

Lesson Two: Mississippians at War

Objectives:

Learn about the different jobs Mississippians performed to help the war effort and identify primary sources that represent each role. Then interact with veterans by conducting oral histories detailing their wartime experiences and take an opportunity to thank those who have served while practicing basic letter writing skills.

Materials: *Wartime Roles: Overview*, *Wartime Roles: Sources* and *Wartime Roles: Answer Key*; *Oral History 101*; *Saying Thanks Worksheet*; *Blue Star Flag Worksheet*; scissors; glue; colored pencils, crayons, or markers; *Speak Like a Soldier Flash Cards*; *Speak Like a Sailor Flash Cards*; *Lesson Two Quiz*.

Procedures:

Activity One: Wartime Roles

1. Distribute *Wartime Roles: Overview* to your class. Working individually, in groups, or as a class, discuss the different roles Mississippians played during World War II.
2. Distribute *Wartime Roles: Sources* to your class or display images using a projector. Examine each primary source document, artifact, or photograph and determine what wartime role it represents. Discuss with students what details of the sources identified them with the specific roles. Use the *Wartime Roles: Answer Key* to provide students with additional information about the Mississippi people responsible for the sources.

Activity Two: Oral History 101

1. Listen to oral histories of World War II servicemen and women. To hear the stories of Mississippians collected by the Corinth Museum's "Honor and Courage: World War II Digital Audio Exhibit" visit <http://www.crossroadsmuseum.com/museumarchive/veterans/WWIIVeterans.htm>. You can also hear oral histories from veterans all over the country at the National World War II Museum's website at <http://www.nationalww2museum.org/see-hear/collections/oral-histories/>.
2. Distribute *Oral History 101* to your students.
3. Ask students to locate a veteran or active duty service member in their family or community and conduct an oral history using the suggested questions.
4. Have students share their findings with the class and discuss the different experiences had by service members of various generations, branches of service, jobs, etc.

Activity Three: Showing Support for Service Members

1. Choose one of the 5 ways to show your support of veterans and service members from the *Saying Thanks Worksheet* and complete the activity as a class.
2. Use the *Blue Star Flag Worksheet* to read about the history of the Blue Star Flag and then have students create and display their own.

Activity Four: Speak Like a Soldier / Speak Like a Sailor

1. Print off the *Speak Like a Soldier* and/or *Speak Like a Sailor Flash Cards* on a double-sided printer or copier.
2. Have students cut out the *Speak Like a Soldier* or *Speak Like a Sailor Flash Cards* to learn the special terms military personal have for everyday items.
3. Individually or in pairs, have students quiz themselves or their partners to see how much military lingo they know.

Extension Activity:

Nisei Troops in Mississippi: Research the 442nd Regiment Combat Team, an all-volunteer Army unit of Japanese Americans trained at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. Suggested research topics include the actions of Daniel Inouye, a Japanese American from Hawaii who would go on to become a United States Senator. In 2000, President Bill Clinton decorated Inouye and 19 others with the Congressional Medal of Honor for actions performed in Italy in 1945; the decoration was withheld at the time because of racial prejudice.

Wartime Roles: Overview

Read the following descriptions of jobs performed by Mississippians during World War II. Then, using the Wartime Roles: Sources worksheet, match each document, photo, or artifact with the appropriate wartime role. NOTE: There may be multiple documents, photos, or artifacts representing each role.

U.S. Army Soldiers

After World War I, Congress gave funds to maintain an army of about 140,000 troops. But in 1940, after Hitler's army had swept across Europe, Congress made two important decisions. One was to mobilize the National Guard into active service and the second was to pass the Selective Service and Training Act, the first peacetime draft in U.S. history. By mid-1941 the Army was at its required strength, and by the end of the war in 1945, 11.26 million soldiers had served.

After completing training, soldiers were shipped out to Europe, North Africa, the Pacific islands, and other Allied countries around the world where they were called GIs, short for "Government Issue." Soldiers were continually on the move, carrying few personal belongings but as much ammo as they could pack. They lived off prepackaged and poorly tasting food called D and K rations. The lengthy marches, hours of hard physical labor, and the terror of combat were interspersed with periods of utter boredom. Pay for privates, the lowest ranking Army soldiers, started at \$50 per month.

U.S. Navy Sailors

The Navy was unique among U.S. military forces in World War II in that it fought by land, air, and sea in both the Pacific and Atlantic theaters. Devastated by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, where 2,008 sailors were killed, twenty-one ships were damaged or destroyed, and more than 300 planes lost, the Navy had to rebuild its Pacific fleet. Undamaged were its aircraft carriers, which would lead the Navy to an important victory in June 1942 at Midway, a major turning point in the Pacific war. Invaluable during these battles were naval aviators who flew attack missions from the decks of aircraft carriers.

In addition to surface naval warfare in the Pacific, 288 submarines patrolled both oceans and warships escorted convoys of Allied troops and supplies across the Atlantic. The Navy also provided transportation and support for the U.S. Marine Corps, their sister service in the Department of the Navy.

The Marines Corps in the Pacific

Newly inducted Marines attended four to eight weeks of basic training at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, or Camp Pendleton, California. These training bases are still in use today. There inductees completed tank training, utilized extensive artillery ranges, and practiced landing exercises on expansive beach fronts. These landing exercises, known as amphibious assaults, would prove essential to the Marines' success in the Pacific. There, an "island hopping" tactic was utilized to capture islands held by small troops of Japanese, "leapfrogging" past heavily fortified enemy-held islands which subsequently became isolated and worthless.

Marine units spent anywhere from several days to several months on each Pacific island, fighting jungle campaigns against the well-concealed Japanese in hand-to-hand combat. They also battled heavy rains,

oppressive heat, malaria, and other tropical diseases. Despite these conditions, the Marine Corps was considered an elite branch of service to join. While in 1939 there were only 19,432 active duty Marines, at their peak in August 1945 there were 485,833. In total, 669,100 men and women served in the Marines during the course of the war.

African Americans in the Military

On the eve of World War II agencies such as the War Department, the Army, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt acknowledged that segregated military units led to inefficiency, lost manpower, and low morale within black units. However, the tradition of assigning African American servicemen to segregated military units was continued during the war in part because a large number of military training bases were located in the South where segregation was legal. In order to retain the goodwill of surrounding communities, the military allowed the practice to continue. But although these facilities were separate, they were, as in civilian life, also unequal, perpetuating the low morale and unrest among African American service members stationed in the U.S.

During the first years of the war, African Americans mainly served in non-combat roles, such as supply, maintenance, and transportation. One example of this is the famed Red Ball Express, a truck convoy that supplied Allied troops throughout Europe after the D-Day invasion of June 1944. As the war continued and Allied troops were lost, African Americans had the opportunity to step into previously restricted roles as pilots, medics, infantrymen, tankers, and officers.

In 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9981 which ordered the integration of the all U.S. armed forces.

Nurse Corps

Both the Army and Navy had established Nurse Corps when World War II began. In both services, nurses were only a step behind combat troops, oftentimes wading to shore behind male servicemen to set up field hospitals just behind the front lines. Their close proximity to the enemy led to many becoming prisoners of war. Nurses helped construct tents for field hospitals, worked in makeshift open-air hospitals, and on hospital ships. Many worked without the supervision of physicians including flight nurses who were responsible for patients evacuated via air transport. By war's end, over 70,000 women had served in the Army or Navy Nurse Corps.

WAACS and WAVES

While women had traditionally nursed troops and provided administrative support during military actions, World War II was the first time they had the opportunity to officially enlist in the armed forces.

During the course of the war the Army recruited 150,000 women for their Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. WAACS not only performed clerical jobs, thereby freeing a man for combat at the front, but also performed tasks related to bombsight maintenance, cryptology, chemical warfare, and ordinance. In the Navy, the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service also took on roles previously performed by men. Over 100,000 WAVES volunteered and served as aviation mechanics, gunnery instructors, parachute riggers, and radio operators.

