

Bedford County, Virginia, WWII Heritage City

A series of lessons from the [World War II Heritage Cities Lesson Collection](#)



Figure 1: Some of the “Bedford Boys,” from the 116th Infantry Regiment, during training in England in 1943. (Courtesy of the National D-Day Memorial)

Introduction

The three lessons, and culminating fourth lesson, support the development of understanding the significance of [Bedford County, Virginia, World War II Heritage City](#). The first lesson shares the story of the “Bedford Boys,” a group of National Guard soldiers from Bedford County who suffered the highest per capita loss of any American community on D-Day while serving with Company A of the 116th Infantry Regiment. The second lesson teaches about local examples of wartime industry and manufacturing, and the third shows ways local civilians contributed to home front efforts. These efforts included fundraising campaigns, volunteering, and donations.

Lessons (with World War II home front topics):

The first three lessons listed can be taught individually or collectively, in any order. The final lesson supports students in summarizing the contributions of Bedford County and supports a comparison to other World War II home front cities in a culminating activity.

1. [The Service and Sacrifice of the “Bedford Boys” from Bedford County, Virginia, World War II Heritage City \(p. 6\)](#)

- Armed Forces
- Military
- Bedford Boys
- D-Day
- Operation Overlord

2. [War Manufacturing in Bedford County, Virginia, World War II Heritage City \(p. 21\)](#)

- Civilian workforce
- Manufacturing and industry
- Women in the workforce
- Defense and war bonds
- Training

3. [Home Front Volunteerism in Bedford County, Virginia, World War II Heritage City \(p. 31\)](#)

- Civilian volunteerism and contributions
- Junior Red Cross
- Salvage and material drives

- War loan drives

4. [Bedford County, Virginia: Comparing and Connecting WWII Home Front Cities \(p. 40\)](#)

Positioning these Lessons in the Curriculum:

The standards listed beneath the lesson links are a collection of standards covered in the lesson collection. The lessons have been aligned to national standards and topics, as well as to the History and Social Science Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools (as of 2023) and the Virginia English Standards of Learning (as of 2024). Objectives for each lesson, materials, and resources are listed within the lesson.

Time period: World War II

Topics: World War II, women's history, workforce migration, science and technology

United States History Standards for Grades 5-12

This lesson relates to the following [National Standards for History](#) from the UCLA National Center for History in the Schools:

Era 8: The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

Standard 3: The causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs

Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

This lesson relates to the following [Curriculum Standards themes for Social Studies](#) from the National Council for the Social Studies:

- Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change
- Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Theme 8: Science, Technology, and Society
- Theme 9: Global Connections

Relevant Common Core Standards

These lessons relate to the following [Common Core English and Language Arts Standards for History and Social Studies](#) for middle and high school students:

Key Ideas and Details

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.2

Craft and Structure

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.4

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.7
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.9

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.10

Virginia State Standards

History and Social Science Standards

The lessons align to the following standards defined by the History and Social Science Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools (as of 2023).

Grade 6: United States History: 1865 to the Present

USII.6 The Second World War and America's Transformation

Grade 10: World History and Geography: 1500 A.D. to the Present

WHII.9 Era of Global Wars: World War II

Grade 11: Virginia and United States History

VUS.14 (Industrialization, Emergence of Modern America, and World Conflicts - United States' involvement in World War II)

English Standards of Learning

The lessons align to standards within the following areas defined by the Virginia English Standards of Learning (as of 2024).

Grades 6-12

Developing Skilled Readers and Building Reading Stamina

Reading and Vocabulary

Reading Informational Texts

*WWII Heritage Cities Lesson Collection
Bedford County, Virginia*

Writing

Communications and Multimodal Literacies

Research

The lesson series was written by Sarah Nestor Lane, an educator and consultant with the Cultural Resources Office of Interpretation and Education, funded by the National Council on Public History's cooperative agreement with the National Park Service.

Lesson 1: The Service and Sacrifice of the “Bedford Boys” from Bedford County, Virginia, World War II Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [Bedford County, Virginia, World War II Heritage City](#). This lesson features primary source readings such as a letter, oral history, and newspaper article, alongside photographs, to help students learn about service members from Bedford, known as the “Bedford Boys.” Twenty of them were lost in the D-Day invasion, the highest per capita loss of any American community, leaving a lasting impact on Bedford County. Their service and sacrifice inspired local home front efforts during the war but also continue to shape remembrance and community service in the region today.

Objectives:

1. Explain who the “Bedford Boys” were and how they were connected to the home front community.
2. Analyze primary sources to understand and reflect on the experiences of the Bedford Boys in England and during the D-Day invasion.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 2-5 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3
3. *Recommended:* Map of Virginia, with Bedford County marked (you may use the [Bedford Boys Homefront Tour map](#) as an additional resource)

Photos



Figure 2: Some of the "Bedford Boys," from the 116th Infantry Regiment, during training in England in 1943. (Courtesy of the National D-Day Memorial)



Figure 3: At the Bedford County Courthouse, a memorial stone honoring the Bedford Boys was dedicated on the 10th anniversary of D-Day. Dani Parker, daughter of Bedford Boy Earl Parker, laid flowers at the monument in her Girl Scout uniform in memory of her father. (Courtesy of the National D-Day Memorial)



Figure 4: The Overlord Arch at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia. Operation Overlord was the codename for the Allied invasion on D-Day. The arch stands at forty-four and one-half feet high, which is representative of the date of D-Day. (Courtesy of the National D-Day Memorial)



Figure 5: A replica of the National D-Day Memorial's sculpture Valor, Fidelity, Sacrifice is located on Omaha Beach in France. One of the main roads off the beach is named "Avenue de Bedford Virginie USA" and includes banners honoring the "Bedford Boys." (Courtesy of the National D-Day Memorial)



Getting Started: Essential Question

How did the service and sacrifice of the Bedford Boys contribute to the Allied mission and affect their home front community?



By the numbers:

- 4,427 service members were killed on D-Day. This included 2,510 Americans and 1,917 Allies from seven nations.
- On D-Day, 20 service members from Bedford lost their lives on Omaha Beach. There were 19 losses from Bedford in Company A, 116th Regiment, and one from Company F. With a population of just 3,200 in 1944, Bedford suffered the highest per capita loss of any American community that day. To put that in perspective, if New York City had experienced the same rate of loss, it would have lost approximately 46,000 service members in a single day.
- Approximately 100 service members from Bedford were killed in the war.



Quotation to consider:

“In sad but loving remembrance of my dear grandson, Staff Sergeant Leslie C. Abbott, who departed this life June 6th, D-Day. If he could have lived until Oct. 7, he would have been 23 years old. His mother died when he was 10 years old and she always called him Dickie, so he was better known by that name. He was good and kind to all and had a smile for everyone.

He said he never knew how much he loved his Daddy and all of us, until he was so far away, and ‘when I return I would like to work on the farm with Uncle Jerry.’ How happy we all could be. But he has gone never to return. . .

He wrote such cheerful letters, but the last letter to me, he said he was sad, blue and all down in the dumps. ‘But I received a letter from you dear grandmother today and it cheered me up so much.’ I am so glad I could cheer him some, on his weary way.

So many of the Bedford boys are sleeping with him on foreign soil. Only wish I could place some pretty flowers on each grave. They all died for their country and we are proud of them; but it makes us all so sad to think they are gone to never return. . .”

- A Memorial written by the grandmother of Staff Sergeant Leslie C. Abbott in *The Bedford Bulletin*, published on November 9, 1944.

Read to Connect

Teacher Note: Reading 1 can be used to learn details and connect to experiences of the Bedford Boys before D-Day, by reading the thoughts of Captain Fellers. Reading 2, an oral history, and Reading 3, a newspaper article, share post-D-Day first-person reflections from those serving and on the home front. These readings can be used to learn about the firsthand experiences of service members at D-Day and the impact it had on the Bedford County community. Due to the length of the readings, you may use smaller excerpts of the readings, such as key paragraphs, if wanting to shorten the lesson. Or, use a jigsaw method and have students read and analyze their designated reading and share back with the group.

Reading 1: Letter

Background: Captain Taylor N. Fellers, who wrote this letter, was the commanding officer of Company A, 116th Regiment. When the company was activated, they trained overseas in England, where Fellers writes from. The company was part of the first wave of the D-Day invasion on Omaha Beach in [Normandy, France](#), also known as Operation Overlord. 35 service members from Bedford participated in the D-Day invasion. Captain Fellers, alongside 19 other service members from Bedford, lost their lives in the invasion. These service members were nicknamed the “Bedford Boys.” Due to the high per capita loss of the Bedford community, the area was selected to be the site of the National D-Day Memorial. The Bedford Boys are honored through memorials in places connected to their service, including in Virginia, England, and France.

*The letter, including the opening description, was published under “Captain Fellers Writes Interesting Letter” in *The Bedford Bulletin* on May 13, 1943:*

Mr. and Mrs. P.A. Fellers received the following letter from their son, Captain Taylor N. Fellers, from ‘somewhere in England.’ The letter was dated March 27, 1943, and describes with interest his new environment, and tells about some boys from Bedford who are still with him.

Dear Mother:

Sure hope this finds all at home well and happy. I got a letter from you today, also one from Janie, mailed March 18th. Very good service, don't you think? Nothing helps a soldier's morale like mail from home and his friends back there. I see in our paper here that quite a load of mail went down in one of our ships. But we can expect some of those things.

