

Texas Teacher Selected for National History Day® Research Program to Memorialize Military Service Members

AUSTIN, TX, UNITED STATES, February 4, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [National History Day](#) (NHD) and [Texas History Day](#) (THD), an affiliate of NHD, are proud to announce a Texas educator was selected as one of the 55 educators representing 32 states and two Department of Defense (DoDEA) schools overseas NHD's Researching Silent Heroes webinar series, in coordination with the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC). The men and women researched for this webinar series died during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War and are buried or memorialized in an American military cemetery cared for by the ABMC.

Ms. Ashley Barshaw from Heritage Middle School in San Antonio was tasked with selecting a Silent Hero buried or memorialized at one of 17 ABMC Cemeteries. She chose World War II U.S. Army Private Edwin Van Der Vaart, who is interred at the Florence American Cemetery in Italy. Ms. Barshaw will research his life and service, then create a profile for their Silent Hero®. "I am thrilled one of our Texas History Day teachers is going to not only hone her skills, but we will also be able learn more about and honor an American World War II soldier," stated Lisa Berg, THD State Coordinator and Director of Education for [Texas State Historical Association](#). Educators chosen for this cost-free learning opportunity receive hands-on training ending March 2025. Teachers meet monthly with both a historian and research specialist to set their Silent Heroes into historical context and learn strategies to research their lives. They discuss effective research strategies and discuss how to deal with roadblocks that historical research creates such as missing or incomplete records, alternate spellings, or reconciling memories with the historical record. When the teachers complete their research in April, they will write a profile for NHD's Silent Heroes' website for publication in late spring/summer 2025. This work will be shared with the American Battle Monuments Commission for future use in their educational materials. "National History Day's Researching Silent Heroes program is essential to our work to improve the teaching and learning of history," said Cathy Gorn, Ph.D., Executive Director of National History Day. "Thanks to ABMC, teachers across the country and around the world get to dive into primary source research about the lives of service members from twentieth century conflicts. I can't wait to read the impactful profiles the teachers will write about these fallen service members' lives."

Texas History Day (THD), sponsored by the Texas State Historical Association (tshaonline.org), is an affiliate of National History Day. THD is a yearlong education program that culminates in an annual state-level history fair for students in grades six through twelve. It provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their interest in, and knowledge of, history through creative and original papers, performances, documentaries, web sites, or three-dimensional exhibits. Over the course of the school year, students research and produce a History Day entry, the results of which are presented at one of the 20 regional competitions in early spring. From there, some students advance to the state competition in April in Austin, or even to the national contest held each June at the University of Maryland at College Park. At each level of competition, outstanding achievement may be recognized through certificates, medals, trophies, or monetary awards. The most important rewards are the skills and insight that students acquire as they move through the History Day program. As many as 50,000 young Texans are involved in the program at the regional and state level each year. More than 1,000 students participate in THD, and approximately 70 students represent Texas at National History Day each year. For more information about THD and the TSHA, please visit tshaonline.org or contact Lisa Berg, Director of Education Services, at lisa.berg@tshaonline.org.

About National History Day (NHD):

NHD is a non-profit organization based in College Park, Maryland, that seeks to improve the teaching and learning of history. Established in 1974, NHD currently engages more than half a million students each year in conducting original research on historical topics of interest and supports teachers through professional development opportunities. Students present their research as a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website. Projects compete first at the local and affiliate levels, where the top entries are invited to the annual National Contest at the University of Maryland at College Park. NHD is sponsored in part by WEM Foundation, The Better Angels Society, Bezos Family Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, Library of Congress, Dr. Scholl Foundation, Behring Global Educational Foundation, 400 Years of African American History Commission, and the National Park Service. For more information, visit nhd.org.

About American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC):

The American Battle Monuments Commission operates and maintains 26 cemeteries and 31 federal memorials, monuments and commemorative plaques in 17 countries throughout the world, including the United States. The three memorials in the United States are: the Honolulu Memorial located within the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu; the West Coast Memorial located within the Presidio National Park in San Francisco; and the East Coast Memorial located within Battery Park in New York City. Since March 4, 1923, the ABMC's sacred mission remains to honor the service, achievements, and sacrifice of more than 200,000 U.S. service members buried and memorialized at our sites. For more information about the ABMC, visit abmc.gov.

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