Despite these opportunities, women were not always given treatment that equaled that of their male counterparts. Neither the Army nor the Navy initially provided equal pay, promotion opportunities, or even supplies and housing to their female troops and neither allowed its women to command men. Although the Army allowed African American women (both enlisted and officers) to join the WAACS from its inception and trained them with white candidates, all other military facilities such as service clubs and beauty shops were segregated, as were the military units they were eventually attached to. The Navy did not accept African American women for service until late 1944.

Prisoners of War

The 1929 Geneva Convention which was in effect during World War II was responsible for ensuring the well-being of all prisoners of war. According to the Convention, POWs were entitled to specific rights such as safe and sanitary camps, food, medical care, and mail.

Despite these international regulations, POWs of both the Allies and the Axis powers endured hardships. In the German POW camps scattered across Eastern Europe, Allied POWs suffered from crowded conditions, harsh winters, meager rations, and boredom. Many tried to escape and while some succeeded, others were recaptured or killed in the attempt.

Conditions endured by POWs in the Far East were much more severe. There prisoners were used for hard labor, such as constructing railways and roads or working in mines, and were routinely beaten by guards there and on the lengthy marches between labor camps. These men (and some women) survived on ½ cup of rice per day, many dropping to below 100 pounds. No medicine was made available to POWs and poor living conditions, intensive labor, psychological trauma, and tropical diseases killed millions. It is estimated that somewhere between twenty-seven and forty-two percent of POWs in the Far East died or were killed in captivity compared to one or two percent in Europe.

U.S.O. Volunteers and Camp Shows

In 1941, the United Service Organization was formed in order to provide “the emotional support the troops needed.” During the course of the war over one million volunteers served over one billion servicemen and women. These volunteers met troop trains with hot coffee and cookies, oftentimes in the middle of the night; assisted servicemen in locating family and social services; and staffed USO recreation facilities on and near military bases. In a single twelve-month period, one USO terminal served 25,883 gallons of coffee, 501,828 doughnuts, 643,218 sandwiches, just over one million men, and processed over 150,000 housing applications. The USO also traveled overseas with its traveling Camp Shows that took celebrities such as Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and Lena Horne onto the front lines to perform for the troops, producing as many as 700 shows a day all over the world by early 1945.

Red Cross Workers

Founded in 1881, the American Red Cross was established with the purpose of “giving relief to and serving as a medium of communication between members of the American armed forces and their families and providing national and international disaster relief and mitigation,” principals still adhered to today.

While many Americans volunteered to go overseas with the Red Cross during World War II, assisting the organization at home was something that every American could do and local chapters of the Red Cross sprung up across the country. These groups provided first aid and water safety training, prepared Red Cross packages of basic food and health supplies for troops overseas, and donated blood. The Junior Red Cross, made up of over 20 million schoolchildren, collected toys and clothing for children overseas and provided entertainment at stateside military camps and veterans hospitals.

By the end of the war, the Red Cross had enrolled and trained over 104,000 nurses, sent 27 million packages to Allied POWs, shipped over 300,000 tons of supplies overseas, and collected 13.3 million pints of blood for use by the armed forces.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Wartime Roles: Sources

After reading Wartime Roles: Overview, examine the primary source documents below and on the following pages and determine what wartime role they represent. Then, discuss what details of the sources identified them with the specific roles. NOTE: There may be multiple documents, photos, or artifacts representing each role.



Exterior (above) and interior (right). Approximate size: 3 x 6 inches, MDAH Archives and Records Services.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Well, actually, well, as you know, up until about the 1960s most of the young people left Mississippi particularly and many number of my friends left. Of course, we served in World War II under circumstances that were not ideal. As an officer in World War II, I had no authority that a white private had an obligation to respect. A black officer, a black person could not command white troops until 1948 by President Truman's executive order. When I had served as a second lieutenant, I received good ratings and I served as first lieutenant and received good ratings, but I was serving in a company, a regiment ⁱⁿ ~~rather~~ which had of course, the majority of officers were white, all the troops were black - but we had enough black officers to form one black company. There were about four of us leftover, not enough to form another company, so we were scattered around in other companies. For me, first lieutenant was a deadend because unless you got a company command you couldn't become a captain, and if you got a staff position, it would be commanding some whites and so you couldn't do that. So, a couple of us approached our regimental commander about

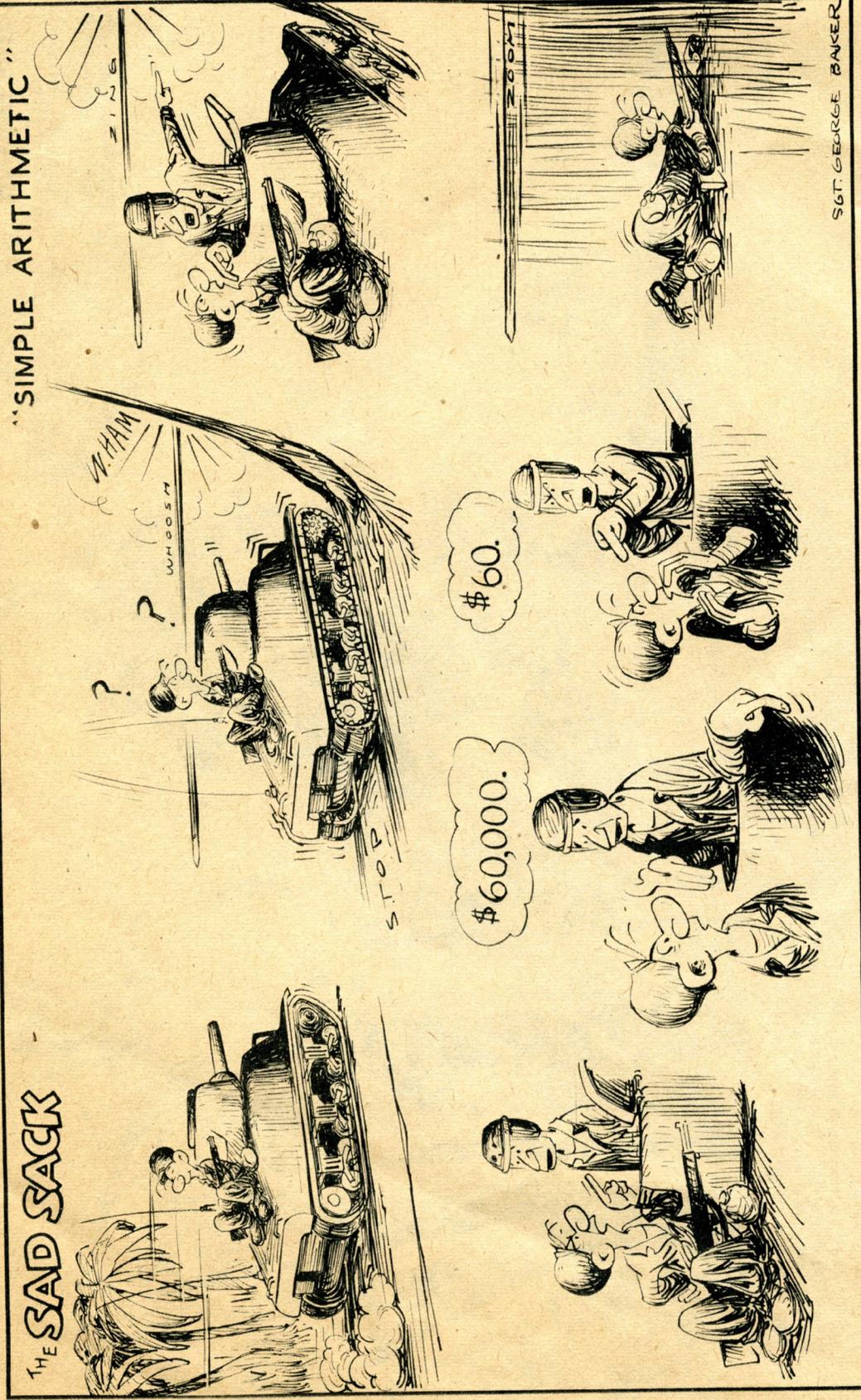
MDAH Archives and Records Services.

