

Activity Book for Schools 12

What Is a Hero?

People often think that most soldiers are heroes, and that most heroes are soldiers. Whether that is true depends on what you think a hero is. In this activity you will get to meet individuals who most people would agree are heroes. And you'll meet individuals who are heroes to some people but not to others. At the end of the *Soldiers and Chiefs* exhibition you will have a better idea of what you think makes someone a hero.



My Name:

You will find answers to some of the questions in the displays. However **most of the questions have no right or wrong answer**: they are meant for your personal thoughts and interpretation. You will recognise these questions when asked:

‘What’s Your Opinion?’



Enter the first room after the introduction space.

For classroom discussion after the museum visit, your teacher has *Teachers’ Notes* with answers to the questions in this book.

1

Possible Hero - John Boyle O'Reilly

Stay to the right and stop at the wall panel about a third of the way along the wall.

Read the panel about John Boyle O'Reilly.

1a. What did John Boyle O'Reilly do to cause his expulsion from the army?



What's Your Opinion?

Look around the room for each of these people from O'Reilly's time. When you find each one, think about whether this person would have seen O'Reilly as a hero.



1b. The Irish woman who wore the trousseau dress (in a display case near the entrance)

Hint: She is an idealistic young bride married to a British Army officer.

1c. The Hibernian Schoolboy (standing in the corner)

Hint: He's reading an adventure novel.

1d. The Irish officer who wore the dark blue uniform jacket (in the display case near the exit)

Hint: He's trained to follow orders.

1e. Can you think of someone today who some people would think of as a hero, and others would feel is definitely not a hero?

Hero Assessment

Place a tick on the Hero Scale to show how much of a hero O'Reilly is **in your opinion**. The Hero Scale is at the end of this book on page 11.

- 1 is an extremely heroic person
- 5 is a person with some heroic aspects
- 10 is a person who is not at all heroic



Leave through the doorway, walk through the next room and then past the row of helmets. Enter the next room.

2

Possible Hero - Francis MacDonnell

Walk across the room to the wall with framed pictures.

Read the section of the panel 'Freelancers in Eastern Europe' about Francis MacDonnell ('Green on Green') and then answer these questions.

- 2a.** The painting shows the French surrender to the Austrians in 1702 at the Siege of Cremona — what does the French Marshal Villeroy hand over to MacDonnell?

Hint: Villeroy wears the blue uniform and MacDonnell wears the red uniform.



What's Your Opinion?

- 2b.** If you were an Irish soldier fighting for the French side, which argument might persuade you to switch your loyalty to the Austrian side (with Captain MacDonnell)?

- Come and make more money in the Austrian service.
- You are sure to be defeated, save yourselves by changing sides.
- Come and serve with other Irishmen.

- 2c.** Does the fact that MacDonnell fought against other Irishmen make a difference to whether he was a hero?

Hero Assessment

Place a tick on the Hero Scale (on page 11) to show how much of a hero MacDonnell is **in your opinion**.



Enter the next room.

3

Possible Hero - Myles Keogh

Stop at the second map on the left. Then cross the room and stop at the display case to the right of the doorway.

There are two places to see objects associated with Myles Keogh: a panel called 'Defending the Pope', and another called 'Keogh at the Little Big Horn'. Over his military career, Keogh joined two different armies: the Papal Army and the United States Army.



Little Big Horn was a battle between the United States Army and American Indians in which a unit of more than 200 soldiers was completely destroyed.

Look at the objects on display, read the panels, and answer these questions.

- 3a.** How successful was the Papal Army as a military force?



What's Your Opinion?

3b. Does the fact that Keogh was killed at the Little Big Horn make him more or less of a hero?

3c. Do you have to fight on the winning side to be a hero?

Hero Assessment

Place a tick on the Hero Scale (on page 11) to show how much of a hero Keogh is **in your opinion**.



Enter the next room.

4 Possible Hero - Daniel Shea

Turn right at the doorway and stop at the first display on your right.



Go to the display 'Serving Among the Sassonach'. Look for a small panel about Daniel Shea called 'Irish Sailors'. Read the panels, look at the medals, and then answer these questions.

4a. Why was Shea awarded each of these medals?
What countries awarded him the medals?

Medal 1

Medal 2



4b. Is there any indication that Shea fought in any battles when he was in the Royal Navy?

What's Your Opinion?

4c. Do you think that a person can be a hero for saving lives rather than fighting in battles?

4d. Can you name someone you feel is a hero who saves lives?

Hero Assessment

Place a tick on the Hero Scale (on page 11) to show how much of a hero Shea is **in your opinion**.

5

Possible Hero - An Irish Victoria Cross Winner

Turn left and stop at the display at the end of the long wall on the right.

Find the large panel called 'The Victoria Cross' (VC) and read about this prestigious British medal.

Now look at the names of the Irishmen who were awarded a VC. The names are grouped by county of origin — find the name of someone from your county, and answer these questions about him. Note that no one from County Longford is recorded as winning this medal. If you are from Longford, please choose someone from another county.

5a. His name

His rank



The date and place of his medal-winning act

What's Your Opinion?

