

# VETERANS DAY LESSON PLAN

## 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grades



**Cathay Williams**  
**Buffalo Soldier**



**Frances Hook**  
**Union Soldier**



# Wreaths Across America

## Lesson Plan

Teacher:	Date:
Grade: 4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson: Veterans Day, Unlikely Warriors

<p><b>OBJECTIVES:</b> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.7; 5.7          Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.8          Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.8          Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work.</p>	<p><b>STRATEGIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Drawing/Coloring</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Think/Pair/Share</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Questions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small Groups</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Large Group</li> </ul>
<p><b>MATERIALS:</b></p>	<p>Computer/laptop; internet (with access to YouTube); Smart Board; Copies of Female Veterans-The Stories of Cathay Williams and Frances Hook; Copies of Reading Comprehension Questions Female Veterans The Stories of Cathay Williams and Frances Hook; Copies of the Medal Coloring Sheet; Copies of Tags the Dog Picture Puzzle</p>
<p><b>Engage:</b> Hook the students</p>	<p>Show the History of Armistice/Veterans Day PowerPoint located <a href="#">HERE</a>          Think/Pair/Share Activity- Pair the students with a partner. Explain the T/P/S directions. The students will think of their answer, get with their partner, and share their answer.          Explain to students: a veteran is a person who has served in the military.  <b>T/P/S Questions:</b> What do you think of when you hear the word veteran? Do you have family members who have served in the military? Are any of them female?  <b>Explain</b> women could not officially serve in the military until 1948. Out of the 19 million veterans in the United States today, 2 million are women. But the formal legislation allowing women into the military was not passed until <b>1948</b> (even though tens of thousands had served in both world wars, and women like Harriet Tubman and Mary Walker had served in the Civil War as nurses, spies, and even soldiers disguised as men like the two you will learn about today).</p>
<p><b>Explore:</b> Students make sense of a concept through observations.</p>	<p>Handout copies of Female Veterans-The Stories of Cathay Williams and Frances Hook Reading Activity and the Reading Comprehension Questions Female Veterans The Stories of Cathay Williams and Frances Hook. Students will read the stories of the two women. When the students have completed reading the text, the students will complete the Reading Comprehension Questions Worksheet. Students will complete the Tags the Dog Picture Puzzle, and color the Veterans Medal coloring sheet. Students will write a Thank You note to a Veteran on the Medal Coloring Sheet.</p>
<p><b>Elaborate:</b> Students apply what they have learned.</p>	<p>Explain to students, that veterans, at some point in their lives, committed to the service of our country. Students will brainstorm a way to serve veterans in their local communities on Veterans Day. See the last page of this lesson plan for suggestions for service.</p>
<p><b>Evaluate:</b> assessment.</p>	<p>Teachers should choose which activities to use as formal/informal assessments.</p>
<p><b>Enrichment/Service-Learning Project</b></p>	<p>Students will participate in an activity to Remember and Honor Veterans on Veterans Day. Students are encouraged to participate in the Wreaths Across America Oral History Project by <a href="#">Clicking Here</a>.</p>

# Wreaths Across America

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### Female Veterans-The Stories of Cathay Williams and Frances Hook

**Directions:** Read both of the following text passages. Answer the Reading Comprehension questions that follow.

#### The Story of Cathay Williams aka William Cathay

Cathay Williams had many “firsts” in her lifetime. As far as we know, she was the first African American woman to secretly join the United States Army when she enlisted on November 15, 1866. Since females were still not allowed to enter the Armed Forces at that time, she joined under the fake name William Cathay. She was the first and only woman to fight in the unit nicknamed the Buffalo Soldiers.

Born in Missouri in 1842, Williams was a slave until the Civil War broke out in the spring of 1861. During the war, captured slaves were forced to work for the military as support staff, like nurses and cooks. Therefore, Williams worked as a cook and washerwoman. She marched with the infantry during the Civil War. After the Civil War, she was no longer a slave. She had to support herself financially.

Joining the Army as a soldier seemed like a good line of work for Williams. In 1866, soon after the Civil War ended, a new law started the first peacetime units of African American male soldiers in the U.S. Army. These units would later be called the Buffalo Soldiers. These soldiers had great riding skills and participated in long, hard marches. The Buffalo Soldiers participated in wars and peacetime activities in the Great Plains. This new law opened the door for Williams to pretend to be a man and join the Army.

Soon after she enlisted as William Cathay, she contracted smallpox, which was a common viral disease at the time. During multiple hospitalizations, no one discovered she was female until she got sick in New Mexico. The surgeon located in Fort Bayard discovered her secret. Once her commanding officer learned she was female, she was honorably discharged due to a disability. After her discharge in New Mexico, she worked odd jobs as a cook, laundress, and seamstress in that same state.

