



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE
Grade 5 and Up

Hispanic Americans and World War II



This guide is a product of the
VOCES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
University of Texas at Austin



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE
Grade 5 and Up

**Hispanic Americans
and World War II**





Introduction

THE VOCES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

September/October Hispanic Heritage Month –Educational Materials

The mission of the Voces Oral History Project is to recognize the contributions of men and women of Latino heritage of the World War II generation. Through a variety of resources, such as a newsletter publication, website, conferences and books, the project seeks to disseminate the remarkable stories of the World War II generation. The Project will add to these various components by making these archives available to teachers and students through educational materials such as these.

The educational kit, created in recognition of September/October Hispanic Heritage Month, has been developed by elementary teachers and addresses the historical experiences and contributions of U.S. Latinos and Latinas during the WWII era. Activities are designed to engage students and teachers in learning about the WWII generation and what it was like to be a Latino during that era – both at war and on the home front. Activities relate to themes discussed in stories from the Project’s newsletter, *Narratives*, which is based on oral history interviews.

Examples of themes include women’s work in wartime jobs on the home front, various positions Latinos held in military service, Mexican nationals in the U.S. armed forces, use of Spanish language and military honors bestowed upon Latinos and Latinas.

Central to this guide is the incorporation of primary source materials such as discharge papers and letters from soldiers back to their homes.

Children will learn how the Project collects oral histories, and how they can do oral histories with their own family members. Each lesson in this guide is aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and note which objectives are met in the lesson.

PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION	
MAILING ADDRESS	Voces Oral History Project University of Texas at Austin 1 University Station A1000 Austin, Texas 78712
PHONE/WEBSITE	Project Office: (512) 471-1924 www.VocesOralHistoryProject.org



About Latinos and Latinas in World War II

World War II was a major turning point for U.S. Latinos, changing the world views of an entire generation. Many Latino soldiers returned home to find the same discrimination they had left behind; they began questioning a system that held Latinos to a lower status. Many veterans used the G.I. Bill to earn a college education. Latinas who worked in military installations and in other jobs previously denied them also questioned the status quo. Some Mexican citizens were brought in to fill jobs left vacant by departing soldiers. Few lives were left untouched—even those men who were unable to join the fighting forces would never be the same.

In the years following World War II, these men and women made astounding civil rights advancements for Latinos—in school desegregation, in voting rights, in basic civil rights. Powerful organizations grew out of this era, including the G.I. Forum and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF).

For Puerto Ricans, World War II brought new questions: the U.S. came to appreciate Puerto Rico's military importance in the Caribbean, especially as guardian to the Panama Canal. The U.S. said that it needed to keep its sovereign power over the island for reasons of national security, and World War II strengthened that position. Accordingly, the U.S. dramatically increased the number of military personnel in Puerto Rico, a military presence that endures to this day. Even as soldiers from Puerto Rico came to the mainland, most of them for the first time, to train before going to fight in the war overseas, Puerto Rico remained isolated in the Caribbean. While the war created jobs in the U.S. mainland, unemployment rose in Puerto Rico. Later, the post-war economic boom in the U.S. helped to finance the industrialization and modernization program on the island, which led to the mass migration of Puerto Ricans to the mainland.

Sadly, the stories of these men and women have been virtually untold, either in the mass media or in historical texts. This project has recorded interviews with over 900 of these men and women and worked hard to share its work with the public, in particular, with future generations, so that they will know about the sacrifices and contributions that Latinos and Latinas made for this country as Americans.

Source: www.VocesOralHistoryProject.org

EDUCATOR GUIDE CONTRIBUTORS	
LESSONS SECTIONS	Edna Amador 8th grade Language Arts Teacher <i>Ysleta Independent School District, El Paso, Texas</i>
NARRATIVES ACTIVITIES	Diana Garcia 5th grade History Teacher <i>Austin Independent School District, Austin, Texas</i>
MATERIALS COORDINATOR	Brenda Sendejo <i>Associate Director/Education</i>



Timeline

Major Events of World War II 1939 – 1945

1939

SEPTEMBER

- 1st Germany invades Poland. World War II begins.
- 3rd Britain, France, Australia, and New Zealand declare war on Germany.
- 5th United States proclaims neutrality.
- 17th The Soviet Union invades Poland.
- 29th Germany and the Soviet Union divide up Poland.

OCTOBER

The Nazis begin euthanasia on sick and disabled in Germany.

NOVEMBER

- 4th Although President Roosevelt has declared American neutrality in the war in Europe, a Neutrality Act is signed that allows the U.S. to send arms and other aid to Britain and France.
- 30th The USSR attacks Finland.



1940

MARCH 18th Mussolini and Hitler announce Italy's formal alliance with Germany against England and France.

MAY 7th British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlin resigns in disgrace. He will be replaced by Winston Churchill on May 10.

10th The German Blitzkrieg ("lightning war") begins, as Rotterdam and other Dutch cities are attacked from the air. By the end of the month, the Dutch armies will have surrendered, Belgium will have surrendered, and the evacuation of British and French troops from Dunkirk will be underway.

JUNE 10th Italy declares war on Britain and France, and U.S. President Roosevelt announces a shift from neutrality to "non-belligerency," meaning more active support for the Allies against the Axis.

28th In the U.S., the Alien Registration Act (the Smith Act) passed by Congress requires aliens to register and be fingerprinted; the Act makes it illegal to advocate the overthrow of the US government.

JULY 9th As German air attacks over Britain intensify, the British Royal Air Force begins night bombing of German targets.

SEPTEMBER 27th Germany, Italy and Japan enter into a 10-year military and economic alliance that comes to be known as the "Axis". Hungary and Romania will join the Axis in November.

OCTOBER 29th Military draft, or conscription, begins in the U.S. It is the first military draft to occur during peacetime in American history.

NOVEMBER 5th Franklin D. Roosevelt is elected to an unprecedented third term as president, with 54 percent of the popular vote. He defeats Republican Wendell L. Wilke.



1941

- JANUARY** 6th Contrary to widespread isolationist sentiment, President Roosevelt recommends “Lend-Lease” program that will provide U.S. aid to the Allies.
- APRIL** 16th Britain receives its first American “Lend-Lease” aid shipments of food. By December, millions of tons of food will have arrived from the U.S.
- JUNE** 22nd German troops invade Soviet Russia, in what they call “Operation Barbarossa,” breaking the “nonaggression” pact signed in 1939. Two days later, President Roosevelt promises U.S. aid to Russia.
- AUGUST** 9th Secret meetings between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill begin off the coast of Newfoundland. They will result in the Atlantic Charter, which contains eight points of agreement on the aims of the war.
- SEPTEMBER** 11th President Roosevelt issues an order that German or Italian ships sighted in U.S. waters will be attacked immediately.
- DECEMBER** 7th Just before 8 a.m., Honolulu time, 360 Japanese planes attack Pearl Harbor, the U.S. military base on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. The attack cripples the U.S. Pacific fleet, and kills more than 2,300 American soldiers, sailors, and civilians. The attack precedes Japan’s formal declaration of war, which is delivered by the Japanese foreign minister to the U.S. embassy in Tokyo more than seven hours later.
- 8th President Roosevelt addresses the U.S. Congress, saying that December 7 is “a date that will live in infamy.” After a vote of 82-0 in the U.S. Senate, and 388-1 in the House, in favor of declaring war on Japan, Roosevelt signs the declaration of war.
- 11th Germany and Italy declare war on the U.S. President Roosevelt calls an end to official U.S. neutrality in the war in Europe, declaring war on Germany and Italy.



