


Teacher Inquiry Kit: Grades K-5

Michael Joseph Bugaj

Title	Master Sergeant Michael Joseph Bugaj, Odawa Veteran of the United States Air Force 
Author(s)	Keith Jones
Grade Level	K-5
Soldier	Master Sergeant Michael Joseph Bugaj
Tribal Affiliation	Odawa
Branch of Service	United States Air Force
Dates of Service	1972-1995
Essential Question	How do non-combatant service members provide valuable contributions to the U.S. military?

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**Contextual
Paragraph**


Michael Joseph Bugaj (pronounced “boo-gai”) was born January 20, 1954, in Detroit, Michigan. His father was a U.S. Navy veteran and later worked for 47 years for Chrysler, the American car manufacturer. His mother was a Native American who worked in the family home.

Bugaj enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1972 because he knew that he might be drafted into the U.S. Army, and he did not want to get sent into combat in Vietnam as an infantryman. After completing his basic training at Lackland Air Force Base (AFB) in Texas, he was stationed at McConnell AFB in Wichita, Kansas from 1972 to 1977. During his time there he was assigned to the carpentry shop on the base, in part because he had taken some carpentry classes in high school but also because he took correspondence courses during the evenings while at McConnell. While at McConnell he also married and had his first child.

In 1977 Bugaj was transferred to Spangdahlem AFB in Germany; he would be stationed there until 1981. At Spangdahlem again worked carpentry but also added masonry to his responsibilities, but because the base was so close to East Germany, he was additionally required to learn Rapid Runway Repair (referred to as “triple R”). After learning the necessary skills, he quickly was placed in the top squadron because of his efficiency in carrying out this duty.

In 1981 Bugaj was transferred back to the states and was stationed until 1989 at Beale AFB near Sacramento, California. At Beale he was moved from the carpentry shop to planning where he oversaw many of the structural projects on base, which required planning projects, surveying sites, managing permits, and inspecting work and damage, among other responsibilities. While not being excited about the move out of the carpentry shop at first, he soon found that he liked the supervisory role he found himself in. While at Beale he also took over the triple-R training for the airmen assigned to that duty.

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	<p>In 1989 Bugaj went back to Germany one more time, this time assigned to Zweibrücken AFB for 2 years until 1991. Now a tech sergeant, he unfortunately found that someone was already assigned the role that he filled at Beale, so he eventually was assigned as a construction inspector. After a strong storm hit the base and damaged the roofs of 70 or so buildings, he found himself very busy overseeing the roofing contracts to repair each one; he related that the Germans there told him that he was the best roofing inspector that they'd worked with at Zweibrücken.</p> <p>After a promotion to Master Sergeant, he was assigned to Travis AFB in the Bay Area of California where he finished his Air Force career in Financial Management, earning his first Air Force Achievement Medal. He retired from the Air Force in 1995, moved back to Michigan, and eventually became active both in the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians association and also the Native American Veterans Association of Southeast Michigan, where he served as Vice President.</p>
C3 Standards	<p><u>C3 Standards:</u> Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts. (D2.His.1.6-8)</p> <p>Analyze how people's perspectives influenced what information is available in the historical sources they created. (D2.His.6.6-8)</p>
Primary Source 1: Permanent Link	

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<https://tioh.army.mil/Catalog/ViewImage.aspx?id=466>



<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/6435698>


Title of Primary Source

Air Force Insignia for the 100th Civil Engineering Squadron (CES) and the 52nd CES


Suggested questions for the source

1. Examine this Air Force [insignia for the 100th Civil Engineering Squadron \(CES\)](#). Describe what you see.
2. Again, using the insignia for the 100th CES, do your best to explain the significance of the colors, symbols and text of the insignia.
3. Now, use [this explanation of the insignia](#) to learn about it. Identify what you guessed correctly, and also some things that you learned.
4. Next, examine this Air Force insignia for the 52nd CES. Describe what you see.
5. Master Sgt. Michael Bugaj (pronounced "boo-gai") was a member of both the 100th and 52nd CES. After studying the insignia for both units, identify and explain some values that you think are important to civil engineering units.

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<p>Primary Source 2: Permanent Link</p>	 <p>https://media.defense.gov/2015/Apr/14/2001040987/-1/-1/0/150414-F-RU502-055.JPG</p>
<p>Title of Primary Source</p>	<p>Beale AFB Airman Working on an Airframe</p>
<p>Suggested questions for the source</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to this link from Beale Air Force Base, where Master Sgt. Michael Bugaj worked from 1981-1989. At the top of the web page, navigate to the picture you see above, then click the link to access that picture and the description that goes with it. Describe some of the details that you see, not only from the description provided, but other details in the background as well. (NOTE: you can click on the picture above to see a larger image with more detail) 2. Master Sgt. Bugaj worked in an all-purpose workshop like this while at Beale AFB. What are some other kinds of projects you think he might have worked on to keep the base running? Don't just think about the planes on the base, but also the base itself.


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	<p>3. Civil Engineering Squadrons have the responsibility to plan, build, and maintain the Air Force bases where they are stationed. Why do you think this would be an important part of service in the Air Force for airmen like Bugaj who served in the CES?</p>
<p>Primary Source 3 Permanent Link</p>	 <p>http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-iFmr5D_GSNM/UdDew0aLPyI/AAAAAAAAAB8g/mlzdDynH1oY/s599/USAFE.jpg</p>
<p>Title of Primary Source</p>	<p>The United States Air Force in Germany During the Cold War</p>
<p>Suggested questions for the source (3-5)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Look at this map showing United States Air Force bases in Germany during the Cold War. Describe what you see on the map. 2. Read this brief history of Germany after the end of World War II, and then explain why the United States had so many Air Force bases in West Germany? 3. Master Sgt. Michael Bugaj was stationed at both Spangdahlem AFB and at Zweibrücken AFB during the Cold War. Looking back at source #2 and thinking of Bugaj's peace-time responsibilities (planning, building, and maintaining the base), why might the Air Force's Civil

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	<p>Engineering Squadrons in West Germany have had even greater importance in Europe than they did in the U.S.?</p>
<p>Primary Source 4 Permanent Link</p>	<div data-bbox="457 305 730 792" data-label="Image"> <p>The image shows the Air Force Achievement Medal, which consists of a circular silver medal with a gear-like border. The center of the medal features a stylized eagle with wings spread, perched on a caduceus (a staff with two snakes entwined around it). The medal is suspended from a ribbon with vertical stripes of blue, white, and green.</p> </div> <p data-bbox="457 846 1705 878"> https://media.defense.gov/2010/Jul/13/2000688445/-1/-1/0/100713-F-JZ034-247.JPG </p>
<p>Title of Primary Source</p>	<p>Air Force Achievement Medal</p>
<p>Suggested questions for the source (3-5)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examine this image of the Air Force Achievement medal. Describe what you see. 2. This medal is awarded to service members (below the rank of colonel) who “distinguish themselves by outstanding achievement or meritorious service.” Master Sgt. Michael Bugaj was awarded this medal during his time in the Air Force. Why do you think Bugaj would consider this medal to represent an important part of his service in the U.S. military? 3. The Air Force Achievement medal is an indication that Bugaj’s skills in the military were valued. In what ways would an award like this possibly help him outside of military service?

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<p>Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions. (2)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why do you think that all of the military branches award medals such as the Air Force Achievement medal?
<p>Primary Source 5 Permanent Link</p>	 <p>https://navasemi.wordpress.com/</p>
<p>Title of Primary Source</p>	<p>Logo of the Native American Veterans Association of Southeast Michigan (NAVASEMI)</p>
<p>Suggested questions for the source (3-5)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carefully examine the logo for the Native American Veterans Association of Southeast Michigan (NAVASEMI). Describe what you see in this logo. 2. Identify at least 3 of the symbols that you see in this logo, and then explain what you think each symbol represents. 3. Explore the NAVASEMI website. From what you can see, what is the purpose of this organization (be specific)? 4. Master Sgt. Michael Bugaj was (and is) a vice president and a board member for NAVASEMI. Based on what you know about him, and about the purpose of NAVASEMI, what are some skills

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	and abilities that you think Bugaj possesses that would be necessary in a leadership role in this organization?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions. (2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do you think that military veterans benefit from veterans' associations (like NAVASEMI)? 2. Do you think that veterans' associations specifically for Native Americans have even greater importance? Explain your thinking carefully.
Works Cited	<p> "#Veteranoftheday Air Force Veteran Michael Joseph Bugaj." <i>Vantage Point</i>, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 20 July 2020, https://blogs.va.gov/Vantage/77215/veteranoftheday-air-force-veteran-michael-joseph-bugaj/?fbclid=IwAR3hkNjYqNqNcxWJxpmN70PW914Kfwgk_rHNEuwDIKEVl5AzQ_kt-bISUkg#. </p> <p> "100th Civil Engineer Squadron." <i>The Institute of Heraldry</i>, Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army, https://tioh.army.mil/Catalog/Heraldry.aspx?HeraldryId=13414&CategoryId=6524&grp=1&menu=Uniformed+Services&from=search. </p> <p> "9th MXS Fabrication Flight: Bending and Molding Airframes for Global ISR." <i>Beale Air Force Base</i>, United States Air Force, https://www.beale.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/667083/9th-mxs-fabrication-flight-bending-and-molding-airframes-for-global-isr/. </p> <p> "Air Force Achievement Medal." <i>Air Force Art</i>, United States Air Force, https://www.af.mil/News/Art/igphoto/2000688445/. </p> <p> "Approved Insignia for: 52nd Civil Engineering Squadron." <i>National Archives and Records Administration</i>, National Archives and Records Administration, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/6435698. </p>

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