events that shape individual response to theatrical works.

TH.912.H.2.8 - Analyze how events have been portrayed through theatre and film, balancing historical accuracy versus theatrical storytelling.

Required Materials:

- Monologues and program notes (attached below)

Learning Objectives:

- Students will prepare a play and learn about veterans of America's wars.
- Students will learn about the legacy of veterans and will learn and discuss the reasons they decided to serve.

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Special Vocabulary:

- Legacy

Procedure:

1. Introduce students to material and provide some historical context for the various conflicts
2. Assign roles to each student.
3. Have students read the play
4. Have students memorize their parts
5. Rehearse and perform these roles
6. After performing, discuss the students interpretations of veterans, their legacies, and the reasons they served.

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LEGACY

PRODUCTION NOTES

The following script is based on the collected research of UCF's History Department. The students listed in the acknowledgements, under the supervision and collaboration with UCF School of Performing Arts -Theatre faculty member, Holly E. McDonald, have created a play for K-12 students in honor of our Veterans.

Production Notes Continued:

There are ten monologues, four specifically for 5-12 and five monologues for grades 6-12 (all monologues may be used for 6-12).

The characters (of student/historian), around the table, should be between 2-6 people.

The characters are listed in chronological order, according to their time of service.

The monologues are scripted, while the characters of student/historians are improvisational. This style allows for adaptation and maximum participation of various k-12 communities.

CHARACTERS

Students or Historians – Any age. Two to six individuals.

David Moniac – Most appropriate for grades 6-12, Second Seminole War, Native American, why people serve.

Settimo Sorci – Most appropriate for grades 5-12, WWI, Italian Immigrant, first generation.

Archie Hawkins – Most appropriate for grades 6-12, WWI, African American, equality.

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William Kirlew – Most appropriate for grades 6-12, WWI, African American.

Mary G. Sutherland – Most appropriate for grades 6-12, WWI, role of women.

William Henry Oliver – Most appropriate for grades 5-12, WWI, the need to serve and becoming civilian again.

William H. Soucie – Most appropriate for grades 5-12, WWII & Korea, wife & son.

William Charette – Most appropriate for grades 6-12, Korea.

Steven Cousens – Most appropriate for grades 5-12, Vietnam, following in his father's footsteps.

TIME

Current.

PLACE

The scene takes place in a meeting/conference room or a classroom space.

SETTING

When the scene opens, we see a table down-right-center stage. Up-stage center we see an opening in two curtains or screens.

THE SCENE

The scene opens with a group of history students or historians discussing the importance of, “legacy”. The conversation is informal and an improvisational style. There are 2 – 6 characters (historians/students) sitting around the table. On the table we see laptops, notebooks, pens, paper and books. They discuss their use of Ancestry.com, research, branches of service, war, census records, military records, enlistment and most of all, the importance of “leaving a legacy.” This is improvisational style, with one set line that will be used to introduce each monologue.

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When the Veteran is mentioned, the actors at the table freeze/tableau, and the veteran appears up-stage between the opening of the curtains. They complete the monologue, step back behind the curtain and then the action continues at the table. This continues until each monologue has been completed. The piece ends with reflection on the word, “legacy.”

SCENE OPENS

HISTORIANS/STUDENTS: Discuss the importance of “legacy” and heroes. What is the meaning of a legacy and the importance of remembering our Veterans. The legacy they left and how we can remember them through careful study, research and dialogue with current service men and women. The lights shift from focus on the table to a focus on the space between the two curtains upstage center. The historians/students freeze. The Veteran steps from behind the curtain.

Intro line:
Freeze.

HISTORIANS/STUDENTS: Improvisational dialogue, followed by:

Student 1: Think about it. When you go to a National Cemetery and see all of those headstones, it makes you wonder.

Student 2: Wonder what?

Student 1: Why they do it? Why do people serve?

Student 2: Well, there are lots of reasons. Patriotism, the greater good, tragedies, family....

(Major David Moniac enters and the historian/students freeze/tableau).