1942

- JANUARY** 14th An order from President Roosevelt requires all aliens to register with the government. This is the beginning of a plan to move Japanese-Americans into internment camps in the belief that these people might aid the enemy.
- FEBRUARY** 19th Executive Order 9066 is signed by President Roosevelt, authorizing the transfer of more than 100,000 Japanese-Americans living in coastal Pacific areas to concentration camps in various inland states (and including inland areas of California). The interned Japanese-Americans lose an estimated 400 million dollars in property, as their homes and possessions are taken from them.
- APRIL** 28th Coastal “dim-outs” go into effect along a fifteen-mile strip on the Eastern Seaboard, in response to German U-boat activity of the U.S. Atlantic coast.
- MAY** 14th The U.S. Congress establishes The Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC), under the direction of Oveta Culp Hobby, editor of the Houston Post.
- 15th Gasoline rationing goes into effect in the Eastern United States. Nationwide rationing will begin in September.
- JUNE** 13th President Roosevelt authorizes the creation of the U.S. Office on War Information (OWI). The first director is Elmer Holmes Davis, a CBS commentator and novelist.
- JULY** 30th The Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Services (WAVES) is authorized by the U.S. Congress.
- SEPTEMBER** 16th The Women’s Airforce Service Pilots (WASPS) are established in the United States. The armed forces will be supplied with more than 1000 auxiliary pilots through this organization.
- DECEMBER** 1st In the U.S., coffee joins the list of rationed items.



1943

- JANUARY** 11th President Roosevelt submits his budget to the U.S. Congress. \$100 billion of the \$109 billion budget is identified with the war effort.
- FEBRUARY** 7th In the U.S., shoe rationing begins, limiting civilians to three pairs of leather shoes per year. The ration in Britain is one pair per year.
- APRIL** 1st In the U.S., meat, fats, canned goods, and cheese are now all rationed. Attempting to stem inflation, President Roosevelt freezes wages, salaries, and prices.
- MAY** 27th In the U.S., President Roosevelt issues an executive order forbidding racial discrimination by government contractors.
- 29th In the U.S., an issue of *The Saturday Evening Post* is published with a cover illustration by Norman Rockwell that introduces an American icon known as “Rosie the Riveter.”
- JUNE** 14th The U.S. Supreme Court rules, in *West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette*, that a West Virginia state law that requires school children to salute the flag, on penalty of expulsion, is unconstitutional.
- SEPTEMBER** 9th Although the Allies have announced the unconditional surrender of Italy, German forces in Italy continue to oppose Allied troops. When the U.S. Fifth Army lands at Salerno, they sustain heavy losses.
- DECEMBER** 17th President Roosevelt repeals the U.S. Chinese Exclusion Acts of 1882 and 1902, thus allowing Chinese residents of the United States to be eligible for citizenship. The new Chinese Act also allows for the immigration of up to 105 Chinese annually.



1944

- APRIL** 3rd In the case of *Smith v. Allwright*, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that an American cannot be denied the right to vote because of color.
- MAY** 3rd In the U.S., meat rationing ends, except for certain select cuts.
- JUNE** 6th “D-Day”: The Allied invasion of Europe commences just after midnight, as more than 175,000 troops land at Normandy, France. The largest invasion force in history, it includes 4,000 invasion ships, 600 warships, and 10,000 planes.
- 22nd In the U.S., President Roosevelt signs the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act that will provide funds for housing and education after the war. It is better known as the GI Bill of Rights.
- JULY** 20th An assassination attempt on Adolph Hitler, planned by some of Hitler’s generals, is unsuccessful.
- 24th Soviet troops capture Lublin, Poland and liberate the Majdanek concentration camp. Captured virtually intact, Majdanek was the first major camp to be liberated.
- AUGUST** 4th In Amsterdam, Otto Frank and his family (including his daughter Anne, then 15) are captured by the Gestapo. Jewish, they have been in hiding for more than two years, kept by Miep and Jan Gies, but have been betrayed by someone familiar with their hiding place and are put on the last convoy of trucks to Auschwitz.
- 25th Paris is liberated by Allied French troops, after four years of German occupation.
- NOVEMBER** 7th Franklin D. Roosevelt is elected to a fourth term as U.S. President, and Harry S. Truman becomes the Vice-President.
- DECEMBER** 16th The Battle of the Bulge begins. It the last major German counteroffensive, as allied troops are pushed back in Belgium’s Ardennes Forest. As Allied lines fall back, a “bulge” is created in the center of the line, giving the battle its familiar name. Two weeks of intense fighting in brutal winter weather follow before the German offensive is stopped.



1945

- JANUARY** 26th Soviet troops find fewer than 3,000 survivors when they liberate Auschwitz, the Nazi death camp in Poland. The German S.S. has moved many of the remaining prisoners to camps inside Germany. From 1939 to 1945, one third of the Jews living in the world will have died in German concentration and extermination camps.
- MARCH** 16th On Iwo Jima, a month-long struggle comes to an end, as U.S. forces capture the 8-square-mile island. Possessing Japan's last line of radar defense to warn against American air attacks, Iwo Jima is a strategically significant prelude to the invasion of Okinawa.
- APRIL** 12th After suffering a massive cerebral hemorrhage, President Roosevelt dies at the age of 63. Vice-President Harry S. Truman (1884-1972) is sworn in as President.
- 28th At Lake Como, in Italy, Benito Mussolini and 12 of his former Cabinet officers are executed. German forces in Italy will surrender unconditionally on the 29th.
- 30th With Russian shells falling on Berlin, Hitler marries Eva Braun in his bombproof Berlin bunker. He then poisons her and kills himself. His remains are never recovered.
- May** 7th Germany surrenders unconditionally to General Eisenhower at Rheims, France, and to the Soviets in Berlin. President Truman pronounces the following day, May 8, V-E Day. The U.S., Russia, England, and France agree to split occupied Germany into eastern and western halves.
- JULY** 30th Torpedoes sink the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* in the Indian Ocean.
- AUGUST** 6th The U.S. B-29 Superfortress, *Enola Gay*, drops an atomic bomb on the Japanese industrial city of Hiroshima. The city is leveled, and an estimated 100,000 people are killed immediately (another 100,000 will die later from radiation sickness and burns). On August 9, a second bomb will be dropped on the Japanese city of Nagasaki.



1945-continued

AUGUST 10th The Japanese surrender after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and U.S. President Truman declares that August 14th will be V-J (Victory over Japan) Day. To date, nearly 55 million people have died in the Second World War, including 25 million in the Soviet Union, nearly 8 million in China, and more than 6 million in Poland.

19th In the U.S., rationing of gasoline and fuel oil comes to an end.

SEPTEMBER 2nd General MacArthur accepts the formal, unconditional surrender of Japan in a ceremony aboard the U.S.S. *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay.

NOVEMBER 23rd Butter rationing comes to an end, and sugar is the only item that continues to be rationed in the U.S.

DECEMBER 15th A new election law is passed in Japan, at the urgency of the occupying Allied forces, which gives Japanese women voting rights.

27th The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development is created. Of the more than \$7 billion contributed by 21 countries, the U.S. has subscribed more than \$3 billion to the World Bank.

Adapted from: eHistory at The Department of History at Ohio State University website, <http://ehistory.osu.edu>.



Glossary

Latinos and World War II

Sources: Handbook of Texas Online and Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition by Merriam-Webster

American G.I. Forum American G. I. Forum is a civil-rights organization devoted to securing equal rights for Hispanic Americans and addressed veteran concern such as hospital care. The G.I. Forum was organized on March 26, 1948 in Corpus Christi, Texas and led by Hector P. Garcia. The first issue they dealt with was the failure of the Veterans Administration to deliver earned benefits to Mexican American veterans. The G.I. Forum became known nationally for its role in the Felix Longoria Affair. In this incident, the body of a soldier who had been killed in action in the last days of the war was being returned to his hometown of Three Rivers, Texas. The local funeral home refused to let Pvt. Longoria's family use its facilities for the wake because he was Mexican American and the funeral director worried that white customers would object. Through support of G.I. Forum and help by LBJ, Longoria was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. This event established the Forum as a civil rights advocate for Hispanics.

