

Teacher's Guide for

A Home for Our Heroes: The History of the Dayton Veterans Administration

- Purpose:** 1) Expose students to history about their hometown.
2) Honor contributions of local veterans.
3) Align text with 8th grade Course of Study.

Why do we celebrate Veterans Day?

In the United States, **Veterans Day** annually falls on November 11. This **day** is the anniversary of the signing of the armistice, which ended the World War I fighting between the Allied nations and Germany in 1918. **Veterans** are thanked for their military services to the United States on **Veterans Day**.

Day 1 Process:

1. Reference timeline beginning in 1775. Show 1860 (Lincoln's election) and 1861 (Beginning of Civil War). Students may plot these events before reading page 2.
2. Read pages 2-3, focus on two vocabulary words (students may choose or teacher may choose). Summarize the passage.
3. Read page 4 and answer the following:
Why did President Lincoln approve the NADVS bill in 1865? Read the quote on page 4 and explain the idea behind taking care of disabled veterans.

Day 2 Process:

1. Refer to timeline and plot April 1867, when they began building the Central branch.
2. Read page 5 and answer: Why was Dayton chosen as the site for the Central Branch?
3. Use page 6 to illustrate Dayton through the eyes of the Cincinnati Commercial and General William Tecumseh Sherman.
4. Read page 7 and explain why a Cincinnati newspaper described the plan for the Central branch as more like "a grand square in Paris than a simple American institution."

Day 3 Process:

1. Refer to timeline and plot, in September 1867, when the first wave of 450 disabled veterans arrived in Dayton, Ohio.
2. Read page 8 and answer: Why did Board Secretary Lewis Gunckel say they could not wait for plans from an architect?
3. Read page 9 and answer: Who was "Little Mother of the Soldiers," and why was she important in the VA's history? (Note that "VA" is a new term and is undefined. Explain that "VA" stands for Veteran's [Health] Administration.)

4. Read page 10 and answer: Why was unusual, in the 1870's, that some of the residents at the NADVS were black men? Based on social practices of that time period, why did the black veterans have separate barracks?

Day 4 Process:

1. Read pages 11-13 and write a summary to explain the central idea of these pages.
2. Read page 14 and explain how the Dayton Soldier's Home was organized.
3. Read page 15. Describe three opportunities for employment at The Soldier's Home.

Day 5 Process:

1. Read page 16 and explain how graves for unknown soldiers were marked in the cemetery. Give evidence that veteran burials were big events. How are veterans honored today?
2. Read page 17 (show image of Soldier's Monument-may find a clearer image via Google image search) and explain what the Soldier's Monument represents.
3. Read page 18. Plot the building of Memorial Hall on the timeline in 1878. Explain why someone would have described the VA as "more beautiful than Central Park in New York City."
4. Read page 19. Explain why the VA was important to Dayton, Ohio.

Activity

As a class, brainstorm the risks and benefits of being a soldier today. Let the class know that they are going to take a closer look at some of the issues that veterans face today.