

## APPENDIX J

### CURRICULUM MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

## **Congressional Medal of Honor Curriculum Components**

### **The Medal's History**

On December 9, 1861 Iowa Senator James W. Grimes introduced S. No. 82 in the United States Senate, a bill designed to "promote the efficiency of the Navy" by authorizing the production and distribution of "medals of honor." On December 21st the bill was passed, authorizing 200 such medals be produced "which shall be bestowed upon such petty officers, seamen, landsmen and marines as shall distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action and other seamanlike qualities during the present war (Civil War)." President Lincoln signed the bill and the (Navy) Medal of Honor was born.

Two months later on February 17, 1862 Massachusetts Senator Henry Wilson introduced a similar bill, this one to authorize "the President to distribute medals to privates in the Army of the United States who shall distinguish themselves in battle." Over the following months wording changed slightly as the bill made its way through Congress. When President Abraham Lincoln signed S.J.R. No. 82 on July 12, 1862, the Army Medal of Honor was born. It read in part, "*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby, authorized to cause two thousand "medals of honor" to be prepared with suitable emblematic devices, and to direct that the same be presented, in the name of the Congress, to such non-commissioned officers and privates as shall most distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action, and other soldier-like qualities, during the present insurrection (Civil War).*"

### **THE MEDAL OF HONOR - Fact Sheet**

The Medal of Honor is the highest award for valor in action against an enemy force which can be bestowed upon an individual serving in the Armed Services of the United States. Generally presented to its recipient by the President of the United States of America in the name of Congress, it is often called the Congressional Medal of Honor. It was created by Congress in 1861 and the medal is bestowed by the President of the United States.

To be recommended for a Medal of Honor a soldier must perform an act of personal bravery or self-sacrifice; the act must involve risk of life; and the action must represent gallantry above the call of duty and have at least two eyewitnesses.

Since the Civil War, more than 39 million men and women have answered the call to serve. Of those, 3,463 served with such uncommon valor that they were presented the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military award.

The first award of the Medal of Honor was made March 25, 1863, to Private Jacob Parrott, and five others. Since then there have been:

- 3,463 Medals of Honor awarded
- For 3,458 separate acts of heroism
- Performed by 3,444 individuals (including 9 "Unknowns")

- Today, there are 109 living Recipients of the Medal of Honor.
- 44% of the living Recipients earned their Medals more than 50 years ago while serving in WWII (34) or Korea (14)
- There are 61 living recipients who performed actions in Vietnam

The President of the United States normally renders a salute to a Medal of Honor recipient when he is wearing the medal.

The Medal of Honor (often referred to as the Congressional Medal of Honor) is the only medal awarded to members of the armed forces that is worn around the neck.

More than 65% of the medals bestowed are done so posthumously.

The only woman to receive the medal, Mary Walker, was a contract surgeon in the Civil War who was held as a prisoner of war for several months.

The only president to be awarded the Medal of Honor was President Theodore Roosevelt for leading his Rough Rider cavalry unit in a charge up San Juan Hill in the Spanish-American War.

### **Frequently Asked Questions on the Medal of Honor**

1. Has a woman ever been awarded the Medal of Honor?  
*Yes, Mary Walker was the only woman awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor at Bull Run on July 21, 1861.*
2. Who was the only Coast Guard Congressional Medal of Honor recipient?  
*Douglas Munro was the only Coast Guard recipient. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions at Point Cruz, Guadalcanal, on September 27, 1942.*
3. How many Air Force Congressional Medal of Honor recipients are there?  
*Since the formation of a separate Air Force in 1947 there have been seventeen recipients. Prior to 1963 members of the Army Air Corps and the Air Force were awarded the Army Medal. In 1963 the Air Force acquired its own MOH design.*
4. How many double recipients are there?  
*There are nineteen double recipients.*
5. Is it required to be a U.S. citizen in order to be awarded the Medal of Honor?  
*It is not required to be a U.S. citizen, but you must be in the U.S. military in order to qualify for the Medal of Honor.*
6. Who was the first recipient?  
*The earliest actions for which the Medal was awarded took place before the Civil War had even begun, February 13-14, 1861 in what is now Arizona. Bernard J.D. Irwin was an Assistant Surgeon in the Army when he voluntarily led a command of troops to relieve a surrounded detachment of the 7th Infantry. Irwin's Medal was not awarded until January 24, 1894, over 30 years after he had performed his deed. But on March 25, 1863 Pvt. Jacob Parrott was the first of a group of six men awarded the Medal for their actions*

in "The Great Locomotive Chase" in April 1862. They were the first ever to wear the Medal of Honor.

