

For Middle and High School Students of History

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Eric Gier is an undergraduate at the United States Air Force Academy majoring in Chemistry and Civil Engineering and is set to graduate at the end of May 2019. Eric is also the founder of the History Club at Cary-Grove High School in his home town Cary, IL.

Our country's military is among the best in the world and to maintain this advantage in the face of ever-increasing threats, an understanding of history and a constant analysis of the past is imperative.

I come from a family with a strong military background, which has stimulated my interest in history and fostered a

commitment to service. I credit my high school history teachers for making the past come alive and making it relatable to the present day. Mrs. Stonebraker, my AP U.S. History teacher, inspired creativity and embraced the idea of forming a History Club by donating her time as an advisor.

During my high school years, I was involved in the Veterans History Project through the Library of Congress. The project provides a means for veterans to tell personal accounts of war, so we may better understand history as they lived it, the realities of service, and archives their advice for future generations before it's lost forever.

With the assistance of the American Legion, I interviewed veterans from WWII, Vietnam, and the Iraq War and recorded their stories. I found myself looking at war from the voices of those who actually experienced it. Ultimately, I chose the path of military service with a clearer vision, greater understanding, and deeper appreciation of what could lie ahead for me.

Now, as I complete my final year at the Academy, I see

how history shaped me at every turn. The importance of history was set from day one, when every basic cadet walked over a beautiful stone bridge leading to the bus that would take us to basic training. The Academy calls this bridge the "Challenge Bridge," which displays plaques honoring fallen graduates. We were told, *"The path to which you aspire has been consecrated by the blood of heroes and paved with the selfless service of countless men and women like you. If you would be worthy of this heritage: Cross this bridge with the determination to live a life that will make all who went before proud of you."* In crossing that bridge, I felt a true connection between the history of war, service and my own future.

Over time I became familiar with the many memorials on the Academy grounds namely the Southeast Asia War Memorial, Vietnam Memorial, and the 911 Memorial. Each memorial is a reminder of past events, cultures embedded in turmoil, military and political strategies, and the cost and benefits of America's past that will guide us forward in an ever-changing world.

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Aside from these visual reminders, the Academy draws energy from history woven into all aspects of cadet life. Our history, law, and political science classes, taught to all cadets, delve into global relations with United States allies and enemies, push students to think critically, and explore human nature when faced with war. We learn about great former military leaders, and the past and current capacity of United States airpower. I have been challenged and humbled by a journey filled with the same training experiences that previous generations of academy leaders went through including basic training, wilderness, evasion, and water survival training courses. I am fortunate enough to have been developed by these events as so many influential historical figures were before me and have no doubt they will shape me into a great officer.

I will be attending graduate school in preparation for my career as research scientist. I realize that my military career is embedded in history and that the true test is applying the lessons I have learned from history to the technical platforms of tomorrow.

The study of history, participation in the National History Club, and the Veterans History Project have led me down a path filled with confidence and commitment. The value of studying history is that it is the best teacher in the world for any career path in understanding our country and how we relate to the rest of the world. To quote philosopher George Santayana, “Those who do not study history are doomed to repeat it” and from this quotation I take the idea that history is the best window we have to understanding the successes and mistakes that will guide our country in the future. ■

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the United States Air Force, Department of Defense, or the US Government.

Footnote:

* For information on the Veterans History Project, see <https://www.loc.gov/vets/>

** Eric’s Veterans History Project interviews are available at: <http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/search?query=eric+gier> and Eric’s Veterans Tribute website, at <http://www.veterans-tribute.org>



For those students working on history research papers this spring, please consider submitting your work to *The Concord Review* for possible publication. TCR remains the only quarterly history journal in the world to publish the academic work of secondary school students. Papers may be submitted on any historical topic, ancient or modern, domestic or foreign.

TCR has published more than 1,200 exemplary history papers by secondary students from 45 states and 40 other countries in 119 quarterly issues since 1987. To find more information, and a submission form, visit TCR’s website at: <http://www.tcr.org/submit>

Access to the NHC network, which includes chapters in 45 states and over 18,000 members, is a great benefit of joining the NHC. We encourage you to read about other chapters in your state or across the country and explore new opportunities! To explore specific sites click on the bolded text to be redirected!



Newnan High School (GA) went to Meriweather County to visit and tour the jail that played a role in the movie "Murder in Coweta County". Students watched the movie before they visited, and while they were in the courtroom they heard from the Executive Producer of the movie, Dick Atkins.



Red Bank Regional High School (NJ) at the **Princeton University Art Museum**, where they went on a tour of the European collection with docents that focused on the theme "continuity and change over time."



Richlands High School (VA) touring Thomas Jefferson's **Monticello**, where the group had a specially arranged three-hour, behind-the-scenes tour. The previous evening they had a catered dinner at the Robert H. and Clarice Smith Woodland Pavilion at Monticello, where they heard from Dr. John Ragosta, who is recognized as an international authority on Jefferson's Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom.



