



ON THE FRONTLINE

NEBRASKANS AT WAR IN IRAQ



Guide for Community & Classroom Use

A Companion Guide
brought to you by



Television

Compiled by NET Television Outreach and Learning Services



Guide for Community and Classroom Use

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NEBRASKANS AT WAR IN IRAQ

Dear Educator or Community Leader,

At a time when the politics of Iraq grab most the headlines, NET felt it was important to focus on the human side of war. The documentary, *On the Frontline: Nebraskans at War in Iraq*, tells the story of an Army National Guard unit's year of combat in Iraq, and the challenges of life after deployment.

This kit contains a DVD of this documentary along with a CD-ROM with printable guides for both this program and the PBS series, *America at a Crossroads*. The purpose of these materials is to extend the impact after broadcast of the *On the Frontline* documentary through educational and collaborative activities. These materials have been designed to build audiences, inspire civic dialogue, and when possible, foster on-going community awareness around the issues that may have been raised in our documentary. Within this guide, you will find information about the program and its creators, a discussion guide for community use, a lesson plan for high school students, and personal photos taken by members of Troop A of the 1-167th Cavalry of the Nebraska National Guard.

NET knows that community partnerships are ingredients of outreach success. Outreach doesn't take place without partners, and the community relationships created via outreach help to distinguish public television as an essential community service. We hope this documentary furthers your understanding of some of the human issues involved with the war in Iraq and that the enclosed guides enrich your community's discussions and/or classroom learning environments.

Thank you for your interest in *On the Frontline: Nebraskans at War in Iraq*.

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Program Description



Photo Courtesy Troop A, 1-167th Cavalry Soldiers

NET Television's *On the Frontline: Nebraskans at War in Iraq* Profiles Soldiers

Roadside bombs, rocket-propelled grenades, and sniper attacks. These dangers were part of an average day for Nebraska Army National Guard soldiers serving in the Iraqi city of Ramadi, a community a little smaller than Omaha. Though thousands of Nebraska National Guard soldiers have been deployed recently, none have seen more hazardous duty than the 63 soldiers from Troop A of the 1-167th Cavalry.

NET Television tells the compelling stories of this unit through in-depth interviews, soldier profiles, and images the soldiers brought home from Iraq in *On The Frontline: Nebraskans at War in Iraq*.

During their Iraqi deployment, this group of Nebraska Army National Guard soldiers provided security for brigade commanders, protected explosive experts dealing with roadside bombs, and served as first responders to bombings and other incidents. They participated in thousands of missions, all the time under fire.

Back in Nebraska, these men are students, businessmen, factory workers, and police officers, as well as husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers. With the unit based in Hastings, Nebraska, the soldiers have connections to cities and towns across the state, including Central City, Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, Lincoln, and Omaha. For some of the soldiers, this marked the third overseas deployment since 2001.

On The Frontline: Nebraskans at War in Iraq also examines how the civilian and family lives of these men were changed by this 18-month training and active duty assignment, in visible and invisible ways. The soldiers returned home with many honors, including a helmet full of Purple Heart medals for combat wounds. But, they also returned with physical and emotional scars, and memories of a war they will never forget. "I saw things that day that I pray that nobody ever, ever has to see," said Staff Sgt. Chad Rowe of Lincoln.

In 2005, NET Television reporter Mike Tobias and videographer Ray Meints traveled with the unit to the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, California, in the Mojave Desert, as they prepared for the Middle East deployment. Tobias also traveled to Bosnia in 2003 to report on soldiers from the 1-167th



Cavalry who were part of the NATO peacekeeping mission in that war-torn country.

"*On the Frontline* is a very intimate look at modern war and warriors. It brings viewers inside the minds and hearts of these soldiers, both on the battlefield in Iraq and as they deal with very serious issues after they return home," said Tobias.

On The Frontline: Nebraskans at War in Iraq is supported by a grant from *America at a Crossroads*, a six-part PBS series on terrorism, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Muslim world, and America's global role.

Another related NET Television production is *Afghan Journey: A Story of Friendship*. It's the story of two Nebraska journalists who visit Afghanistan. For more information about *Afghan Journey: A Story of Friendship*, visit our website: www.netNebraska.org/television/promopops/afghan.htm.

NET1, NET2 and NET-HD are part of NET Television, a service of NET. Complete program schedules are available online at www.netNebraska.org.