7. Who was the first African-American recipient?  
*William Carney was the first African-American recipient. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on July 18, 1863 at Fort Wagner, SC.*
8. Is the Medal of Honor only awarded to enlisted personnel?  
*Originally the Medal of Honor was only presented to the enlisted, but on March 3, 1863 this was extended to officers as well.*
9. Is it illegal to sell the Medal of Honor?  
*It is illegal to sell, wear, or manufacture any decorations or medals authorized by Congress for the armed forces of the United States. In General - Whoever knowingly wears, manufactures, or sells any decoration or medal authorized by Congress for the armed forces of the United States, or any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of such forces, or the ribbon, button, or rosette of any such badge, decoration or medal, or any colorable imitation thereof, except when authorized under regulations made pursuant to law, shall be fined under this title (18 United State Code) or imprisoned not more than six months or both.*
10. What are the guidelines for which the medal could be awarded?  
*On July 25, 1963 Congress established a set of guidelines under which the Medal of Honor could be awarded (1) while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; (2) while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or, (3) while serving with friendly forces engaged in armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.*
11. What was the last action that was recognized with the Medal of Honor?  
*The last action recognized with the Medal of Honor was on June 27-28, 2005. Lt. Michael P. Murphy led a mission to locate an anti-coalition militia leader in Afghanistan. He was posthumously given the Medal of Honor on October 22nd, 2007.*
12. How many minority recipients of the MOH have been awarded (African-American, Hispanic-American, Asian-American and Native-American)?  
*There have been 87 African-American MOH Recipients. Information on these Recipients can be found at [http://www.homeofheroes.com/e-books/mohE\\_black/index.html](http://www.homeofheroes.com/e-books/mohE_black/index.html). There have been 41 Hispanic-American MOH Recipients. Information on these Recipients can be found at [http://www.homeofheroes.com/e-books/mohE\\_hispanic/index.html](http://www.homeofheroes.com/e-books/mohE_hispanic/index.html). There have been 31 Asian-American MOH Recipients. Information on these Recipients can be found at [http://www.homeofheroes.com/e-books/mohE\\_asian/index.html](http://www.homeofheroes.com/e-books/mohE_asian/index.html). There have been 22 Native-American MOH Recipients. Information on these Recipients can be found at [http://www.homeofheroes.com/e-books/mohE\\_indian/index.html](http://www.homeofheroes.com/e-books/mohE_indian/index.html)*

## Medal of Honor Symbolism



### **THE ORIGINAL NAVY MEDAL OF HONOR**

The Navy's Medal of Honor was the first approved and the first designed. The initial work was done by the Philadelphia Mint at the request of Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles. The Mint submitted several designs for consideration, and the one prepared by the Philadelphia firm of William Wilson & Sons was the design selected.

The selected Medal of Honor design consisted of an INVERTED, 5-pointed STAR. On each of the five points was a cluster of LAUREL leaves to represent victory, mixed with a cluster of OAK to represent strength. Surrounding the encircled insignia were 34 stars, equal to the number of stars in the U.S. Flag at the time in 1862....one star for each state of the Union including the 11 Confederate states. The stars are also symbolic of the "heavens and the divine goal which man has aspired to since time immemorial" according to Charles Thompson, Secretary of the Continental Congress back in 1777.

Inside the circle of 34 stars were engraved two images. To the right is the image of Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom and war. On her helmet is perched an owl, representing WISDOM. In keeping with the Roman tradition, her left hand holds a bundle of rods and an ax blade, symbolic of authority. The shield in her right hand is the shield of the Union of our states (similar to the shield on our seal and other important emblems.)



