

Teacher Inquiry Kit: Grades 6-12

Woodrow Wilson Keeble

Title	Hero Woodrow Wilson Keeble: Medal of Honor Recipient
Author(s)	Cynthia Stout
Grade Level	6-12
Soldier	Woodrow Wilson Keeble - “Woody”
Tribal Affiliation	Sioux and Alaskan Indian
Branch of Service	Army
Dates of Service	1941 - 1946, 1951 - 1952
Essential Question	American Indians have served in all our nation’s wars even though they were not granted legal citizenship until 1924. Native Americans still have the highest record of service per capita of all the ethnic groups in U.S. history. What made Woodrow Wilson Keeble’s service so outstanding?
Contextual Paragraph	<p>Woodrow Wilson Keeble was born in 1917 in Waubay, South Dakota. As a youngster he moved to Wahpeton, North Dakota and became a member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate tribe. His mother died shortly thereafter and his father who was too poor to feed his family permanently enrolled Woody and his siblings in the Wahpeton Indian School.</p> <p>Woody excelled in sports, especially baseball. He was being recruited by the Chicago White Sox when his Army National Guard unit was called up to serve in World War II. He served in the North Dakota 164th Infantry Regiment. The regiment was assigned to the Pacific Theater of War. Woody fought in several battles, the most notable, Guadalcanal. He was highly decorated for his actions.</p> <p>Discharged in 1946, Keeble returned to his home and worked as a teacher in the Wahpeton Indian School. He married Nettie Abigail Owen-Robertson. They had one son, Earl. Nettie died one year after he returned from the Korean War and Woody was left to raise their son alone. Keeble fell on hard times and is said to have pawned his service medals. Despite his disabilities that were an outcome of both of his experiences in WWII and Korea, he persevered. In 1967 He married Blossom Iris Crawford-Hawkins, the first Sioux woman to complete a Doctor of Education degree.</p>

	Keeble died January 28, 1982, and is buried in Sisseton, South Dakota. On May 17, 2008, his tombstone was replaced with a Medal of Honor headstone.
C3 Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D2. His. 1.6-8. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts. • D2. His. 3.6-8. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.
Primary Source 1: Permanent Link	https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/bib/61549 https://www.usdakotawar.org/history/woodrow-wilson-keeble
Title of Primary Source	Library of Congress Veterans History Project The U.S. - Dakota War of 1862
Suggested questions for the source	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider both sources listed above. Which source would seem to have the most credibility? Explain your reasoning. 2. When thinking about various sources, what criteria do you use to determine a source's validity? 3. How might you verify the actual spelling of Woody's last name?
Primary Source 2: Permanent Link	https://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/keeble/citation/president.html
Title of Primary Source	Official Citation and Presidential Remarks for the awarding of the Medal of Honor to Master Sergeant Woodrow W. Keeble
Suggested questions for the source	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What skill did Woody have in his pre-military life that contributed to his being recognized for the Medal of Honor? 2. What does President Bush attribute to the long time it took to honor Woody? What do you think about his two reasons? 3. In President Bush's recounting of Woody's heroic acts, which do you find most significant?
Primary Source 3 Permanent Link	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodrow_W._Keeble
Title of Primary Source	World War II Experiences

Suggested questions for the source	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In World War II, Woody served in the Pacific Theater. Read the section headed World War II and make a list of the places he served. 2. Find a map of the Pacific Theater in World War II and identify the locations of the six places he served. 3. Which of the battles do you think was the most dangerous encounter? 4. What award did Woody and his fellow Dakotans receive for their actions on Guadalcanal?
Primary Source 4 Permanent Link	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodrow_W._Keeble
Title of Primary Source	Woodrow Keeble on Combat
Suggested questions for the source	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the section entitled “Woodrow Keeble on Combat.” Before he experienced an attack, how does he view cowardice or an overt show of fear? 2. After experiencing battle, how does Woody begin to think about his attitude toward cowardice? 3. Read an account of either Guadalcanal or Operation Polar Nomad and apply what you have read to Woody’s quotes on experiencing the horrors of war. 4. Woody says, “Fear did not make a coward out of me.” What does he recount his struggle with fear during 13 months of combat?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the students’ own lives, what are the strongest emotions they have encountered? • How have students confronted these emotions? • Are there lessons they can take away from Woody’s thoughts and experiences?
Primary Source 5 Permanent Link	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodrow_W._Keeble https://www.usdakotawar.org/history/woodrow-wilson-keeble https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/85578/veteranoftheday-army-veteran-woodrow-w-keeble/ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Indian_boarding_schools
Title of Primary Source	Wahpeton Indian School – aka Circle of Nations School

