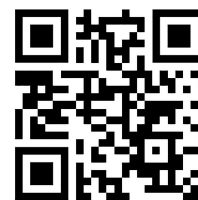




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SCAN ME TO VIEW LESSON

HVL LESSON TITLE:

IN THEIR SHOES

DEVELOPED BY: ERIN COGGINS

IN THEIR SHOES GUIDING QUESTION:

What were members of
the Allied Forces feeling
the morning of D-Day?

OVERVIEW

Using an interview of World War II veteran Harold McMurran and primary sources, students will reflect upon the feelings members of the Allied Forces experienced on the morning of June 6, 1944.



Subject(s):
History
English



WWII Veteran(s):
Harold McMurran



Duration:
45 min.

IN THEIR SHOES

DEVELOPED BY: ERIN COGGINS

“The Germans had just about every inch of that beach covered with machine gun fire. You could see the bullets hitting everywhere in the sand.”

HAROLD MCMURRAN - WWII VETERAN

OVERVIEW

Using an interview of World War II veteran Harold McMurran and primary sources, students will reflect upon the feelings members of the Allied Forces experienced on the morning of June 6, 1944.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

On June 6, 1944 the Allied Forces of Britain, America, Canada, and France attacked German forces on the coast of Normandy, France. With a huge force of over 150,000 soldiers, the Allies attacked and gained a victory that became the turning point for World War II in Europe.

OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

- Understand the mission set before the American Invasion Forces on June 6, 1944;
- Understand the feelings of those who took part in the Invasion of France; and
- Recognize the qualities of a World War II hero.

STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3

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 the text.

D2.His.3.9-12.

Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.

D2.His.13.9-12.

Critique the appropriateness of the historical sources used in a secondary interpretation.

MATERIALS & DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT A: Photo of Harold McMurren

DOCUMENT B: Questions for a Hero

DOCUMENT C: Harold McMurren Biography

ARTICLE: *Vet Recalls 'Horrible Day' In WWII*

https://www.army.mil/article/127591/veteran_recalls_horrible_day_in_wwii

DOCUMENT D: Eisenhower's Order of the Day

ARTICLE: *Eisenhower's Order of the Day (1944)*

<https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/general-eisenhowers-order-of-the-day>

DOCUMENT E: Order of the Day Activity

DOCUMENT F: V-Mail (optional)

VIDEO: *"Things You Don't Forget"*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fd8okLRFUeQ>

PROCEDURES

ACTIVITY 01 (15 minutes)

Getting to Know a Hero (25 minutes)

- Project the photo of Harold McMurren. Inform students that Harold landed on Utah Beach on June 6, 1944.
- Distribute a copy of Questions for a Hero (Document B) to every student. Ask students to write down five questions they would ask Harold to learn more about his service on D-Day.
- Play the Memoirs of World War II video of Harold McMurren. As students watch the video, have them mark off any of their questions that were answered by the video. In the space titled Harold's Words, instruct students to sum up Harold's experience described in the video.
- Distribute a copy of Harold's biography to each student. Instruct students to call out some words that would describe why Harold is considered a hero. Make a list of the words given on the board.

ACTIVITY 02

Getting the Go Ahead (20 minutes)

- Tell students, that like Harold, they will be given an order.
- Distribute a copy of Gen. Eisenhower's Order of the Day (Doc. D) to each student along with a copy of the Order of the Day activity handout (Doc. E). Inform students that this letter was given to each member of the Allied Invasion Force and was also broadcasted to sailors and soldiers on ships as well.
- Play the audio of Eisenhower reading the Order of the Day.
- Students will complete the Eisenhower Order of the Day activity for assessment.

METHODS FOR EXTENSION:

To advance the activity, instruct students to stay in the past (June 6, 1944) to write a letter home to their parents or loved one, describing what they experienced the morning of June 6, 1944 as they were given the Order of the Day. This is a good time to introduce V-Mail.

**V-Mail History

V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the mail system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination. The letter would be packaged in a much smaller size. For more information, visit this link .