While Cathay Williams had a lot of firsts in her life, she was more than those facts. She was a gutsy woman. She served her country and did all she could to survive after slavery. After Congress passed the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act on June 12, 1948, women could finally join the military. They could be full-time service members. Women like Cathay Williams, with their competent service, helped pave the way for future female heroes to serve their country as well. Even though Williams served in the Army under a fake name, she is still a veteran worthy of gratitude for her service.

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### The Story of Frances Hook aka Private Frank Miller

Frances Hook was born in Illinois in 1847. When she was three years old both of her parents died, leaving only her and her older brother, who brought her up until the start of the Civil War.

At the time the Civil War began, Hook and her brother were living in Chicago, Illinois. When her brother decided to enlist in the Union Army. Hook, not wanting to be left alone, decided to disguise herself as a man and enlisted with her brother. When Hook claimed to have enlisted in the Union Army, she was fourteen years old, but says she told recruiters she was twenty-two. She cut her hair and enlisted in the 11th Illinois Infantry Regiment (or the 65th Illinois Home Guard depending on the source) using the alias Private Frank Miller on April 30, 1861. Hook and her brother served their 90-day term without being discovered.

On July 30, 1861, Hook, and her brother re-enlisted in the 11th Illinois Infantry for three more years. Their regiment fought at Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, and then at the Battle of Shiloh (April 6–7, 1862) where Hook's brother was killed. Hook was so devastated by her brother's death that she could no longer bear to serve in the same regiment he had died in. However, Hook wished to continue her military service. Under a new alias, Frank Henderson, she enlisted in the 33rd Illinois Infantry regiment. After a few months of service, she was wounded in the shoulder at the Battle of Fredericktown (October 21, 1861, Missouri. While being treated at the regimental hospital the doctor discovered her sex; she was discharged from the army and told to go home.

Having no family to go home to, Hook enlisted in the 90th Illinois Infantry Regiment. While serving in the 90th Infantry (fighting quite often), the regiment saw combat at Holly Springs, Coldwater, the Siege of Vicksburg, the Siege of Jackson, and Missionary Ridge. The regiment was marching through Florence, Alabama in the late summer of 1863. While on the march Hook entered a seemingly empty house to search for supplies; while she was searching, two Confederate soldiers hiding in the house surprised and captured her.

Hook was imprisoned, as a man, in Atlanta, Georgia. Soon after her imprisonment she attempted an escape but was shot in the thigh and taken to the prison hospital. While being treated another doctor discovered her true sex. Hook was moved to a separate room and put on a list of prisoners to be exchanged. On February 17, 1864, Hook was one of twenty-seven Union prisoners exchanged at Graysville, Georgia.

During her imprisonment she told her story to Confederate doctors and officers. The Confederacy was so impressed by her actions she received a letter from Confederate President Jefferson Davis offering her a commission if she would fight for the Confederate army. Hook refused stating she would rather serve in the Union Army as a private than in the Confederate army as a lieutenant. She went on to state she would rather be hanged than fight against the Union.

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When Dr. Mary Edwards Walker\*, a Union Army surgeon, heard this report she argued Hook should be made a lieutenant in the Union Army, but was ignored. Because Dr. Walker was thrilled about the news of a female soldier, she notified the press. Hook consented to interviews but refused to give her real name. She promised newspaper reporters that she would go home, though many doubted her.

Frances Hook was again discharged and told to go home. The officers who were in charge of sending her home alerted recruitment authorities, "advising them to be on the lookout for her trying to rejoin the service." With no home to go to some speculate she enlisted again; however, there is no substantial proof she did.

\*In the 161 years since the country's most prestigious military decoration was instituted, the Medal of Honor has been presented to over 3,500 service members but only one has been a woman, Dr. Mary Edwards Walker, Civil War Surgeon.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Reading Comprehension Questions Female Veterans

#### The Stories of Cathay Williams and Frances Hook

1. What obstacle(s) did Cathay Williams face?
2. What obstacle(s) did Frances Hook face?
3. What influence did the obstacle(s) have on Williams' life decisions?
4. What influence did the obstacle(s) have on Hook's life decisions?
5. Why is it important to know Williams was a female service member in 1866?
6. Why is it important to know Hook was a female service member in 1861?
7. Why do you think the author wrote about Williams?
8. Why do you think the author wrote about Hook?
9. How are the stories of Williams and Hook similar?
10. How are the stories of Williams and Hook different?

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## Medal Coloring Sheet

Color the Veterans Medal, then write a Thank You note to a Veteran on the front or the back!





