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/oralhistories/.
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.
Well, actually, well, as you know, up until about the 1960s most of the young people left Mississippi and many 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, 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 dead end 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 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 the time of your release, maintained an average rating of excellent for a period of time, then you were to advance 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 Bragg 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.
From Yank: The Army Weekly, August 10, 1945. MDAH Museum Division Education.
When You Go...

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

The American National RED CROSS

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.

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 advised 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—safely and soundly—gun and earth—kids. The field director managed to get the news and rushed the good news to Sergeant Dee.

MRS. MILLER wired her son, Frank, in camp in Wisconsin, that his father had been taken suddenly and critically ill. Frank, an only son, asked his commanding officer for an emergency furlough to his home in Oregon. The commanding officer turned to the Red Cross field director to ascertain the seriousness of the father’s illness and the need for Frank’s presence at home. This was done by a telegram to Frank’s local Red Cross chapter. Home Service wired the field director back within the hour, reporting that the father was not expected to live. The commanding officer granted the furlough.

But Frank, a recent recruit, did not have sufficient money to make the long trip home. Again the Red Cross could help. His field director took him money for his fares and made arrangements—his trip was made with speed and economy. The railroad provided the fastest possible trip.

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—on 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 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, another 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 led and happy; her home clean, and the housekeeper prepared to stay on through her convalescence.

The Red Cross, the service of good will, comes daily to those at home and those far away. The Red Cross assumes its responsibility in time of need from the countries to which it is sent from the Red Cross service, as they neglect to do so. The Red Cross is the means by which military and civilian authorities, in this country or overseas, may obtain information they need in deciding questions of relief or discharge, or—if the serviceman is hospitalized—of medical diagnosis and treatment.

The Red Cross chapters offer claim services. Home Service is keenly interested in expediting claims and claims procedures, and—working through Red Cross field directors in the Veterans Administration—on all developments in a particular claimant’s case.

The Red Cross gives practical help where it is 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.
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

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>Tonnage</th>
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<td>384,100</td>
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<td>Total Small Craft</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>478,200</td>
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B. ENEMY SHIPS PROBABLY SUNK

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<td>Total Small Craft</td>
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C. ENEMY SHIPS DAMAGED

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**Estimated Small Craft Tonnage**

**GRAND TOTAL**

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Hattiesburg Gets
$50,000 USO Unit

HATTIESBURG, Miss.—The $50,000 U. S. O. Building, one of the most modern U. S. O. Centers in the United States, built for the Negro soldier stationed at Camp Shelby, Miss., was placed at their disposal, following its dedication in impressive ceremony, participated in by high army officials, and officials of the United Service Organization, here Sunday, March 22nd.

Funds for the new building, following determination of the need by the Federal Security Administration, were furnished by the Federal Works Agency, with construction under the supervision of the United States Engineers.

Richard H. Lyles, Regional Director of the Federal Security Agency, in commenting on the new center said: “The new Negro Federal Community building in Hattiesburg is a substantial step forward meeting the need for clean, wholesome fun for the Negro troops at Camp Shelby.”

The building and its furnishings include, a large lounge with fireplace, comfortable couches, chairs, tables, lamps, refreshment lounge, two club rooms, reading and writing rooms, free checking service, kitchen and auditorium, stage, shower facilities, and many other accommodations. The USO Center will be operated by the United States Organization: Negro Division, Young Men’s Christian Association.

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

Approximate size: 20 x 14 inches. MDAH Archives and Records Services.
Dear Mama Sunday,

I've been hearing from you through the letters that I receive from Will and am very glad that you have. It's forgotten the old days not being much right now due to the weather, but have been very busy since we loaded the cattle, so in building hangars for the air force. The stages are for all cities and state that you publish it to the year at day. Carver. Rainy was almost too bad. We've been driving. We have fine rains. 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. are waiting, but I think the war is almost over. It's a pity for what easy everyone can be fooled to not know those who have hurt the people over there don't care. It is going to last much longer. It seems that about 70% of the people think that as long as the time to do is every a war had lasted so can say one thing that you can't and if you can't live you can't worth more than the whole 2 5 in the years to the home and back. This paper is coming from one of the hundreds left for U.S. as your sister.

Yours,

[Signature]

Oct. 10-44

MDAH Archives and Records Services.
VITIES

APRIL 13, 1945

USO SHOW

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

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 assisted by Major N. F. Parrish. (INS)

(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

From The Jackson Advocate, March 21, 1942. MDAH Archives and Records Services. Used with the permission of The Jackson Advocate.
U.S. Army Soldiers Identification cards were issued to all military personnel by the War Department. This one belonged to Francis H. Doane, a World War I veteran from Connecticut who was recalled in April of 1942 and assigned to the Mississippi Ordnance Plant in Flora. There he acted as the Director of Military Intelligence (which is why his card states his branch of service as “M.I.”) and Public Relations Officer until 1944. He retired in 1946 with the rank of colonel.