Riverside High School (TN) being presented a framed map of Wartime Vietnam by local V.F.W. Post 4971. R.H.S. National History Club officers from L to R: Bailey Sanders, Hayden Clenney, and Layla Buckner; kneeling from L to R: Laura Crawley and Cole Reddix.



Williams Bay High School (WI) will once again trek over to Europe this summer to visit Ireland, Wales, and England. During their visit they will take in the Ring of Kerry, the Book of Kells, Henry VIII's court, and more. The WBHS History Club has been making a trip to Europe now since 2001!



C.E. Byrd High School (LA) hosting their 7th annual academic conference last month. Here is a photo of one of their students presenting his paper on this year's theme: Agents of Change. They had more than 200 in attendance this year and students presented over 75 papers!



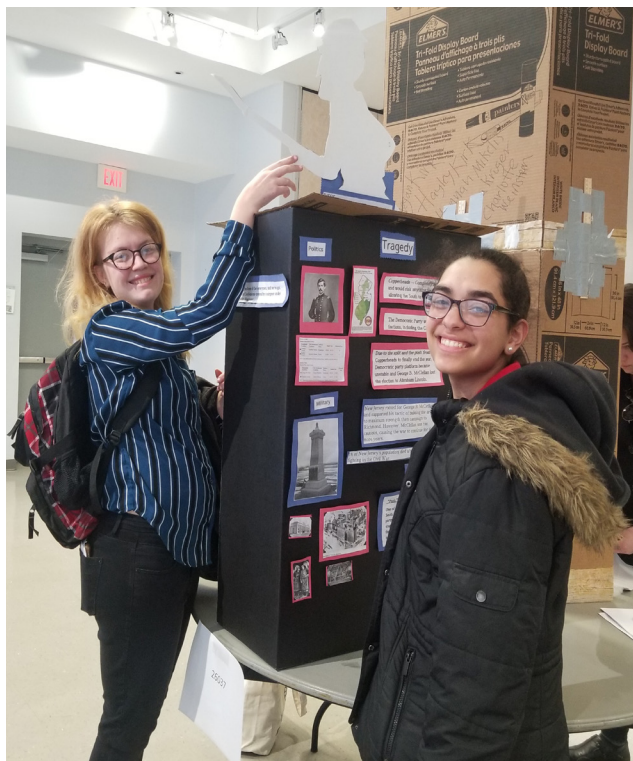
Brown County High School (IN) visiting Boston and the Tea Party Museum in March!



Patchogue-Medford High School (NY) at the 9/11 Memorial and Museum in March!



San Joaquin Memorial High School (CA) traveling to the Museum of Tolerance in LA!



West Milford Township High School (NJ) participating in the regional competition for National History Day!

HISTORY STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

This Spring the NHC and George Washington's Mount Vernon once again co-sponsored the "History Student of the Year" prize. Each chapter chose one recipient for this award, and s/he received an autographed hardcover copy of *Buried Lives* by Carla McClafferty. This is the 15th year of the partnership between Mount Vernon and the NHC to sponsor this prestigious award. To view a list of the award winners please visit our [website](#)!

Mount Vernon is the most popular historic estate in America. The estate, gardens and farm of Mount Vernon totaled some 8,000 acres in the 18th century. Today, roughly 500 acres have been preserved 16 miles south of Washington, DC, on the banks of the Potomac River. Visitors can see 20 structures and 50 acres of gardens as they existed in 1799, as well as the tombs of George and Martha Washington. Mount Vernon welcomes over 1,000,000 visitors each year.



James C. Enochs High School (CA) Advisor
Bryan Rogers with recipient Eric Morrison



NATIONAL HISTORY SCHOLARS SOCIETY

The NHSS was created in Spring 2009 to recognize the truly outstanding members in each Club. Nominees are expected to have a B grade or higher in at least one Honors/AP history class, have been a member of their History Club for 2+ years, and be nominated by their Club Advisor.



There were 586 student members inducted into the NHSS this spring (3.3% of total NHC student membership), and they will proudly wear burgundy honor cords at graduation as a symbol of their academic excellence. To view the entire list of inductees please visit our **NHSS** page on our website.



LESSONS OF LEADERSHIP CONTEST

This annual contest co-sponsored by the National History Club and The HBE Foundation challenged middle and high school students from across the country to select a historical figure (domestic or foreign, ancient or modern) and examine how that person displayed courage and conviction with a decision they made or throughout his/her life. Congratulations to this year's winners! Feel free to read the first place essay on Rachel Carson by clicking on the [link](#)!