Civilian Conservation Corps President Roosevelt called an emergency session of congress on March 9, 1933 to hear and authorize his Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) Act, or more commonly known as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) program. The President proposed to recruit thousands of unemployed men into this program to do battle against the destruction and erosion of natural resources. CCC enrollees across the U.S. were credited with renewing the nation's decimated forests by planting an estimated 3 billion trees between 1933 and 1942. By the end of the program, over 3 million young men engaged in a massive salvage operation.

Civil Service The Civil Service are government jobs that are prized because they provide a steady paycheck and are generally well-paying. Examples: *police officers, fire fighters, civilians who work on military bases.*

The Draft Government policies that require citizens to serve in their armed forces. It is also known as mandatory military service, selective service or conscription.

D-Day June 6, 1944 is known as D-Day, the day 150,000 Allied forces invaded France on the beaches of Normandy during World War II.

Discrimination Prejudice; treatment or consideration based on class or category rather than individual merit. Examples: *racial discrimination; discrimination against foreigners.*

Great Depression The economic crisis beginning with the stock market crash in 1929 and continuing through the 1930s. With World War II came better economic times for Americans, as the war industries which provided supplies for the war resulted in new jobs.



G.I. Bill The G. I. Bill of Rights or Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 provided for college or vocational education for returning World War II veterans (commonly referred to as GIs or G.I.s) as well as one-year of unemployment compensation. It also provided loans for returning veterans to buy homes and start businesses.

Honorable Discharge Discharge given to a soldier whose service has been honest and faithful, and who has been given a rating of ‘good’ – ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’. Also called a White Discharge.

Mexican Revolution A popular revolution inspired by calls for social and political reform that led to the overthrow of dictator Porfirio Díaz of Mexico. Fought over a period of almost ten years from 1910; resulted in ouster of Porfirio Díaz from power; opposition forces led by Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata. As a result of the unrest of the Mexican Revolution, many Mexican people fled to the United States, resulting in increased immigration of Mexican nationals in the early 1900s.

Patriotism The act of being loyal to one’s country and having pride in it. Especially relevant during periods of national turmoil, such as war.

Pearl Harbor On the morning of December 7, 1941, planes and midget submarines of the Imperial Japanese Navy commanded by Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, carried out a surprise assault on the United States Navy base at Pearl Harbor, and against the Army Air Corps and Marine air fields nearby on Oahu, Territory of Hawaii, now the State of Hawaii. This attack has been called the Bombing of Pearl Harbor and the Battle of Pearl Harbor but, most commonly, the Attack on Pearl Harbor or simply Pearl Harbor.

President Roosevelt Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 32nd President of the United States; elected four times; instituted New Deal to counter the great depression and led the country during World War II (1882-1945).

Rationing The system set up during World War II to make sure goods in short supply were available equally to all at fair prices. Purchases of about twenty products including sugar, meat, coffee, butter, and gasoline were controlled with special government coupons. The coupons had to be turned in as the items were purchased. The system is a good example of one way Americans on the “home front” shared the sacrifices needed to help win the war.

Squadron A Squadron is a grouping of aircraft, naval vessels, armored fighting vehicles or soldiers.

Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps, or WAAC Over 150,000 American women served in the Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC), which was eventually shortened to WAC, during World War II. Members of the WAC were the first women other than nurses to serve within the ranks of the United States Army. Political and military leaders, faced with fighting a two-front war and supplying men and material for that war while continuing to send lend-lease material to the Allies, realized that women could supply the additional resources so desperately needed in the military and industrial sectors.



Narratives Story: Aurora Estrada Orozco

Themes: Personal Goals, courage, justice, discrimination, ethnic pride, education, women’s homefront contributions

Activity: The *Corrido* Challenge

Aurora Estrada Orozco was only about 4 when she came to the United States due to unrest in Mexico.

Her father, Lorenzo Estrada, was a bookkeeper at an American gold, silver and coal mining company in Serralvo, Nuevo Leon, until Pancho Villa’s men started sabotaging production. The company, known to Mrs. Orozco only as “La Fundacion,” decided to leave and offered Mr. Estrada a position in Mercedes, Texas, in the Rio Grande Valley.

“We were very happy because we were coming to the United States,” Mrs. Orozco said.

Mrs. Orozco clearly remembers the culture shock she went through when arriving in the United States.

“In Mexico we were living better, but then we came to the U.S. and we had to start all over and we didn’t know how to speak English,” she said. They lived on a ranch where her older brothers and sisters worked picking cotton.

She started going to an American school but did not understand a word of English. Her parents put her in a private Mexican school until she knew how to read and write in Spanish. Then it would be easier to learn English.

When she was 9 and in second grade, she transferred to North Ward Elementary. Even then, the only time she used English was at school; only Spanish was spoken at home and in her neighborhood.

Mrs. Orozco clearly remembers she and her group of Mexican friends would sit in a corner of the cafeteria.

“The whites would make fun of us because we were eating taquitos,” Mrs. Orozco said.

During the Depression, young Aurora’s family, like most others, had financial problems. She and her brothers and sisters had to start working when they were very young. Mrs. Orozco started picking cotton with her father when she was 10.

“Even the white people from the northern states used to come down to the Valley and they used to come to the



Aurora Estrada Orozco in Mercedes, Texas, in the 1940s.



Aurora Estrada Orozco-continued

neighborhood ... asking for food," she recalled. Mrs. Orozco recalls her family giving food, but only food. Mrs. Orozco said the people in Mercedes called them "trampas" because they jumped on trains and came asking for food in the Mexican barrios.

It was a time when few people had telephones. People found out what was happening by listening to the radio. Aurora Estrada was 21 when the war started. She remembers how her father told everybody to gather around the radio in the living room to listen to President Roosevelt talk about it. People knew young men would be called to serve pretty soon.

"They called my brother and they called my cousin to go to war," Mrs. Orozco said. The Army also called her sister's husband, Lauro Galvan, who went to the Pacific. Her brother, Roberto, fought in the Battle of the Bulge as an Army infantryman. Her cousin, Amador Sanchez, was an Army medic at a hospital in England.

She said he was 45 miles away from Berlin when the war ended. He brought home the boots that he used throughout the war and told her that "sometimes they were full of blood, he said, sometimes they were full of mud, but he just kept them on." During the war, people in Mercedes often went to the train station to say goodbye to the boys who were leaving.

"We didn't have fiestas anymore," Mrs. Orozco said; the townspeople cried often and the Christmas holidays were sad. The Brownsville Herald published the names of men who were wounded or dead. In Mercedes, the first war dead was Miguel Gonzalez, a neighbor of Mrs. Orozco's, who died at "la invasion." It was the first military funeral the small town had seen.

Mrs. Orozco also talked about the rationing.

"You couldn't buy leather shoes," she said. The government wanted people to save the leather for the soldiers. She said they would go to Mexico and buy huaraches instead. They also did not have butter, so oleomargarine was introduced. They could not find sugar in Mercedes, so they went to Mexico to buy that and other supplies.

Since there were not enough men in Mercedes to do the work, Mrs. Orozco and her sisters began working in various jobs. Among the jobs available were making buttons from seashells and stitching uniforms for the military.

She also said men from Mexico started coming in.