that situation. Of course, he was sympathetic, but as we already knew, could really do nothing about that. So, we were saying, why break our backs to get good ratings and good performance records when it's not going to mean anything in terms of promotion. But that was the case, and so I served really all throughout my active duty as a first lieutenant, but there was a regulation which provided that if you had, ~~at~~ ^{up to} the time of your release, had maintained an average rating of excellent for a period of time, then you were to advanced ⁱⁿ ~~to the~~ grade. So, I was released as a captain, but I never served as a captain. So, you have the conditions and a part of that time as an officer, for all of that time as an officer, but we could not go to white officer clubs. We, for a time there in North Carolina, well, of course in Fort ~~Lambert~~ ^{Liberty} Wood and in North Carolina for a certain period of time black officers and white officers had separate quarters. Just before we went overseas, maybe six months before, the colonel integrated the Officers' Quarters, but the Officers' Club was never integrated. That applied wherever we went: so the situation was not the ideal either place. So, that just added another thing to the list that needed some attention.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

YANK The Army Weekly • AUGUST 10, 1945



From Yank: The Army Weekly, August 10, 1945. MDAH Museum Division Education.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

When You Go...

EVERY SINGLE DAY YOUR RED CROSS CHAPTER ANSWERS QUESTIONS LIKE THESE—

From a mother:

Can my son come home to help me straighten out urgent business affairs?

From a wife:

My allowance has not come through. What will I do about expenses when my baby is born?

From a sister:

How may I get news of my brother from whom I haven't heard for months?

From a father:

My son is 22. Am I held responsible for any debts he owed when he went into service?

GIVE THIS LEAFLET TO YOUR FAMILY. WHEN YOU GO THEY MAY HAVE QUESTIONS—QUESTIONS YOU DON'T ANTICIPATE NOW. THE ADDRESS OF YOUR RED CROSS CHAPTER IS GIVEN BELOW.



The American National RED CROSS

ARC 12
July 1954

Exterior (above) and interior (right). MDAH Archives and Records Services.



SERGEANT DEE, stationed on an island in the Pacific, had not heard from home in three months. His wife, at their home in Texas, was expecting her first baby—and the nearer the time the more frantic her husband for word from home. Like many a soldier, Sergeant Dee could take an enemy barrage better than he could take such suspense. Finally, he asked his Red Cross field director on the post what could be done about putting him in touch with home. The field director radioed for news.

Back in Texas a small town Red Cross chapter got busy for an anxious and expectant father, half a world away. Within a short time Home Service was ready with the news for Sergeant Dee: his son was five days old; wife and baby were doing well. Two days later—somewhere down near the equator—the field director received the message and rushed the good news to Sergeant Dee.

THE RED CROSS links the serviceman with his family. Action may be initiated by the serviceman's field director in this country or abroad, or by the family's Red Cross chapter at home.



Your Red Cross Can Help Your Family

- ★ If they need to get in touch with you in case of serious illness or death at home
- ★ If they need help at home in time of trouble—the kind of help you would give if you were there
- ★ If they need advice about allowances, allotments, and government benefits for dependents of servicemen
- ★ If they need help in preparing claims for government benefits
- ★ If they are worried about you and want reports on your welfare

YOUR LOCAL RED CROSS CHAPTER, through its Home Service program, offers these services to the families of the men and women in the armed forces.



PHIL SMITH left the Army hospital to go home to his wife and child in Iowa. He had a disability discharge but—confident that he could get along well in his old job—he had declined to file a claim for a pension. Back home, his troubles started. His illness turned out to be recurrent; finally his doctor urged further hospitalization. How could Smith provide for his wife and child during that period?

He took his problems to the Red Cross. Home Service helped him get into a veterans' hospital, helped him to apply for a pension, and—to his infinite relief—arranged to provide for his family while the claim was pending and while he was hospitalized. To expedite his claim, Smith gave the Red Cross power of attorney—which meant that a Red Cross field director would represent him in the Veterans Administration office.



THE RED CROSS chapters offer claims service. Home Service is kept fully informed on regulations and claims procedures, and—working through Red Cross field directors in the Veterans Administration—on all developments in a particular claimant's case.



THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY of a small Vermont town sent a hurried call for the Red Cross Home Service worker. Could the Red Cross do anything to help one of their patients? Mrs. West, mother of three small children, had been brought in for an emergency operation. Her husband, in the Navy, was on sea duty. There was no one to take care of the children.

The Red Cross could do plenty to help. Home Service secured a housekeeper to live in the home with the children—to keep the youngest at home and to send the others to school. By keeping in touch with the family, Home Service could report to Mrs. West that her children were having good care. When she returned home she found her family well fed and happy, her home clean, and the housekeeper prepared to stay on through her convalescence.



THE RED CROSS gives practical help where it is most needed. For needs not met by public funds, Red Cross can give financial aid. The purpose of family service is to provide for your family the help and encouragement you would give if you were at home.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Sargan (Flypen)
July 19, 1949

Dear Madel,

Yes, your guess was right, I am an
Sargan and have been since since "D"
day (about one o'clock).

June 15th + 16th were the worst
days of my life to this date. You
feel mighty bad when Sim. and
mortar shells fall around you, some
as close as this and four feet, not to
mention counter-attacks, small arms
fire, and air raids. I am really
glad to be here.

My Bty. was the first artillery
to come ashore on Sargan. + the
first to fire. We have fired well
over 2 million dollars worth of

ammo. My boys have done well,
Madel, and I am sure proud
of them. (you know, I am the old
man" of this Bty, being the C.O.)

Hot! fly here, hence the nickname
for the place -
Tell that rich gal to stand by it!
I get back + tell adia to be good.
Love
chr