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DOCUMENT A:



DOCUMENT B:

5 Questions to Ask a Hero:

Write 5 questions that you would ask Mr. Harold McMurrin about his service.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

As we watch the video, make a check beside the question(s) that Mr. Harold McMurrin answered. In the space below answer, how did the answers make you feel about Mr. McMurrin?

In Harold's Words:

DOCUMENT C:

BY Skip Vaughn, Redstone Rocket. -- On June 6, 1944 Harold McMurren was in a landing ship tank with other American Soldiers about to go ashore to liberate France from Nazi occupation.

He was a 19-year-old Soldier just shy of his 20th birthday June 10. He recalled the scene from D-Day, June 6, 1944.

"I landed on Utah Beach," the New Market resident said. "I went in behind the 4th Infantry. What wave it was, I don't have no idea. They talk about waves; I don't know if anybody knew. They just went in one after the other and they got mixed up going in.

"It was sometime around 7 o'clock in the morning. Well, it was a horrible day. I mean it's hard to describe what went on, what you saw and how you felt. I had three modes that I went through. First, I was scared; then I was afraid; then I was numb. It didn't make any difference.

"It was bullets flying all around, artillery shells bursting all around. And there were people lying in front of you. Some wounded, some dead. The next bullet may be for you. Have you ever seen the movie 'The Longest Day'? In my estimation, that's the most accurate."

McMurren is a native of Dora, which was mainly a coal mining town back then. He was the oldest and lone son of three children of William McMurren, a railroad conductor who got coal from the coal mines.

He was a member of the 546th Ordnance Company, a 275-member unit which was supposed to retrieve damaged heavy equipment on D-Day. "I think it took three LSTs (landing ship tanks) to hold us. Mine was the first that went in," he recalled. During the battlefield chaos, when the Germans would aim their weapons on those seeking damaged tanks and other heavy equipment, the unit's mission shifted from Ordnance to infantry. "So we gave up as an Ordnance outfit, we became infantry," McMurren said.

That day, McMurren recalled, the Soldiers barely got off the beach because the Germans had hedgerows as barriers. "It took us six weeks to fight through those hedgerows," he said. He and his companions became part of Gen. George Patton's Third Army.

During the worst winter he can remember, he fought in the Battle of the Bulge. From Dec. 16, 1944, to Jan. 25, 1945, this was a major German offensive campaign launched through the densely forested Ardennes region of Wallonia in Belgium, France and Luxembourg on the Western Front toward the end of World War II in Europe.

"And there was more men incapacitated from frozen feet in the Battle of the Bulge than was wounded by the Germans," he said. He avoided this by keeping dry socks in the waist of his uniform; and when his feet got wet, he'd put on the dry socks.

After that fateful battle, his unit was shipped to Marseille, France, a staging point to go to the Pacific to fight the Japanese. But the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended the war.

"They loaded us on a victory ship 26 December '45," McMurren said, "and shipped us home."

He has a battle star from two of WWII's most important battles, D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge, and he recently received the Legion of Honor from the French government.

DOCUMENT D:

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.



Dwight D. Eisenhower

DOCUMENT E:

Executive Order of the Day Activity

ACTIVITY ONE:

- 1. It is early morning on June 6, 1944 and you have just been given this letter. What are you feeling? Use strong adjectives in your answer.**

- 2. You have heard that this is the biggest mission of the war. What do you expect to encounter?**

- 3. What does Eisenhower list as progress the Allies have made in the War since 1941? Does this set your mind a little more at ease? Why or why not?**

- 4. Gen. Eisenhower says “this task will not be an easy one.” Based on what Mr. Harold McMurren revealed in his interview, what made this statement true?**

- 5. What does it mean to you that Gen. Eisenhower says “he has full confidence in your courage?”**

ACTIVITY TWO:

You are a French citizen. Write a thank you letter to Mr. Harold McMurren for his role in liberating your country. Be sure to mention specifics from Mr. McMurren’s story.

DOCUMENT F:



TO:

FROM:

CENSOR’S STAMP: