

Teacher Inquiry Kit: Grades 6-12
 Tecumseh Nathaniel Underwood

Title	End of the Trail: A Veteran Capable of Anything
Author(s)	Cynthia Stout
Grade Level	6-12
Soldier	Tecumseh Nathaniel Underwood
Tribal Affiliation	Seminole and Chickasaw
Branch of Service	Army
Dates of Service	1963 – 1965
Essential Question	One thing Tecumseh Nathaniel Underwood wants people to remember from his life story is the End of the Trail statue. How does the statue relate to what his military service taught him?
Contextual Paragraph	<p>Born in 1944, this Seminole Indian enlisted in the army at age 18 after facing limited employment prospects in his home state of Oklahoma. Despite his mother’s displeasure at his decision, a strong sense of patriotism drove him to follow his father and grandfather’s footsteps.</p> <p>He was assigned to West Berlin during the Cold War and the erection of the Berlin Wall. His position as a radio operator gave him access to places around the world – Vietnam and Australia – to name a few. The connection to Vietnam gave him the urge to want to serve there. His request for reassignment, however, was denied and he spent the duration of his service 1962 to 1965 in Germany.</p> <p>His discharge from the army was a bit rocky. He encountered incidences of discrimination and disparagement of his heritage which resulted in a court martial. The experience taught him to express himself in better ways as he stood up for himself.</p>

	In the years since his service (he is 73 at the time of the interview) he applied many of the lessons he learned during his military service to his life. He learned to be forceful without being harsh. He understood his own resiliency in light of the resilience shown by his native forebearers.
C3 Standards	<p>D2. His.1.6-8. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.</p> <p>D2. His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.</p>
Primary Source 1: Permanent Link	https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/66497/veteranoftheday-army-veteran-tecumseh-nathaniel-underwood/
Title of Primary Source	Veteran of the Day – Army Veteran Tecumseh Nathaniel Underwood
Suggested questions for the source	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Underwood was assigned to West Berlin barely 20 years after the end of World War II. What historic event was he witnessing? 2. Underwood served as a radio operator. Where did his communications “take” him? 3. On November 9, 1989, Underwood was watching the fall of the Berlin Wall on his television. What were his feelings about the dismantling of the Wall?
Primary Source 2: Permanent Link	https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp-stories/loc.natlib.afc2001001.107900/ https://www.koco.com/article/oklahoma-boarding-school-unmarked-burial-sites-found/39971746 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloomfield_Academy_(Oklahoma)
Title of Primary Source	<p>Library of Congress’ Veterans History Project – Tecumseh Nathaniel Underwood</p> <p>KOCO News - “Oklahoma home to more Indian boarding schools than any state”</p> <p>Wikipedia - Bloomfield Academy (Oklahoma)</p>
Suggested questions for the source	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was Underwood’s experience at the Carter Seminary Indian Boarding School? (4:00 – 4:50 [.50])

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. What was the stated purpose of the Carter Seminary curriculum? 3. What were the federal policies of Indian Boarding Schools designed to do according to Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland (first Native American to serve in a Presidential Cabinet)? 4. After “interrogating” the sources listed above, what is your opinion about the Indian Boarding School system? 5. How did the Indian Boarding School experience affect Underwood’s life at the time and as he grew to adulthood?
Primary Source 3 Permanent Link	https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp-stories/loc.natlib.afc2001001.107900/
Title of Primary Source	Library of Congress’ Veterans History Project – Tecumseh Nathaniel Underwood
Suggested questions for the source	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What circumstances led to Underwood enlisting in the army? (1:45 – 2:50 [1.05]) 2. What was Underwood’s experience with the recruiter? 3. Given Underwood’s experience at the Indian Boarding School, were you surprised by his encounter with the army recruiter? Why or why not? 4. How did Underwood’s family react to his enlistment? Why (6:35 – 8:00 [2.25]) 5. What promises did the recruiter make? What happened to those promises? (9:40 – 12:17 [2.35]) 6. How did Underwood’s Indian heritage come into play as he left to go overseas? (12:40 – 13:54 [1.14])
Primary Source 4 Permanent Link	https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp-stories/loc.natlib.afc2001001.107900/
Title of Primary Source	Library of Congress’ Veterans History Project – Tecumseh Nathaniel Underwood (16:08 – 23:00 [6.62])
Suggested questions for the source	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was Underwood’s boot camp experience? 2. What high school talent aided Underwood in his success on the grenade range? 3. How did Underwood’s grenade trainer characterize his ability to repeatedly hit the bulls eye?

	4. When Underwood transferred to Fort Belvoir, Virginia he spent his free time at Smithsonian (Natural History Museum). What experience did he have there with one of the curators? Why was he afforded that special attention?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of boot camp? • What are the positive and negative aspects of the boot camp experience?
Primary Source 5 Permanent Link	https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp-stories/loc.natlib.afc2001001.107900/
Title of Primary Source	Library of Congress' Veterans History Project – Tecumseh Nathaniel Underwood (27:40 – 36:30 [8.50])
Suggested questions for the source	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Underwood believed that he had a good connection with West Berliners, but not so much with West Germans. Why? 2. What did Underwood consider the “upside” of his assignment in West Berlin? 3. What did he consider the “downside” of his West Berlin assignment? 4. What happened when Underwood asked for a transfer to Vietnam? How did his training influence the decision?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do “non-whites” typically have a different experience in the military than whites? Why? • Why would someone want a transfer to Vietnam?
Primary Source 6: Permanent Link	https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp-stories/loc.natlib.afc2001001.107900/
Title of Primary Source	Library of Congress' Veterans History Project – Tecumseh Nathaniel Underwood (36:55 – 45:50 [8])
Suggested questions for the source	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What reasons did Underwood give for joining the military 2. How did Underwood's military service end?

	<p>3. Underwood talks about his court martial and the reasons for it. What was the stockade warden’s propose?</p> <p>4. Underwood says he had a “jolt of reality.” What was he talking about?</p>
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would you imagine a “typical” person’s experience in the military is like? • Why do men and women enlist in the military?
Primary Source 7: Permanent Link	<p>https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp-stories/loc.natlib.afc2001001.107900/</p> <p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/End_of_the_Trail_(Fraser)</p>
Title of Primary Source	<p>Library of Congress’ Veterans History Project – Tecumseh Nathaniel Underwood (46:10 – 57:00 [10:50])</p> <p>Wikipedia – End of the Trail</p>
Suggested questions for the source	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did Underwood’s military service affect the way he viewed his life? 2. What were the two things Underwood would like people to know? 3. What does Underwood wish people knew about American Indian veterans?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After learning about Tecumseh Underwood’s experiences in the military, which do you consider “typical”, and which seem to be a result of his American Indian status? • After viewing the End of the Trail statue, why do you think it has such meaning for American Indians?
Works Cited	<p>Primary</p> <p>“Tecumseh Nathaniel Underwood Collection.” (AFC/2001/001/107900) <i>Veterans History Project</i>, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, October 26, 2011. https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp-stories/loc.natlib.afc2001001.107900/</p> <p>Secondary</p>

“Army Veteran Tecumseh Nathaniel Underwood.” *Veteran of the Day*, November 1, 2019. <https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/66497/veteranoftheday-army-veteran-tecumseh-nathaniel-underwood/>

“Bloomfield Academy (Oklahoma).” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, December 5, 2021. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloomfield_Academy_\(Oklahoma\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloomfield_Academy_(Oklahoma))

“End of the Trail (Fraser).” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, July 5, 2022. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/End_of_the_Trail_\(Fraser\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/End_of_the_Trail_(Fraser))

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