DAVID MONIAC: Appears between the opening in the two curtains or screens. Delivers the monologue and then, exits behind the screen.

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I was the very first of my kind to enter the military academy at West Point. Native Americans had nothing to do with the US military, partly because we were not welcome. Some doubted my dedication to the cause because it was so unusual for someone like me to be in their ranks. You also have to remember, I enrolled in 1817. People viewed other races differently back then. I showed them that they were wrong though, on all accounts. I worked hard and astonished people with how quickly I was picking up concepts. I was able to understand complex mathematical concepts like sine and cosine with only a couple of years of formal education. People were surprised by my intelligence and considered me a marvel. John Adams, a former president, even wanted to meet me at one point, although I was a bit too bashful to talk to him.

After graduation in 1822, I was commissioned as a Brevet Second Lieutenant, although I did leave after a brief time in the service to return home. I had received a letter from my uncle detailing my father's money and alcohol problems back home. It was a hard choice to make, but I had a duty to my family, so I left with hopes that I could return to the service later to pay them back for my education. In those calmer years, I settled down, and found someone to love, Mary. We married, and we even had a son, whom I named after myself. We were a wonderful family of three: David, Mary, and David Jr.

When David Jr. was just three years old, I knew that now was the right time to return to the service. I left for Florida to fight in the Seminole War as a captain. It wasn't long into the war when they noticed my skill and promoted me to a major. By that point, I knew that I had proven the doubters wrong. I had shown that I, a Native American, could excel and be dedicated to the cause and protection of our country. I even made the ultimate sacrifice in that war, my life. I showed the world and all of those who would think less of me and my race that we are all willing to sacrifice and work hard for our country, our family, and our home.

My name is David Moniac, and this is my story.

(Major David Moniac exits and the Historian/students continue their conversations.)

HISTORIANS/STUDENTS: Improvisational dialogue, followed by:

Student 1: It is fascinating how the call to service can be so powerful, it speaks to many different people, it ignites a person to help, to serve, to become part of a legacy.

Student 2: Yeah, there are many immigrants who left behind one country, to find themselves moved to protect another.

(Private Settimo Sorci enters and the historian/students freeze/tableau).

SETTIMO SORCI: Appears between the opening in the two curtains or screens. Delivers the monologue and then, exits behind the screen.

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I was born on January 4, 1893, in the beautiful country of Italy. I moved to the United States in 1913 with 265,542 other Italians with dreams just like me. Many of these immigrants ended up going back to our homeland, but not me. My love for this country was unmoved. In 1918, I was drafted into World War I, and on June 27 I was assigned to Company B of the 53rd Pioneer Infantry. My time in this unit was cut short; two weeks after deployment to Europe I was transferred to Company E of the 329th Infantry, 83rd Division. We were responsible for the training and sorting of new troops that were coming in from America to replace casualties from other units. Our division was known as a depot division combat. Although my position wasn't in direct combat, we were ready if needed. My homeland of Italy suffered over 680,000 deaths in the war while America lost more than 116,000 soldiers, sailors, and airmen. The war caused economic ruin in Italy. We sure saw a lot of action, even if the Army said we were behind the lines.

After I was discharged, I married the beautiful Anna Giangrasso. She, too, was an Italian immigrant. I had two children with Anna, Anthony and Frances, and spent a large portion of my life as a baker in Queens. On February 21, 1964, my beautiful wife passed away at seventy-years old. My service secured her a spot in a National Cemetery. After my wife's death, I moved to Port Richey, Florida, where I lived the rest of my days and was buried in the Florida National Cemetery. My son would later be buried at this same cemetery as well.

My name is Settimo Sorci, and this is my story.

(Private Settimo Sorci exits and the Historian/Students continue their conversations)

HISTORIANS/STUDENTS: Improvisational dialogue, followed by:

Student 1: What about equality?

Student 2: What about it?

Student 1: Throughout the history of this country, inequality has existed, and yet, those who were discriminated against still served to protect others who were also oppressed.