African Americans in the Military George A. Owens was born in Hinds County, the son of a sharecropper. While in the Army he served in Alaska (building the Alcan Highway); Fort Belvoir, Virginia; Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; and Camp Sutton, North Carolina before heading to England, France, Germany, and Okinawa in 1945. After the war he completed his education and eventually became president of Tougaloo College in 1965, a post he held until 1984. Included here is a small excerpt of an oral history conducted by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in 1980.

U.S. Army Soldiers Sad Sack, a lowly Army private, was the creation of Sergeant George Baker, a former Disney animator. Debuting in Yank magazine in 1942, Sad Sack appeared in every World War II theater of operation as the butt of military jokes. This cartoon appeared in the August 10, 1945, issue of Yank and addresses a typical military gripe: servicemen performing dangerous duties for very little pay.

Red Cross Workers This brochure highlights the various ways the American Red Cross helped servicemen and their families during World War II. It was kept by a Natchez branch of the Red Cross.

The Marine Corps in the Pacific This letter was written by Captain Charles Clark Jacobs to his sister Madel, both of Greenville, Mississippi. Written from Saipan in the North Mariana Islands, Jacobs gives a brief description of the mid-June 1944, invasion of the island. Later that year he was awarded the Bronze Star for his heroic actions there and a second Bronze Star for action at Iwo Jima. Captain Jacobs died in 2011 in Cleveland, Mississippi.

**TRANSCRIPT: PAGE ONE**

Saipan (“Flypan”)  
July 19, 1944

Dear Madel,
Yes, your guess was right. I am on Saipan and have been here 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 8 m. and mortar shells fall around you, some as close as three and four feet, not to mention counter-attacks, small arms fire, and air raids. I am really glad to be here.
My Btry. [battery] was the first artillery to come ashore on Saipan and the first to fire. We have fired well over ½ million dollars worth of ammo. My boys have well, Madel, and I am surely proud of them. (You know, I am the “old man” of the Btry being the C.O.)
Lots of flies here, hence the nickname for the place –
Tell that rich gal to stand by til I get back & tell Adlia to be good.
Love,
Charles over

**TRANSCRIPT: PAGE TWO**

P.S.
You were wrong about the Phi – [?] corps being drawn back after the landing. We fought thru the whole campaign.
The army unit here is not worth a “Tinkers damn.”
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.
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.

**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/](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](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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AWOL</th>
<th>Barracks</th>
<th>Bivouac</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boondockers</td>
<td>Chit</td>
<td>Commissary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>Dogface</td>
<td>Fatigues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUBAR</td>
<td>Garrison</td>
<td>GI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hash Marks</td>
<td>Hump</td>
<td>Latrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Mess Hall</td>
<td>Motor Pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PX/Exchange</td>
<td>Rucksack</td>
<td>Stockade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>camping</td>
<td>dormitory</td>
<td>absent without leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grocery store</td>
<td>request form</td>
<td>boots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work/combat uniform</td>
<td>infantry man</td>
<td>family member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Issue</td>
<td>duty station</td>
<td>fouled up beyond all recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bathroom</td>
<td>long hike or march</td>
<td>stripes on uniform showing time in service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vehicle storage</td>
<td>cafeteria</td>
<td>Military Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jail</td>
<td>backpack</td>
<td>store</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Speak Like a Sailor Flash Cards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aye Aye</th>
<th>Bells</th>
<th>Bravo Zulu</th>
<th>Brig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulkhead</td>
<td>Civvies</td>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Deck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GQ</td>
<td>Galley</td>
<td>Gig Line</td>
<td>Govie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatch</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Irish Pendants</td>
<td>Leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muster</td>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Rack</td>
<td>Ralph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seabag</td>
<td>Shipmate</td>
<td>Skivvies</td>
<td>Utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jail</td>
<td>job well done</td>
<td>rung at intervals on board ship to note the time</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>floor</td>
<td>hat</td>
<td>civilian clothing</td>
<td>wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government owned vehicle</td>
<td>the straight line from shirt buttons to belt buckle to trouser fly</td>
<td>kitchen or cafeteria</td>
<td>General Quarters or Battlestations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vacation</td>
<td>hanging threads on a uniform</td>
<td>bathroom</td>
<td>door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to vomit</td>
<td>bed</td>
<td>physical training</td>
<td>roll call, attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work clothes</td>
<td>underwear</td>
<td>co-worker and/or friend</td>
<td>duffle bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>special duty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson Two Quiz: Mississippian 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