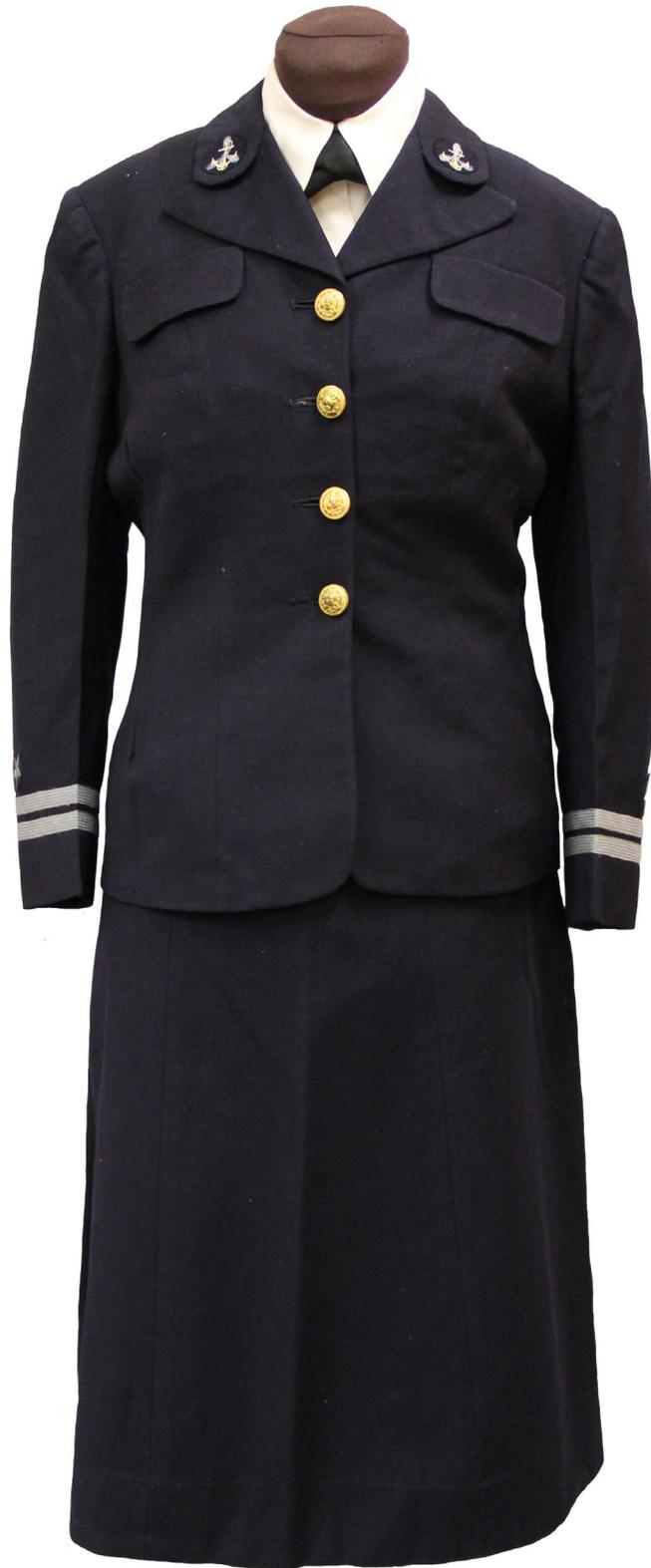
WMM

P.S.

you were wrong about the Phil.
boys being thrown back after
the landing. We fought thru the
whole campaign.

The army unit here is not with
a "Tinkus Down".

NAME: _____ DATE: _____



MDAH Museum Division Collections.

SECRET

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

PART I

REPORT OF LOSSES INFLICTED ON ENEMY SHIPPING BY TASK FORCE 38 FOR PERIOD OF
30 OCTOBER 1944 TO 26 JANUARY 1945

A. ENEMY SHIPS SUNK

	Number	Tonnage
1. Total Warships	45	94,100
2. Total Merchant Ships	104	384,100
3. Total Small Craft	114	*
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	263	478,200

B. ENEMY SHIPS PROBABLY SUNK

1. Total Warships	4	6,400
2. Total Merchant Ships	22	80,800
3. Total Small Craft	9	*
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Total	35	87,200

C. ENEMY SHIPS DAMAGED

1. Total Warships	52	51,800
2. Total Merchant Ships	172	526,300
3. Total Small Craft	175	*
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Total	399	578,100