(Private Hawkins enters and the historians/students freeze/tableau).

ARCHIE HAWKINS: Appears between the opening in the two curtains or screens. Delivers the monologue and then, exits behind the screen.

I'm Archie, Archie Hawkins. I was born Feb. 12, 1902 in a small town called Lloyd, Florida. My family was poor. I didn't even go to school, which was actually fairly common back then. When I was a kid we moved to another small town, Greenville, Florida, and I decided to register for the draft. War was on everyone's minds and there was a big one in Europe. I figured it was only a matter of time before we got

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dragged in. Service would get me away from the farm. I'd be paid, fed, and housed. I hoped that I could also get more rights for my people. Being a black man was not easy in this country. I figured as a serviceman I'd be treated better. There was just one problem - I was only 15. So, I told them I was born in 1896, so they'd think I was 21. They rejected me, but I didn't let that stop me. We moved backed to Lloyd and I tried again. This time, I successfully enlisted in the army. The country was fighting what we now call World War I. I was sent to Camp Joseph E. Johnston in Jacksonville in a segregated unit. I guess I should have expected that. We never got sent to Europe, but we were hit hard with sickness. We dropped like flies. This got the boys in charge to give us war-risk insurance, which we should have had anyway. After three months, I was discharged. I had hoped that serving my country would open doors and bring about equality, but I was wrong. By 1920 I was still unemployed. Riots and discrimination were everywhere. There was even a welcome home benefit given for veterans in my county, white veterans that is. I wasn't allowed.

Eventually I moved to St. Petersburg and became a landscape gardener and I started a family. On February 27th, 1989 I passed away. In life, I served in a segregated unit, faced prejudice, violence, and discrimination. In death, whites and blacks, privates and generals- it doesn't matter. We all share the same plot of land.

My name is Archie Hawkins, and this is my story.

(Private Hawkins exits and the Historian/Students continue their conversations)

HISTORIANS/STUDENTS: Improvisational dialogue, followed by:

Student 1: There is equality in death and yet, in life, racism still exists.

Student 2: Yeah, like being a black man/African-American, and deciding to serve a country that doesn't equally serve you. It's an incredible story.

(Private Kirlew enters and the Historian/Students freeze/tableau)

WILLIAM KIRLEW: Appears between the opening in the two curtains or screens. Delivers the monologue and then, exits behind the screen.

Land of the free. I immigrated from Jamaica, along with my parents, to the land of the free, hoping to find a healthier life that I would cherish before my death seventy-eight years later. I was offered an education at Virginia Union University, a historic black university. I renounced my British citizenship,

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because in my mind, I was an American, ready to serve in the army, ready to do my time. So yeah, I told them I was twenty-one, but I didn't care, this was the Great War, and I had to do what I had to do in order to serve.

I was assigned to the Depot Brigade with other black recruits on September 1, 1918, where we were provided the clothing, equipment, and training for trench warfare. I never made it into battle partly because of the color my skin and the war ended before we were needed. Yes, I'm black and I look like my fellow African Americans, I'm West Indian, isn't that different? Not when they used race to separate us. I never even got the chance to hold a weapon because of their fear of me possibly turning it around on them.

After the war ended, I was honorably discharged, and still faced discrimination, but don't take pity on me, because this coincided with the Harlem Renaissance and I relocated back to New York City. Suddenly, the Great Depression was happening and I needed to react quickly because they were only providing restricted employment for first class citizens. I started the papers on May 15, 1933 and was granted citizenship. World War II came about and the US entered the war in 1941. With the enlistment expanding up to age forty-five, and me being forty-four at the time, I was still overlooked. Like so many African Americans I still enlisted, but was only granted a support role. It wasn't even a year later, before they got me out of there. I took my last breath at the age of ninety-two, in South Florida in 1991. All I ever wanted to do, was to serve this country.

My name is William Kirlew, and this is my story.

(Private Kirlew exits and the Historians/Students continue their conversation.)

