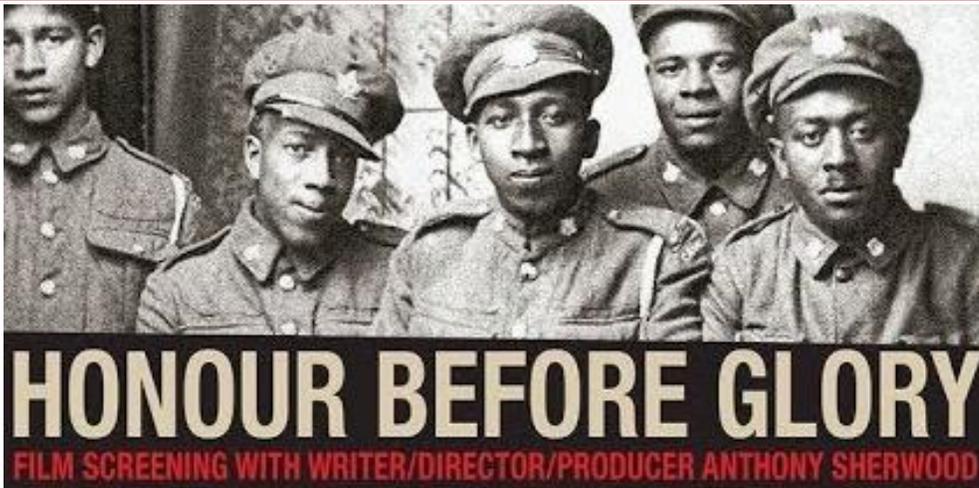


LESSON PLANS & STUDENT ACTIVITIES

LESSON OUTCOMES:

- Learn about the No. 2 Construction Battalion, or “Black Battalion”
- Develop an understanding of history as a constructed narrative that is unavoidably incomplete and subject to continual revision

BACKGROUND:

At 7 p.m. on Feb. 15, 2018, Valour Canada and The Military Museums Foundation, in celebration of Black History Month, welcomed Mr. Anthony Sherwood to The Military Museums to speak about the No. 2 Construction Battalion and the challenges they faced during the First World War. His docudrama, *Honour Before Glory*, is the story of Canada’s one and only all-black military battalion formed during the First World War. It is based on the diary of Captain William White, the battalion’s Chaplain and Sherwood’s Great Uncle.

ACTIVITY:

Verbally or in writing, discuss how the three quotes on the student activity page below are connected to each other, and how they are connected to the docudrama *Honour Before Glory*. Collectively, what do the quotes indicate about the discipline of history?

TEACHER NOTES:

This activity is intended to help students explore the nature of the discipline of history.

Concepts that may come forward during this exploration:

- History is created, not uncovered
- There are better and worse accounts of history; no 'true' and complete historical narrative exists
- History can be told through many lenses
- Some voices of history are never heard, some are actively repressed
- Historians and even historical sources differ widely in their interpretations. Differing perspectives can be correct to varying degrees

Objectives:

Our Intention is to educate Canadian Citizens so that they:

- » *Appreciate the role of our military heritage in protecting Canadian interests, values and beliefs.*
- » *Understand the role our military history has had in shaping our country and the world.*
- » *Are inspired to be engaged and well-informed participatory citizens of Canada.*

Intended Student Body:
High School &
Advanced Placement

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

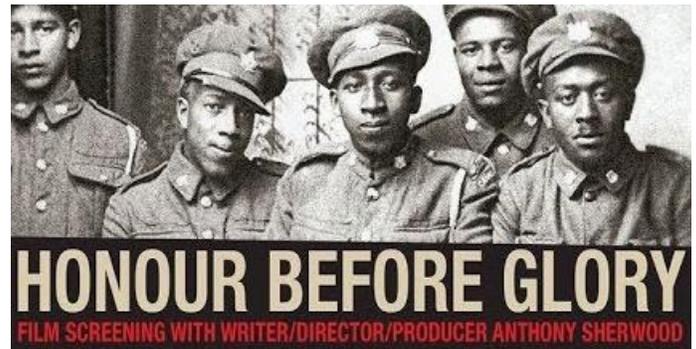
- Honour Before Glory Lecture: <https://valourcanada.ca/video-documentaries/honour-before-glory/> (36 minutes)
- Student Activity Sheet (see below)

OPTIONAL RESOURCES:

- Part 1 of the docudrama: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKZsJuOXiNI> (28 mins)
- Further information about the docudrama: <http://anthonysherwood.com/portfolio-item/honour-before-glory/>

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RESOURCES:

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ACTIVITY:

Verbally or in writing, discuss how the three quotes below are connected to each other, and how they are connected to the docudrama *Honour Before Glory*. Collectively, what do the quotes indicate about the discipline of history?

“This was a rare document, the diary, because it was a first-hand account of what was happening to these soldiers [in the “Black Battalion”] that nobody knew about. This stuff is not in military records, folks. The army wasn’t going to tell you that they weren’t giving them socks, weren’t giving them underwear, they worked them day and night, they didn’t take care of them when they were sick.”

– Anthony Sherwood, director of *Honour Before Glory*, from February 15th, 2018, recorded lecture, 17m40s

“I went into this investigation imagining history to be a unified narrative, free of debate, which, once uncovered, would simply verify everything I had always suspected...The trouble came almost immediately. I did not find a coherent tradition marching lockstep but instead factions, and factions within factions...I had come looking for a parade, for a military review of champions marching in ranks. Instead I was left with a brawl of ancestors, a herd of dissenters, sometimes marching together but just as often marching away from one another.”

– Ta-Nehisi Coates, from *Between the World and Me*, Spiegel & Grau, New York, 2015, p. 48, a work examining racial injustice and American History

“The past is everything that has happened and can never be recounted in its totality. History is the telling of what happened and is by nature selective in that telling. In creating a historical narrative, by identifying what we include and exclude and by making judgements about the merits of various actions, we make sense of the past and signal what it is important to know. The history we create depends on our present situation and purposes. This history, unlike the past, is never static—it changes with emerging values, ideas, and audiences.”

– *Teaching Historical Thinking Revised and expanded edition*, The Critical Thinking Consortium, 2017, p.3