"They were illegal, but they let them stay anyway because there was so much work and there was nobody to do it," she said.

Mrs. Orozco said war-time made a difference for her and other women. Before the war, it was considered a



Aurora Estrada Orozco-continued

disgrace for women to work outside of the home, but it became the norm during the war years. Mrs. Orozco said that during the war, she and her sisters were allowed to date, but there were no men to date. One store in Mercedes had male manikins and the owner of the store said girls went there to look at the manikins — so they could remember what boys looked like.

After the war was over, Mrs. Orozco said people went to the train station again to greet their boys.

“Some of them were crippled, some of them were blind and some of them would have one arm,” Mrs. Orozco said. But people were glad the men were coming back alive.

In 1949, Mrs. Orozco met her husband, Primitivo Orozco Vega, an immigrant from Guadalajara, Mexico, at Our Lady of Mercy’s Jamaica Dance, a Mexican fiesta.

Both Mrs. Orozco and her husband faced discrimination. One time, the couple sat in the white section of a movie theater. When she learned later about the segregated seating, she shrugged it off as ridiculous.

“My money is as good as their money,” she said.

Another time, Mrs. Orozco and her husband needed \$150 to buy supplies for his shoe making shop. Responding to a newspaper ad, Mrs. Orozco visited a man who made short-term loans. But the man, an Anglo, told her he did not lend money to Mexicans or blacks because “they didn’t know how to pay.” She responded that he should have specified that in his ad. The man did not like her tone of voice.

Her answer: “Maybe I was the one who had to come and talk to you like that.”

The man later called and told her he was going to lend them the money. They’ve become close friends since then.

“You have to speak out in these little towns,” Mrs. Orozco said.

The Orozcos have four daughter and two sons, all college graduates. Her husband died Oct. 4, 1989.

Mrs. Orozco was interviewed at Mexic-Arte Museum by Desirée Mata on Oct. 17, 2003, in Austin, Texas.



The *Corrido* Challenge

During The 1800s in Mexico, a type of song, the *corrido*, was developed. This song, like an English ballad serves to tell a tale in a simple, poetic song. Stories told through everyday language *corridos* were often based on actual events. The *corrido* came to serve as a musical form of spreading important news, especially along the U.S.-Mexico border. Thus, *corridos* are referred to as “*musica de la frontera*,” border music.

The structure of the *corrido* follows two forms. First of all, *corridos* have 36 lines, which can be written out in 6 stanzas of 6 lines, or in 9 stanzas of 4 lines. Each line contains 7 to 10 syllables.

In the 6 stanza verse, the rhyme scheme is ABCBDB, and in the 4 line stanza the scheme is ABCD, or AABB (a couplet).

The first stanza gives the listener the setting of the story, including a specific date and place.

Many *corridos* praised the feats of heroes and the noble deeds of just men who challenged unjust men and situations. **Challenge yourself to writing a stanza or two based on one of the Latinos or Latinas you read about.** On the next page is an example about Aurora Estrada Orozco, a woman who stood up against discrimination and fought for the rights of her family and community.

Information about *corridos* was taken from the following website:

http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/3738/3738_mexRev_definition.pdf

To learn more about *corridos*, a suggested resource is: Paredes, Americo. *With His Pistol In His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958.

TEKS Correlation:

TEKS 5.22(B): *Culture*: Student can explain how examples of art, music, literature reflect the times during which they were created.



Aurora Estrada Orozco's Corrido

From Mexico to the Rio Grand' they came,
To escape a revolution, their aim
Aurora's family sought a good life,
But instead they got a lot of strife

At school, separate they had to sit,
Being Mexican meant you didn't fit
Discrimination she did face,
Proudly Aurora stood up for her race

She picked cotton at the age of ten
The Great Depression happened then
Then came World War II
Aurora's family knew what they had to do

The men, they went off to fight,
Aurora worked day and night
Sewing a soldier's uniform
Work for women was now the norm

War ends, and soldiers were greeted,
Some crippled, blind, but not defeated
The war of prejudice continued still
But Aurora had an iron will

"You have to speak out," she said.
When talked down to, she would not bow her head
A good life she did achieve
In herself and her race she did believe



Narratives Story: Pablo Cavazos

Themes: New life experiences, military service, travel

Activity: World War II: Life Changing Experiences Exercise

Pablo Cavazos With 18 pairs of boots and 15 cowboy hats, Pablo Cavazos, 78, is a walking specimen of Texas pride.

His advice to young people is simple: Get a good start in the military.

“If they go into the military, they’ll learn a lot of things there,” Mr. Cavazos said.

In 1943, Mr. Cavazos was drafted into the service on Jan. 14, 1943, and left his family in Corpus Christi to receive training in California as a military carpenter, although carpentry was not unfamiliar work to him. At age 16, Mr. Cavazos had begun work at the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station base as a welder’s and carpenter’s helper. Three years later, he was a soldier in World War II.

In 1944 Mr. Cavazos was shipped to England, where he worked as a truck driver. It took nine days to travel from Boston, Mass., to Liverpool, England, where he stayed until 1946.

Although he made only \$66 a month, Cavazos does not have many complaints. In his own words, his military experience was “pretty good.” In fact, by his recollections everything was “pretty good,” including the people and his interaction with them, the food and the ship.

After the war, Mr. Cavazos was discharged and went to work in Chicago for a time where he met Gloria, now his wife of 51 years.

In 1950 Mr. Cavazos came back home to Corpus Christi, bringing Gloria with him. The couple had a daughter, Esther, and now have a grandson, Michael.

He worked for a while as a truck driver before going into the welding business. He then worked for the Lone Star Liquor Distributing Co. for 17 years.



Pablo Cavazos in uniform, in the service 1943.



Pablo Cavazos-continued

A self-taught man, Mr. Cavazos is called “Mr. Fix-it” by his friends and family. From TVs to radios, Mr. Cavazos is the handyman people often come to for repairs. His relatives say he can fix anything.

The war is over now, but Mr. Cavazos still likes to meet with his old military friends in a café called the Taqueria Mexico. Mr. Cavazos, however, likes to call it the “Café Bengay,” because it is a hangout for “old-timers.” He and his friends get together there and talk about the old days.

Mr. Cavazos was born in Corpus Christi on Jan. 25, 1924. His parents, Jose Guerrero Cavazos and Manuela Peña Cavazos, were originally from Monterrey, Mexico. They moved to Corpus Christi in 1915, the year they were married. His father worked in the Corpus Christi Cotton Mill to provide for his family, which included three boys - all of whom served in the military - and two girls.

In Mr. Cavazos’ home sits a framed picture of him in a white shirt and white tie, wearing his military insignia and hat. The picture was taken shortly after his entry into the service, and his parents framed it with both the Mexican and American flags, as a symbol of both his patriotism to the United States and his Mexican heritage. The plaque underneath reads: “Pablo Cavazos entered American forces January 22, 1943. May God see that he returns after performing his duty.”



Pablo Cavazos, left, with fellow soldier Jose Vegas in Los Angeles in 1943 at a ‘picture-taking place’ where military staff posed for pictures to send home.



Name _____

Date _____

World War II: Life Changing Experiences



Pablo Cavazos, left, with fellow soldier Jose Vegas in Los Angeles in 1943 at a 'picture-taking place' where military staff posed for pictures to send home.

Study the photograph above. What can you infer about how the soldiers were feeling?



Narratives Story: Carmen Contreras Bozak

Themes: Women's wartime contributions, life experiences, courage, world travel

Activity: One Woman's Experience in World War II

Carmen Bozak's only memory of Dec. 7, 1941 - the day Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese - is of a good friend and co-worker being stranded after her date heard about the attack on the car radio. The woman's date stopped the car in the middle of nowhere and told her to get out because he had to return to his base.