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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Help Tags the Dog find the 8 differences between the original drawing, left, and the altered version, right.



World Leaders Entertainment





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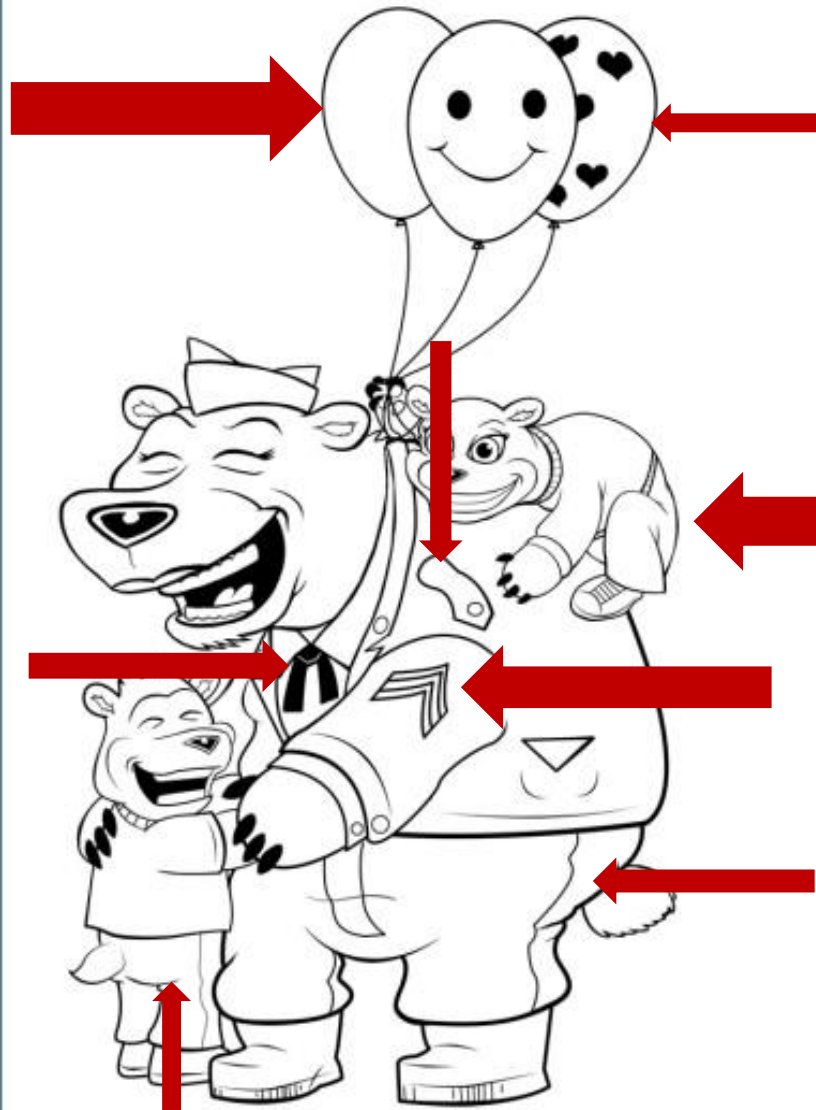
## ANSWER KEY



Help Tags the Dog find the 8 differences between the original drawing, left, and the altered version, right.



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## “Find a Way to Serve” on Veterans Day

- Make Thank You cards to Veterans you know in your community, or in a local VA Home or VA Hospital. Let them know you appreciate their service to our country.
- Help an elderly veteran with yard work.
- Collect items for “Survival Back-Packs” for homeless veterans with socks, caps, gloves, toothpaste, a toothbrush, and other toiletries to be distributed to homeless vets in your community. Many large cities hold Operation Stand Downs for Veterans. For more information, [Click Here](#).
- Organize a Checkers, board game or card game tournament at your local VA Home. Coordinate with the nursing home staff and plan a fun afternoon for the residents and students alike!
- Write letters to be included in soldier care packages. [Operation Gratitude](#) sends over 250,000 packages to Servicemen and Women, and First Responders annually, the link above provides guidelines for participation in their program.
- Organize a Zoom Meeting between your class at school and a local VA Home. Discuss what their childhoods were like growing up, what kind of classes they took in school. Did they live in town or in the country, what kinds of chores and activities did they participate in when they were your age. Document their responses and share with other classes in your school. If some of your interviewees have a talent like singing or playing the piano, maybe they could share those talents with the class the next time you Zoom. Once you have met the veterans, select a “pin-pal” you can correspond with by letter every few weeks.
- Be a companion to a local senior citizen who is a veteran. Make cards, surprise them with visits around their birthday or sing carols for them around the holidays.