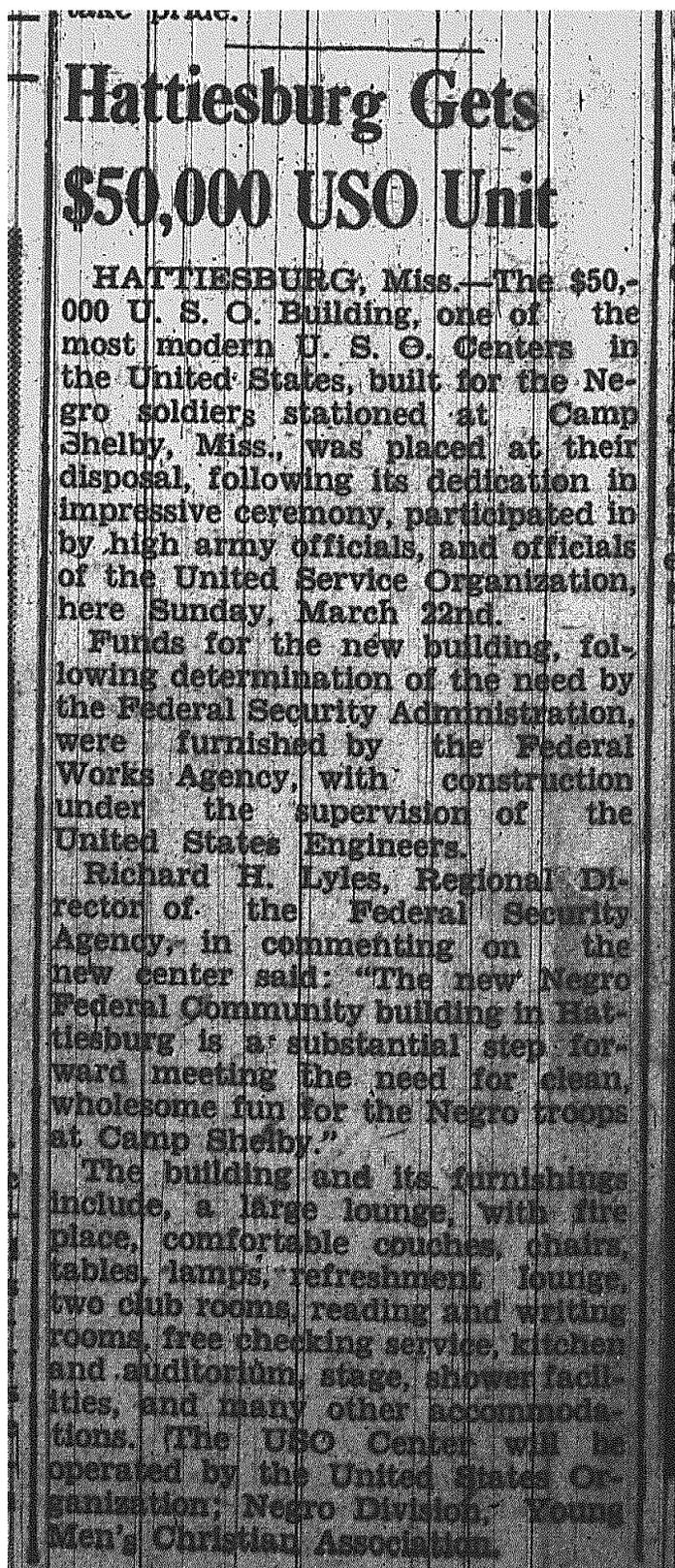
Sub Total 697 1,143,500

* Estimated Small Craft Tonnage 20,000

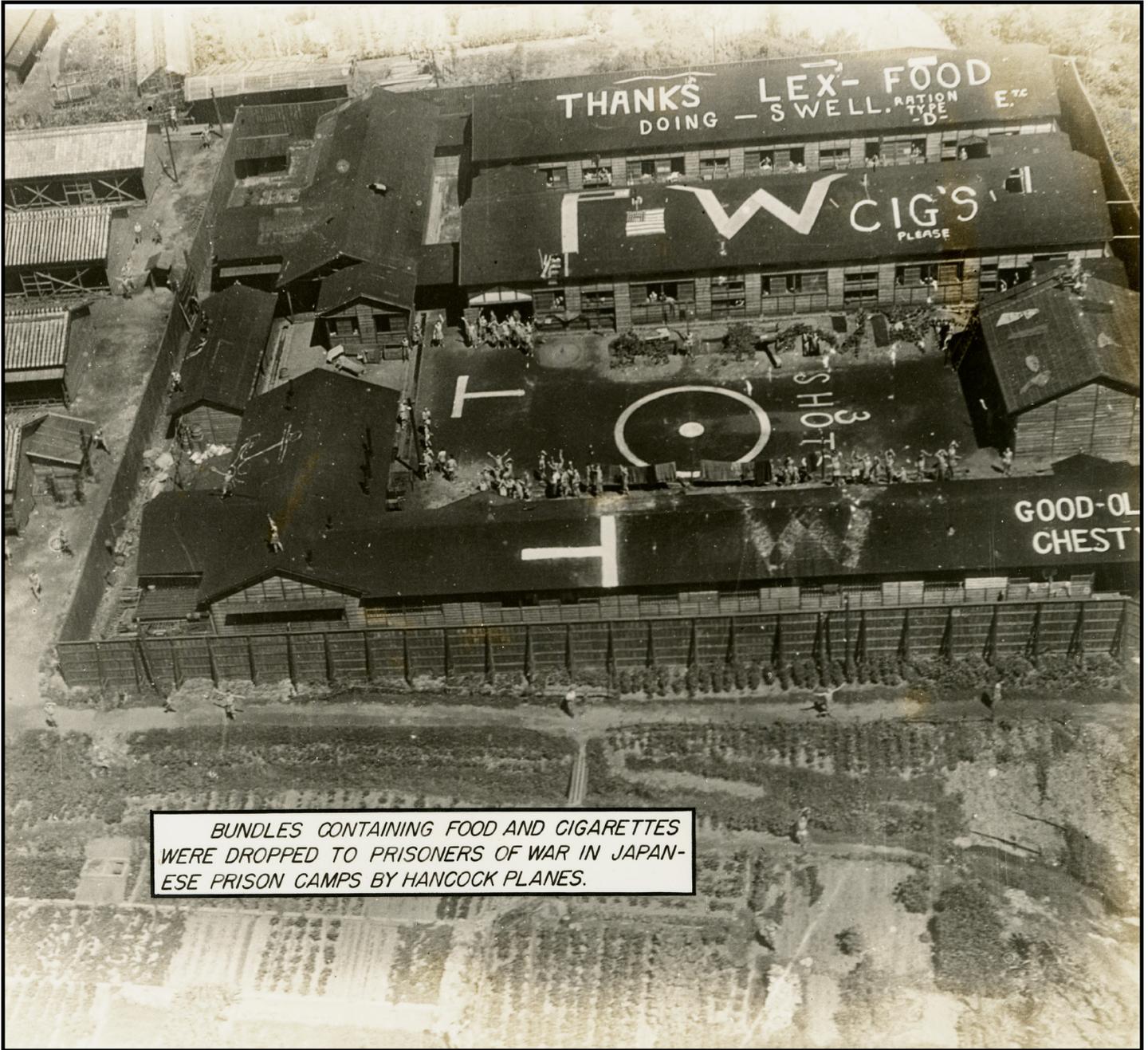
GRAND TOTAL 697 1,163,500

CTF 38, Action Report
30 Oct. 1944 - 26 Jan. 1945

ENCLOSURE (B)



From The Jackson Advocate, April 4, 1942. MDAH Archives and Records Services. Used with the permission of The Jackson Advocate.



BUNDLES CONTAINING FOOD AND CIGARETTES WERE DROPPED TO PRISONERS OF WAR IN JAPANESE PRISON CAMPS BY HANCOCK PLANES.

MDAH Archives and Records Services.

Enlist in a Proud Profession...

JOIN THE
**U.S.
CADET
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CORPS**

A LIFETIME
EDUCATION
FREE!
FOR HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATES WHO QUALIFY

LEAFLETS AVAILABLE AT THIS PHARMACY. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION WRITE
MISSISSIPPI NURSING COUNCIL FOR WAR SERVICE
3209-24TH AVENUE, MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI

U. S. Public Health Service • Federal Security Agency

Approximate size: 20 x 14 inches. MDAH Archives and Records Services.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Oct. 10-44

Dear Miss Lindsey;

I've been hearing from you through the letters that I receive from Willie and am very glad that you haven't forgotten the old G.I.s not being much right now due to the weather but have been very busy since we loaded the outfit I'm in building landing strips for the air forces. The strips are for fighter planes.

I've seen some very pretty cities and some that were a pile of rubbish St. Lo, St. Jean De Day + Caen etc. 2 signs was almost as bad.

I've seen Dreary, Versailles, Paris etc. I wish I could mention

some more but not yet. I forgot to mention Reims the city with the beautiful Cathedrals. I was there a few times.

I know everyone back home or in the U.S. rather, thinks the war is almost over. It's a pity how easily everyone can be fooled. It's not nearly over here at all if the people over there don't wake up its going to last much longer. It seems that about 90% of the people think that all they have to do is buy a war bond but I can say one thing these bonds on the front are worth more than \$8.75 now and if they survive will be worth more than the whole \$25 in ten years to themselves if ~~some~~ one else. This paper is some we found that the Germans left for us. your 9 student
P. S. MDAH

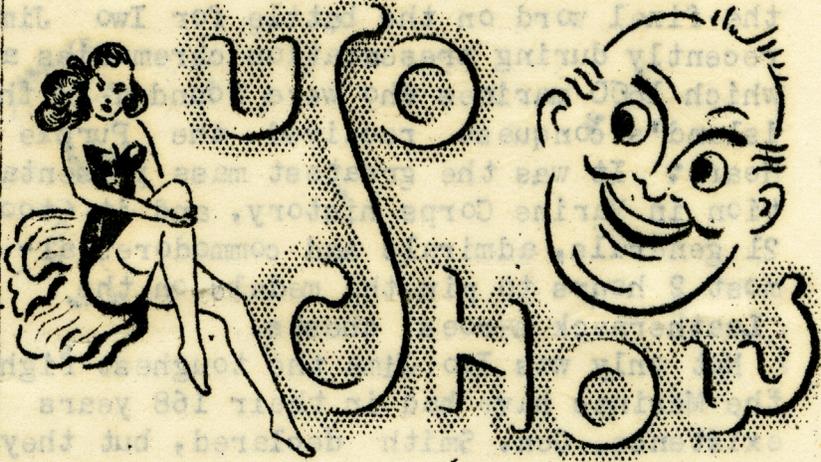
MDAH Archives and Records Services.

P.S.

You should see the stock I live in. I have a heater made from an old German Panzer Car and another fellow and I built in a little stock we have to crawl in and out but its warm inside. I just had we are having Chicker for dinner tomorrow. These fellows are real getting good at finding their way around after dark. This is a big mess of writing but they don't furnish lights or a desk.

APRIL 13, 1945

VITAE



ON MONDAY NIGHT MAY 7, 1945 AT 8:00 P.M. USO Tabloid Troupe #92 will be presented at the POST THEATER to the personnel of this post.....DON'T FORGET THE DATE

ABE SHER, comedian and whistler performed on 20 islands for USO-Camp shows in the South Pacific. His whistling imitation of Hitler's speech and his novelty Frisco dance were hilarious hits with servicemen out there.

CHARLES NOLAN presents an expert acrobatic and juggling act. Nolan keeps his audience on its toes watching his fast-paced gyrations and juggling feats.

SALLY GOODWIN, rhythm singer, features novelty numbers in a highly original style

PRINCESS LITTLE HAWK, is an acrobatic dancer with a colorful background. Born in Argentina, she played in Colombia, Puerto Rico, Panama and Venezuela. Her parents had a knife-throwing act.

SHIRLEY ROBINSON, accordionist, from Fla. has an unusually large repertoire of the hit tunes and boogie-woogie swing.

DON'T FORGET MONDAY NITE MAY 7

From The Camp Clinton POW WOW, vol. 2, no. 13, April 13, 1945. MDAH Archives and Records Services.

Commissions For First Negro Army Pilots



TUSKEGEE, Ala.—Members of the first class of Negro pilots from the nation's first Negro air school, here, received their wings and now are second lieutenants in the U. S. Air Forces. Shown here are Col. Frederick V. H. Kimble, presenting wings to (left to right), Capt. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., of Washington, D. C.; Lemuel Rodney Custis, of Hartford, Conn.; Charles Henry De Bow, of Indianapolis, Ind.; George Spencer Roberts of Fairmont, West Va., and Mac Ross, of Dayton, Ohio. Col. Kimble was assisted by Major N. F. Parrish. (INS)

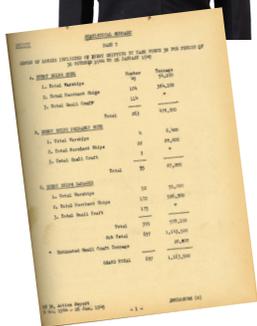
From The Jackson Advocate, March 21, 1942. MDAH Archives and Records Services. Used with the permission of The Jackson Advocate.