A policeman picked up Mrs. Bozak's friend from the rural Virginia road and drove her to a nearby Salvation Army office, where she was given a bus ticket home to Washington, D.C.

"She was the lucky one," Mrs. Bozak said. "She had a date. That's all I remember about that day."

Little did Mrs. Bozak know that six months later she would be pulled into World War II after enlisting as a member of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, or WAAC. The group later became known simply as the Women's Army Corps.

Today, Mrs. Bozak's life is still dominated by her experiences during World War II and her devotion to war veterans. In 1989, she started a chapter of WAC Vets in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., where she currently lives. She was the chapter's first president and also founded a chapter of the Society of Military Widows in 1998.

When Mrs. Bozak isn't attending these organization's monthly meetings, she spends her time volunteering at the Oakland Park VA Outpatient Clinic, where she does administrative work, attending Veterans of Foreign Wars meetings, playing in her church poker club and traveling. Much of her traveling includes trips to WAC reunions and conventions.

Mrs. Bozak fondly recalls her memories of traveling overseas and of the friendships she made while in the Army. What she remembered less clearly, though, is her life before she entered the service. She says that part of her life seems like a century ago.

She was born Carmen Contreras on New Year's Eve, 1919, in Cayay, Puerto Rico, near San Juan, the oldest of three children. She attended elementary school in Puerto Rico, where her mother, Lila Baudilia Lugo Torres, worked as a seamstress and raised her children by herself.



**Carmen Bozak in uniform,
overseas in the service.**



Carmen Contreras Bozak-continued

The family moved to New York City, and young Carmen attended Julia Richman High School. Upon graduating from high school, she went to work for the National Youth Administration. Shortly afterwards, she took the Civil Service test and took a job as a payroll clerk in the War Department in Washington.

Mrs. Bozak said the job at the War Department was responsible for igniting her patriotism and excitement at the beginning of the war, and is what ultimately drove her to join the WAAC.

“Oh, I had to go,” Mrs. Bozak said. “I thought, it’ll be a change. I’ll get to travel. I was so happy that I did join, that I got a good job.”

In January 1942, Mrs. Bozak, as one of 195 members of the 149th WAAC Company, set sail from New York’s harbor for Europe. She remembers watching her ship pass by the Statue of Liberty and realizing that they were sailing off to battle.

Mrs. Bozak said the women that comprised the 149th were chosen for their ability to speak more than one language. Mrs. Bozak felt special to be among them, she said.

“I was only out of basic training not two months, and I was going overseas already,” she said. “I was so happy, even though I got seasick.”

Mrs. Bozak was stationed in Algiers for the majority of her time overseas. While there she performed the duties of a Teletype operator, transmitting encoded messages to the battlefield.

Algiers was not far from battlefield action. Mrs. Bozak recalled that during her 18 months there she witnessed four air raids and the dropping of a bomb near one of the residences.

Mrs. Bozak said she and one of her friends seldom sought cover like the rest of the women in her unit. She said they liked to go up on the roof of the hotel where they worked nights to watch the artillery fire.

“We were never afraid,” Mrs. Bozak said. “Some girls were scared, but I never was.”

After her time in Algiers, Mrs. Bozak spent a short time in Italy before she returned to the United States.

She was discharged as a Technician 4th grade, and earned several medals, including the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, 2 Battle Stars, a World War II Victory Medal, an American Campaign Medal, a WAAC Service Medal and the Good Conduct Medal.

After coming home, an eye infection she had contracted in Algiers flared up, and she was sent to Valley Forge General Hospital in Pennsylvania in July 1945, which turned out to be a fortunate twist of events.

During a trip back to the hospital from Washington, Mrs. Bozak met her future husband, Theodore J. Bozak, who was also a patient at the hospital. After dating for less than five months, the two married.



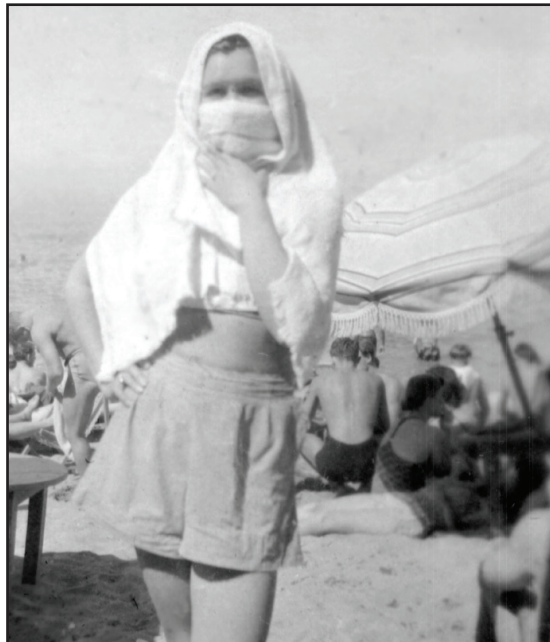
Carmen Contreras Bozak-continued

“That was my lucky day (the day he was transferred to Valley Forge),” Mrs. Bozak said. “That was the day I met my husband.”

The couple was married for 46 years until his death in 1991. They had two sons, Brian and Robert, and a daughter, Carmen.

Mrs. Bozak said her Puerto Rican heritage never deterred her from accomplishing any of her goals and that she was never the victim of discrimination based on her culture or her gender.

She said she did not teach her children to speak Spanish because her husband was of Polish decent and did not speak the language. In retrospect, Mrs. Bozak said she has some regrets about letting her heritage slip away, “and not teaching the children the Spanish language.”



Carmen Bozak at France Beach outside of Algiers in 1943.

Carmen Contreras Bozak-continued



Carmen Bozak in Rome with a carabinieri in 1944.

It has been more than 60 years since Mrs. Bozak served the U.S. Army in World War II, but her time in the war continues to be a part of her everyday life.

Whether she is remembering her days of USO dances and of meeting the pope while on a pass in Italy, or is attending one of her many meetings, Mrs. Bozak is living a life whose course was determined by a simple decision to enlist in the Army.

At the time of this interview, Mrs. Bozak was looking forward to attending the 60th anniversary of the 149th WAAC Company in Des Moines, Iowa. She said the number of participants at the reunion was expected to be less than half of the first reunion in Hot Springs, Ark., in 1960, as many participants are “too old, or too sick to travel.”

But Mrs. Bozak said she wouldn't have missed the event for anything.



Name _____

Date _____

Carmen Contreras Bozak
One Woman's Experience in World War II

Study Carmen Bozak's photo of her in Rome in the *Narratives* article. After reading her story, what do you think she might have been feeling?

What do you think Mrs. Bozak learned while in the military? What sort of life-changing experiences could she have had?

If you could talk to Mrs. Bozak, what would you want to tell her? What questions might you ask her?



Name _____

Date _____

Today it is very common for women to serve in the military. Does it surprise you that women served in the military during World War II? Why or why not?

What role did Mrs. Bozak play in helping the United States during the war? How do you think her experience might have been different from that of a woman who was not Hispanic?

TEKS Correlations

TEKS 5.26: *Social Studies Skills*: The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms.

TEKS 5.25(A) and (B) *Social Studies Skills*: The student applies critical thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources including interviews (A) and (B) draw inferences and conclusions

Narratives Stories: Richard Candelaria

Themes: Military service, honors, heroism, courage, new experiences

Activities: Roles of Latinos & Latinas in Films of 1940s, Film Strip Animation

Growing up in Southern California during the 1920s and 1930s, Richard G. Candelaria would bike up to the top of Mulholland Drive to watch the P-38 twin-engine fighter planes take off and land from Burbank. He read magazine articles about World War I bi-planes, about people like the Red Baron and the Lone Eagle; they inspired him as a boy.

