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Topic: **Black Troops in the Civil War**

Abstract:

In this lesson, students, working individually, with partners or small groups, will use various websites to investigate the role of Black soldiers and Black regiments in the American Civil War. The student activities are independent of one another and do not need to be completed in order or even by all students. Each activity culminates in a student created product.

Students will read accounts of the battles fought in by Black regiments, especially the Battle of Cripem's Farm and the Battle of Fort Wagner, through the documents on the Legion of Valor website and other internet sites. It is to be noted that Medals of Honor were presented to Black soldiers in both of these battles.

Grade Level: 8

Time to Complete: 5 to 10 hours

Standard(s) Covered:

8.10 Students analyze the multiple causes, key events, and complex consequences of the Civil War.

5. Study the views and lives of leaders and soldiers on both sides of the war, including those of black soldiers and regiments.

Major Objective(s):

The major objective of this lesson is to help students to understand that blacks played a major role in the Civil War. Black regiments fought bravely and suffered great losses even though they did not receive the same pay and respect. Without the Black regiments, the outcome of the war could have been different. Also, students also need to be made aware of the Black soldiers that received the Medal of Honor for bravery.

Major Points To Teach:

- Approximately 180,000 African Americans comprising 163 units served in the Union Army during the Civil War, and many more African Americans served in the Union Navy.
- Both free Africans Americans and runaway slaves joined the fight.
- Although black soldiers proved themselves as reputable soldiers, discrimination in pay and other areas remained widespread.
- African American soldiers participated in every major campaign of 1864-1865 except Sherman's invasion of Georgia.
- African Americans were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Civil War.
- African American soldiers comprised 10% of the entire Union Army. Losses among African Americans were high, and from all reported casualties, approximately one-third of all African Americans enrolled in the military lost their lives during the Civil War

Suggested Strategies:

- Students will be exposed through the three modalities through classroom discussion of the topic, through the use of visuals by using the television or video projector and the researching of assigned internet sites and note taking on their laptops.
- Students will be able to participate throughout the lesson through discussion as a class, individually and in their groups. Since this is a web based activity, the lesson will also be hands on with the students actively participating using their textbooks and the internet.
- Throughout the lesson, questioning will occur and the students will be given the opportunity to express themselves allowing the teacher to monitor their grasp of the material presented.

Practices:

Student Activity 1:

Design and create a pamphlet advertising for recruitment of African Americans for the Union Army.

- Begin by folding a piece of paper into thirds, or you may use a computer drawing program and scanned pictures.
- Create or find pictures of Black soldiers and regiments.
- Write descriptions for the pictures (be sure to give details) and incorporate quotes from Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln encouraging troops to enlist.
- Design an eye-catching front cover.

Student Activity 2:

Create a historical newspaper front page, from the time period, which details the awarding of the Medal of Honor to the Black soldiers that received it.

- Using the descriptions provided by the documents on the Legion of Valor site and other sources, write a newspaper story detailing the awarding of the Medal of Honor to black soldiers during the Civil War.
- Using a sheet of paper mock up the front page of a Civil War era newspaper, including the Banner: name of paper, date, city published; Headline: pertains to the battles and soldiers receiving the Medal of Honor.
- Try to make the newspaper as realistic looking as possible.

Student Activity 3:

Write a poem that details the bravery of the Black soldiers that served during the Civil War.

- Using the poem style assigned to you by your teacher, write a two-stanza poem on the Black soldiers and regiments of the Civil War. Pay attention to the rhyming pattern and rhythm of each line.
- Each stanza should be at least nine lines long.
- It should tell something about the Black soldiers that won the Medal of Honor.
- When you have edited and rewritten it, turn it in to your teacher in the form that he or she has requested.

RESOURCES:

Legion of Valor Archives Materials:

The names listed below are the Black Civil War veterans that received the Medal of Honor and documents relating to receiving this honor as well as military records can be found at the links listed in the Legion of Valor Archives.