HISTORIANS/STUDENTS: Improvisational dialogue, followed by:

Person 1: Don't forget, there are different types of discrimination.

Person 2: You're right! Women were also discriminated against.

Person 1: But if women were seen as the weaker sex, how could they serve?

(Yeoman 1st Class Sutherland enters and the Historians/Students freeze/tableau.)

MARY G. SUTHERLAND: Appears between the opening in the two curtains or screens. Delivers the monologue and then, exits behind the screen.

My name is Mary G. Sutherland. I was born November 1st, 1895 in Massachusetts to my incredible parents. They immigrated from Ireland to start a new life here. My dad, John, was a blacksmith. We were a large family, with six siblings, so you can imagine there were a lot of mouths to feed.

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Massachusetts had a lot of factories so we were able to get work. That was, until World War I broke out. It had been raging in Europe for a few years, but the US had not yet become involved. In 1917, we declared war on Germany, and officially entered into a world war, the first any of us had ever seen. I had to do something, but I'm a woman. Who was going to want my help? Women didn't even have the right to vote, let alone a place in the military. Luckily for me, there was one branch at that time that saw the value of women and their work within the military. An entity that required my skill, my capabilities, and as a result, needed me during our country's most desperate hour: The United States Navy. So, on September 3rd, 1918 I enlisted. My rank was Yeoman-F, a title that identified me as female. My enlistment caused quite a stir. My role was a non-combat one, but my family was still worried. Truth be told, so was I. I was terrified. This was a huge decision, and a dangerous one. But I knew it was the right one. Just because I was a woman didn't mean that I couldn't do something. I had to do something! I had a calling to serve my country. My husband also served.

Because women were given non-combat roles, we did an odd assortment of activities. We served as mechanics, truck drivers, cryptographers and telephone operators. Additionally, military women faced a great deal of inequality during our service. There were no medical exams for women, and often we faced issues concerning our uniforms and housing: They didn't have enough! The Navy was not prepared for women!

I was released from service in 1920. Everyone called it the War to End All Wars. I wasn't sure about that, but I hoped it to be true. Things seemed to be turning around. Soon after I got home the 19th amendment was passed. I could now legally vote! I was elated! My voice would now be heard. I could make a difference even in peacetime. And I did.

On September 28th, 1988 I passed away. I left behind three children, thirteen grandchildren, and six great grandchildren. Because of my service and sacrifice in a time when women weren't considered equal, they now have a voice. My headstone serves as a reminder, with me on the front and my husband on the back, a unique case, since most women were on the back. I passed away first, and as a result, stayed on the front. Women too can make a difference, not only in times of war, but in times of peace and prosperity.

My name is Mary G. Sutherland, and this is my story.

(Yeoman 1st Class Sutherland exists and the Students/Historians continue their conversations.)

HISTORIANS/STUDENTS: Improvisational dialogue followed by:

Student 1: When you think about the history of our country, and all of the wars...

Student 2: And there's been quite a few! Some Veterans served in more than one war, or at least tried to...

(Corporal William Henry Oliver enters and the Students/Historians Freeze/Tableau.)

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WILLIAM HENRY OLIVER: Appears between the opening in the two curtains or screens. Delivers the monologue and then, exits behind the screen.

My name is William. William Henry Oliver. Born and raised in Albany, New York, around the turn of the century and the child of Canadian immigrants. For people like me, America was the land of opportunity. Having three older sisters and two younger brothers, that opportunity meant work, and I started working as soon as I could to help support my parents and siblings. I was a printer during the start of the war overseas – what we call World War I now – relieved that we as a country were following a policy of non-intervention that kept us out of it. But the time for staying out of it passed, and I registered for the draft when the US declared war on Germany in 1917. A year later I was in the Army. I was 22.

I didn't get much time in the service -- barely a year, in all honesty -- but I was proud of that year, and proud to have served my country when it needed me. I'd never been outside the country, so it was both exciting and scary to be shipped off to France right out of the gate. What was even scarier was the kind of fighting we were doing out there with the 2nd Pioneer Infantry - a part of the American Expeditionary Forces. But I was fighting for my family, for their safety, so I tried not to mind it, and focused on the work at hand.