“I wanted to be a fighter pilot,” Mr. Candelaria said. “That was my one wish.”

Years later, Mr. Candelaria lived out his wish when he served as a World War II fighter pilot, destroying German Luftwaffe fighter planes. He shot down six enemy planes, a feat that earned him the distinction of “ace.” It’s an accomplishment that he is proud of.

“It’s the most exclusive club, or association, in the world,” he said of the American Fighter Aces Association, of which he is a charter member. “You can’t buy your way in. You can’t influence your way in. You can’t talk your way in. There’s only one way in: aerial combat.”

Mr. Candelaria was born July 14, 1922, in El Paso, Texas. When he was only 9 weeks old, he and his mother returned to California.

“My parents wanted me born in Texas,” Mr. Candelaria said. “They were on an extended visit to Texas where both paternal and maternal grandparents lived.”

He was the only child in his family. Mr. Candelaria was 7 years old when his father, an architect, died. His maternal grandmother, two aunts and an uncle then moved to Southern California to live with the family. For four years they lived comfortably despite the Depression of the 1930s, Mr. Candelaria said.

After he graduated from Theodore Roosevelt High School in February 1939, Mr. Candelaria passed preliminary entrance exams for the Air Force flying program. He began studying at the University of Southern



Richard Candelaria on April 7, 1945 at the Royal Air Force base in Watersham, England.



Richard Candelaria-continued

California seven months later to meet the two-year college requirement. During this time, he maintained his interest in airplanes by working part time at Miller Dial & Instrument, a company that produced instrument dials for aircraft.

When Pearl Harbor was bombed on Dec. 7, 1941, Mr. Candelaria knew his time to fight for the nation soon would come. After years of waiting, he was accepted into the flying program of the Army Air Force in January 1943.

Mr. Candelaria began his training at the Santa Ana preflight base in Southern California and traveled to several training locations in California and Arizona. In January 1944, Mr. Candelaria graduated as a second lieutenant.

“I was selected and assigned to Williams Field and Luke Field, Arizona, as a flight instructor, teaching advanced pilot instrument flying and fighter aircraft gunnery,” Mr. Candelaria said.

In May 1944, when the call came out for fighter pilots, Mr. Candelaria rushed to the nearest headquarters to register.

“That may sound funny, but this is what you wanted to do, this is what you trained for, this is why you even joined. So therefore, I was happy,” Mr. Candelaria said. “I was eager to sign up. I was hoping they would take me — and they did.”

Mr. Candelaria’s career as a fighter pilot took off from there. After a series of fighter tactics training programs across the country, Mr. Candelaria was assigned to the 435th fighter squadron, of the 479th fighter group, 8th fighter command, and based at the Watersham Royal Air Force Base in Ipswich, England. He was one of only two Latinos in his squadron, and one of only three Hispanics in the entire group — there were three squadrons, or 10,000 to 12,000 men, per group, Mr. Candelaria said.

He recalled the camaraderie of the Air Force fondly.

As a fighter pilot, he flew P-38s, twin-engine fighters, and P-51 Mustangs, long-range fighter planes. His mission was to escort and to protect bombers to their targets and back.

His greatest personal victory occurred April 7, 1945, when he shot down four enemy aircraft. That day, because of a slight mechanical problem, Lt. Candelaria flew separate from his squadron, and while alone he encountered two jet fighters and fifteen ME-109s, top German fighters. As he radioed his squadron for help, he engaged the lead aircraft of the group. Eventually, Lt. Candelaria shot the lead aircraft down, along with three others, before his squadron was able to help.

One week after that momentous personal triumph, on Friday, April 13, Lt. Candelaria’s good fortune reversed when his own plane was shot down over Germany.



Richard Candelaria-continued

“For those of us who are superstitious,” Mr. Candelaria said, “it was a good day to stay in bed.”

That morning, Lt. Candelaria had flown with his squadron to East Prussia, east of Berlin. Spying enemy aircraft parked on the ground in Rostock, he decided to destroy as many as he could. But he broke a cardinal rule: He made a second pass on a ground target, which enabled the anti-aircraft artillery ground troops to zero in on him.

As he flew across the airfield, guns shot up everywhere, along with many cannons — “the famous and feared 88 mm artillery guns” Mr. Candelaria said. He saw his engine catch fire and steered his plane southwest, toward Allied lines on the other side of the Elbe River. He bailed out of his aircraft.

“The chute opened and I came down,” Mr. Candelaria said. “All of a sudden it was so quiet and peaceful. ... I almost enjoyed it.”

He was slightly wounded; glass and metal shrapnel had punctured his skin, but his helmet had mostly protected his head.

“I felt pretty lucky,” he said.

As soon as he landed, Lt. Candelaria saw a truck of German soldiers firing at something, perhaps him. He ran into a nearby woods and buried his parachute, waiting until dark to start walking out.

Under cover of dark, with the help of a compass so small he could fit it under his tongue, he made his way southwest, in the direction of the Allies. On his second day, Lt. Candelaria encountered two German soldiers in a field of tall grass. He tried to surrender — waving a white scarf — but they fired at him. He fired back, and killed both.

Lt. Candelaria then changed directions and headed south. A day and a half later, he came upon a stream he could drink from. However, two civilians, using pitchforks to bale hay, saw him and charged. Lt. Candelaria shot and killed them.

Lt. Candelaria buried his cartridges and changed directions again — this time taking refuge in an abandoned cabin. Local civilians, however, reported him to military authorities and were ready to lynch the American themselves. The German military, however, got to him first and took him prisoner, where he said he was treated well.

One German officer noted that he had relatives in Wisconsin, Mr. Candelaria said. A German doctor treated his wounds, using Schnapps to sterilize the cuts.

He recalled one driver saying, “You’re a soldier. I’m a soldier. When the war is over, we can go home.”

Lt. Candelaria was a prisoner of war for 31 days, until he and a few other POWs decided to escape. They hijacked a German automobile, taking a German captain hostage to reach Allied lines. Mr. Candelaria made



Richard Candelaria-continued

it safely back to his squadron, his country and his family.

Mr. Candelaria later became a charter member of the American Fighter Aces Association, one of his proudest accomplishments. He also earned many awards, including the Distinguished Flying Cross, Silver Star, the French Croix de Guerre with Palm, the Purple Heart and three Presidential citations.

Mr. Candelaria married Betty Jean Landreth in 1953. The couple recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They had two daughters, Camdelyn Marie and Calia Monique.

Mr. Candelaria has also had a very successful business career, establishing various business enterprises and working in business management and administration, all without the benefit of a college degree.

“I never received a degree, a lot of education but no degree,” Mr. Candelaria said. “I pulled a, at Microsoft, a Bill Gates thing.”



**Richard Candelaria, 1st Lt. 435th Fighter Squadron
U.S.A.F., December 5, 1944**



Narratives Stories: Saragosa A. Garcia

Themes: Military service, honors, heroism, courage, new experiences

Activities: Roles of Latinos & Latinas in Films of 1940s, Film Strip Animation

Saragosa A. Garcia always marched to the beat of a different drummer.

And his ability to play music, to change the tempo of his life, along with the assurance from carrying a treasured Holy Bible and his mother's prayers, may have helped him through tough times in World War II and in a segregated Texas.

Mr. Garcia born on Oct. 22, 1922 in Corpus Christi, Texas, to a family of musicians. From what he says, Mr. Garcia was destined to play the drums.