Prisoners of War (Germany) William H. Turcotte, a member of the 8th Air Force, 91st Bomb Group, 322nd Squadron, was shot down on October 9, 1943, and kept this journal until he was liberated on April 29, 1945. In it Turcotte included menus, lists of books he had read and plays produced while in the camp, notes about the growth of vegetables, and poetry among other things. These pages, entitled “A Kriegie’s Day” (POWs called themselves *Kriegies*, short for *Kriegesgefangenen*, the German word for prisoner of war) is a humorous view of daily camp life, including the twice daily *Appell* (roll call) and afternoon tea with British internees. After the war, Turcotte became a wildlife biologist and conservationist in his native state of Mississippi. He passed away November 5, 2000.



WAACS and WAVES/U.S. Navy Sailors Bessie Will Gilliland joined the U.S. Navy WAVES in 1942 and became a Lieutenant Commander. Later, she taught first-grade and became a principal of the Lorena Duling School in the Fondren area of Jackson, Mississippi.



U.S. Navy Sailors This Statistical Summary of enemy ships sunk and damaged was part of an activity report kept by Naval Lieutenant Charles A. Sisson of Clarksdale, Mississippi. Sisson served as secretary to Vice Admiral John Sidney McCain of Carrollton, Mississippi, the Commander of Second Carrier Task Force, Pacific Fleet. During the last year of the war this Task Force participated in operations at Palau, Okinawa, Formosa, Leyte, China, and the Philippines.



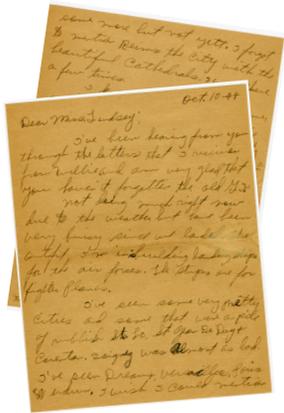
USO Volunteers/African Americans in the Military Located near Camp Shelby, an Army training base in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, the East Sixth Street USO provided a home-away-from-home for soldiers, especially for the 14,000 who were living in tents due to inadequate housing. It was staffed by 344 local community members who, between 1942 and 1946, worked 40,261 hours. By 1944 there were approximately 3,000 USO clubs but only 300, including the Hattiesburg location, served African Americans. Today the building is on the National Register of Historic Places and houses the African American Military History Museum.



Prisoners of War (Japan) Although the exact location and date of this photo are unknown, its caption read “Bundles Containing Food and Cigarettes were Dropped to Prisoners of War in Japanese Prison Camps by Hancock Planes.” The U.S.S. Hancock was one of twenty-four Essex-class aircraft carriers built during World War II. According to the National Archives, approximately 295 Americans held in Japanese POW camps were from Mississippi.



Nurse Corps By June, 1943, so many women had joined a military Nurse Corps that a shortage of civilian nurses occurred. In response, Congress passed the Bolton Act which established a Cadet Nurse Corps. This program paid the education expenses for nursing students who were willing to commit to essential military or civilian nursing after graduation. Extremely successful by the time the program was discontinued, it had created over 150,000 new nurses.



U.S. Army Soldiers Miss Bell Lindsey, an English teacher at Copiah-Lincoln Junior College, maintained regular correspondence with dozens of former students during World War II. A unique collection, the letters come from all over the world and relate (many in great detail) the various experiences of her students including military training, battle, and even capture. A fairly typical example by Grover Smith is shown here, who references several towns in Normandy and their condition after D-Day (June 6, 1944), states his opinion about the value of American soldiers, and describes his makeshift living quarters. Smith went on to receive the Silver Star and the Purple Heart. A native of Drew, Mississippi, Smith passed away in Louisiana in 2011.

TRANSCRIPT: PAGE ONE

Oct. 10-44

Dear Miss. Lindsey,

I've been hearing from you through the letters that I receive from Willie and am very glad that you haven't forgotten the old G.I.s.

Not doing much right now due to the weather but have been very busy since we landed. The outfit I'm in is building landing strips for the air forces. The strips are for fighter planes.

I've seen some very pretty cities and some that were a pile of rubbish St. Lo [Saint-Lô], St. Jean De Day [Saint-Jean de Day, an airfield in Normandy] & Carentan. Isigny [Isigny-sur-Mer] was almost as bad. I've seen Dreux [Dreux], Versailles, Paris, & Verdun. I wish I could mention

TRANSCRIPT: PAGE TWO

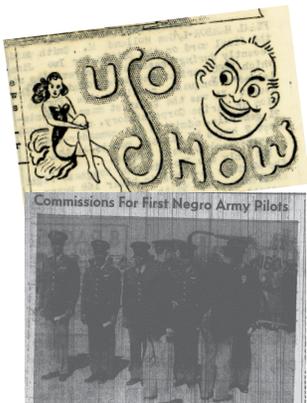
some more but not yet. I forgot to mention Reims the city with the beautiful Cathedrals. I was there a few times.

I know everyone back home, or in the U.S. rather, thinks the war is almost over. It's a pity how easily everyone can be fooled. It's not nearly over here and if the people over there don't wake up it's going to last much longer. It seems that about 90% of the people think that all they have to do is buy a war bond but I can say one thing these boys on the front are worth more than \$18.75 now and if they survive will be worth more than the whole \$20 in ten years to themselves if to no one else. This paper is some we found that the Germans left for us.

Your student,
Grover

TRANSCRIPT: PAGE THREE

P.S. You should see the shack I live in. I have a heater made from an old German powder can and another fellow and I built us a little shack we have to crawl in and out but it's warm inside. I just heard we are having chicken for dinner tomorrow. These fellows are sure getting good at finding their way around after dark. This is big mess of writing but they don't furnish lights or a desk.



USO Shows This advertisement for a USO Show was published in the April 13, 1945, edition of *The POW WOW*, a base newsletter from Camp Clinton, Mississippi.

African Americans in the Military Early in the war Tuskegee, Alabama, became a training site for African American pilots. By war's end, about 1,000 pilots had graduated from the course but its first graduating class was big news for the *Jackson Advocate*, "the state's leading colored weekly," on March 21, 1942. Other African American units, inadequately trained and ineffectively led by white officers often had mixed success on the battlefield. Notable exceptions are the 761st Tank Battalion and the 332nd Fighter Group.

Oral History 101

What is an oral history? According to the Oral History Association, an oral history is the process of “gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events.” Oral histories can be gathered by anyone with a list of questions, a recording device (such as pencil and paper or a recorder), and an interviewee. These histories are important to historians because they capture the memories of everyday people. Somewhere between 600 and 1,000 World War II veterans die each day, making it more important than ever to collect their memories now and preserve them for future generations.

Find a veteran or active duty service member in your family or community and conduct an oral history with him or her using the suggested questions below. Feel free to insert more questions (such as those on the additional list below) when appropriate or tailor your questions to ask about specific aspects of military life (such as basic training, combat, or living conditions) or conflicts (World War II, Korean War, Vietnam, Gulf War, or Iraq/Afghanistan). Remember that this is not a conversation; your job is to listen. For additional help visit the Oral History Association’s Web Guides to Doing Oral History at <http://www.oralhistory.org/web-guides-to-doing-oral-history/> or the National World War II Museum’s Oral History Guidelines at <http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/oral-history-guidelines.html>.

Suggested Questions:

1. State your name, birthdate, and hometown.
2. State your branch of service, your specific unit, and the dates you served.
3. What job did you perform while in the military?
4. Why did you join the military?
5. Where were you stationed?
6. Did you see combat? Would you describe to me what being in combat is like?
7. Were you wounded? If yes, tell me how it happened.
8. Did you receive any special awards or decorations? If yes, tell me what you did to earn them.
9. What effect did your military service have on your family?
10. Why did you leave the military?
11. Did the military have a positive or negative effect on your life? In what way?
12. What about your military experience would you want someone like me to remember?