Then the war ended. It was 1919, and I was suddenly a civilian again, back working as a printer. Got married to a girl named Margerite, but it didn't work out. Then I got married again, in 1943, to my wife Palma, and this time it stuck. She's stuck with me, that is. I love that woman. She's got a real big heart.

Worked in a hospital when I met her, superintendent for 15 years there I think, and she stayed involved in the medical community throughout our time together. Got appointed head of the medical property office of the Emergency Medical Service of Civilian Defense, and got recognized for 25 years of service by the Red Cross, too. She's got moxie, that one.

I signed up for the "Old Man's Draft" back in '42, just when the Second World War broke out. I was 46 by then, so they rightly didn't ask me to go in with all the young men and fight; but it was the principle of the thing. If and when my country needed me, I was ready and willing to fight for it.

My name is William Henry Oliver, and this is my story.

(Corporal William Henry Oliver exits and the Students/Historians continue their conversation.)

HISTORIANS/STUDENTS: Improvisational dialogue followed by:

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Student 1: Some people have families and children that follow in their footsteps.

Student 2: Well of course! Serving your country is quite a legacy to leave!

(First Lieutenant William H. Soucie enters and the Students/Historians freeze/tableau.)

WILLIAM H. SOUCIE: Appears between the opening in the two curtains or screens. Delivers the monologue and then, exits behind the screen.

Guess I should start at the beginning. I was raised in Connecticut during one of the most troubled times in American history, after all - with all the big mills moving south where the production was cheaper, taking lots of jobs down there with 'em. Then the Great Depression hit us, somewhere in the early 1930s... that's when things got bad. Finding a job at that point wasn't just hard, it was impossible. That's sort of why I joined the Army, the first time anyway. It was steady work for steady pay. And four years later, when my term was up, I went right back to civilian life - like I never left. At the time, I thought my service was just a quick in-and-out. It was good, though, because my time out was when I met the love of my life. Married her, too. Gladys is my everything, and when I decided to re-enlist after Pearl Harbor, she supported me. I couldn't have survived that war without her.

This time around, I served six years, got out, and realized right away that this was what I wanted to do with my life. About a month later, I joined the newly minted US Air Force. I fought in World War Two and then the following Korean War and my wife stood by me always. She even became active in the Veterans of Foreign Wars with me, all through the 50s and 60s and even after I retired. Then, nothing made us prouder, the day our son, Thaddeus, followed in my footsteps and joined the Air Force. My name is William, William Soucie.

(First Lieutenant Soucie exits and the Students/Historians continue their conversation.)

HISTORIANS/STUDENTS: Improvisational dialogue followed by:

Student 1: The idea of family is definitely important.

Student 2: It raises the stakes!

Student 1: It takes a lot of bravery to leave your home behind and serve.

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Student 2: Courage.

(Hospital Corpsman William Charette enters and the Students/Historians freeze/tableau.)

WILLIAM CHARETTE: Appears between the opening in the two curtains or screens. Delivers the monologue and then, exits behind the screen.

By the age of five, my parents were deceased. But graciously, my uncle took me in like a good man and guided me. He raised me in the rural area of Ludington, on a farm full of dairy cows, but then I grew up and started working summer jobs on the ferry. My experiences with ships sailing along the Great Lakes - so beautiful, so vast - led me to become a sailor by enlisting in the Navy. So, I volunteered my service, while others were drafted; I trained at the Naval Station Great Lakes, becoming a hospital corpsman. Since the Navy supplies the Marines with medics I served in a Marine unit. I was part of the Fleet Marine Force, and once I finished Field Medical Training, as well an infantry crash course, I was sent to Camp Pendleton, part of a rapid expansion that took place in our country's military forces, between '50 and '53 due to the Korean War and the larger Cold War.