He had four older brothers, and his parents had a brand-new Model "T" Ford. His family moved to a small farm the family called El Rancho Colorado (The Red Farm) in Rosenberg. The dad worked part-time as a carpenter in the area.

Mr. Garcia smiled as he revealed his father's other job title, playing music.

And sometimes, his dad had another sideline.

"I'll tell you this, he was a bootlegger. He sold whiskey," Mr. Garcia said.

He started school at Robert E. Lee Elementary in Rosenberg and had problems from the very beginning with his teacher who "was about 90 years old."

"She didn't want us to play with the (what Mr. Garcia called) Bohemians — you know, the white folks," he said. The school was segregated, and his teacher wouldn't promote him to the next grade level at the same pace as the white students in his class. He remembered how the Hispanic students — including his brothers and sisters — learned how to dig holes with a shovel outside, instead of taking a recess. And while the Anglo children took their recess, the Hispanic children were in the classroom.

"I was in the third grade for three or four years," Mr. Garcia said. His dad finally got fed up with the discrimination his kids received at school.



Saragosa Garcia on the border between Luxembourg and Belgium in 1944.



Saragosa A. Garcia-continued

“My children didn’t come here to learn how to dig holes,” he told the teacher. He took the kids out of Robert E. Lee and moved the family to Houston to attend Jones School. In 1935, at age 13, Mr. Garcia finally passed to the fourth grade.

Mr. Garcia remembered a certain teacher he had, a Mrs. Smith, who gave him a Bible. “I still have that Bible today,” he said.

Shortly after they moved to Houston, Mr. Garcia’s dad stuck a nail right through his hand and was not able to work. The family moved again to Rosenberg, a “Bohemian” town to pick cotton on a farm for a month. Then they moved to town.

“I was the oldest, so I had to start working,” he said. He sold candy, delivered newspapers and worked at a fruit stand in Houston until he turned 20. “I didn’t want to go to school anymore.”

Along the way, he discovered his love for playing the drums. “I learned music from watching my brothers,” he said.

In 1942, Mr. Garcia’s entire life changed when he was drafted into the Army. He was sent to Fort Bliss in El Paso for training with a crew of four other men to be anti-aircraft gunners. He remembered learning how to shoot at a moving target. He said it was difficult because if they missed the target, they could do some real damage, “If we shot too far off, we’d shoot the plane!”

“Sometimes, we took a week or two of infantry training in the desert — with all the snakes,” he said. This desert training was in nearby Las Cruces, N.M.

In 1943, his unit took an eight-day train ride to Camp Pickett, Va. Compared to the hot climate of El Paso, the weather in Virginia was almost unbearable. “It was so cold there!” He said.

As part of their training, they had to swim in frigid water. “We would swim with no clothes. Nothing,” said Mr. Garcia. “We were planning for D-day.”

Shortly after celebrating New Year’s of 1944 at Camp Kilmer, N.J., Mr. Garcia joined more than 15,000 troops on a ship to Europe.

“We went across the Hudson River and saw a big old ship with 20,000 soldiers on it,” he said. He boarded the Queen Elizabeth, the world’s largest ship. Eight days later, on Jan. 8, the Queen Elizabeth docked in Scotland.

British and American officials welcomed the troops aboard the ship, and Mr. Garcia remembers hearing Bing Crosby singing “The Funny Old Hills.” Nearby, women from the Red Cross served coffee, doughnuts, candy and cigarettes.



Saragosa A. Garcia-continued

Once arriving in Scotland, they took a train to the south of England in preparation to cross the English Channel. On Feb. 20, 1944, Garcia was assigned to Battery B of the 197th Anti- Aircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons (AAA-AW) Battalion (Self-Propelled) attached to support the 16th Infantry Regiment of the First Infantry Division. They trained in England until heading for Normandy's Omaha Beach.

June 6, 1944, the first day of the Normandy Invasion, Mr. Garcia's captain said, "This is the day you need to start praying."

Mr. Garcia came from a strong Pentecostal background, and he believed that he had his faith to thank for his survival. "I carried that Bible Mrs. Smith gave me on all the time," he said.

In remarks to the Project after the interview, Mr. Garcia wrote that he was in the second wave of American soldiers to land in Normandy.

"We were supposed to land after the combat engineers," he wrote. "So we had a hard time getting over the hill; we had to wait 'til the engineers make a road.

"A sniper shot at me from a hill and just barely missed," he said. "And I was laying down and praying for some guy to make a road so we could get by." His prayers were answered when an engineer cleared a road for them to cross. "There were bodies all over the place and ships burning," Mr. Garcia said.

After his close encounter with death, Mr. Garcia saw action in France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland before entering Germany.

On Dec. 16, 1944 in eastern Belgium, Garcia heard a voice on the radio warn, "Everybody, get out of here now. The Germans are 10 miles away." This marked the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge, which has been called the worst battle in history in terms of losses to American forces. More than a million men fought in the snow, and at least 19,000 Americans died.

One leader said to his men, "There are two types of people who will stay: the dead and those who are going to die." Mr. Garcia was one of the lucky ones. He put his half-track into four-wheel drive and made it out of the battle with no wounds. He was with an antiaircraft artillery battery attached to the 16th Infantry Regiment. His unit, Battery B of the 197th AAA-AW Battalion (SP), protected the soldiers from the with air, protecting the quartermaster transporting ammunition to the front lines.

When the war ended, Mr. Garcia did not go home immediately. First, he had to guard a prisoner of war camp in Germany. He remembered one night when he was on guard by himself. His sergeant said, "Anybody who comes through here — kill him."



Saragosa A. Garcia-continued

Mr. Garcia heard footsteps early in the morning, and he started shaking as he said, "Oh Lord, please help me." It turned out that it was just a group of people going to church. Once again, Mr. Garcia had his religion to thank. "The Lord helped me not to fire," he said.

Cpl. Garcia was discharged in 1945, having earned an EAME Campaign Medal, with five Bronze Stars, a Victory Medal with one Bronze Arrowhead, a Sharp Shooter medal, a Half Track Medal, for being a driver, and a Good Conduct Medal.

He moved back to his home in Rosenberg where he could resume life as it had been before the war. He combined his love of music with his faith by playing for his church and even played the drums in a country-western band. "We used to play all over the place," he said. His band played at parks, parties, weddings and hotels.

"I even played with a symphony. I didn't know how to read the music so I just followed signals," Mr. Garcia said.

In 1952, he was married and moved to Houston, where he and his wife, Ophelia (Turnini) still live today. They had two sons and a daughter.

Mr. Garcia later worked at a shipyard, where he said discrimination was apparent. His supervisor assigned him to "Mexican labor" and only gave the white workers the good jobs, he said. They had separate facilities for the "whites," "colored" and "Mexicans."

Mr. Garcia sued the shipyard for discrimination, and won. His action changed in the way the company treated minorities, and the shipyard was forced to grant everyone equal facilities.

Mr. Garcia decided he wanted to do something more with his life. He applied and was accepted as an automotive mechanic for the U.S. Postal Service. While still playing music all over town with his band, he retired after 28 years with the Postal Service.

"My wife asked me, 'How in the hell did you do all this with only a fifth-grade education?'" Mr. Garcia said.

Saragosa Garcia just marches to the beat of his own drum.

Narratives Stories: Jose M. Lopez

Themes: Military service, honors, heroism, courage, new experiences

Activities: Roles of Latinos & Latinas in Films of 1940s, Film Strip Animation

One of the 12 Hispanic WWII veterans to have received the Congressional Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military accolade, had a difficult childhood, but maintained a fervent belief in the Virgen de Guadalupe, the patron saint of most Mexicans.