Recoiling from Minerva is a man clutching snakes in his hands. He represented DISCORD and the insignia came to be known as "Minerva Repulsing Discord." Taken in the context of the Civil War soldiers and sailors struggling to overcome the discord of the states and preserve the Union, the design was as fitting as it was symbolic.

The ribbon that held the medal was originally a blue bar on top and 13 red and white stripes running vertically. The 13 represents the original 13 colonies. The color white represents purity and innocence, red represents hardiness, valor and blood, blue signifies vigilance, perseverance and justice. The stripes also represent the rays of the sun.



Since this time much of the symbolism in the Medal of Honor has not changed much. The Army MOH was created soon after the original Navy MOH in 1862. It included an Eagle, symbolizing the United States of America, was perched on a cannon and saber grasped in its talons.



In 1904 the Gillespie version of the MOH included a simple portrait of a helmeted Goddess of War to replace the "Minerva repelling discord" scene. The red, white and blue ribbon was replaced with a light blue and 13 white stars. The 13 is once again the original 13 colonies.



In 1919 the Tiffany Cross version of the MOH had a Maltese Cross instead of an inverted star. The Maltese Cross' eight points symbolize the 8 virtues of a knight. A cross itself also represents the four cardinal directions and the sun. This design was discontinued in 1942 due to its unpopularity.



In 1965 the Air Force MOH was created and it replaced the Minerva portrait with the head of the Statue of Liberty. Lady liberty has a pointed crown instead of a helmet. And she does stand for liberty although she is derived from the imagery of Semiramis, wife of Nimrod, and Queen of Babylon. Semiramis was famed for her beauty, strength, and wisdom and was said to have built the famous Hanging Gardens of Babylon. She purportedly reigned for 42 years after taking control from Nimrod. She is a mythical figure who might be somewhat based upon a historical figure.

## **The Congressional Medal of Honor Society's History**

The Congressional Medal Of Honor Society of the United States of America is perhaps the "most exclusive organization" in our country...it is certainly one of the most unique. Its small membership includes men of all races, social classes and economic levels. They range in stature from 5'2" to 6'5", in age from 53 to 94, and they live in all areas of our Country. Among them are scholars and ordinary men, successful entrepreneurs and struggling laborers, ministers and misfits, very rich to very poor. No amount of money, power or influence can buy one's rite of passage to this exclusive circle, and unlike almost any other organization, this group's members hope that there will be NO MORE INDUCTEES. Beyond this attitude towards recruitment, about all they have in common is a passionate love for the United States of America and the distinct honor of wearing our Nation's highest award for military valor, The Medal of Honor.

### **Why a Medal of Honor Society?**

Just as the Medal of Honor itself has grown and developed since 1862, so to has the society that represents the men who wear it. It is doubtful that in 1862 anyone thought that the newly created award would achieve the prominence that it did. By the end of the Civil War only 680 of the total 1520 Medals of Honor ultimately awarded for the conflict, had actually been presented. In the 35 years following the Civil War another 105 were awarded for Civil War actions as well as almost 500 for other actions including the Indian Campaigns and the Korean action of 1871. In the last decade of the century aging Civil War veterans began to seek recognition of their prior service and heroism in requesting awards of the Medal. (From 1890-1900 a total of 683 were awarded....more than were

awarded during the war itself.) The Grand Army of the Republic had also designed and begun presenting awards of its own (some of which looked very similar in design) to military veterans, and confusion arose as to WHO was truly a Medal of Honor recipient. Added to that were the imposters...sorry individuals who passed themselves off as war heroes to feed their own egos. Thus it was that on April 23, 1890 the MEDAL OF HONOR LEGION was formed by the true recipients themselves in order to protect the integrity of the Medal. A large purpose of this early forerunner of today's Medal of Honor Society was legislative...lobbying for necessary changes to protect the integrity of the Medal of Honor.

