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**ELA/Literacy Class—Amarillo Naranja Azul Verde**

**Response to Literature—Informational**

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| **Carl M. Brashear, 75,**  **Diver Who Broke a Racial Barrier, Dies**  By MARGALIT FOX | **Annotation Steps**:  **Step #1**—   * Read the article once for comprehension   **Step #2**—   * Read the response questions.   C-U-B the questions  **Step #3**—   * Read the article a second time; annotate for answers to the short response questions) |
| Carl M. Brashear, a son of Kentucky sharecroppers, who in 1970 became the United States Navy’s first black master diver, and whose story was told in the 2000 movie “Men of Honor,” died Tuesday in Portsmouth, Va. He was 75. The cause was heart and respiratory failure, said his former wife Junetta Brashear.  Starring Cuba Gooding Jr. as Mr. Brashear, “Men of Honor” told the story of its hero’s struggle against seemingly insurmountable odds: rural poverty, a limited education and the racism that pervaded the armed forces from the late 1940’s, when he enlisted, until long afterward.  The movie also portrayed Mr. Brashear’s grueling fight to return to diving, and to attain the coveted position of master diver, after he lost a leg during a shipboard accident in 1966.  A 31-year Navy veteran, Mr. Brashear retired in 1979 as a master chief boatswain’s mate, the highest enlisted rank in the Navy. He was also the first person ever to be returned to full service as a Navy diver after losing a limb.  Carl Maxie Brashear (pronounced bruh-SHEER) was born on Jan. 19, 1931, in Tonieville, Ky., the sixth of eight children. He left school after seventh grade to help his father work the land, but dreamed of adventure. He did not want to spend his days behind a plow.  At 17, he tried to join the Army in early 1948, but the Army did not want him. The Navy was more welcoming, so he enlisted in February 1948. (The entire military was later desegregated in June of that same year.)  Like most black Navy men of the period, Mr. Brashear was placed in the stewards’ branch, where he prepared meals for white officers in the officers’ dining hall.  In 1950, Mr. Brashear was assigned to the aircraft carrier Palau. One day he watched, fascinated and inspired, as a diver slipped into the ocean to recover an airplane that had rolled overboard. Here was the adventure he had sought for so long.  He wrote to the Navy diving school, asking for admittance. He wrote again. And again. Curiously, as Mr. Brashear later recounted, his letters kept getting lost. He wrote more than 100 times before being admitted in 1954.  Few of Mr. Brashear’s classmates were pleased to see him. He sometimes found threatening notes with racial epithets on his bunk.  He graduated in 1955 and spent the next several years as a Navy salvage diver. But he longed to be a first-class diver, carrying out missions deep undersea. In 1960, after earning his high school equivalency diploma, he entered the Navy’s deep-sea diving school.  Mr. Brashear failed the course, unable to pass its rigorous science component, which included physics, medicine and mathematics. For the next three years, he studied every moment he was not on duty, and in 1963 was readmitted. He graduated in 1964 as a first-class diver, third in his class of 17.  In 1966, Mr. Brashear was aboard the Navy salvage ship Hoist off the coast of Spain, helping to recover a hydrogen bomb that had plunged into the Mediterranean after the plane carrying it crashed. As he supervised from the ship, a line broke, sending a heavy steel pipe hurtling toward the men on deck.  Mr. Brashear pushed his men out of the way, but could not avoid the pipe himself. It crushed his left leg. He lost so much blood that he was initially pronounced dead by the Spanish hospital to which he was evacuated.  After being transferred to Portsmouth Naval Hospital in Virginia, Mr.Brashear was told that his leg could be repaired enough to allow him to walk with a brace and cane. The process would take several years.  “Go ahead and amputate,” he told the doctors. “I can’t be tied up that long. I’ve got to go back to diving.”  He was fitted with a prosthetic leg, and the Navy sent him his discharge papers. He did not sign. Instead, he quietly signed his own orders for a transfer back to diving school. He dived with his new leg, had pictures taken and showed them to Navy officials. They did not believe such a feat was possible.  The Navy finally agreed to put Mr. Brashear through a series of tests, including climbing ladders with barbells strapped to his back to simulate a diver’s staggering load. For the final test, in a scene dramatically reproduced in the film, Mr. Brashear was required to walk 12 steps unaided, wearing nearly 300 pounds of equipment. He took the steps, and was returned to active duty as a diver.  In 1970, after more grueling tests, Mr. Brashear became a master diver, the highest position a Navy diver can attain.  Despite a lifetime of hard-won achievement, Mr. Brashear spoke about “Men of Honor” with humility and awe.  “Not in my wildest dreams did I think this would happen,” he said in an interview with CNN in 2001. “Even after I lost my leg I was just doing my job.” |  |

**Short Answer Responses—**Use textual evidence to answer each question

1. What is a central idea of the passage? **Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your**

**answer.**

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1. According to the passage, what was the author’s view of Carl Brashear? **Be sure to use evidence**

**from the text to support your answer.**

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1. How did the setting affect Carl Brashear’s dreams throughout the article? **Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your answer.**

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