Your letter today made me a bit homesick when you spoke of things beginning to look like spring over there. Bet you have a pretty garden of flowers getting ready to bloom. Not much signs of any change here at the moment. We do have a nice day occasionally, but us yanks can't figure the weather here like we could at home. I remember back there when Dad used to go out in the yard and take a look at the mountains, and if he saw any snow flurries on the Peaks, he would come in and pull his chair closer to the fire. Here the people don't seem to mind the weather at all.

I wrote you about buying me a Scotch kilt. Well, it's all right. A plaid of a lot of history attached to it, called the 'Royal Stewart.' I bought it in Scotland and it was made by a Scotchman. One of my boys parents live up there so he located it for me. I will send it home and maybe when I get back will get in it and go up-town.

The boys in the company are doing well. Most of the Bedford boys I have left are my key non-coms. I am beginning to think it is hard to beat a Bedford boy as a soldier. Out of less than a hundred we left there with I would say about a dozen have made officers and several more will be soon. They are good practical officers, too, with a year or more of regular non-commission service behind them. I am truly proud to be commanding my old home town outfit and just hope I can carry them right on through and bring all of them home. The replacements we have got from time to time have been northerners. Mostly New Englanders but I think most of them have developed a southern drawl by now. I still find the battle of Bull Run and Gettysburg going on in quarters when I go in for bed check at night. They sit around and smoke their pipes and fight it all over again. Among them are Diplomats, Statesmen, Politicians and Guard House lawyers. It is really interesting just to listen . . . The outgoing mail has to be censored by one of the company officers, so once in a while it falls my lot to help with it and I could write a book on it. . .

I know you people back there are making a lot of sacrifices in the war effort. I sure admire the spirit and morale of the people here. They are really all out to give Hitler a swift kick in the pants.

I have been to quite a number of places in England and some in Wales and Scotland. It is really an interesting place, far more so than most of us 'yanks' back home ever realized. The old customs and tradition that are still practiced in some places are spectacular. One of the most interesting I have seen was the English high court opening. I had the pleasure of

seeing one of them. The same old custom of opening court that has been practiced for centuries. Well, I will have to tell you all about it when I get home.

We are O.K., so don't worry about us. Plenty of hard training but plenty of food and a little time off to relax.

Give my best regards to all the fellows around town.

My love to all at home. "Cheerio." Taylor

Questions for Reading 1 and Photos

1. Where is Captain Fellers writing from? Why were the service members there at the time?
2. How does Captain Fellers describe the service members from Bedford?
3. Why do you think this letter was published in the paper for the public? (*Tip: Consider home front motivation and the number of local service members serving with Fellers.*)
4. How does this reading show readers some of the experiences and motivations of the service members, from Fellers' perspective?

Reading 2: Oral History

Background: The oral history text is a compilation of excerpts from an interview of Roy Stevens, who served in Company A, 116th Regiment, and survived the D-Day invasion. His twin brother, Ray, also served in the Company and was killed in action on D-Day. Roy went on to serve in Operation Cobra, the campaign in which Allied forces fought to break through the hedgerow terrain of Normandy and expanded the foothold established during the D-Day landings.

The interview was recorded on July 7, 2004 and was provided by the archives of the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia. The transcript has been lightly revised for grammar with added headings and combined excerpts for student readability.

Roy Stevens: Interview Excerpts

Bedford and joining the National Guard

"Well, Bedford has always been known as a farming town back in the early days . . . Everybody knew one another. It was a small town. It was great - the world's best little town. Beautiful place, beautiful people here. It's hard to describe - it is a great town. But it has grown since then, since 1944.

All my buddies in Bedford were joining the National Guard. The reason we joined – Ray and I – this was my twin brother and I - because you got this uniform and also it was a dollar each time we trained, and a dollar you know, was quite a bit, and a uniform . . . All my friends were joining – all my buddies were joining the National Guard. So, we decided we'd go in. And he went in on the last week of December and I went in the first week of January in 1939. He went in in 1938. . . So we joined and the National Guard then was a little bit different than how the National Guards are today. We trained with . . . floods, strikes, and things like that. We didn't have combat duties. So, it was very interesting trying to do that. . . Like I said, everybody was joining, so we'd thought we'd join the crowd.

[Company A] was great. They were just like one big family. You just, you know, you'd just have it. You know what each one was doing. What happened. Just a big family. And we were really knitted together with that friendship and that brotherly love. We just – it was just kind of tough . . . The way it turned out. It was a great family.”

Company A in England

“We took that (British barracks) over and we started training about 7 days a week . . . and then too, at night we heard the bombers come over and then start. They didn't bomb us, but they'd bomb the cities around; we could see that. We had to be very (careful) – black out, you know - at night you didn't even light a cigarette. But that was the way it was when we first got there.

We started training and we had no idea at that time that we'd be picked for the invasion. . . After that there we went to a place in Liverpool. We had to do guard duty on the docks. I'm not sure how long we were there, but we left there and went to Ivybridge, England. There's where we started training. . . We knew then we were going to do something, we just didn't know what.

We worked at least six days a week, sometimes seven. We just kept training, and we trained there for about a year. Just about a year, maybe more.

We arrived in England in September '42 and this must have been something like '43 was Ivybridge. And then we went over to Slapton Sands. Now, the reason we trained at Slapton Sands was the fact there were beaches there a whole lot like Normandy. But when we were training, we had no idea that's what it was, you see. We found this out later. That the beaches looked a whole lot like where we were going to invade in 1944.

So, we started training. We trained and trained. I broke my leg, and I was in the hospital for a while. But when I came back, I reckon (it was) about two weeks before we got in the ship. I was there in the staging area. We were taken to a building similar to this one and in that building was a sand table. And on that table, there was the beaches of Normandy. That is

when we found out that we were going to be the first wave going in: because A Company was picked. We'll never know why, but we were picked to go. We were proud of the fact we would be leading on that day. . . I think they picked us because we had been trained and trained and trained, and we were ready. . .

. . . We used to get packages you know, and candy and peanuts and all that stuff. And the company we was in, like the A Company- anyone got a package, you'd open it up and everybody got a part of it, you know. And that's what we did. We were like a family. So yeah, we really enjoyed getting things from home. Hearing from people. How they were doing. And Ray and I bought a farm for my daddy and mother before we got in and they were living on it. They really enjoyed it. And we really felt like we helped them a little bit in a way because they helped us all through the years."

D-Day and Reflection

"... But on that ship that night (June 5, 1944) things were kind of . . . people were putting on because they were scared. We were scared. We were afraid. We didn't know what we were getting into . . . But we knew in the end, it (was our) time to go. We had trained and trained until several of them had hoped this would be the real thing. So, we'd get this job done and go back home and start our families and what and so forth.

And so, the morning of June 6, about 2:00 in the morning, we were loaded off the ship, and we were about 6 miles clear out off the northern coast of France, and we were unloading there to get on the assault crafts. My boat was number five and Ray was number two. And I was going down . . . and he stuck his hand out for me to shake. He and I had agreed to shake hands . . . that day after the invasion at the crossroads . . . I said, "Well, I'll shake your hand then, Ray."

And I didn't do it. So, I don't know. I just wonder sometimes, why didn't I? Because he just dropped his hand, because he knew something that I didn't know. He just knew he wasn't going to make it, I guess. And it bothered me. It bothers me to this day why I didn't shake his hand . . .

We went in and you could see the beaches very good. But you had to be there to know what took place. I've never seen so many boats and ships... they said it was 5,000. They also said it was . . . airplanes was 11 or 12,000. I don't know. The noise and everything you hear . . . And the weather was bad. The weather was foggy, and the airplanes couldn't get in and bomb the beaches like they were supposed to, like they had to do. And then the rocket ship. I guess they were like us - they were nervous and scared, and they fired them too quickly. A good bunch of them, if they would have hit the beaches like they should have, they would have bombed mines . . .

Well, our boat hit (an obstacle) and it knocked a hole in the bottom, and it sank, and it took about 20 minutes. We tried to bail it out with our helmets, but we couldn't. The reason I know it hit an obstacle because that obstacle came up the side and it was a pipe. . . I guess that's the reason I'm talking to you, because our boat hit that obstacle. . . We lost one man. I couldn't swim. I never learned to swim. I had this assault jacket on, and I couldn't get it off. Instead of me going over the waves, I went through them. . . We fought there for about two and a half hours. Something like that. I finally just gave up. I just couldn't. . . I thought that was it. And this boat came up behind me and I never did see it before. . . A boy from Bedford, he helped me get on that boat. . . And I always thought he'd saved me, because I'd gone – I'd about had it. . .

[Four days later] We went over to the cemetery. And the first grave I came to was Ray's and I couldn't believe that. . . And there was a piece of dirt on it, on the cross, and I knocked it off, and then there was his dog tags. And I couldn't believe that. . . I tell you; it's kind of rough to think back on it and what we would have done any different, we don't know. . .

You talk about a long day. (D-Day) was the longest day. And this we should never forget . . . And I'm proud of the fact what we're doing what we're doing to get this to all the young people today. That they know what it is to be called up, and why we went. It was freedom, free speech, and we wanted to be free people. When we got back home, we didn't want to be Germans or didn't want to be Japanese. We wanted to be Americans. . .”

