

# Save A Life, Save A Nation

**Suggested Application: Social Studies, Leadership, Vietnam War**

## OBJECTIVES

### Students will:

- recognize heroic actions in civilian and military circumstances
- reflect on how their personal decisions can have an impact far greater than they might initially imagine

**Medal of Honor Focus: Bruce Crandall, U.S. Army, Vietnam War**

**Citizen Honors Focus: Rick Rescorla**

### Teacher Preparation:

This Lesson assumes a basic knowledge of the Medal of Honor and Citizen Honors. If needed, use lessons A3 and A4 for background knowledge of the two awards.

### Introductory Activity:

Begin by showing a clip from the movie [We Were Soldiers](#) (1:06:57-1:10:22). In this scene, Bruce Crandall gets into an argument with another soldier. Discuss the idea that we are all faced with decisions that impact other people. (If you do not have access to the clip, a discussion about how decisions impact others will work as well).

### Whole Group Activity:

Show Bruce Crandall's Living History video.

Lead a classroom discussion on the decisions Bruce Crandall faced and the choices he made. Some decisions to focus on include staying in the Army after his initial draft enlistment was up, volunteering for helicopter training, and pioneering a new and potentially dangerous tactic of helicopter mobility on the battlefield.

### Whole Group Activity:

Show the video of Rick Rescorla.

Ask students if they can make any connections between Bruce Crandall and Rick Rescorla. Similarities include the following: Bruce Crandall is wearing a black Stetson in his video as are people in the Rescorla video; Crandall mentions Fort Hood in his video, and the Rescorla story mentions Fort Hood; both men were in the Vietnam War.

Reveal that Rescorla was in the battle of Ia Drang Valley in Vietnam in November 1965 where Bruce Crandall performed that acts of heroism that resulted in him being awarded the Medal of Honor (depicted in the movie [We Were Soldiers](#)).

Lead a discussion about the fact that without Crandall's heroic decision to fly repeatedly into a dangerous situation, the soldiers in the battle, including Rescorla, potentially would not have survived the battle. Point out that Rescorla and Crandall probably did not know each other well, if at all, at the time. Discuss what would have happened to the people Rescorla helped evacuate on 9/11 if he had not survived the battle in 1965.

**Concluding Activity:**

Students will write a reflection on a time they made a decision which impacted others, either positively or negatively. What was the decision? How did it affect others? Would they have made a different choice after they saw the ripple effects of their choice and actions?

**Assessment:**

Participation in class discussion, student reflection paper

**Resources:**

Bruce Crandall and Rick Rescorla Living History videos, movie [We Were Soldiers](#) (optional).