

MORMON PIONEER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MPNHA)

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in partnership with

MPNHA honors veterans on Discovery Road

The Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area (MPNHA) honors Veteran's Day on its award-winning TV series, *Discovery Road*, in an episode dedicated to the heroes of World War II who risked everything for their country.

In the latest episode titled "Honor, Valor and Heritage," host James Nelson tours heritage hot spots in a cherry red 1977 Mercury Cougar. Nelson finds an historic Sanpete County community that honors its military history; an iconic American bomber plane offering inspiration to soldiers and civilians; and stories of World War II veterans, many of whom have strong family ties to the Mormon pioneers.

"It was one discovery of great history after another while we were working on this episode," Nelson says. "Until you knock on a few doors and spend a little time on front porches and in living rooms, you don't realize how many wonderful veterans grew up in Sanpete County or spent a portion of their lives in the area."

"The number of men and women from this area who have served in the U.S. military stretching over many generations is incredible. The service and sacrifice in Sanpete County has been exemplary."

The first stop in "Honor, Valor and Heritage" is in the Sanpete County community of Spring City. The entire town is listed on the National Historic Registry.

With the town steeped in so much history, a local veteran thought it only right that the city honor its veterans with a memorial, which was ultimately funded in part by the MPNHA. The heritage area has also helped fund veterans memorials



The American bomber plane, the B17 "Flying Fortress" known as the "Madras Maiden" makes a stop in Utah on its national tour and introduces the compelling stories of World War II airmen who share a connection with the iconic warplane.



The latest episode of the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Show, Discovery Road, introduces Robert "Doc" Hedelius, who handles the solemn task of playing taps at funerals for veterans whose lives have come to a close.

and projects in Manti, Gunnison, Mt. Pleasant, Salina, and Wayne County.

"The memorials stand as a witness to character traits manifested by Mormon pioneers—grit, determination, courage and a commitment to the values their adopted country espoused," says Monte Bona, MPNHA director and Discovery Road executive producer. "They were immigrants from Great Britain, Scandinavia and throughout Europe, but they became Americans."

From there the show takes a look at the World War II bombing powerhouse, the B17 "Flying Fortress." When the Liberty Foundation brings the B17 bomber, "The Madras Maiden," to Utah, the heroic experiences of World War II airmen unfold for viewers.

After a visit into the lives of the airmen and the powerful bomber that connects them in the way their pioneer heritage did, Nelson gives viewers to a deeper glimpse into the harrowing heroics and touching tales of soldiers of World War II.

"It was amazing to sit across from these veterans and hear their war stories," Nelson says. "They may be seventy-plus years removed from the battlefields and the war ships, but they are proudly in the moment when recalling what they did to serve America."

As the episode comes to a close, Nelson introduces "Doc" Hedelius, a retired veterinarian, and a veteran who plays "Taps" for fellow veterans whose lives have come to a close.

The connection between military heritage and the the birth of Utah is a recurring theme in the episode, which talks about how even Chief Blackhawk held a war camp on the ancestral lands of one veteran, Floyd Burraston.

"Mormon soldiers served in the Civil War, the Spanish American War, World Wars I and II, Korea and Vietnam," Bona says. "Later generations fought in Afghanistan and Iraq."

Discovery Road is aired regularly on the Utah Education Network (Channel 9) and on several local cable channels. "Honor, Valor and Heritage" will air during November. It can also be watched at mormonpioneerheritage.org.

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About the MPNHA:

The Mormon Pioneer Heritage Area is a federally designated area of central and southern Utah running along the beautiful and historic U.S. Highway 89 — including the All-American Road Utah State Route 12, and Capitol Reef Scenic Byway Utah State Route 24, which both intersect with U.S. 89 and together form the MPNHA's Boulder Loop. The area includes the counties of Sanpete, Sevier, Piute, Wayne, Garfield and Kane.