NET1 is Nebraska's first public television broadcast service and includes PBS and award-winning, locally produced public television programming;
NET2 offers live coverage of the Nebraska Unicameral, Spanish language programming, and other acquired or locally produced programs;
NET3 is a 24-hour channel featuring the most popular how-to, travel and lifestyle series; and
NET-HD presents high-definition digital broadcast programming displayed in a wide-screen format.

NET

vision:



Biographies



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Mike Tobias, Producer/Reporter NET Television News and Public Affairs

Mike Tobias joined the News and Public Affairs unit at NET Television in April 2000, primarily working on the weekly news magazine *Statewide* until May 2006. He now produces news and public affairs documentaries. Tobias has reported on a variety of topics, especially politics and government, agriculture and the drought, and the military. Highlights include: following a class of recruits through Nebraska State Patrol training in 2000-2001; traveling to Bosnia in 2003 to report on Nebraska National Guard soldiers involved in the NATO peacekeeping mission; spending more than 100 hours with unlimited access inside a 2004 Congressional campaign; embedding with an army unit training for Iraq in the Mojave Desert in 2005; and following tornado chasers for 700 miles through Nebraska and Kansas in 2005.

Tobias has received numerous national, regional, and local awards for his work. In 2003 he received the national USC Annenberg Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Television Political Journalism for his report on candidate apathy, *Missing Candidates*. Other awards include:

- 2003 – National Council on Problem Gambling Media Award-Electronic, for *Gambling with Their Golden Years*, a report on older adults and gambling addiction.
- 2004 – Northwest Broadcast News Association Eric Sevareid Award, Documentary/Special Award for Merit, for *Hire Me for the House*, a special project in which Congressional candidates were interviewed and profiled as job applicants.
- 2005 – Regional Emmy Nominee, Interview/Discussion Program category, for *Hire Me for the House*.
- 2005 – Nebraska Broadcasters Association Service to Agriculture, gold award, for *Where's the Water*, several stories on drought and agriculture water issues in Nebraska.
- 2005 – Nebraska Broadcasters Association Best In-Depth or Investigative Story or Series, bronze award, for *Thompson Campaign*, an inside look at a big money Congressional campaign.
- 2005 – Northwest Broadcast News Association Eric Sevareid Award, Talk/Public Affairs Award for Merit, for *Embedded Reporters Interview*, an interview with two reporters embedded with soldiers in Iraq.
- 2006 – Nebraska Broadcasters Association Service to Agriculture, bronze award, for *Republican River*, an in-depth look at the water battle along the Republican River basin.
- 2006 – Nebraska Broadcasters Association Best In-Depth or Investigative Story or Series, bronze award, for *Troop Training*, a series of stories following Nebraska National Guard soldiers training in the Mojave Desert before deployment to Iraq.
- 2006 – Northwest Broadcast News Association Eric Sevareid Award, Documentary/Special Award for Merit, for *Twisters*, a show that follows storm chasers and examines Nebraska tornado history and myths.



Tobias is also involved in hosting and/or producing NET Television's regular series of *Nebraska Connects* outreach programs.

Before joining NET Television, Tobias was news services director and interim director of university relations at Nebraska Wesleyan University (1989-2000); and reporter/photographer/anchor at Lincoln CBS affiliate KOLN-TV (1986-1989), where he earned honors from the Nebraska Associated Press and the Nebraska Press Photographers and covered the Republican National Convention in 1988. Tobias received his bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1986, and was named senior broadcasting student of the year.



©2007 Billings Photography

Ray Meints, Videographer/Editor NET Television

Ray Meints joined the NET team in March of 2000, as a Senior Videographer/Editor. For nearly two decades prior to the move, Meints worked in television news as a photographer, editor, reporter, and producer, with 16 years at WOWT TV, the NBC affiliate in Omaha, Nebraska.

An award winning photojournalist, Meints has been recognized for his talents by the Associated Press, The Northwest Broadcasters Association, The Nebraska News Photographers Association, and the National Press Photographers Association. In 1999, Meints was honored by his Nebraska peers as the Nebraska Television News Photographer of the Year. He was also honored as the first recipient of the "Dave Hamer Excellence in Photojournalism" award, recognizing his contributions to the advancement of photojournalism in the state of Nebraska.

In addition to his Nebraska awards, Meints has been a photojournalism leader on the national level as well. For eight years, he served on the board of directors of the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA), as both Director and Associate Director for the NPPA's Region 9. He is a past President of the Nebraska News Photographers Association, and is currently on the NNPA's board of directors.