Questions for Reading 2, By the Numbers, and Quotation to Consider

1. What were reasons Stevens shared for joining the National Guard?
2. How did training prepare Company A for the D-Day invasion?
3. How does Stevens describe the bond among the men in Company A?
4. Why do you think Stevens continues to reflect on the moment he didn't shake his brother's hand? What does this show about how memory and grief can affect veterans when they share their histories?
5. Compare this text with a secondary source account of D-Day. How does hearing a firsthand perspective shape the way you understand and reflect on the event?
6. *By the numbers*: How many service members from Bedford were lost at D-Day? Why was this significant?
7. *Quotation to consider*: How does the grandmother's remembrance help us understand the personal cost of war for the Bedford community?

Reading 3: Newspaper Article

Teacher Notes: In the opening paragraph, it describes the morning Elizabeth Teass received telegrams as “in late June or early July 1944.” In other sources such as the [Bedford Boys Homefront tour](#) by the National D-Day Museum, the date is identified as July 17, 1944.

Additionally, support in identifying the connections from Reading 3 to Reading 1 and 2, such as Fellers (author of Reading 1) and Roy Stevens (interviewee in Reading 2).

The following article contains mature content related to the violence and loss experienced during D-Day. Establishing discussion norms and preparing students in advance will help support respectful and thoughtful reflection.

40 years ago, Bedford Lost 23 of its own

Culpeper Star-Exponent, June 6, 1984

“Good morning, go ahead,” Bedford Western Union operator Elizabeth Teass typed into her teletype machine one morning in late June or early July 1944, telling the office she was ready to receive messages.

The 21-year-old Miss Teass watched in a kind of trance as the machine relentlessly rattled out the telegrams announcing the deaths of 16 Bedford men in the Omaha Beach landing on D-Day.

The men, all in their 20s, had been her peers, some her friends.

‘It was the first word we received that so many of them had been killed,’ she said.

As word of the casualties made its way around, the folks milling about town grew quiet. The booths and soda fountain in the usually lively Green’s Drugstore, where Western Union was based, had an eerie stillness, Miss Teass said.

‘Bedford was a sad town that day.’

Forty years ago on June 6, 35 Bedford men boarded landing craft bound for Omaha Beach as the first wave of soldiers hit the shoreline of Nazi-occupied France; 23 didn’t make it through the day; some never made the shore.

Of all towns in the nation with men in the invasion, Bedford, then a town of 3,000 people, suffered the highest casualty rate.

‘It was very hard for us to accept,’ said Mrs. Frank Woodford, whose brother, Taylor Fellers, died that day. ‘They’d been together and trained together for so long. Then when they got there, they didn’t even have a chance.’

The men, none older than 29, had composed Bedford's National Guard unit, which many had joined in the 1930s for the extra money and summer vacation.

'Most of us that hit the beach, we had been together at least 30-some months in England. We were mostly raised up together been to school together and everything right on through,' said Clyde Powers, a retired electrician whose brother died during the invasion.

The young men were excited when the call to war came after Pearl Harbor in late 1941, said Roy Stevens, whose twin brother, Ray, died during the assault. The Guard members had almost finished their tour of active duty when they were told they'd be in 'for the duration.'

The war, which had been raging in Europe for several years, had hit home.

'There was a challenge and some fascination. We were young and maybe we didn't know fear, didn't know the danger,' Stevens said.

As this 'bunch of farm boys' in Company A, 116th Infantry, 29th Division, trained at Fort Meade, Md., they began to think of themselves as one of the best infantry units in the Army.

'We were a proud outfit,' Stevens said, looking at a yellowed photograph of the company after it had completed training. 'Most anybody would have been proud to be in that outfit.'

Capt. Taylor Fellers wrote home in 194[3]: 'I'm beginning to think it's hard to beat a Bedford boy as a soldier.'

In 1942, those spirited, patriotic GIs left for England where they began training for 'Operation Overlord,' the allied invasion of France. For the next two years, while the Germans held France, they prepared for the massive assault.

The D-Day landings, which put 154,000 Allied soldiers in France, launched the major Allied offensive against Nazi-occupied Europe. They culminated in Germany's surrender and the end of the war in May 1945.

As D-Day approached, Nance said, the men in Company A, knowing they would be the assault company, were ready, almost eager for the invasion to begin.

'We even competed for a chance to go first,' said Ray Nance, a lieutenant in the company. 'That's the spirit this outfit had.'

We had trained for so long we were hoping this would be the real thing.'

Fellers, who had been in the hospital with a sinus infection, checked out early so he'd be sure to go in with his company, Powers said. Another man in the company went AWOL [absent without leave] from the hospital so he could make the landing.

It was 6:30 on a foggy, rainy June morning when the landing boats began bouncing through the choppy sea to the beach, beginning the largest amphibious attack in history.

‘We’d been in the service for three years. We were professionals by then only thing was that we hadn’t been in combat yet,’ Nance said.

Powers remembers: ‘I don’t think most realized what they was [sic] getting into. We had no concept of what was going to happen.’

According to some statistics, A Company suffered 96 percent casualties in the first 10 minutes of fighting. Almost everyone who made it to the shore was wounded.

Neither Powers nor Stevens reached the shore. Their boat sank before it hit the ground and they returned to England.

G. E. Overstreet, a retired building contractor, made it to the shore, only to begin what he calls ‘the longest day of my life.’

‘When we got off the boat, the guy in front of me, he got killed. I had a flamethrower and I dropped that, grabbed his rifle and took off.

‘I got behind a tank and stayed there until it got hit. I took off for the beach.’

As he struggled across the surf, weighed down by his wet, woolen uniform and equipment, Overstreet was shot in the abdomen. ‘I had to keep going,’ he said.

With only cursory medical attention, he lay on the beach until 4:30 the next morning. While bodies washed ashore around him, he lay there ‘scared to death.’

Overstreet doesn’t like to think about that day, which many historians have called quite simply ‘hell.’

‘Forty years, that’s a long time and you try to forget things like this.’

Nance, who landed 21 minutes behind Company A, tried to watch his company’s landing: ‘There was lots of noise and the Germans were raining down heavy fire. From what I could see, it looked like all them (Company A) were either killed or wounded.

‘It seemed like were the first ones there. They had taken the real fury.’

Nance, who was shot in the foot, dug in once he got ashore. Looking around, he realized that his company had suffered massive casualties.

‘There was a kind of numbing shock. When our own aid man came, he’d been clipping first-aid packets off the dead, he told me that he’d seen Capt. Fellers’ body. I was numbed,’ Nance said.

It was several days before Stevens, who was back in England, found out how many people from Bedford including his twin had died.

‘I went to the graveyard there and saw all the dog tags tacked onto the crosses.’

For Stevens and the other men all fierce patriots who believed in what they were doing those first moments when their grief and pride touched were confusing.

‘We was a crack (strong) outfit and we never got a chance to prove ourselves. That’s kind of what got me. There was no cover, nothing that day, just manpower,’ Stevens said.

‘Ray would’ve done it again. He would’ve gone to preserve what we have here in this country.’

The people back in Bedford, too, grieving as they were over their boys, didn’t question why they had fought and died.

Questions for Reading 3

1. How does Miss Teass describe the impact of the news of losses to Bedford?
2. Using the quotations and recollections from service members, describe motivations of the Bedford soldiers before D-Day from their perspectives.
3. Overstreet and Nance, quoted in the reading, both survived D-Day. Overstreet said, “. . . you try to forget things like this.” Why may these veterans have shared their histories for this article (and Stevens in Reading 2)? How do oral histories and veterans’ stories, like used in this article, help readers in the current day better understand their experiences?
4. Using the readings from across the lesson, reflect on the final sentence from the article: “The people back in Bedford, too, grieving as they were over their boys, didn’t question why they had fought and died.”

How do you believe the Bedford Boys impacted the actions of their family and friends in Bedford on the home front?

(Continue to reflect on this question while progressing through the other Bedford lessons.)

Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did the service and sacrifice of the Bedford Boys contribute to the Allied mission and affect their home front community?

Additional Resources

[Bedford Boys Homefront Tour](#) by the National D-Day Memorial

[Bedford Boys Tribute Center in Green's Drugstore, Bedford, Virginia](#)

[General Eisenhower and D-Day](#) by the Eisenhower National Historic Site (National Park Service)

[The Story About the National D-Day Memorial: About the Memorial and Bedford](#) by the National D-Day Memorial

Note: [Lesson 4](#) includes a reading from the dedication of the National D-Day Memorial and may be used to connect to this lesson.

Lesson 2: War Manufacturing in Bedford County, New York, World War II Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [Bedford County, Virginia, World War II Heritage City](#). This lesson includes readings and photographs that help learners understand the role of local wartime industries and training. The materials highlight specific products manufactured in the area and how they supported the Allied war effort. One reading shows on how local high schools partnered in training initiatives. An optional extension reading shares about local women advocating for equal pay during wartime employment.

Objectives:

1. Explain the impact of wartime manufacturing on workforce, training, and development in Bedford County.
2. Describe how local manufacturers contributed to the U.S. and the Allied forces, both in production and in fundraising campaigns.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 6-9 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (and optional extension)
3. *Recommended:* Map of Virginia, with Bedford County marked



Getting Started: Essential Question

How did industries and training in Bedford County contribute to the war effort on the home front?

