



Educator Information

“Become a Soldier” Interactive Program

The Seminary Ridge Museum provides students with engaging and fun educational programs. All of our interactive activities and learning resources investigate historical content while also teaching critical thinking and analytical skills essential to the formation of the next generation of citizens and leaders. The Seminary Ridge Museum’s “Become a Soldier” interactive program fulfills the following learning and affective objectives and adheres to both National Center for History in the Schools Standards in Historical Thinking and Content Standards and Common Core Standards.

Program description:

During the “Become A Soldier” program, students receive the name of a soldier from either the 151st PA or 14th SC, who engaged each other behind the Seminary building on the afternoon of July 1, 1863. A soldier in uniform teaches the new “recruits” how to stand at attention, march, and hold a weapon, all activities aimed at removing a soldier’s individuality and transforming him into a cog in the “machine of war.” “Recruits” have the opportunity to perform these movements on the very same ground where men fought.

Throughout the program, students focus on the “why” of soldiering, rather than just the “what,” building in students a sense of historical empathy. Participants in the program read quotes from enlisted soldiers and engage in facilitated discussion with their peers to analyze and evaluate the differing reasons men went off to war and gave their lives for their cause. At the end of the program, students discover what happened to their assigned soldier during the fighting on July 1. Many of the men, some as young as 17 years old, lost their lives or were forever scarred by wounds received around the Seminary building. This makes the affective connection for students, that soldiers are not just a cog in the machine, but rather individuals, and that war has lasting effects on the soldier and his loved ones.

Learning objectives (At the end of this activity, students will be able to):

- Perform various steps of an infantry soldier during the Civil War, including marching and the Manual of Arms.
- Describe why marching, drilling, and the manual of arms were necessary parts of a soldier’s life.
- Compare and contrast the differing perspectives of Union and Confederate soldiers who fought in the Civil War.

Affective objectives (As a result of this activity, students are expected to):

- Actively participate in facilitated discussion with peers to analyze topics relating to the life of a soldier during the Civil War.
- Value Civil War soldiers as individuals, not just part of a larger group.
- Demonstrate understanding of soldiers' differing ideologies during the Civil War.
- Display historical empathy.

National Standards:

National Center for History in the Schools Standards in Historical Thinking:

This program builds students' skills in historical comprehension, historical analysis and interpretation, and historical issues decision making and analysis.

National Center for History in the Schools Content Standards (Civil War and Reconstruction):

Standard 1A—The causes of the Civil War: The student understands how the North and South differed and how politics and ideologies led to the Civil War.

Standard 2B—The course and character of the Civil War and its effects on the American people: The student understands the social experience of the war on the battlefield and home front.

Common Core State Standards (6-8): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.1-4, .6, .9; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.1-4, .6, .9; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.1-4, .6, .9; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1, .1.C, .1.D, .4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1, .1.C, .1.D, .4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1, .1.C, .1.D, .4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1-6, .8-9; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.3

Common Core State Standards (9-12): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1, .3-4, .6; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1, .3-4, .6; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1, .1.C, 1.D, .4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1, 1.C, 1.D, .4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2-4, .6, .8-9; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2-4, .6, .8-9.

For more information on National Center for History in the Schools standards, visit www.nchs.ucla.edu.

For more information on Common Core standards, visit www.corestandards.org.

For information on how this and other programs at the Seminary Ridge Museum meet state standards, contact Peter Miele, Director of Education and Museum Operations, at pmiele@seminaryridge.org.