Additional Questions:

1. Where did you have basic training?
2. What is one thing you will always remember about basic training?
3. Why were you sent overseas?
4. Did you have any input on where you were stationed?
5. Tell me about some of the people you served with.
6. Do you see the actions you performed while in combat as being justified? Why or why not?
7. Were you ever captured by the enemy? If yes, how were you captured? What were the conditions of your prisoner of war camp? How long were you a prisoner?
8. How did you travel from place to place while in the military?
9. What was your impression of military food?
10. Did you work with any special military equipment (such as tanks, artillery, planes, etc.)?
11. Did you ever have to seek medical treatment? What kind of medical treatment did you receive?
12. What sort of entertainment did the military provide for you when you were off duty?
13. Where were you on the day war was declared? Where were you on the day peace was declared?

Saying Thanks Worksheet

There are many ways to show military veterans and current service members today that you appreciate them. Choose one of the methods from the list below:

1. Locate an active duty service member serving overseas and write him or her a friendly letter (see samples in your language arts book).
2. Locate an active duty service member serving overseas and send him or her a care package with cards or letters, baked goods, books, movies, games, or any other special treat that they may be missing.
3. Locate a military veteran and write him or her a thank you letter (see samples in your language arts book).
4. Create a holiday greeting card for service members and veterans in the hospital with the help of the American Red Cross. Send cards to:

Holiday Mail for Heroes
P.O. Box 5456
Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5456

Cards must be received by December 1 to ensure holiday delivery. Visit the Holiday Mail for Heroes website at <http://www.redcross.org/support/get-involved/holiday-mail-for-heroes> for more information.

Need help locating a veteran or active duty service member? Try one of the following:

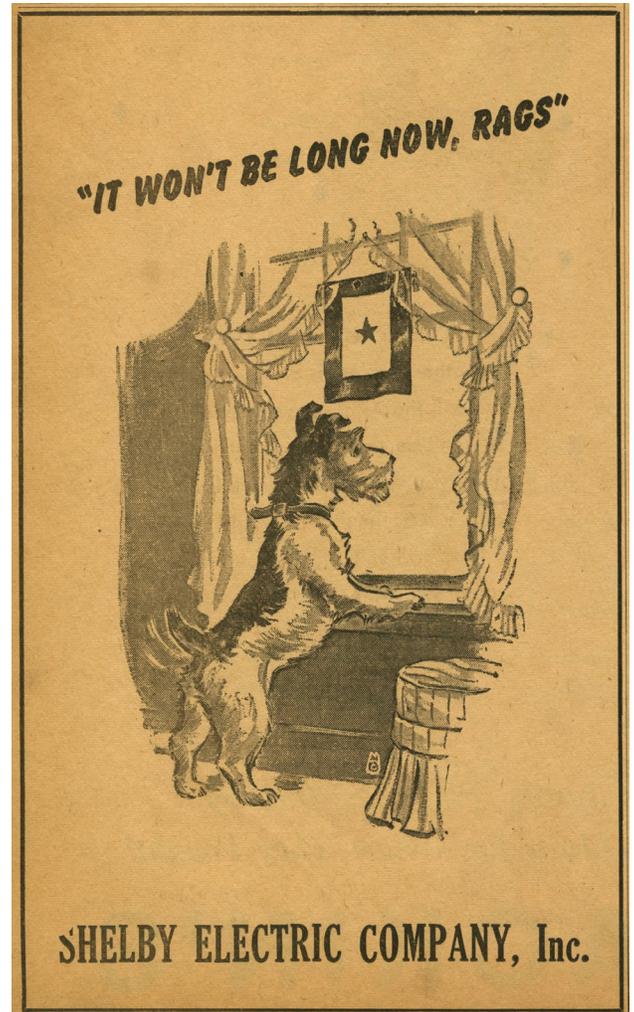
- Ask your friends, family, co-workers, and community members if they know a veteran or active duty service member.
- Contact your local VA Medical Center or military installation.
- Contact the USO at www.uso.org.
- Contact the National World War II Museum in New Orleans at <http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-teachers/contact-us.html>
- Call the African American Military History Museum in Hattiesburg at 601-450-1942
- Call the MDAH Outreach Programs Coordinator at 601-576-6997. We'll see what we can do!