Photos



Figure 6: Piedmont Label Company employees during the war. The company fulfilled orders for labels during wartime, such as shipping labels. Today it is Smyth factory, and is Bedford's oldest continually operating factory, having opened in 1919. (Courtesy of the Bedford Museum)

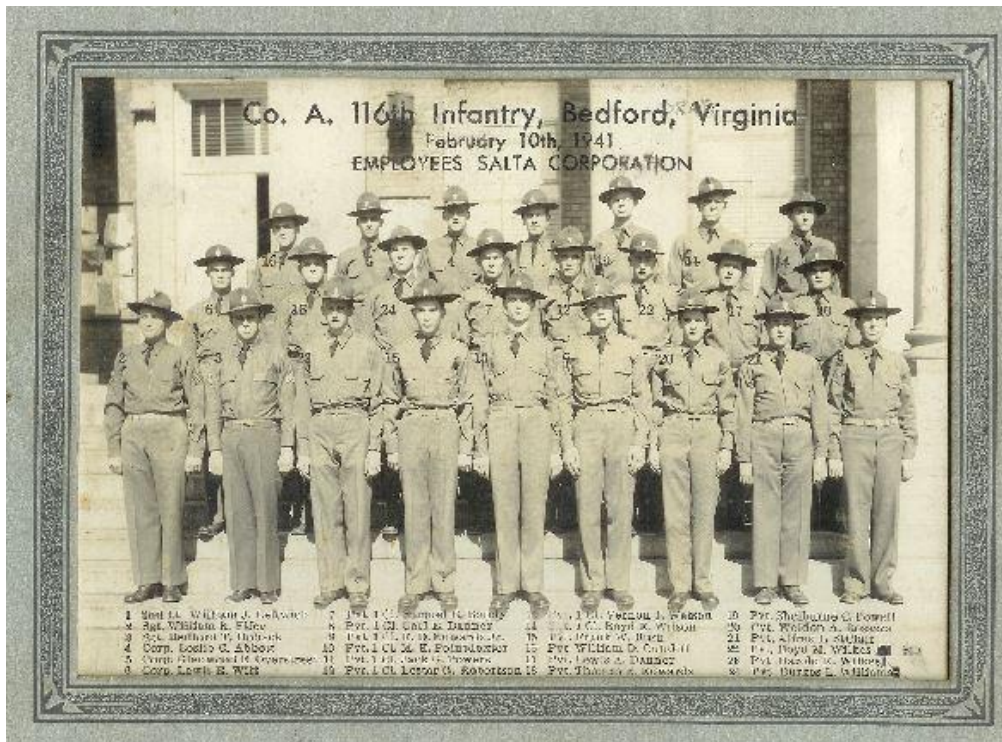


Figure 7: 24 of the men from Company A 116th Infantry in 1941 who worked for the Salta Corp., which became Rubatex Corp. (Courtesy of the Bedford Museum)



Figure 8: Employees from Rubatex, manufacturer of rubber products used during the war. (Courtesy of the National D-Day Memorial Museum)



Figure 9: Six local members of the Home Guard at the Bedford Woolen Mill, also known as the Hampton Looms Woolen Mill, about January 1941. One item produced by Hampton Looms was wool uniforms. (Credit: Bedford Museum)



By the numbers:

- Hampton Looms of Virginia, Inc., reported 338 of 344 employees (98.2%) were using a pay-roll allotment plan to purchase defense bonds in March 1942. This was a total of \$337.25 per week. Today, that amount would be roughly equivalent to more than \$6,500.
 - *The Bedford Bulletin*, March 5, 1942
- The Piedmont Label Company announced that 100% of employees were participating in the payroll allotment plan, investing regularly in defense stamps and bonds. At the time, there were 95 employees purchasing about \$200 per week in stamps and bonds (over \$3800 today).
 - *The Bedford Bulletin*, March 26, 1942
- By January 1943, the Piedmont Label Company had 20 employees in military service. The company erected a flag pole at the plant with an American flag and a service flag. The service flag had one star for each employee serving.
 - *The Bedford Bulletin*, January 7, 1943



Quotations to consider:

“The Electro Metallurgical Company, located at Holcomb Rock, has been issued a certificate by the U.S. Treasury Department in recognition of the company’s cooperation in the purchase of war stamps and bonds. Companies with 90 percent or more of its employees making systematic war savings purchases are entitled to such certificates. A.G. Cummings, chairman of War savings in Bedford county, said this is the fourth company in Bedford county employing a large group which has been awarded such certificates. The others are the Piedmont Label Company, The Hampton Looms of Virginia and the Bedford Pulp and Paper Company at Big Island.

Cummings said that the Johnson Cash Store, here, employing 22 people, was not only participating 100 percent in the pay roll allotment plan for war savings, but each employee is investing 10 percent of his earnings.”

- Holcomb Rock is Recipient of War Stamp Certificate, *The Bedford Bulletin*, July 16, 1942

“Bedford is the first municipality in Virginia to have 100 percent of its employees investing at least 10 percent of the gross pay roll regularly in War Bonds, Robert F. Nelson, State Administrator of the War Savings Staff, Treasury Department, has announced.

‘This is an outstanding accomplishment indeed, and I offer my heartiest congratulations to A. G. Cummings, chairman of the Bedford War Savings Committee, to all his workers, and to the municipal employees of Bedford who made this record possible. . .’

- “Employees of Bedford 100 percent Bond Buyers,” *The Bedford Bulletin*, October 29, 1942



Read to Connect

Background: The readings in this lesson do not include all examples of local wartime industry. Additional examples include Belding Hemingway producing rayon thread for parachutes, Southern Flavoring Company manufacturing parachute parts, and Bedford Pulp and Paper Company creating cardboard boxes used for shipping and storing gunpowder.

*The three readings are highlights of local industries and training and their contributions to wartime manufacturing. Also included are statistics on employee fundraising and campaign efforts (see *By the Numbers and Quotations to Consider* for more details). Many factory workers left to serve in the military, including the “Bedford Boys.” Women filled critical roles in these industries to help maintain production during the war.*

Reading 1: Newspaper Article

Bedford Plant Is Busy With War Orders

Virginia Rubatex Corporation Now Has 450 People Working

The Bedford Bulletin, January 30, 1941 (Roanoke Times)

It takes rubber to equip an army. Therein lies Bedford country’s contribution to the part Southwestern Virginia is playing in national defense preparations.

Rubber products are now being rapidly turned out by more than 450 workers at the plant of the Virginia Rubatex corporation located on the outskirts of the town of Bedford, the county seat of government.

There are small rubber devices – rubber in the modern fighting plane; the army engineers have perfected flotation pontoons or rubber, and there are rubber parts in the makeup of many another implement of warfare used by the soldier.

Four Years Old

Supplying the bulk of this material – in composition units made to order for the purposes they are intended – is the four-year-old Bedford industry.

Within the past year, the Virginia Rubatex corporation has seen its employment rolls double, its payroll increase in proportion, its production stepped up to a continuous operation and the value and diversity of its product greatly increased. Practically the entire plant is now occupied with filling government orders, and an ever more rapid output of orders on standing contracts awaits only the installation of additional equipment.

Last spring, until about the first of April, the enterprising little industry was confining its activities to the making of products it had perfected and for which it had built up a trade. Some of the goods sent out were for army use, but this was nothing unusual as the plant had been filling such orders for most of the years it had existed.

As April began, there were only about 300 persons on the local payroll, which was something less than \$2,000 weekly. The plant operated six days each week and then only during the daylight hours.

Today, by way of comparison, many of the products upon which the business was built and sustained during its first three years now play minor roles and have given way to the goods that have been labeled for national defense.

There are 460 persons employed by Rubatex now. For 385 of them – all on the local payroll – there is a total stipend of \$5,000 weekly. In addition, there are 75 government inspectors, drawing an estimated \$2,000 weekly total.

For the past five months, the plant has operated seven days each week, 24 hours per day. One day during this period – Christmas – the production of rubber devices ceased. Even then, necessary repairs and installations were made.

Gas mask parts are being turned out by the thousands. Big shipments of rubber composition material, to be used in building pontoons for the army's flotation division, are made from the Bedford source at frequent intervals. A light, durable substance used by airplane builders is being manufactured there and stands high on the priority list on which the production is governed.

Speed Up Production

Both in quality and in the value, the products made at Rubatex during one month at the present pace is equal to that put out during the entire year of 1938. That gives some idea of the change that has come over the plant since its early beginning. . .

Government orders for gas mask, airplane and bridge parts have an A-1 rating on the priority list at the Virginia Rubatex corporation's Bedford plant, but the little rubber products industry sticks by its first love – padding for football equipment.

Rubatex lays claim to making all the rubber padding that goes in football uniforms for the entire United States.

This represented a large part of the production before the defense contracts were awarded last year, and it is still important enough for manufacture alongside the implements now being made for Uncle Sam's soldiers.

Questions for Reading 1, By the Numbers, Quotations to Consider

1. How many workers were employed at the Virginia Rubatex Corporation by the end of January 1941 (the article publication date)?
2. Describe the connection between Rubatex's growth and national defense needs. How did operations and priorities change?
3. What types of military products were being manufactured at the Rubatex plant?
4. Why do you think the author highlighted the plant's continuous operations, pausing only on Christmas Day? What message might this have been intended to send to the readers at the time?