Meints is also active as a photojournalism judge, having judged contests on the local, statewide, regional, and national/international levels. He is the NPPA's only three-time judge for the prestigious "Best Of Photojournalism" contest, held annually at the Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Meints is also proud to be the husband of Mary Fraser Meints for 24 years and counting. They have no children, but are considered (at least in family circles) to be the world's best aunt and uncle!



Program Discussion Guide

Created by Mark Anderson, Lincoln High School



Photo Courtesy Troop A, 1-167th Cavalry Soldiers

Previewing Questions

1. What do you know about the war in Iraq?
2. What do you know about the role of Nebraska National Guard members in Iraq?
3. What is it that you hope to learn or understand better by watching this program?

Post-viewing Questions

1. What was the role of the Nebraska National Guard in Iraq? How was the mission in Iraq different from previous missions undertaken by the Nebraska National Guard?
2. How are National Guard troops different from other soldiers? What are some of their primary occupations?
3. How did the experiences of the Nebraska National Guard in Iraq change the lives of its members? How did the Nebraska National Guard members describe their time in Iraq?

The Battlefield

1. Describe Route Michigan through Ramadi. If you were in the gun turret on Route Michigan, how would you determine friends or enemies? How would you make the decision to use a machine gun or grenade launcher?
2. What dangers does the Nebraska National Guard face daily in Ramadi?
3. In the program, Nebraska National Guard troops find many weapons caches. What kinds of weapons are there? Where do you think the weapons come from? What is an I.E.D.? What are some types of technology used by National Guard troops on daily missions?
4. Compare the things the soldiers think about on a day-to-day basis in Ramadi to at home.

The Place, The People

1. Ramadi is roughly the size of Omaha, but there is no visible infrastructure (shops, restaurants, businesses). What problems face the people of Ramadi? Where do the people of Ramadi get the things they need to survive?



2. How would you explain the contradiction of the Iraqi people wanting a U.S. military presence versus at the same time wanting the U.S. military to leave? Identify some of the obstacles that face Iraq as it tries to train its own security forces.
3. Why is a constitution for Iraq described as a “ray of light”? How would you feel if you could not vote?
4. How do the soldiers describe dust storms? How do the soldiers describe the Iraqi people?

Over There

1. Describe some of the missions executed by the Nebraska National Guard.
2. Camp Ramadi is portrayed as a light-hearted place where people spend their time goofing around while patrols seem to be filled with a heightened sense of danger and professionalism. How would you explain this stark contrast? What are some of the ways the soldiers deal with the extreme stress of war? How do soldiers spend their time off-duty in Iraq?
3. What are some of the effects of the unit's deployment on friends and family here in Nebraska? What would be the psychological consequences of wondering every day for 18 months whether or not someone you were close to would be killed? What would it be like trying to become reacquainted with someone you had not seen for 18 months?

Coming Home

1. At the beginning of the program, a Nebraska National Guard member poses a question, “What is it that really goes on in Iraq?” What do *you* think really goes on in Iraq? How has your answer changed as a result of watching this program?
2. What is the most common problem facing soldiers returning from Iraq? What are some of the difficulties that soldiers face in readjusting to civilian life?
3. What are some of the reasons given by soldiers for re-enlisting or not re-enlisting? What are the soldiers' attitudes about the war in Iraq now that they have returned?
4. If you had to write a letter home to tell someone that their relative had died, what sort of things would you say?



Lesson Plan for High School Students

Differing Experiences of War

Created by Mark Anderson, Lincoln High School

Length: 3 days

Nebraska Social Studies Standards:

World History 5.1, 5.4, 6.2
US History 6.1
Introduction to Geography 6

Materials:

Access to the web or library, large sheets of paper for each small group, pens.

McRel National Standards:

World History 39.8, 41.3, 41.8, 43.1, 43.7, 44.4,
44.6, 44.10, 44.13, 44.15
Historical Understanding 2.5
U.S. History 30.3, 30.5, 30.6
Behavioral Studies 1.1, 1.4, 1.7, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5,
3, 4
Civics 3, 4, 22, 23
Geography 13

Extension activities cross-discipline with Art and

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to accurately describe the experience of *servicing* in an active combat region.
2. Students will be able to describe the experience of *living* in an active combat region.
3. Students will understand the ways in which the experience of war changes the participants.
4. Students will be able to describe the effects of war on the families and friends of the troops in Iraq.

Premise:

Analyze in small groups various sources detailing the effects of war on soldiers, civilians, and those in the regions at war, make presentations, and individually write about reflections of those experiences.

Suggested Pacing:

Day 1. Watch the program.