Suggested questions for the source	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was Woody’s relationship with the Wahpeton Indian School before he served in WWII, during the period before fighting in Korea and after he was permanently discharged from the army? 2. Find an account of Indian Boarding Schools and consider the variety of experiences indigenous youngsters encountered. How do you think Woody’s experience was similar or different to those recounted in the account? 3. After he was discharged in 1952, Woody resumed working at the Wahpeton Indian School. What was his life like working at the school and after he could no longer continue there?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why were Indian Boarding Schools established? • Was there an Indian Boarding School located in your state? Where? Is it still there? What were they like?
Primary Source 6: Permanent Link	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodrow_W._Keeble https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/85578/veteranoftheday-army-veteran-woodrow-w-keeble/ https://www.army.mil/article/7566/first_sioux_to_receive_medal_of_honor
Title of Primary Source	Korea
Suggested questions for the source	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When Woody’s 164th Infantry Regiment was reactivated on January 16, 1951, Woody’s commanding officer had to select several sergeants for deployment to the front lines and Woody volunteered. Why? 2. What was the Operation Nomad-Polar like? 3. How did Woody’s actions stand out in this last major United Nations offensive of the war? 4. What did Woody do to be awarded the Medal of Honor?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about WWII and Korea, how were they similar and different? • What was the nation’s attitude toward each war?
Primary Source 7: Permanent Link	https://www.army.mil/article/7566/first_sioux_to_receive_medal_of_honor https://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/keeble/citation/president.html

Title of Primary Source	Long Road to the Medal of Honor
Suggested questions for the source	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The awarding of the Medal of Honor took 60 years to come to fruition. What happened? 2. The family began the process to upgrade Keeble’s Distinguished Service Cross to a Medal of Honor in 1972 when both Woody and Blossom were alive. Unfortunately, they unknowingly headed in the wrong direction. What did that mean? 3. Who supported the Keeble family in obtaining the Medal of Honor for Woody?
Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What part does the Warrior Spirit Project play in shedding light upon the experiences of American Indians in war? • Why do you think that despite the discrimination faced by American Indians in society, they patriotically continue to fight this nation’s wars?
Works Cited	<p>“President’s Remarks: https://army.mil/medalofhonor/keeble/citation/president.html March 3, 2008.</p> <p>“Veteran of the Day Army Veteran Woodrow W. Keeble” https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/85578/veteranoftheday-army-veteran-woodrow-w-keeble/ November 3, 2021.</p> <p>Carrie McLeroy “First Sioux to Receive Medal of Honor” https://army.mil/article/7566/first-sioux-to-receive-medal-of-honor October 23, 2102.</p> <p>“Master Sergeant Woodrow Wilson Keeble” https://governor.nd.gov/theodore-roosevelt-rough-rider-award/master-sergeant-woodrow-wilson-keeble</p> <p>Veterans History Project, “Woodrow W. Keeble Collection” https://memory.loc.gov/diglig/vhp/bib/loc.natib.agc2001001.161549 October 26, 2011</p> <p>“Woodrow Wilson Keeble” https://www.usdakotawar.org/history/woodrow-wilson-keeble</p> <p>“Woodrow W. Keeble” https://en.wikipedia.org/wik/Woodrow_W._Keeble</p>