By the Numbers and Quotations to Consider

5. What patterns can be seen among local companies in how their employees participated in war bond and stamp programs? What do these suggest about values or expectations held by the community?

Reading 2: Newspaper Article

Bedford Helped Put Them Across

Materials From Local Industry Play Part in Crossing Roer

The Bedford Bulletin, May 24, 1945

Bedford industry helped American armies in Europe get across the rivers, especially those guarding the German frontier, and also supplied the gadget which enabled the B-29 super-bomber get into the air the first time at the testing grounds.

In a recent issue of Life magazine there were several pages of pictures showing the first crossing of the Roer River, one of the toughest obstacles the First and Ninth armies had to overcome before reaching the Rhine. These crossings were made by foot soldiers on

narrow pontoon bridges, just wide enough for the men to walk single file. The swift current, plus enemy artillery fire, wrecked many of these bridges, but the Life pictures reveal one significant fact – none of them sank. Many broke loose and floated down stream, but all of them remained afloat. Products of the Bedford plant of the Virginia Rubatex Company went into the making of these bridges and made them unsinkable.

When the first B-29 was all ready for its trial flight at an air base in Ohio it was discovered that one essential gadget was lacking. The order was placed with Rubatex and hurried delivery was urged. But before this small part could be turned out, equipment for its production had to be designed and made, and this part of the job was turned over to Tom North, local machinist, who stayed at his shop day and night until it was completed. Officials at the air base called up a day or two after the order was placed and said they would send a plane to Bedford to get the part when it was ready, but were told that it was already on its way by air mail.

The Rubatex plant's entire output for the past several years has gone to the army, navy and air forces, but the company management, the employees and Bedford people generally are especially proud of these two achievements mentioned here. They helped put our armies across European rivers and helped lift from the ground the giant planes which are now wrecking Japanese cities and war industries.

Questions for Reading 2

1. What were two examples of products from Bedford companies helping American armies?
2. How did a Bedford plant support the Roer River crossing?
3. What does the story of Tom North's work on the B-29 part show about the importance of home front efforts?
4. What message is the author trying to convey to readers?

Reading 3: Newspaper Article

Class to Train War Workers Is Beginning Monday

The Bedford Bulletin, October 29, 1942

A new class for training war production workers will be started at the Bedford high school, Monday night, November 2. Training in machine lathe operation, electric welding, oxy-acetylene welding, and bench metal work is being offered. Instruction will be given between the hours of seven p.m. and ten p.m., Monday through Friday nights for a ten week

period. Trainees must be at least 17 years of age. There is no maximum age limit. Women will also be admitted to classes.

A number of interested trainees have attended previous organization meetings and they are requested to be present Monday night as well as any other qualified persons who are willing to accept work in war production industries.

Each person will be registered with the U.S. Employment Service after training has begun. They will then be recommended for employment upon completion of the training program.

The course will be given free of charge. S. A. Cravotta, industrial arts teacher in the Bedford high school, will be the instructor.

J. L. Borden, Principal, Bedford High School

Questions for Reading 3

1. Why do you think the training program was held in the evenings?
2. What does the invitation of women and no maximum age limit in the program suggest about local labor needs during wartime?
3. How did the partnership between the high school and the U.S. Employment Service help prepare trainees for work in war industries?

Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did industries and training in Bedford County contribute to the war effort on the home front?

Extension

Additional reading: Newspaper Article

Business Women Discuss Problem of Pay Equality

The Bedford Bulletin, October 14, 1943

At the meeting of the Business and Professional Women's Club, Monday October 11th, the members discussed with lively interest the problem of 'Living on the Home Front,' and the necessity of every individual to meet these demands.

Women through the country are daily facing increased responsibilities and must find ways and means to utilize the highest degree of efficiency. To have a deep and sympathetic understanding of the burdens now carried by so many war workers, who struggle to maintain the family circle and home life, we must share a part of the struggle ourselves. This means a whole-hearted cooperation and a fellow feeling for the overtaxed shopkeeper and the many weary workers who serve the public as well as the civic jobs they carry.

Emphasizing the importance that women have 'equal pay for equal work,' and that skill and production alone should determine the wage rate, the National Federation urges a nationwide awakening to the adjustment of women in the industrial field. The Federation is asking Congress for a favorable vote on the 'Equal Rights Amendment' this fall.

At the conclusion of the meeting the president called the attention of the members to several radio programs of interest which will be featured by the national networks during National Business Women's Week.

Reading Questions

1. What was the topic of the club meeting?
2. How were women's roles on the home front changing?
3. Why might the National Federation have chosen to tie its advocacy for the Equal Rights Amendment to wartime labor?
4. How might this advocacy work have informed later efforts for equal rights, like the Equal Rights Amendment?

Lesson 3: Home Front Volunteerism in Bedford County, Virginia, World War II Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [Bedford County, Virginia, World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains readings and photos to support students to learn ways local civilians in Bedford contributed to war efforts. The readings include examples of youth volunteerism, such as participation in book drives and fundraising campaigns. The readings also include one on local salvage drives and a persuasive piece aimed at encouraging contributions to war loan drives.

Objectives:

1. Identify examples of ways local civilians in Bedford County contributed to home front causes.
2. Explain how volunteer efforts in Bedford County, such as material collections and war loan drives, supported the armed forces during the war.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 10-12 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3
3. *Recommended:* Map of Virginia, with Bedford County marked



Getting Started: Essential Question

How did civilians Bedford County support the war effort through volunteering and other home front activities?

Photos



Figure 10: The local American Legion volunteered in registering draftees, setting up aircraft observation posts, and purchasing defense bonds. Most served in World War I. From "Howard E. Board Legion Post Buys Defense Bonds," *The Bedford Bulletin*, Feb. 26, 1942.



Figure 11: An article from *The Bedford Bulletin* shares how one hundred utility bags and seven scrap books were sent to the Camp Pickett hospital by youth in the Junior Red Cross. There was also a need for knitters, work that could be done at home. August 17, 1944.

Text for Figure 11: "Junior Red Cross Makes Utility Bags. One hundred utility bags and seven scrap books, made by the Bedford Junior Red Cross, were sent to Camp Pickett hospital this week. Mrs. Harry Carder has sent out a call for more knitters. She points out that winter is coming and there will soon be a great need for the knitted articles made through the Red Cross. The number of volunteers doing this work has decreased sharply in recent months. All this work is done at home."

**How many boys from
BEDFORD COUNTY
won't come back?**

NOBODY knows the exact number. Nobody. But—
The number who do come back—on their own two feet instead of in a flag-draped box—will be in exact proportion to the job we do here at home.

For every minute that we can help shorten the war will mean more lives saved. (213 Americans were killed in the final day of the last war, and 1,114 were wounded before the 11:00 o'clock Armistice took effect.)

Now one way all of us can help shorten the war is to tighten our belts and buy more War Bonds. Yes, still more. And . . .

If you think you're buying all the War Bonds you are able to, imagine—for a minute—that it's after the war . . .

. . . you're standing at the station . . . a bunch of home-town boys, still in uniform, climb off the train . . . one of them kisses his wife and grabs his kid in his arms . . .

. . . and then he turns to a young woman beside them, a girl who looks like his wife's sister, and you overhear him say . . .

"Catherine, I don't know how to tell you how sorry I am . . . it's such a shame about Joe . . . it makes me sick all over when I think how he'd be here today if the war had only ended a week sooner."

Think it over. Can't you buy a few more War Bonds to help end the war that week or month sooner? Sure, it may mean giving up something, but what's that compared to what they're giving up? And remember, always—The money you "can't spare" may spare a soldier's life!

KEEP ON BACKING THE ATTACK!

This Advertisement is a Contribution to America's All-Out War Effort by

C. E. DUNHAM'S CASH GROCERY	GRIFFIN SHOE HOSPITAL	SPRADLIN & UPDIKE
B. W. DEAN, D. V. M.	LADY FAIR BEAUTY SHOP	POGUE'S, Inc.—Drugs
W. H. CHASE, Plumbing	BELDING-HEMINWAY CO.	JOHN RUSSELL HOSPITAL
VIRGINIA QUICK LUNCH	ARTHUR'S JEWELRY STORE	COFFEY & JOHNSON
GOODE'S SHOE SHOP	J. J. NEWBERRY CO	PEOPLES GARAGE, Inc.
F. D. BROWN & SON, Big Island	DUVAL MOTOR CO., Forest	RIVERSIDE LUNCH ROOM, Big Island
PIEDMONT BRANDS A. M. ELLIOTT, Mgr.	MARSTELLAR CORPORATION R. Q. OWEN, BEDFORD AGENT	MILL STONE TEA ROOM JES. C. S. OVERTREEK
J. S. McCAULEY, Goode	BANK OF BIG ISLAND	BEDFORD NEWS STORE
	HAAMPTON LOOMS OF VIRGINIA, Inc.	

