

LESSON PLAN

OBJECTIVES

- Reading Comprehension for Division II and III
- Respond to an actual letter from Alex Decoteau
- Learn more about Alex by reading what he wrote to his Sister, Emily Latta

MATERIALS

- The letter, attached, which was written by Alex, and which is on the website. This letter was kindly donated by Alex's great-niece, Izola Mottershead.

ANTICIPATORY SET

Read the date on the letter, and compare with the date of Decoteau's death, October 30, 1917. to illustrate to students that it was written the same year. Decoteau was killed at the Battle of Passchendaele, by a sniper's bullet. Poor weather conditions and extreme rainfall made the battle exceptionally difficult. Many soldiers drowned in mud holes.

PROCEDURE

Have students read the letter silently. Then have them share their responses. The following questions could be asked.

1. Where is the letter written?
2. In the first paragraph Decoteau talked about why he hadn't written sooner. What were some of his reasons?
3. How does he show concern for his family? (The brother mentioned is his younger brother, Alfred).
4. What do Decoteau and the other soldiers, many from Edmonton, talk about?
5. What other details do you learn about Decoteau from this letter?
6. Does his voice come through? Can you almost hear him talking?

CLOSURE

Review what the students learned from learning about Decoteau in his own words. Discuss the value of letter-writing. Discuss with students why they believe the letter was saved for so many years.

Have students compare the letter to what they learn about Tom Longboat from reading *The Man Who Ran Faster Than Everyone*. Decoteau believed that Tom Longboat had been killed in the war.

EVALUATION

Students could write a letter from Emily, replying to Alex. They could share their feelings after reading the letters in a group.

MODIFICATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

Have students work in pairs or small groups.