Blue Star Flag Worksheet

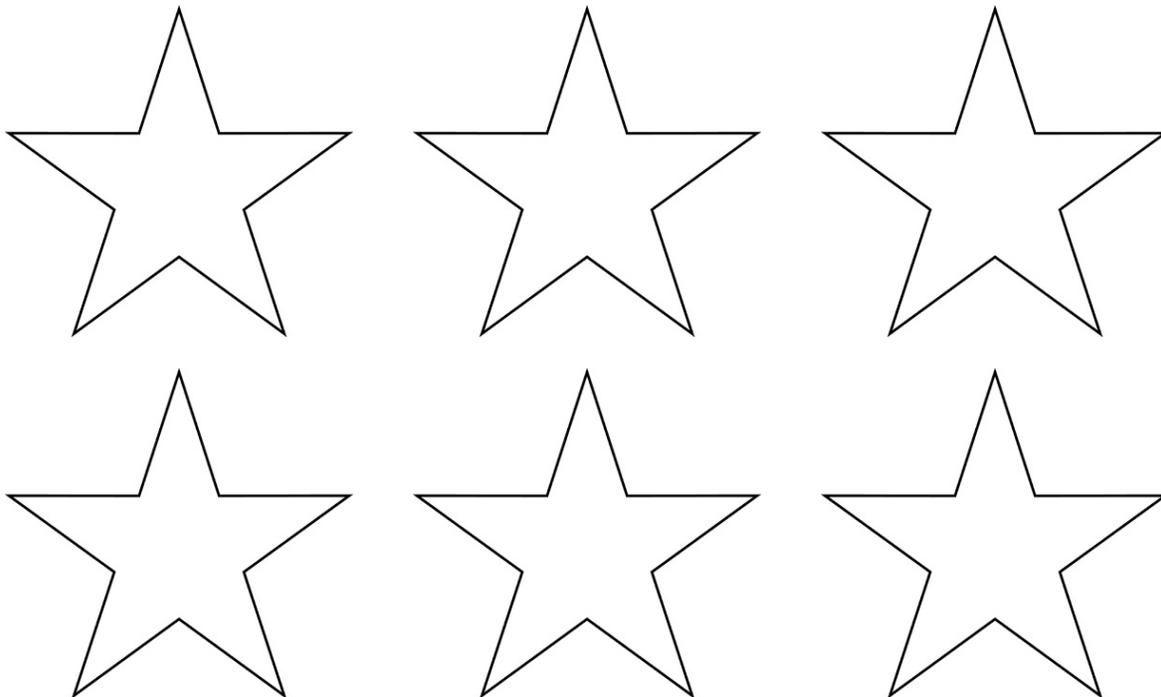
Blue Star Flag History

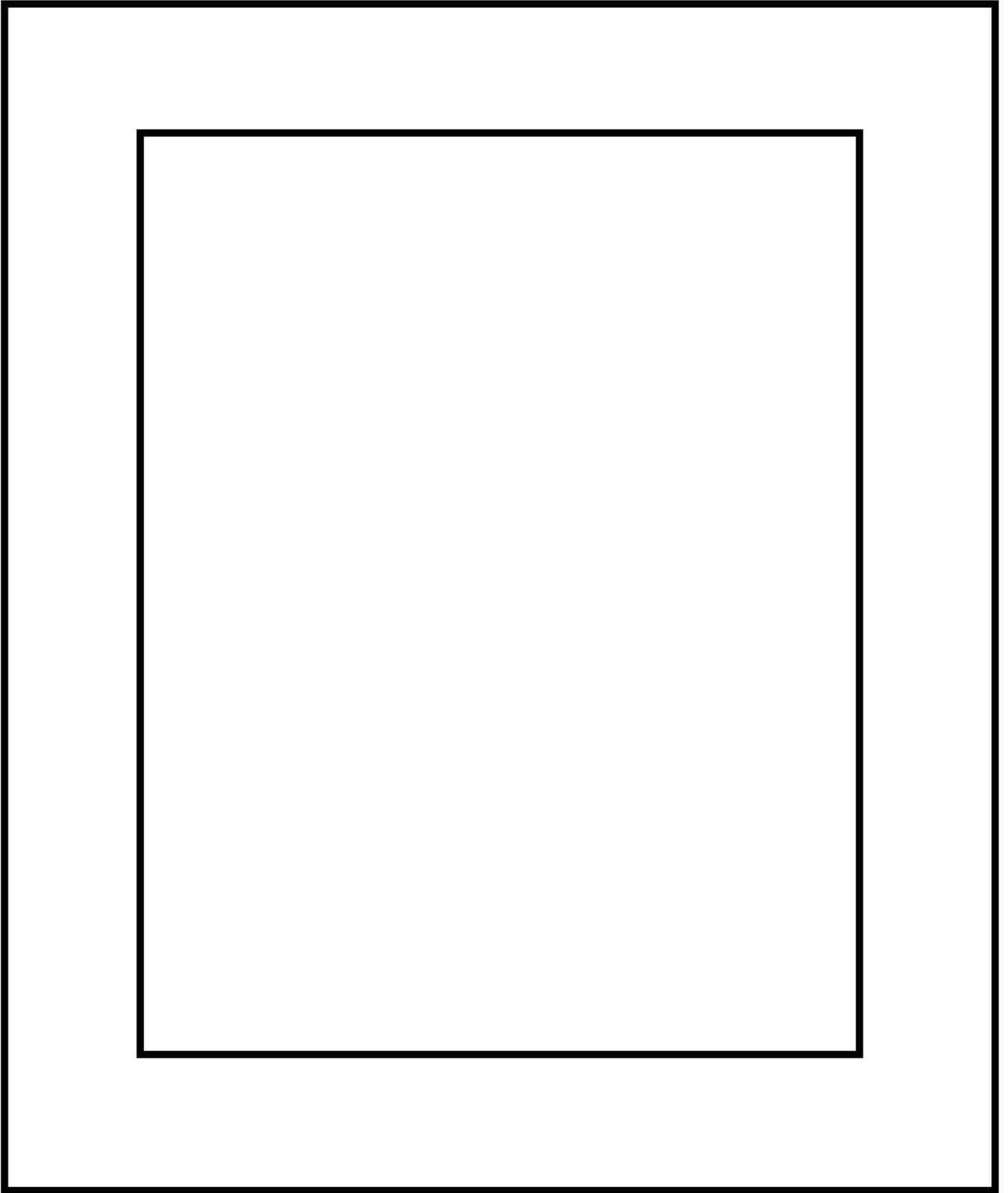
The Blue Star Flag or Service Flag was designed and patented by a World War I Army captain from Ohio named Robert L. Queisser who had two sons serving on the front lines. Displayed in home windows, it quickly became a symbol of a child in service, a symbol that became more widespread during World War II. Many of the flags were handmade by mothers across the United States. The Department of Defense specifies that the flag may be displayed by family members of a service member or by an organization to honor its members who are currently serving. Each blue star on the flag represents an individual on active duty; gold stars (which are placed above the blue stars) represent those who have been killed in action or died while in service. The colors are also symbolic; blue represents hope and pride while the gold star represents sacrifice in the name of liberty and freedom.

Use the stars below and the outline of a Blue Star Flag on the following page to cut out, color, and display your own. Choose the correct number of stars to represent currently serving military members in your family, community, or school.



MDAH Museum Division Education.





Speak Like a Soldier Flash Cards

AWOL	Barracks	Bivouac
Boondockers	Chit	Commissary
Dependent	Dogface	Fatigues
FUBAR	Garrison	GI
Hash Marks	Hump	Latrine
MP	Mess Hall	Motor Pool
PX/Exchange	Rucksack	Stockade

camping	dormitory	absent without leave
grocery store	request form	boots
work/combat uniform	infantry man	family member
Government Issue	duty station	fouled up beyond all recognition
bathroom	long hike or march	stripes on uniform showing time in service
vehicle storage	cafeteria	Military Police
jail	backpack	store

Speak Like a Sailor Flash Cards

Aye Aye	Bells	Bravo Zulu	Brig
Bulkhead	Civvies	Cover	Deck
GQ	Galley	Gig Line	Govie
Hatch	Head	Irish Pendants	Leave
Muster	PT	Rack	Ralph
Seabag	Shipmate	Skivvies	Utilities
Watch			

jail	job well done	rung at intervals on board ship to note the time	yes
floor	hat	civilian clothing	wall
government owned vehicle	the straight line from shirt buttons to belt buckle to trouser fly	kitchen or cafeteria	General Quarters or Battlestations
vacation	hanging threads on a uniform	bathroom	door
to vomit	bed	physical training	roll call, attendance
work clothes	underwear	co-worker and/or friend	duffle bag
			special duty

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Lesson Two Quiz: Mississippians at War

Choose the best answer from the multiple choice questions below.

1. The Selective Service and Training Act (the Draft) was instituted by Congress in
 - a. 1939
 - b. 1940
 - c. 1941
 - d. 1942

2. The only U.S. military branch to fight by land, sea, and air is the
 - a. Army
 - b. Navy
 - c. Marine Corps
 - d. Air Force

3. During World War II, the Marine Corps became famous for their
 - a. courage under fire
 - b. brilliant military planning tactics
 - c. fighting expertise
 - d. amphibious assaults

4. In 1948, Executive Order 9981 allowed these Americans to serve alongside white military members
 - a. Asian Americans
 - b. non-American citizens
 - c. African Americans
 - d. Hispanic Americans

5. WAACS and WAVES allowed women to enlist in the armed forces for the first time. The jobs they performed included
 - a. nursing and secretarial
 - b. aviation mechanics, gunnery instructors, and parachute riggers
 - c. bombsite maintenance, ordinance, and chemical warfare
 - d. all of the above

6. The United Service Organization provided services for active duty members and their families in the U.S. and overseas. The services provided by the USO included
 - a. meeting troop trains
 - b. locating family and social services
 - c. staffing recreational facilities
 - d. all of the above

7. First aid and water safety training, care packages of food and medicine, and blood donation were all services provided by the
 - a. USO
 - b. Red Cross
 - c. Nurse Corps
 - d. Junior Red Cross

8. It is estimated that twenty-seven to forty-two percent of prisoners of war in this location died or were killed when in captivity.
 - a. the Far East
 - b. Germany
 - c. Eastern Europe
 - d. United States

9. This individual became a beloved icon of American servicemen because he represented the common gripes of GIs everywhere.
 - a. Private Low Pay
 - b. General MacArthur
 - c. Sad Sack
 - d. Admiral Nimitz

10. A Blue Star Flag shows
 - a. the number of household members who are active duty
 - b. the number of household members who have been killed in action
 - c. the number of household members who have died in service
 - d. all of the above

Use a separate sheet of paper to complete the short answer questions below.

1. Propaganda encouraged women to join the military and “free a man for combat.” While many Americans appreciated the efforts of these women, believing that it would help bring the war to a speedier conclusion, others resented them for helping send beloved husbands, sons, and brothers from the safety of a desk job or training command in the states to the front lines. How do you feel about this issue? Explain your reasoning.
2. Identify and explain 2–3 ways in which the segregation of troops and civilians harmed the war effort.
3. Re-examine the aerial photograph of a Japanese POW camp. What can you learn about life in the camp from the image?
4. Like displaying an American flag, the display of a blue star flag demonstrated your patriotism. What other ways did Americans show their patriotism during World War II?

Lesson Two Quiz: Mississippians at War Answer Key

1. B
2. B
3. D
4. C
5. D
6. D
7. B
8. A
9. C
10. D