Figure 12: An advertisement encouraging locals to buy war bonds was sponsored by many local companies and businesses: "How many boys from Bedford County won't come back? Keep on Backing the Attack!" An excerpt reads: "Think it over. Can't you buy a few more War Bonds to help end the war that week or month sooner? Sure, it may mean giving up something, but what's that compared to what they're giving up? And remember, always - the money you 'can't spare' may spare a soldiers' life!" (The Bedford Bulletin, Oct. 28, 1943)



By the numbers:

- By March 5, 1942, twelve schools in Bedford had 35% of students purchasing stamps or bonds. The total at the time was \$22,544.25. One week alone was \$781.05.
- “Stewartsville Leads In Defense Stamp Purchases In Schools,” *The Bedford Bulletin*, March 5, 1942
- In one salvage drive, local Girl Scouts collected 6,000 tin cans. The same drive collected over 7,000 pounds of waste paper as well.
- “Girl Scouts Salvage 6000 Cans In Drive,” *The Bedford Bulletin*, November 18, 1943



Quotations to consider:

“Definite progress has been made in organizing local volunteer emergency service during the past week. A permanent headquarters has been established in the town council room in the basement of the courthouse where information concerning the defense program and the tire rationing board can be obtained. . .

It is essential to remember that members of both the defense council and the tire rationing board are volunteer unpaid workers with other jobs as well as defense duties to perform, and that calling them at their places of business will make it hard for them to handle their extra responsibilities. If you have questions, call the defense headquarters.”

- “Appoints Heads of Defense Committees,” *The Bedford Bulletin*, January 29, 1942

Local women volunteered to make surgical dressings for the Red Cross at the local library, in a room designated for making them. An article in the *The Bedford Bulletin* on April 1, 1943 shared the quota for Bedford County was 90,000 dressings.

The mayor wrote, “. . .One or two of these dressings may mean the difference between life or death for an American soldier, perhaps your own son, husband or brother, or that of a neighbor. It is essential, therefore, Bedford County take care of the full quota of surgical dressings allotted to it and this can be done only if the women of the town and county volunteer their services more freely than they have in the past.”

- “Women Volunteers Still Needed for Surgical Dressings”



Read to Connect

*Teacher Note: The following two excerpts highlight how youth contributed to the war. You can use one or both to show youth involvement on the home front. Additional examples can be found in *By the Numbers*.*

The Everette School, mentioned in Part B, was a segregated school for African American students, as the schools in Bedford County were at the time. The label used to describe the school in the text reflects discriminatory terms used at the time.

Reading 1: Newspaper Excerpts

Examples of Youth Volunteerism

Part A: Junior Red Cross Will Continue Book Campaign

The Bedford Bulletin, March 12, 1942

One hundred books have been gathered to date through the efforts of the Junior Red Cross which sponsored the local Victory book campaign. It is hoped that an additional hundred will be added during the next ten days during which the boxes will be kept at Lyle and Jones' Drug Stores, for convenience of donors.

When the drive is over, the University of Virginia will send its bookmobile to Bedford to pick up the entire lot, and distribute them in army camps. Not only is there a need for recreational reading but many of the soldiers are trying to keep up their studies along with their new duties, and therefore professional books of all kinds, scientific and vocational books are needed, also. This is a patriotic service in which every home in Bedford, town and county, has the opportunity to make a worthwhile contribution.

Part B: Schools Buy Jeeps For Victory

Seven High Schools Participate in War Bond Campaign

The Bedford Bulletin, May 13, 1943

Seven of the Bedford county high schools participating in the Schools at War Jeep Campaign, conducted during the six weeks period ending April 30, bought thirteen jeeps for victory. Approximately \$900 is required to finance the purchase of each of these useful military transports. The campaign was carried on by the students and was financed through sale of War Savings Bonds and Stamps.

A total to date of \$44,343,57 in war bonds and stamps owned by pupils and purchased during session 1942 – '43 is shown by reports sent into school board office during the

month of April. The schools participating to date in (the) jeep campaign are: Bedford, Boonsboro, Stewartsville, New London, Huddleston, Marcuse and Montvale.

Everette negro school in Forest district enjoys the unique distinction of having its pupils reporting first the buying of a war bond by collective effort, for their school itself. This bond will be made out to the school board for Everette school and will be used, ultimately for some permanent improvement for said school. Everette, taught by Mrs. Ella Davenport, has always done a good job of community work, having active junior and senior community leagues.

Questions for Reading 1 and By the Numbers

Part A

1. Who collected books, and from where?
2. How did the collection of books support the military?

Part B

3. How did students raise money for the Jeep campaign?
4. Why was the Everette School's effort notable?

Synthesize: Reading 1 and By the Numbers

5. Compare the ways in which youth contributed to the war effort. What do these examples show about the role of youth on the home front in Bedford County?

Reading 2: Newspaper Article

Teacher Note: The article [Material Drives on the World War II Home Front](#) (National Park Service) may be used to learn more about material drives and their purpose.

What to Save and How to Save It

Campaign Against Waste of Paper and Other Materials is Imperative

The Bedford Bulletin, January 29, 1942

One of the most imperative needs of national defense, at present, is a campaign against waste of usable materials. The conservation of paper, metals, rubber and rags is of foremost importance to prevent a shortage which may be drastic in its results. To meet this need in Bedford, Mrs. Wesley Smith has been appointed by the local defense council chairman of waste prevention and salvage. She has arranged for the town truck to collect paper from business houses and factories on Wednesday and for the Rubatex truck to collect from private homes on Friday. The Rubatex truck, however, will only come on call,

until the residential section is organized more thoroughly. If you have saved paper and have a large supply on hand, telephone Mrs. Smith, 5831, and she will arrange for the truck to come by on Friday. It must be set before 10:00 o'clock a.m.

Newspapers and magazines should be tied in bundles. Scrap paper should be spread out flat between newspapers and magazines so that it can be tied up also. Any scraps that are too small to be incorporated into the bundle need not be saved. Paper cartons, such as butter comes in, cracker boxes and other paper containers should be spread flat and tied in the bundle.

Metals of every kind should be saved and it is requested that these be kept in the home until Mrs. Smith announces what disposition to make of them. Garden tools, kitchen utensils, toothpaste tubes, wire fencing, tire chains, batteries, hangers, all come under metals to be saved. Tin cans and razor blades are no good – don't save them.

Burlap bags in good condition, old rags and any discarded rubber articles come under the heading of things to save. The public will be notified shortly what to do with these.

This campaign to conserve materials in which a shortage threatens will not be for one week or even two. It will be for the duration of the war and perhaps longer. Each citizen is, therefore, requested to organize his own household so there will be a minimum waste. This will be a continuing program to get all needed waste materials into circulation in a steady orderly flow. Your part will be to save metals, rubber, paper and rags, and turn them in when and as requested. When the salvage system is completely organized, you should be able to turn in your waste materials as regularly as you now put out your garbage.

Questions for Reading 2

1. What materials were locals asked to save for the war effort?
2. Why were these types of materials saved?
3. How was the collection of salvaged materials organized in Bedford? Include the role of the defense council and Rubatex trucks. (*The defense council is also referenced in the Quotations to Consider.*)
4. How may the collection of items for material drives impacted daily routines of families?

Reading 3: Newspaper Article

Back Bedford County Boys

The Bedford Bulletin, September 16, 1943

Advertising the third War Loan drive, a banner across Bridge Street urges the people to 'Back Bedford County Boys' at the front by 'Buying More War Bonds.' From the local point of view that banner tells much of the story. It makes the war a personal thing to us. Some two thousand Bedford county boys and men are in the armed service of their country and can be found on every active front and on every continent. They are our fighting men and they are fighting our battles, and we fail them miserably, not to say traitorously and criminally, if we do not give to our common cause the same full measure of devotion and support they are giving.

It would be a foolish thing to expect a group of men to operate farms, factories and mills without the equipment required for the particular job to be done. The finest farm in the land is useless unless its possibilities for production are made real and active by the application of manpower, equipment, fertilizer and seed. The same is true of an army, navy or air force. These are the forces we are depending upon to bring us victory in this war, but they cannot accomplish the task we have set for them unless we supply everything needed for their effective and successful use. Better by far that no American fighting force be recruited and sent out to fight if we at home remain so engrossed in our own personal affairs and pleasures that we fail to give the backing they must have to win battles.

Buying War Bonds, incidentally, is just one of the ways open to the American people to back up the fighting men at the front, though it is one of the most important and necessary ways. Your money will ensure that your fighting son or brother is supplied with arms, equipment and food and everything that can be devised for his health and safety, but more than that is required to guarantee that his morale is kept high and that his courage does not falter. He must have the consciousness that the people back home see the war as he sees it; that they are ordering their lives in every particular toward complete unity in support of the war; that they are not evading or sidestepping measures which have become necessary in order that the full power of the nation can be organized and directed to the one purpose of winning the war as quickly as possible; that they are submitting patriotically to such restrictions and inconveniences as may be required of them, and are contributing their full share in work and sacrifice in prosecution of the war, which has the same meaning for all alike, soldier and civilian.

Buy War Bonds because your money is needed by the treasury to ensure that the men at the front are equipped with the best arms and supplied with all the other things required for their comfort and safety, but do not neglect the other duties demanded of you by reason of the fact that your country is at war. Your soldier at the Front will be heartened by the knowledge that you at home are shirking none of your responsibilities.

Questions for Reading 3

1. What message was on the banner?
2. According to the author, why is buying War Bonds considered one of the most important ways to support the war effort?
3. What argument is the author making about the responsibilities of civilians on the home front?
4. How does the author appeal to the emotions and sense of duty of people in Bedford?

Extension Question

5. Compare this article to modern efforts to encourage civic participation, such as public health campaigns or disaster relief. How are these campaigns similar or different?

Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did civilians Bedford County support the war effort through volunteering and other home front activities?

Lesson 4: Bedford County, Virginia: Comparing and Connecting WWII Home Front Cities

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, [Bedford County, Virginia](#), designated as a [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains photographs, readings and a culminating project. The first reading is a speech from the dedication of the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford and it connects the story of local service members, the “Bedford Boys,” to national service during the war. Quotations and statistics in the lesson also connect to civilian home front contributions. These topics can be explored more in the other Bedford County lessons on [manufacturing](#) and [volunteerism](#). The second reading connects the region to the designation of a Heritage City. The culminating project supports students’ overall understandings of Bedford County as a WWII Heritage City, with the opportunity to combine lesson themes from across the Bedford County lesson collection. This is to summarize the city’s contributions and encourage connections to the overall U.S. home front efforts.

Objectives:

In a culminating product:

- a. Explain the service and sacrifice of the “Bedford Boys.”
- b. Describe examples of home front defense manufacturing and training in Bedford County and the impact to the Allied efforts.
- c. Identify examples of local contributions and volunteerism to home front wartime efforts, including that of youth.
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Bedford County and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 13-16 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, & optional media activity links

3. Maps, project materials (as needed)
4. Student graphic organizers (See Figure 17 at end of lesson, for reference)
 - Create Comparison Matrices for your students to use. To compare two cities, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows. Label the left column Theme/Topic and the other columns City 1 and City 2. For a Comparison Matrix for three cities simply add an additional column.
 - Create two Single-Point Rubrics to assist students' self-assessment. One is for assessing proficiency in meeting teacher-selected standards. One is for assessing proficiency in meeting objectives.
 - For the rubric on standards, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows of content. Label the first column "Areas for Improvement," the second column, "Proficient (Meeting Standard)," and the third column, "Areas of Exceeding Standard." Leave the first and third columns blank. In each row of the second column identify a Standard and indicate a space for noting the evidence for meeting the standard. Include a space at the bottom of the page for assigning points for each column.
 - For the rubric on objectives, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows of content. Label the first column "Areas for Improving toward Objective," the second column, "Proficient (Meeting Objective)," and the third column, "Areas of Exceeding Objective." Leave the first and third columns blank. In the four rows of the second column identify these four objectives:
 - a. Explain the service and sacrifice of the "Bedford Boys."
 - b. Describe examples of home front defense manufacturing and training in Bedford County and the impact to the Allied efforts.
 - c. Identify examples of local contributions and volunteerism to home front wartime efforts, including that of youth.
 - d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Bedford County and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

Include a space at the bottom of the page for assigning points for each column. See the last photo of this lesson for reference.



Getting Started: Essential Question

Why was Bedford County chosen as a World War II Heritage City, and what are its similarities and differences to other home front cities?

Photos



Figure 13: 116th Regiment, comprised of "Bedford Boys." (Courtesy of the National D-Day Memorial)



Figure 14: The Hoback brothers, part of the "Bedford Boys," visiting with their mom, dad, brothers, and sisters prior to deployment. Both were killed in the D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944. The Hoback brothers are also referenced in Reading 1. (Courtesy of the National D-Day Memorial)

People of BEDFORD

Our Quota in the 7th War Loan is \$565,000



**Can we make it?
 We'll tell the world we can!**

Does that figure sound big, neighbor? Well, those Super-forts that are plastering Japan are big—and cost plenty. Battleships are big—and cost millions. The job our fighting men are doing is big—and the cost is staggering.

So, of course, our job is big. But we can do it if you and every other patriotic American in this city buy a bigger bond than before... or!... a bigger portion of income in War Bonds now!

Study the chart on the right. See what your country expects you to do in the 7th War Loan. Remember, you are part of America—a part of America's might!

FIND YOUR QUOTA... AND MAKE IT!		
IF YOUR AVERAGE WAGE PER MONTH IS:	YOUR PERSONAL WAR BOND QUOTA IS (CASH VALUE)	MATURITY VALUE OF 7TH WAR LOAN BOND PURCHASE
\$200	\$17.50	1
250-299	18.00	1
300-349	19.25	1
350-399	21.00	1
400-449	22.75	1
450-499	25.00	1
500-549	27.25	2
Under \$100	12.50	2

**Pour out Your Might in the
 MIGHTY SEVENTH!**



Your War Bonds Are Like
READY CASH

War Bonds are your safest investment. Safe in principal... safe in return. You get \$4 for every \$3 you invest, at maturity.

This Advertisement is a Contribution to America's All-Out War Effort by

LEGGETTS DEPARTMENT STORE MCGHEE'S CASH GROCERY DUVAL MOTOR COMPANY ELKS SERVICE STATION PEOPLES GARAGE, INC. BELDING HEMINWAY Co. JOHNSON'S CASH STORES	RAY MARTIN D. E. DAVIS W. R. DEBO PEOPLES NEWS BAR R. S. TURNER S. W. LINDSAY & SONS MARTIN'S GROCERY BEDFORD CITY MILLS	WESTERN AUTO ASSOCIATE STORE PIEDMONT STORES, INC. LAZENBY & WINGFIELD BURKS HARWARE Co. BEDFORD NEWS STORE MRS. L. A. BROMENA H. A. GILLS & COMPANY
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Figure 15: An advertisement by local Bedford businesses encouraged locals to contribute to the 7th War Loan drive to meet a quota of \$565,000. It included the question "Can we make it? We'll tell the world we can!" From The Bedford Bulletin, June 21, 1945.



Figure 16: The names of the American service members killed on D-Day are found on the wall on the western side Estes Plaza at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, VA. Names of fallen Allies appear on the eastern wall. (Courtesy of the National D-Day Memorial)



Quotations to consider: Volunteerism over time

1942

“A campaign is on for the donation of books for the armed forces, sponsored by the American Red Cross, the American library association and the United Service organization (U.S.O.). A donation of ten million books for the boys in the U.S. training camps and ‘The only place to get them is from your book cases,’ said Mrs. Edward D. Gregory, chairman, who has just organized the Junior Red Cross in the Bedford school.”

- “Victory Book Campaign,” *Bedford Bulletin*, Feb. 12, 1942

“Those interested in salvaging waste paper for defense are distressed to see that paper is still being poured into the garbage truck, an indication many are not awake to the necessity of saving even bits of paper for the defense of the nation.

The town of Bedford has been divided into communities with a person designated in each community to give information concerning the disposal of waste paper. . . Any person or

business having a truck may help in this patriotic work and it is expected that others will volunteer.”

- “Save Paper and Aid Defense,” *Bedford Bulletin*, Feb. 12, 1942

2001

“On Saturday, Nov. 27, Bedford’s own National Guard Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 29th Infantry Division will be leaving Bedford on a one year out of country deployment to Africa. This deployment is part of the continuing military ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ part of America’s global war on terrorism in response to the Sept. 11 attacks. . . . Alpha Company’s first deployment as a company was in Feb. 1941 when they were called up for what was supposed to be a year of training. That got extended when Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor.

To provide ‘home front’ support to the 130 soldiers in Alpha Company and their families during their deployment, the Bedford Boys Tribute Center is beginning ‘Operation Bedford Remembers.’ . . .

When you adopt a soldier, you will be given his rank, full name, birthday, and hometown. Also you will be given special ‘Operation Bedford Remembers’ writing stationary and envelopes to use. Our soldiers continually serve to ensure our freedoms; now is our time to thank them for their service by physically covering their back on the ‘Home front’ while they are gone. . . .”

- “Bedford Boys Tribute Center begins ‘Operation Bedford Remembers,’ *The Bedford Bulletin*, November 24, 2001



By the numbers:

In a local article on agricultural needs in 1943, it stated that “Food must be produced, first for the men bearing arms, then for the allies, the liberated peoples and for the people at home,” and emphasized that “There is a critical need for food, the more food that is produced, the less blood will be shed by American boys.”

Bedford County farmers were facing shortages of labor, machinery, and fertilizer, but were still called upon to boost agricultural production. Examples included an **8%** increase in milk production, a **3.4%** increase in egg output, and an expansion of soybean acreage from **600 to 1,000 acres**.

- “Bedford’s 1943 Production Goals are Announced,” *Bedford Bulletin*, Jan. 7, 1943

“While this plan has been encouraged by the management, the campaign for ‘An all-out for Victory’ is waged by the employees themselves. With **98.2** percent of the employees participating in the plan, this week, one employee stated that he was sure there would be 100 percent in a short time.”

- “On Hampton Looms’ employee contributions,” *The Bedford Bulletin*, March 5, 1942

Reading 1: Presidential Speech at the Dedication of the National D-Day Memorial

Background: The following are excerpts from a speech by the former President George W. Bush, given at the dedication of the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia, on June 6, 2001. To learn more about the Bedford Boys and their service, use [Lesson 1](#).

President George W. Bush: You have raised a fitting memorial to D-Day, and you have put it in just the right place—not on a battlefield of war, but in a small Virginia town, a place like so many others that were home to the men and women who help liberate a continent.

Our presence here, 57 years removed from that event, gives testimony to how much was gained and how much was lost. What was gained that first day was a beach, and then a village, and then a country. And in time, all of Western Europe would be freed from fascism and its armies.

The achievement of Operation Overlord is nearly impossible to overstate, in its consequences for our own lives and the life of the world. Free societies in Europe can be traced to the first footprints on the first beach on June 6, 1944. What was lost on D-Day we can never measure and never forget. When the day was over, America and her allies had lost at least 2,500 of the bravest men ever to wear a uniform.

Many thousands more would die on the days that followed. They scaled towering cliffs, looking straight up into enemy fire. They dropped into grassy fields sown with land mines. They overran machine gun nests hidden everywhere, punched through walls of barbed wire, overtook bunkers of concrete and steel. The great journalist Ernie Pyle said, ‘It seemed to me a pure miracle that we ever took the beach at all. The advantages were all theirs, the disadvantages all ours.’ ‘And yet,’ said Pyle, ‘we got on.’

A father and his son both fell during Operation Overlord. So did 33 pairs of brothers -- including a boy having the same name as his hometown (Bedford City), Bedford T. Hoback, and his brother Raymond. Their sister, Lucille, is with us today. She has recalled that Raymond was offered an early discharge for health reasons, but he turned it down. "He didn't want to leave his brother," she remembers. "He had come over with him and he was going to stay with him."

Both were killed on D-Day. The only trace of Raymond Hoback was his Bible, found in the sand. Their mother asked that Bedford be laid to rest in France with Raymond, so that her sons might always be together.

Perhaps some of you knew Gordon White, Sr. He died here just a few years ago, at the age of 95, the last living parent of a soldier who died on D-Day. His boy, Henry, loved his days on the family farm, and was especially fond of a workhorse named Major. Family members recall how Gordon just couldn't let go of Henry's old horse, and he never did. For 25 years after the war, Major was cherished by Gordon White as a last link to his son, and a link to another life.

Upon this beautiful town fell the heaviest share of American losses on D-Day -- 19 men from a community of 3,200, four more afterwards. When people come here, it is important to see the town as the monument itself. Here were the images these soldiers carried with them, and the thought of when they were afraid. This is the place they left behind. And here was the life they dreamed of returning to. They did not yearn to be heroes. They yearned for those long summer nights again, and harvest time, and paydays. They wanted to see Mom and Dad again, and hold their sweethearts or wives, or for one young man who lived here, to see that baby girl born while he was away.

Bedford has a special place in our history. But there were neighborhoods like these all over America, from the smallest villages to the greatest cities. Somehow they all produced a generation of young men and women who, on a date certain, gathered and advanced as one, and changed the course of history. Whatever it is about America that has given us such citizens, it is the greatest quality we have, and may it never leave us.

In some ways, modern society is very different from the nation that the men and women of D-Day knew, and it is sometimes fashionable to take a cynical view of the world. But when the calendar reads the 6th of June, such opinions are better left unspoken. No one who has heard and read about the events of D-Day could possibly remain a cynic. Army Private Andy Rooney was there to survey the aftermath. A lifetime later he would write, 'If you think the world is selfish and rotten, go to the cemetery at Colleville overlooking Omaha Beach. See what one group of men did for another on D-Day, June 6, 1944.'

Fifty-three hundred ships and landing craft; 1,500 tanks; 12,000 airplanes. But in the end, it came down to this: scared and brave kids by the thousands who kept fighting, and kept climbing, and carried out General Eisenhower's order of the day -- nothing short of complete victory.

For us, nearly six decades later, the order of the day is gratitude. Today we give thanks for all that was gained on the beaches of Normandy. We remember what was lost, with respect, admiration and love. . ."

Questions for Reading 1, Photos, and Quotations to Consider

1. What is the context for this speech? How is it connected to Bedford County, Virginia?
2. What is the story of the Hoback brothers? (*Referenced in the speech and the Figure 14 image.*)
3. Reread this sentence: "When people come here, it is important to see the town as the monument itself."
4. What do you think this means in relation to the story of the Bedford Boys and the community's contributions during the war?
5. Select a sentence from the speech that is meaningful to you. What makes this sentence stand out to you?
6. Look at the dates of the speech in Reading 1 and the second quote in Quotations to Consider. How do these examples show that Bedford County continues to honor and share the story of the Bedford Boys' service today?

Reading 2: Heritage City Designation

Excerpt from: "[House Report 115-998](#), "To Direct the Secretary of the Interior to Annually Designate at Least One City in The United States as An 'American World War II Heritage City,' and for other purposes" (October 30, 2018)

". . .PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 6118 is to direct the Secretary of the Interior to annually designate at least one city in the United States as an "American World War II Heritage City".

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

On December 7, 1941, military forces of the Empire of Japan attacked the U.S. Naval Fleet and ground bases at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. On December 8, 1941, one day after what President Roosevelt referred to as, "a date which will live in infamy," the United States declared war against the Empire of Japan. Three days later, on December 11, 1941, Japan's ally, Germany, declared war on the United States. Sixteen million Americans, mostly young working-age men, served in the military during World War II, out of an overall United States population of 113 million.

While an unprecedented number of Americans served in World War II, the country drastically increased its war production on the home front, serving not only the needs of the armed forces of the United States but her allies as well--in what President Franklin Roosevelt called "The Arsenal of Democracy." The combination of millions serving in the

military, during a period of necessary and drastic increases in production, led to significant social changes on the American home front.

The World War II period resulted in the largest number of people migrating within the United States in the history of the country. Individuals and families relocated to industrial centers for good paying jobs out of a sense of patriotic duty. Many industrial centers became “boomtowns,” growing at phenomenal rates. One example, the City of Richmond, California, grew from a population of under 24,000 to over 100,000 during the war. . .”

Questions for Reading 2, Quotations to Consider, and Photos

1. What was the purpose of the bill (H.R. 6118) according to the report?
2. Why do you think Bedford County was designated as a World War II Heritage City? Connect details from the bill and evidence from the first reading, and/or other readings from the Bedford County lessons.
3. Examine the lesson photos and Quotations to Consider. Describe the connections of these sources to Bedford County’s designation as a Heritage City.
4. Are there other cities you think of when considering home front contributions during wartime? Which, and why?

Extension

5. Although Bedford County was not a “boomtown,” it did contribute to wartime production and home front needs through manufacturing and volunteerism. Review and summarize examples of these efforts using readings from [Lesson 2](#) and [Lesson 3](#).

Optional Media Activities

The following media activities may be used to connect to Reading 1 in this lesson and [Lesson 1](#) on the Bedford Boys and D-Day. Students may also use these resources for their culminating activity / mastery product.

Virtual Tour of the National D-Day Memorial

Students can take a [virtual tour](#) of the National D-Day Memorial. Students may also use the National D-Day Memorial’s [“Map and Walking Tour”](#) brochure as a visual support and for more information.

Bedford Boys Homefront Map

Explore locations connected to the home front and the Bedford Boys at "[Bedford Boys Homefront Tour](#)," by the National D-Day Memorial. Additional information and resources on the Bedford Boys can be found on their website as well.

Culminating Activity/Mastery Product

To demonstrate student understanding, support students in creating a final product that meets the following objectives:

- a. Explain the service and sacrifice of the "Bedford Boys."
- b. Describe examples of home front defense manufacturing and training in Bedford County and the impact to the Allied efforts.
- c. Identify examples of local contributions and volunteerism to home front wartime efforts, including that of youth.
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Bedford County and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

Mastery products should be:

- . . . **student-led**; Students work as individuals or in collaborative groups.
- . . . **student-directed**: Students are offered a variety of choices for product type.
- . . . **student-organized**; Teacher facilitates by providing students with the comparison matrices and/or resource links from throughout the series of lessons.
- . . . **student-assessed**; Teacher supports student self-assessment and reflection by providing students single-point rubrics to assess for meeting standards and/or lesson objectives.

Note: Depending on time and scope, the comparison of Bedford County, Virginia to another WWII Heritage or home front city(s) within the mastery product (objectives) may be omitted. However, comparing cities is recommended, as it connects students to a deeper understanding of the WWII home front.

Examples of mastery product choices include, but are not limited to:

- **Written**: Letter (opinion or informative), essay, poem, narratives, biography, articles, class book or children's book, speech or debate (then presented orally), blog / website, plaque or historical displays, pamphlets or rack cards

- **Graphic Organizers:** timeline, flowcharts, mind or concept content maps, Venn diagrams, comparison matrices, posters
- **Artistic Expression:** song, dance, theater (ex. skits), 3-D models, dioramas, photo journal, stamp and coin designs, visual art, architecture/building or monument, museum design
- **Media design and creation:** podcast, historical markers, social media content, interactive virtual maps or tours, infographics, video, comic strips or graphics, game design, slideshows, digital scrapbook

Please view the [NPS Heritage cities lesson collection](#) for information and resources on other cities.

Single-Point Rubric

Areas for Improvement	Proficient (Meeting Standard)	Areas of Exceeding Standard
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
Points		

Figure 17: Single-Point Rubric (Standards; Blank) [Teacher selects priority standards for assessment.] Courtesy of Sarah Nestor Lane

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