

A Soldier's Experience

Ohio Memory Interactive Lesson—www.ohiomemory.org

Soldiers engaged on the front during World War I were fighting in what would become known as the world's first modern war. The men and women who served in WWI endured the most brutal forms of warfare ever known. Many were sent away from their homes to serve for months or even years at a time. Through diaries, letters and photographs, we are able to analyze these experiences and see what life was truly like for a soldier fighting on the front lines.



[Ralph Evans' scrapbook](#) includes photographs, newspaper clippings, postcards, poems, and military records documenting his World War I service.



Activity 1

Ralph B. Evans, 26 years old

Quarter Master Corps Supply Company 305 and Salvage Company I

- I. Read at least two entries from Ralph's [diary](#) and answer the questions below.
 - i. What were the hardest challenges facing soldiers while they were fighting abroad? Why?

 - ii. What is something that surprised you about Evans' daily life in the army?

- II. After you've read entries from his diary, look through Ralph Evans' [scrapbook](#) on Ohio Memory. Reflect and answer the questions below.
 - i. Why do you think he chose to keep newspaper clippings? What was their significance to him and to the war effort?

 - ii. What does it seem was the most important thing for him to keep? Why do you think it was important to keep these items?





- III. Pick a poem from the scrapbook and illustrate the poem. You can use this as an opportunity to experiment with Blackout poetry, an activity during which you can create poems by using words in Evans' diary or scrapbook to create your own poem. For instructions, visit the Blackout Poetry blog post [here](#).

Activity 2

Burt J. Moffett **166th Infantry Band, 99th Headquartered Company**

- I. Read at least two entries from Moffett's [diary](#) (from either [volume I](#) or [volume II](#)). Reflect and answer the questions below.
 - i. What services did the infantry band provide and why were these important?

 - ii. How do you think Moffett's view of the war differs from soldiers that were on the front lines?

 - iii. Use Moffett's diary to identify services or objects that were used to comfort soldiers on the front lines. Why were these provided? Were they effective?





Extension Activities

- I. Use the transcription tool at transcribe.ohiohistory.org to read and transcribe at least one page of [Mary Miller Hayes' war diary](#).
- II. After completing the activities, look for WWI stories in your own community. Reach out to local veteran's organizations, genealogical societies and historical societies to volunteer or interview those who directly work with your veteran community. You can view a list of state and regional veterans organizations on the Ohio Department of Veterans Services website (<http://dvs.ohio.gov/main/veterans-organizations.html>) and local veteran organizations [here](#).
- III. Use the information you learned about the World War I soldier experience to create a mural depicting the WWI soldier experience using images, symbols, and words. This can be done independently or as a class.

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