I hadn't been two months into Korea, and my unit was under fire. God, what did I get myself into? Snapping back into what I was destined to do, I encountered many injuries, because I willingly exposed myself to the enemy's fire, with no desire... to quit, I continued to medically aid my fellow wounded comrades, believing they were going to get through it. At one point I used my own body to protect a Marine from an enemy grenade, and then forgetting about my own safety, I passed off my vest to another wounded man, exposing myself to gunfire so that he could be evacuated to seek better aid. Unfortunately, my medical equipment was destroyed from the blast, but I continued rendering aid to many units by ripping up my uniform to use as dressings because we were going to survive... our bodies may have been weak, but our minds were steadfast. I was told I saved lives and inspired a victory, that I was making history. I don't know; I was doing my job. The recommended Navy Cross award was upgraded to the Medal of Honor, presented by President Eisenhower in 1954. That was not the end of my service, I re-entered the Navy after a brief time as a civilian and had the honor of having the last say on selecting which World War II remains got to be placed in the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery. I even became one of the first hospital corpsman to serve on a nuclear submarine after repositioning myself to Submarine and Hospital Service, all of which my five-year-old self could never dream.

I held my last position at a recruit dispensary; I retired on April 1, 1977, deciding to make Orlando, Florida, the place in which I'd continue to reside. For thirty-five years, I remained active and very much involved in national associations, but on March 18, 2012, I passed away after suffering from heart surgery complications. I had a son pass before me and was survived by a son after me, accompanied by my wife Louise and our three daughters. Four years later, Louise joined me in Bushnell National Cemetery. My extended family, a few organizations and hospitals are named after me, and there are the sailors who received their entry level training under me, all of who will continue my legacy.

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My name is William Charette, and this is my story.

(Hospital Corpsman Charette exits and the Students/Historians continue their conversation.)

HISTORIANS/STUDENTS: Improvisational dialogue followed by:

Student 1: The idea of legacy....

Student 2: It certainly is grand...

Student 1: Some people served because it's what their family before them did.

Student 2: Talk about a legacy.

(Communications Yeoman Steven Cousens enters and the Students/Historians freeze/tableau.)

STEVEN COUSENS: Appears between the opening in the two curtains or screens. Delivers the monologue and then, exits behind the screen.

It was 1966 when I, Steven Cousens, a seventeen-year-old man, enlisted in the US Navy during the Vietnam war. I was not drafted, I volunteered. I was trained in communications: I worked as hard as I could to make sure that my fellow soldiers, sailors, and marines got the information they needed to survive. I did the best I could to make sure that I could save as many lives as possible. When 1969 came around, I was released from my service back into an uninviting country.

Part of the reason I decided to enlist was because my father before me had done so. I wanted to be like him, a hero, but when I returned, I came back to a country that didn't want me. When my father and his fellow fighters came home, they were seen as warriors who were willing to sacrifice everything for their country. When we came home, some anti-war protesters could only see us as murderers, and they made sure that we knew that. I understood why they were against the war, but we were just doing what we thought was best for our country. I was doing it for the guys next to me, fighting with me and dying beside me. The least that you could do is not hate us.

I spent the rest of my days in California where I would begin my eternal rest in 1997. It's funny to me, I ended up in the same place as the heroes of World War II. In the end, we were exactly the same. Men and women who sacrificed for their country because that was the best they could do. In the end, we all ended up in the same place. All of us, willing to do anything for our home. That's what really mattered.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

National Cemetery
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Department
of History

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My name is Steven Cousens, and this is my story.

(Communications Yeoman Cousens exits and the Students/Historians continue their conversations.)

HISTORIANS/STUDENTS: Improvisational dialogue followed by:

Student 1: The stories people hold can be incredible.

Student 2: Yeah, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, cousins, grandparents, real people, making a difference and changing history.

Student 1: Creating a legacy.

(All of the Veterans appear on stage, but this time, the students/historians see them.)

All VETERANS: We are your history, your veterans, and you are our legacy.

END OF SCENE.