FIRST PRIZE: \$2,000



Mallory Tucker, Caddo Parish Magnet High School (LA) --- **Rachel Carson: A Life of Courage**

SECOND PRIZE: \$1,000



Corinne de Syon, J.P. McClaskey High School (PA) --- **Olympe de Gouges, Women's Rights, and the French Revolution**

SECOND PRIZE: \$1,000



Christian Greibesland, Felix V. Festa Middle School (NY) --- **Documentary on the Stonewall Riots**

THIRD PRIZE: \$500

*** **Jack Gasdia**, Alvirne High School (NH), Essay on Alice Paul

*** **Anja O'Brien**, Langley High School (VA), Essay on Nellie Bly

HISTORY CLUBS OF THE YEAR

The following Chapters are being recognized by the NHC for exemplary activities, community service, and overall commitment during this school year. Each Club received a plaque to hang in their school and a year's subscription to *The Concord Review*. To view a picture of select groups please visit the **Clubs of the Year** section on our website.

*** Booker T. Washington Magnet High School --- Montgomery, Alabama ***

*** C.E. Byrd High School --- Shreveport, Louisiana ***

*** James C. Enochs High School --- Modesto, California ***

*** Franklin High School --- Franklin, Tennessee ***

*** Newnan High School --- Newnan, Georgia ***

*** Santa Catalina School --- Monterey, California ***

*** Starr's Mill High School --- Fayetteville, Georgia ***

*** Stilwell High School --- Stilwell, Oklahoma ***

*** Suffern High School --- Suffern, New York ***

*** West Milford Township High School --- West Milford, New Jersey ***

ADVISOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

The NHC and **The History List** are recognizing the following Advisors for their exceptional commitment to history education and the mission of the NHC. Advisors received a plaque, as well as a custom made “**History Teacher**” shirt with Ben Franklin’s image on it.



Carolyn Douglas, Woodland High School (GA)



Carlanna Hendrick, South Carolina Governor's School (SC)



Rich Raggo, Salesian High School (NY)



Kevin Cline, Frankton High School (IN)



Laura Huffman & Sherry Harley, Cannon School (NC)



The History List is the place to go to find out about history-related events and exhibits. Started in the Boston area, it continues to expand geographically. Teachers and history clubs can get involved by adding information about their favorite sites. Similar to Wikipedia, anyone who is signed in can enter or edit. Learn more and sign up for an account here: **TheHistoryList.com/start**. This free service is supported, in part, by the sale of their original merchandise for history lovers through **TheHistoryList.com/store**.

The NHC is proud to have the support of over 60 college history departments! We hope that any of our junior and senior members who are interested in majoring in history in college will visit a college's website listed down below to find out more about the history department and its offerings.



Barnard College	Marquette University	University of Arkansas
Baylor University	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	UCLA
Boston University	Northwestern University	University of Chicago
Brandeis University	Ohio State University	University of Cincinnati
Brown University	Penn State University	University of Colorado
Carnegie Mellon University	Princeton University	University of Florida
Coe College	Rhodes College	University of Iowa
DePaul University	Rice University	UMass Amherst
Georgia Tech University	Rollins College	University of North Carolina
Grand Valley State University	Santa Clara University	University of Oklahoma
Franklin & Marshall College	Southern Methodist University	University of Pennsylvania
Harvard University	St. John's University (NY)	University of Rhode Island
Ithaca College	Stanford University	University of Tennessee
Johns Hopkins University	Suffolk University	University of Utah
Lafayette College	Swarthmore College	University of Vermont
Lawrence University	Syracuse University	University of Wisconsin Madison
Louisiana State University	Temple University	Vanderbilt University
Loyola University Chicago	Texas Christian University	Wake Forest University
Loyola University New Orleans	University of Alabama	Wellesley College

NATIONAL HISTORY CLUB

The NHC would like to express our gratitude to the following people and organizations who make our important work possible...

John Abele	Penguin Random House
HISTORY®	Smithsonian Institution
George Washington's Mount Vernon	Society of Architectural Historians
The HBE Foundation	The Concord Review
Agricultural History Society	The Churchill Centre
American Association for State and Local History	The History List
American Historical Association	Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund
Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles	Patrick Allitt (Professor, Emory)
Centre for International Governance Innovation	Peter Baldwin (Professor, UCLA)
Dole Institute of Politics	Rick & Barbara Berenson
Gilder Lehrman Institute	Radcliffe Cheston
HarperCollins Publishing	Don Farinacci
History News Network	Will Fitzhugh
History 500	Joan & Rick Gier
Laurel Hill Cemetery	William Jordan (Professor, Princeton)
Museum of Florida History	John Lane
National Council for History Education	Frances & John Pepper
National Vietnam War Museum	Jim Schneider
National World War I Museum	Henry Seng
National World War II Museum	Gina Shannon
Omohundro Institute of Early American History	Art Snyder
Organization of American Historians	Rick Sperry
Parkview High School (GA)	Steve Wheatley

The National History Club is a 501(c)(3) organization that relies on grants and donations to support efforts. If you are passionate about history and would like to contribute to our mission of promoting history at the secondary level please contact **Robert Nasson** (rnasson@nationalhistoryclub.org).

www.nationalhistoryclub.org