The efforts of the Medal of Honor Legion led to many changes including the review of 1917 and establishment of the Pyramid of Honor providing awards other than the Medal of Honor distinguished actions that did not merit the Medal of Honor. Accordingly, on April 27, 1916 the United States Congress directed that an *HONOR ROLL* be established listing the names of any veteran over age 65 who had served in any war and received the Medal of Honor. This was to be maintained by the War Department for the Army and by the Navy Department for sailors and Marines, primarily for the express purpose of validating war veterans' applications for the special \$10 per month pension paid to Medal of Honor recipients over age 65. (39 Stat. 53)

By 1940 the number of living Medal of Honor recipients had dropped to 279, most of them older veterans. The last Civil War recipient had died just two years earlier. World War II focused new attention upon Medal of Honor heroes, many of them coming home to active roles as "celebrities" promoting war bond drives. The impact of World War II on the Medal of Honor was perhaps as dramatic as the changes of 1917:

1. Propelling the Medal to increased prominence and recognition in American Society,
2. Providing the Nation with a group of new young war heroes. Though more than half the men who received Medals of Honor during World War II died in their moment of valor, 190 living heroes were added to the Medal of Honor Roll.

This new prestige attached to the Medal along with the fresh group of war heroes, many of whom were the subject of books and movies, led to the creation in 1946 of the MEDAL OF HONOR SOCIETY. Less political than its predecessor, the organization became more concerned with perpetuating the ideals embodied in the Medal...promoting patriotism and fostering a love of Country in the aftermath of World War II.

On August 5, 1958 President Dwight Eisenhower signed legislation sent to him by Congress chartering the CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR SOCIETY. The purposes of the organization were clearly spelled out in its charter (which can be found in Title 36 U.S.C., Chapter 33). They included:

- Creation of a bond of brotherhood and comradeship among all living recipients of the Medal of Honor.
- Maintaining the memory and respect for those who had died receiving the Medal of Honor, as well as those living recipients who had since died.

- Protection and preservation of the dignity and honor of the Medal of Honor at all times and on all occasions.
- Protecting the name of the Medal of Honor as well as individual Medal of Honor recipients from exploitation.
- Providing assistance and aid to needy Medal of Honor recipients, their spouses or widows, and their children.
- Promoting patriotism and allegiance to the Government and Constitution of the United States.
- To serve the United States in peace or war.
- To promote and perpetuate the principles upon which our nation is founded.
- To foster patriotism and inspire and stimulate our youth to become worthy citizens of our country.

The Korean War (1950-53) had done little to increase the number of living Medal recipients, of 131 Medal of Honor actions only 37 men survived to join the exclusive CMOH Society. Meanwhile (in 1953) the last hero of the Indian Campaigns died followed by many of the other older heroes of wars past. By the time Roger Donlon earned the first Medal of Honor of the Vietnam War in 1964 the numbers in the Society had dropped to less than 270 living heroes. The Vietnam War pushed the numbers back over the 300 mark and brought with it some new challenges for the Society.

Imagine first of all what it must be like to take a boy fresh out of high school, put him in uniform and send him off to war to witness unspeakable violence and death in one moment, then clean him up and make him the honored guest at the White House where the President himself presents him our Nation's highest honor. Compound the "culture shock" by returning that young hero to a society that really didn't appreciate his actions and even opposed the war he had served in, and you've got the makings for some serious problems. Thus the Vietnam War presented the older members of the Society with a new mission...mentoring, counseling and becoming "big brothers" to a new group of heroes. It was a needed service for the young heroes and generated a further bond among the men of this select group. As they became more and more personally involved in the lives of each other they began to meet each year for special reunions. It was during these reunions they began to also recognize their own heroes, presenting their newly created (1968) National Patriots Award to the likes of Bob Hope, Jimmy Stewart, and others.

Today the number of living Medal of Honor recipients is at its lowest point in history... only 105 living recipients as of March 16, 2008. Thus has passed to the Medal of Honor Society a new challenge, struggling to maintain a heritage that is quickly vanishing. Members of the Society now meet for an ANNUAL reunion and attempt as well to have smaller get-togethers from time to time. While each of these men is quick to point out that, since the Medal can only be received for WAR-TIME heroism, they hope that there will be no new members of the Society; we as Americans are rapidly losing some of our greatest heroes and role models. Thanks to the Medal of Honor Society however, their memory will never be lost to future generations.

Source: Congressional Medal of Honor Society website, [www.cmohs.org/](http://www.cmohs.org/)