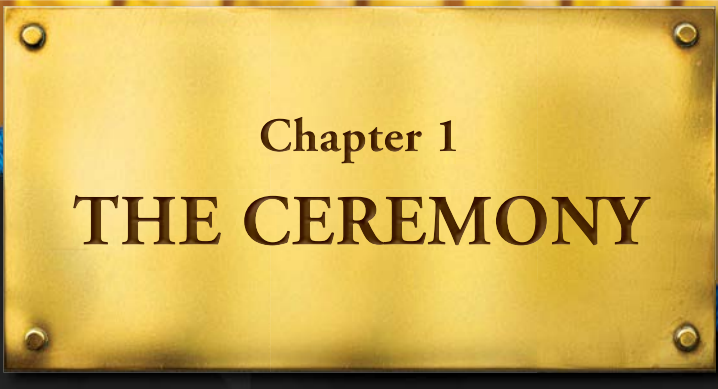




**MEDAL
OF HONOR**

JOHN PERRITANO



Chapter 1
THE CEREMONY

It was June 2, 2015.
There was an event.
It was at the White House.
President Obama spoke.
He held a case.
A medal was inside.
It was the *Medal of Honor*.
This is a US military honor.
It is the top one.

Obama talked about two men.
Both were *soldiers*.
They fought in World War I.
William Shemin was one.
Henry Johnson was the other.

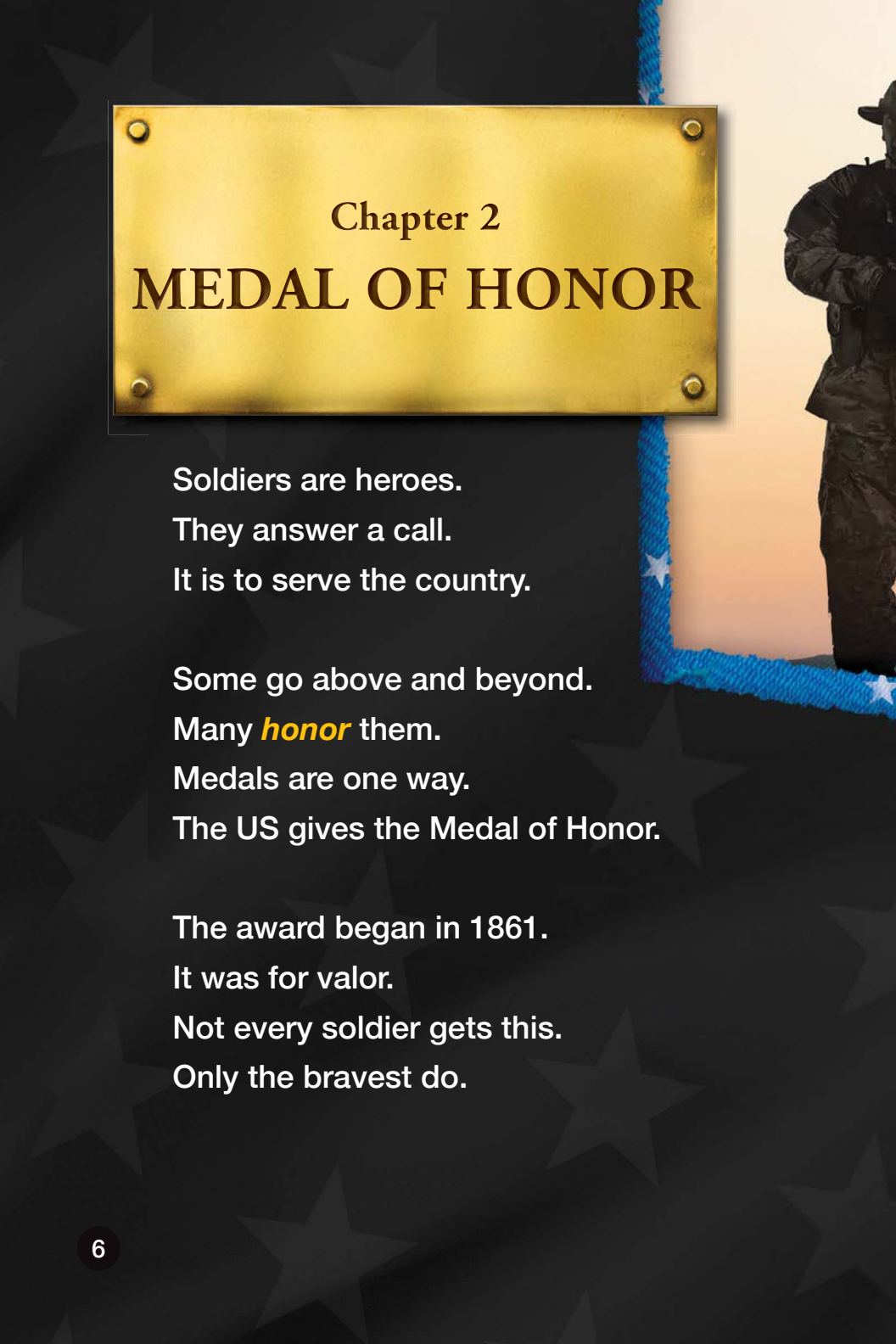


The men were **heroes**.
They had done great things.
Shemin saved many lives.
Johnson did too.
Both had been **wounded**.

The men deserved the Medal of Honor.
They got other awards.
France gave Johnson one.
It was France's top award for *valor*.
Johnson was the first American to get it.
But neither got the Medal of Honor.
Why not?
Shemin was Jewish.
Johnson was African American.

It was almost a century later.
Many thought this day would never come.
It finally did.
“We remember our heroes,” Obama said.
“It’s never too late to say thank you.”





Chapter 2

MEDAL OF HONOR

Soldiers are heroes.
They answer a call.
It is to serve the country.

Some go above and beyond.
Many *honor* them.
Medals are one way.
The US gives the Medal of Honor.

The award began in 1861.
It was for valor.
Not every soldier gets this.
Only the bravest do.



The Medal of Honor is usually presented by the president in the name of Congress. Some call it the Congressional Medal of Honor. But the official name is Medal of Honor.

Sometimes the person has died.
They can still get one.
Family gets the medal.

The first one was given in 1863.
More than 3,500 have one.
Here are some of their stories.

Chapter 3

MARY EDWARDS WALKER

It was 1861.
The Civil War had begun.
Mary Edwards Walker wanted to help.
She helped the *Union*.

Walker was a doctor.
But she could not work as one.
The Army had a rule.
Women could not be doctors.
She worked as a nurse.

Walker worked in a hospital.
She helped troops.
Some were sick.
Others had been hurt.

Later she went to the field.
There were tent hospitals.
She worked there.
Then the Army made a change.
They let her be a surgeon.



It was April 1864.
Walker crossed enemy lines.
Troops were hurt.
She was trying to help.
But some thought she was a spy.
She was taken prisoner.
The enemy held her.
They kept her for five months.
Then they let her go.





She went to work in a hospital.
It was for female prisoners.
Walker ran the hospital.
She also did surgery.

Finally the war ended.
Walker got the Medal of Honor.
She became famous.
Walker used her fame for change.
Back then, women could not vote.
Walker thought it was wrong.
She fought for their **rights**.



It was 1917.

The Army changed the rules.

Only soldiers could get the award.

Her name was taken off the list.

But she kept her medal.

Walker wore it until she died.

It was 1977.

President Carter restored her award.

Walker was put back on the list.



In more than 150 years, Walker was the only woman to receive the Medal of Honor.