5b. This display panel provides little information about the circumstances for which your man won the medal – think about what more you would need to know to consider him a hero.

Put a tick beside the best reason for your VC winner to be a hero:

- he risked his life to saved the lives of his comrades in battle
- he risked his life to kill or capture many of the enemy
- he died in the act of heroism for which he won a medal
- he fought for a cause he believed in
- just the fact he was awarded this important medal for bravery means he was a hero

Hero Assessment

Place a tick on the Hero Scale (on page 11) to show how much of a hero the Victoria Cross winner is **in your opinion**.



Leave this room, cross the bridge, walk past the aeroplane, and enter the next room.

6

Possible Hero - Elizabeth O'Farrell

After the large gun on wheels, turn left and walk diagonally to the display opposite the green flag.



Find the panel called 'The Bitter End' and read about Elizabeth O'Farrell. Look closely at the photograph to see the hem of her dress behind Patrick Pearse.

6a. What did Elizabeth O'Farrell do at the end of the Rising?



What's Your Opinion?

6b. Compare her actions to the actions of Patrick Pearse, one of the leaders of the 1916 Rising. Were Pearse's actions more heroic than O'Farrell's?

Hero Assessment

Place a tick on the Hero Scale (on page 11) to show how much of a hero O'Farrell is **in your opinion**.

7

Possible Hero - Samuel Morgan

Cross the room to the opposite side and stop at the displays on the wall.

Find the panel called 'Professional Soldier, Fond Father', read about Samuel Morgan, and look at the objects on display. Then answer these questions about Samuel Morgan.

What's Your Opinion?

7a. From the information given in the label, do you think that Morgan was particularly brave? Did he receive any special awards for bravery?

7b. Does the fact that he seems to have loved his son, Leo, affect whether he was a hero?
Do you think he was a hero to Leo?

7c. Can someone like Morgan who just does his duty be considered a hero?

Yes

No

Would you change your answer if doing his duty gets him killed?

Hero Assessment

Place a tick on the Hero Scale (on page 11) to show how much of a hero Morgan is **in your opinion**.

8&9 Possible Heroes - Liam Lynch and Michael Collins

Turn right after the two life-sized figures and stop at the display in the corner.

Find the section called 'Lost Leaders' with the uniforms of Michael Collins and Liam Lynch. Read the information with each uniform, and then answer these questions.



8-9a. During the War of Independence, Lynch and Collins were friends and fellow soldiers. Who did they fight against?

8-9b. Which side did each man take during the Civil War: Anti-Treaty or Pro-Treaty?

Lynch



Collins

What's Your Opinion?

8-9c. In what ways was Michael Collins a hero?

8-9d. In what ways was Liam Lynch a hero?

8-9e. Can two men who opposed each other both be heroes, or can only one be a hero?



Hero Assessment

Place a tick on the Hero Scale (on page 11) to show how much of a hero Lynch and Collins are **in your opinion**.



Leave this room and go down the stairs.

10

Possible Hero - Brendan 'Paddy' Finucane

Turn right at the bottom of the stairs. Walk toward the window, around the curved wall, and stop at the display case.

Find the panel titled 'Paddy Finucane'; look at the logbook with the panel, and listen to the words of Finucane speaking on the radio in England. Answer these questions.



Hint: Finucane's original talks were broadcast during the Second World War.

What's Your Opinion?

10a. When you hear what Finucane has to say, listen to how he talks about life and death combat in the air.

Does he sound like a heroic fighter pilot to you?

10b. Why do you think he was asked to broadcast on the radio in England? Tick as many as you agree with from this list.

- to encourage young men to enlist in the British Armed Forces
- to inspire the British with the bravery of their fighting men
- to show how Irish people were supporting the war
- to make the enemy afraid of the Royal Air Force
- because he was a famous fighter pilot

10c. Do you think Finucane was a hero to Irish people, even though Ireland was not directly involved in the Second World War?



10d. Had you ever heard of Paddy Finucane before today? He is not as famous now as he was more than 60 years ago.

Why do you think that heroes change over time?

Hero Assessment

Place a tick on the Hero Scale (on page 11) to show how much of a hero Finucane is **in your opinion**.

Final Hero Assessment

Look at your rankings on 'My Hero Scale' for all the possible heroes. Which person did you rank as the most heroic? Do you want to change any ranking after comparing them to one another? What does this tell you about your idea of 'what is a hero'?



Hero Scale

Possible Heroes	Big Hero			Some Heroic Qualities				Not a Hero		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
John Boyle O'Reilly										
Francis MacDonnell										
Myles Keogh										
Daniel Shea										
An Irish VC Winner										
Elizabeth O'Farrell										
Samuel Morgan										
Liam Lynch										
Michael Collins										
Brendan 'Paddy' Finucane										

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What Is a Hero?

Want to know more?

For more information on exhibitions and education programmes, contact the Education and Outreach Department of the National Museum of Ireland.

Tel: 01 648 6453 Fax: 01 679 1025 email: bookings@museum.ie

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Cover image: Flight Lieutenant Brendan 'Paddy' Finucane DFC, in his Supermarine Spitfire, Second World War, Imperial War Museum