- **ANDERSON, BRUCE** Rank and organization: Private, Company K, 142d New York Infantry. Place and date: At Fort Fisher, N.C., 15 January 1865. Entered service at: Ephratah, N.Y. Born: Mexico, Oswego County, N.Y., 9 June 1845. Date of issue: 28 December 1914. Citation: Voluntarily advanced with the head of the column and cut down the palisading.
<http://lovarchive.fcoe.net/weblink/index.asp?DocumentID=7904&FolderID=3838&SearchHandle=0&DocViewType=ShowImage&LeftPaneType=Hidden&dbid=0&page=1>
- **BARNES, WILLIAM** Rank and organization: Private, Company C, 38th U.S. Colored Troops. Place and date: At Chapins Farm, Va., 29 September 1864. Entered service at:-----. Birth: St. Marys County, Md. Date of issue 6 April 1865. Citation: Among the first to enter the enemy's works; although wounded.
<http://lovarchive.fcoe.net/weblink/index.asp?DocumentID=7801&FolderID=3838&SearchHandle=0&DocViewType=ShowImage&LeftPaneType=Hidden&dbid=0&page=1>
- **FLEETWOOD, CHRISTIAN A.** Rank and organization: Sergeant Major, 4th U.S. Colored Troops, Place and date: At Chapins Farm, Va., 29 September 1864. Entered service at: -----. Birth: Baltimore, Md. Date of issue: 6 April 1865. Citation: Seized the colors, after 2 color bearers had been shot down, and bore them nobly through the fight.
<http://lovarchive.fcoe.net/weblink/index.asp?DocumentID=7998&FolderID=3838&SearchHandle=0&DocViewType=ShowImage&LeftPaneType=Hidden&dbid=0&page=1>
- **HAWKINS, THOMAS R.** Rank and organization: Sergeant Major, 6th U.S. Colored Troops. Place and date: At Chapins Farm, Va., 29 September 1864. Entered service at: Philadelphia, Pa. Birth: Cincinnati, Ohio. Date of issue: 8 February 1870. Citation: Rescue of regimental colors.
<http://lovarchive.fcoe.net/weblink/index.asp?DocumentID=8782&FolderID=3838&SearchHandle=0&DocViewType=ShowImage&LeftPaneType=Hidden&dbid=0&page=1>
- **HILTON, ALFRED B.** Rank and organization: Sergeant, Company H, 4th U.S. Colored Troops. Place and date. At Chapins Farm, Va., 29 September 1864. Entered service at:-----. Birth: Harford County, Md. Date of issue: 6 April 1865. Citation: When the regimental color bearer fell, this soldier seized the color and carried it forward, together with the national standard, until disabled at the enemy's inner line.
<http://lovarchive.fcoe.net/weblink/index.asp?DocumentID=8680&FolderID=3838&SearchHandle=0&DocViewType=ShowImage&LeftPaneType=Hidden&dbid=0&page=1>
- **KELLY, ALEXANDER** Rank and organization: First Sergeant, Company F, 6th U.S. Colored Troops. Place and date: At Chapins Farm, Va., 29 September 1864. Entered service at: -----. Birth: Pennsylvania. Date of issue: 6 April 1865. Citation: Gallantly seized the colors, which had fallen near the enemy's lines of abatis, raised them and rallied the men at a time of confusion and in a place of the greatest danger.
<http://lovarchive.fcoe.net/weblink/index.asp?DocumentID=8558&FolderID=3838&SearchHandle=0&DocViewType=ShowImage&LeftPaneType=Hidden&dbid=0&page=1>
- **LAWSON, JOHN** Rank and organization: Landsman, U.S. Navy. Born: 1837, Pennsylvania. Accredited to: Pennsylvania. G.O. No.: 45, 31 December 1864. Citation: On board the flagship U.S.S. Hartford during successful attacks against Fort Morgan, rebel gunboats and the ram Tennessee in Mobile Bay on 5 August 1864. Wounded in the leg and thrown violently against the side of the ship when an enemy shell killed or wounded the 6-man crew as the shell whipped on the berth deck, Lawson, upon regaining his composure, promptly returned to his station and, although urged to go below for treatment, steadfastly continued his duties throughout the remainder of the action.
<http://lovarchive.fcoe.net/weblink/index.asp?DocumentID=8606&FolderID=3838&SearchHandle=0&DocViewType=ShowImage&LeftPaneType=Hidden&dbid=0&page=1>

- **PINN, ROBERT** Rank and organization: First Sergeant, Company I, 5th U.S. Colored Troops. Place and date: At Chapins Farm, Va., 29 September 1864. Entered service at: Massillon, Ohio. Born: 1 March 1843, Stark County, Ohio. Date of issue: 6 April 1865. Citation: Took command of his company after all the officers had been killed or wounded and gallantly led it in battle.
<http://lovarchive.fcoe.net/weblink/index.asp?DocumentID=8269&FolderID=3838&SearchHandle=0&DocViewType=ShowImage&LeftPaneType=Hidden&dbid=0&page=1>
- **RATLIFF, EDWARD** Rank and organization: First Sergeant, Company C, 38th U.S. Colored Troops. Place and date: At Chapins Farm, Va., 29 September 1864. Entered service at: -----. Birth: James County, Va. Date of issue: 6 April 1865. Citation. Commanded and gallantly led his company after the commanding officer had been killed; was the first enlisted man to enter the enemy's works.
<http://lovarchive.fcoe.net/weblink/index.asp?DocumentID=8817&FolderID=3838&SearchHandle=0&DocViewType=ShowImage&LeftPaneType=Hidden&dbid=0&page=1>

Internet Links:

- **Thirty-fifth United States Colored Troops: (First North Carolina Colored Volunteers)**
This site contains information on the 35th U.S. Colored Troops. Included are links for Letters and Reports from Members of the 35th United States Colored Troops.
http://extlab1.entnem.ufl.edu/olustee/35th_USCI.html
- **Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Infantry**
This site contains invaluable information on the Massachusetts fifty-fourth. Included are links to photographs, letters and other documents relating to the 54th.
http://extlab1.entnem.ufl.edu/olustee/54th_MS_inf.html
- **The Battle of New Market Heights/Chapin's Farm.**
During the Civil War, 16 black American soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor. Fourteen of these soldiers, all enlisted, received their medals for uncommon valor at the Battle of New Market Heights near Richmond, Va. They constituted the largest number of black soldiers so honored in a single day's battle in American history. This site contains a summary of the battle.
<http://www.army.mil/soldiers/feb96/p50.html>
- **USCT Medal of Honor Recipients**
Richmond National Battlefield Park website. One of the highlights of Civil War History: US Colored Troops who received the Medal of Honor at New Market Heights is presented. A very complete site that includes perspectives on the battle, profiles of the Medal of Honor recipients, maps and more.
<http://www.nps.gov/rich/default.htm>

Materials Required for Lesson:

This lesson is written for use in a classroom with at least one computer with internet access. It would work equally well in a computer lab situation.

Assessment:

Student projects will be assessed as follows:

- Followed all instructions.
- The project is neat, easy to read and creative.
- The project is historically accurate.
- The main idea is clearly stated.
- Ideas are clarified and supported with evidence and examples.