Day 2. Read articles/accounts, and brainstorm key ideas onto paper.

Day 3. Small groups present experiences of those in articles to large group. Individuals write Reflections.

Procedures:

1. Watch the program *On the Frontline: Nebraskans at War in Iraq* on the enclosed DVD. The program is one hour long, so you may wish to divide this up over different class periods. Here are the sections in the program:
Open; The Battlefield; The Place, The People; Over There; War and Death; Coming Home; The Future
2. Divide students into small groups in order to get as many perspectives as possible.
3. Give each group one article/reading to represent the effect of war on one type of person.
4. Each small group will examine its reading, and then write a description of the experience of the type of person it is researching. Each small group should have a large sheet of paper, using one side to collect important thoughts and ideas about its article, and the other for a more thorough description. Students may use this to aid in the presentation, if necessary.



4. After describing the experience from the article on the large paper, the small groups should compare and contrast that experience with what they saw in the program about the experiences of the Nebraska National Guard in Iraq.
5. Each small group will prepare a brief presentation that conveys the experience of the type of person it has studied. This may take the form of a piece of art, a brief skit, a detailed explanation, etc.
6. After the presentations, each individual student will choose one of the types of people affected by war and write a brief reflection about those experiences.

Readings:

Use these web links or allow students to surf the web or research in the library on their own, with your supervision and approval of final choices. Print out the needed resources or allow students to use them in a web presentation.

Experiences in War

Residents of Iraq

An ophthalmologist in Baghdad	http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4876222.stm
A businessman in Kirkuk	http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4875968.stm
A teacher in Basra	http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4876792.stm
A gravedigger in Kirkuk	http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4882634.stm
An artist in Baghdad	http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4879532.stm
A Sudanese national living in Baghdad	http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4880152.stm
A 15-year-old girl living in Baghdad	http://livesstrong.blogspot.com/

(Caution: This is an unsupervised blog, not a news article.)

Families of soldiers on duty in Iraq

Caring Native American mother	http://www.indiancountry.com/content.cfm?id=1096414343
Fearful British mother	http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/wales/2860211.stm
Angry Californian mother	http://www.metroactive.com/papers/metro/05.11.05/meredith-0519.html
Anxious Canadian mother	http://www.cbc.ca/canada/newfoundland-labrador/story/2007/04/17/war-families.html?ref=rss

Soldiers

Nebraska National Guard troops preparing for war	http://journalstar.com/articles/2007/04/03/news/politics/doc461303cebc201338687044.txt
Career soldier in Afghanistan and Iraq	http://www.defendamerica.mil/articles/apr2007/a042307ms1.html
A Nebraska National Guard Member on duty in Iraq	http://journalstar.com/articles/2007/03/16/news/local/doc45f9d77865259375235341.txt
Soldiers working toward reconstruction in Iraq	http://www.defendamerica.mil/articles/apr2007/a042307ej1.html
A veteran who has returned and opposes the war	http://journalstar.com/articles/2007/03/17/news/local/doc45fc58ccd1c83225395319.txt
A veteran who experienced a traumatic brain injury in Iraq	http://journalstar.com/articles/2007/04/04/news/local/doc461421c67f449946054636.txt



Extension Activities:

1. Students may create a large map of Iraq and put it on the classroom wall. Then every day for a pre-determined period of time, students may read all of the articles they can find in the newspaper and make a list of that day's news from Iraq, mapping the location of each story. Use your map of the daily news stories to turn the data into a chart to study trends and activities in the war.
2. Students may write about experiences in which they have felt some of the emotions described by the soldiers in the video.
3. Students may research the British empire's involvement in the Middle East with an emphasis on the partition of the region following World War II, and the effects that has had on modern Iraq.
4. Students may respond by drawing or creating an art project illustrating a particular part of the experiences they have read about.
5. Students may use video editing software to create their own documentaries about the war.
6. Students may research and report on the psychological effects of post-traumatic stress disorder.



Photo Gallery



Photos Courtesy Troop A, 1-167th Cavalry Soldiers



Photos Courtesy Troop A, 1-167th Cavalry Soldiers



For More Information

For more information about *On the Frontline: Nebraskans at War in Iraq*, visit our website:

www.netNebraska.org/extras/onthefrontline/

For questions regarding the program *On the Frontline: Nebraskans at War In Iraq*, contact:

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For questions about community outreach use or purchase of these or other NET programs, contact:

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Photos Courtesy Troop A, 1-167th Cavalry Soldiers