



Photograph of John Lewis Barkley in uniform, with his Medal of Honor pinned onto the left side of his uniform. He is also wearing black arm band on his left arm.

Online Collections Database, 2010.102.5, www.theworldwar.org/research/database. National WWI Museum and Memorial. Online.

Medal of Honor: Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

Recommended Grade Levels: 9-12

Course/Content Area(s): U.S. History

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LESSON OVERVIEW:	In this lesson, students will read excerpts from an American soldier’s memoir in which he describes the combat, valor, and hardships faced while fighting on the Western Front. This soldier, John Lewis Barkley, was a U.S. Army Medal of Honor recipient of World War I for his valiant action in fighting to hold off two German attacks with a captured machine gun. After reading, students will consider what else a good historian should explore to gain a full picture of what it meant to be an American soldier.
OBJECTIVES:	<i>Students will:</i>
	- gain a better understanding of what the fighting in World War I was like for American soldiers - read excerpts from <i>No Hard Feelings!</i>, a memoir written by a WWI veteran - examine objects from WWI
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT:	National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) C3 Framework Standards: D2.His.6.9-12. Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced. English Language Arts CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH 9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of a text.
TIME NEEDED:	1 60-minute class
INTERDISCIPLINARY:	World History, ELA
PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:	General knowledge WWI will help with understanding
MATERIALS NEEDED:	- Photo of John Lewis Barkley Excerpts, Artifacts, and Questions Document (digital or paper printed for one excerpt for each group)

LESSON

INTRODUCTION/HOOK:

1. Introduce students to John Lewis Barkley with a brief piece of background story and a photo:
 - a. Born in Blairstown, Mo. in 1895, John grew up on a farm and was one of the millions of men inducted into the Army when the U.S. declared war on Germany in 1917. He went to France with the 4th Infantry Regiment of the Third Division in 1918, and participated as a private first class in the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the largest American military operation of the war.
 - b. On Oct. 7, in fighting near Cunel, France, PFC Barkley, on his own initiative, repaired a captured German machine gun, mounted it on a disabled French tank, and manned it through repeated German artillery barrages and counterattacks, enabling his regiment to gain and hold its objective. For his actions that day he was awarded the Medal of Honor.
 - c. After the war, John returned to Missouri, joining the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, and was active in many veterans' observances.
 - d. Image of Barkley can be found here:
<https://collections.theworldwar.org/argus/final/Portal/Default.aspx?component=AAAS&record=ad51d4ed-343b-4e81-a126-9dfbd1f55f48>
2. Let students know they are going to work together to build an understanding of what life was like for a soldier on the Western Front, using John Lewis Barkley's memoirs and artifacts from the Great War to explore those experiences.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Divide students into seven groups.
2. Provide each group with their excerpt and corresponding object and questions.
3. Give students time to read and answer their assigned questions with their group.
4. Bring students back together as a class and have each group describe what they learned about soldiers' experiences during the Great War based on what they read and saw.

POST-ASSESSMENT:

Host a discussion with students over the following questions:

- Since these memoirs were published in 1930 and written by Barkley, what are some good historical questions we could ask to be good historians? Example questions include:
 - What are some other resources we could look for to read about Barkley's actions to understand what he experienced better
 - How do artifacts from the way help us to confirm descriptions of his stories as accurate?
 - When did Barkley actually write his memoirs and do you think the time between altered his recollection in any way? Why or why not?
- Why is a single memoir not enough to tell the entire story of American soldiers' experiences during WWI?

MODIFICATIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS/EXTENTIONS

- Consider which excerpt to give to each group. Intensity of reading and of content varies.
- Extension:
- Task students to explore more about Barkley's life after the war and have them make a timeline of his life.
 - Additional resources from and about Barkley's life can be found here:
 - Article: [Portrait of John Lewis Barkley](#)
 - Online Collections Database: [John Lewis Barkley Collection](#)
 - Entire text of [No Hard Feelings](#)

Bibliography:

Barkley, J. Lewis. (1930). *No hard feelings!* New York: Cosmopolitan book corporation.