Jose M. Lopez's father died in the Mexican Revolution; his son never really knew him. Mr. Lopez's mother died eight years later, when he was eight. He never went to school, but worked in the cotton fields to help support himself.

As an infantry soldier, he prayed to his beloved Virgin, but he didn't pray to be a hero, he only wanted to return to his wife and their two children in Brownsville, Texas.

Sgt. Jose M. Lopez did return safely — to a hero's welcome and met a succession of U.S. presidents, from Truman to George W. Bush. He was even feted in Mexico with that country's highest military honor.

"I prayed a lot to the Virgen de Guadalupe," (Le rezaba mucho a la Virgen de Guadalupe), Mr. Lopez recalled about his time in Belgium as a sergeant in the U.S. Army, Company K, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. "And she allowed me to succeed and I finished with combat." (Y se me concedio que triunfe y acabe con el combate.)

Mr. Lopez — who believes he survived the horrors of war thanks to the Virgin's blessings — sure enough packed his bags upon arriving in Brownsville and along with his wife and two children went on a pilgrimage to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City.

The trip was fully funded by donations from the grateful residents of Brownsville, who threw Mr. Lopez a hero's welcome.



Jose Lopez shakes hands with John F. Kennedy, one of several U.S. presidents who have thanked him over the years for his bravery in battle.



Jose M. Lopez-continued

“I was glad that I returned to my family,” Mr. Lopez said. “My wife and I went to church to thank God that I returned and saw my children and wife.”

But the valor that Sgt. Lopez demonstrated on a Belgium battlefield — where he carried out a seemingly suicidal mission — was more than a divine gift. It was a quality that flowed deep in his blood.

Born in Mission, Texas, in 1910, Mr. Lopez’s father, Cayetano Lopez, and his mother, Candida Mendoza de Lopez, emigrated from a small village in the Mexican state of Oaxaca. His father worked on the cotton and beet fields of Mission while his mother took care of the newborn.

Mr. Lopez became an orphan when his mother died.

“I didn’t know my father . . . my mother died very young,” Mr. Lopez said. (Yo no conocí a mi papa . . . mi mamá falleció muy joven.)

Mr. Lopez grew up living with a maternal uncle, Constancio Mendoza, but he provided for himself by working on the cotton fields around Brownsville. Mr. Lopez never had the chance to set foot in a classroom, something he regrets to this day.

As a young man, Mr. Lopez then caught the attention of a boxing promoter, who noticed his physical abilities and mental agility. A seven-year career as a lightweight boxer then ensued, and he fought a total of 55 matches, winning all but three of them. Never in his defeats was Mr. Lopez knocked out nor did he hit the tarp.

While at a boxing match in Melbourne, Australia, in 1934, Mr. Lopez met a group of men who worked for the Merchant Marine, and he was convinced to sign a work contract with it. He was accepted into the union in 1936 and spent the next five years traveling the world and visiting far-off places such as New Zealand, Australia, Fiji and Tahiti.

For a time, Mr. Lopez lived in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, where he would break concrete with a steel gun for a living. He lived there for about five months but eventually decided to return to the mainland United States.

It was en route to California that he learned about the Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which led the United States into World War II. Mr. Lopez said the attack happened three days into his voyage back home.

“When I arrived in Los Angeles, I disembarked, they arrested me because they thought I was Japanese,” (Cuando llegue a Los Angeles, que me desembarque, luego me agarraron porque creían que era yo japonés.) Mr. Lopez said. “I let them see my papers, that I was Mexican and they let me go. They were going to put me in the prison (interment camps) for the Japanese.” (Les deje mis papeles que era Mexicano y me soltaron. Me iban a poner en la prisión de los japoneses.)



Jose M. Lopez-continued

Mr. Lopez then returned to Brownsville in 1942 to marry Emilia Herrera, with whom he would eventually have four daughters — Candida, Virginia, Maggie and Beatrice, and one stepson, Juanito, from his wife's first marriage.

But later on that year, he received a draft card and went to San Antonio to enlist in the U.S. Army. Mr. Lopez was sent first to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and then to Camp Roberts, Calif., to receive his basic training.

Although Mr. Lopez volunteered to serve in the Airborne Unit, he was not accepted because the Army wanted young, single men to serve in that dangerous unit. Instead, Mr. Lopez was assigned to Company K of the 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division.

Sgt. Lopez was then sent to Northern Ireland to receive military training for a top-secret mission that would pave the way for the Allied Force's invasion of Nazi-controlled Europe, the June 6, 1944, assault on Omaha Beach.

Mr. Lopez's regiment landed at Normandy on June 7, D-plus-1.

"We fought very hard against the enemy," (Peliamos muy fuerte con los enemigos.) Mr. Lopez said. "We lost many of my friends." (Perdimos muchos amigos mios.)

Sgt. Lopez's ultimate test of valor, however, came on Dec. 17, 1944, near Krinkelt, Belgium, when he took it upon himself to carry his machine gun from Company K's right flank to its left to protect it from the advancing German infantry. "Germans started to arrive and attacked an American tank," Mr. Lopez recalled. (Alemanes comensaron a llegar y atacaron a un tanque americano) "I climbed up and asked if anyone was alive..." (Me trepe y pregunte si alguien estaba vivo)

There was no answer.

Sgt. Lopez then occupied a waist-deep fox hole and shot 10 Germans. He stayed there, despite heavy enemy fire, and he shot 25 more Germans, according to an account from the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, which maintains a Web site.

"Everyone was afraid of where I put them to fight the Germans," Mr. Lopez said, recalling that one soldier even wanted to surrender. "I told them that they had to stop and fight back."

Sgt. Lopez realized his position would be outflanked so he carried his machine gun to a new position, reset the weapon and continued to fire. He single-handedly held off the Germans until he was satisfied that his company had completely gotten away and was no longer compromised.

Sgt. Lopez's efforts ultimately allowed the Americans to create a line of defense to fight back enemy fire.

Sgt. Lopez's bravery — in which he killed at least 100 Germans and secured the position of Company K —



Jose M. Lopez-continued

merited him the United States' highest award for military valor, the Congressional Medal of Honor.

After being presented the medal in Nuremberg, Germany, Sgt. Lopez returned to the United States. He received an enthusiastic reception when his ship landed in New York City, and he was even greeted by legendary New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia.

"Oh boy, they gave me a welcome!" Mr. Lopez said. "I met the mayor, the Italian guy [LaGuardia]."

Sgt. Lopez was also greeted in Mexico City during his pilgrimage to the Basilica. He was welcomed by President Avila Camacho and was also awarded Mexico's highest military commemoration, la Condecoracion del Merito Militar.

When he came back from the war, he was unable to get a good job in Brownsville, so he moved to San Antonio and worked as a contact representative with the Veterans Administration. A few years later, he volunteered — to serve in Korea, this time retrieving fallen soldiers' bodies. But somehow word got to then-President Harry S. Truman, who ordered him returned home.

"Bingo," Mr. Lopez said his captain said. "Sergeant Lopez, we're sending you back to the U.S."

Mr. Lopez now advises his grandchildren to get an education, which he considers the most important thing to do in life.

"It's the most one can leave to one's grandchildren: education," (Es lo mas que le puede dejar uno a los nietos, es la educacion) Mr. Lopez said, boasting about the success of his grandchildren's college educations and careers as doctors, magazine representatives and even imported cigar merchants. "They must learn so that they can live in this life." (Que aprendan para poder vivir en esta vida.)

Mr. Lopez currently lives in San Antonio with his wife Emilia, at his daughter, Maggie Wickwire's home.



Name _____

Date _____

Think of the films you watch. How are Latinos and Latinas portrayed now? Do stereotypes still persist?

Are you seeing more positive and complex Latino characters in films?

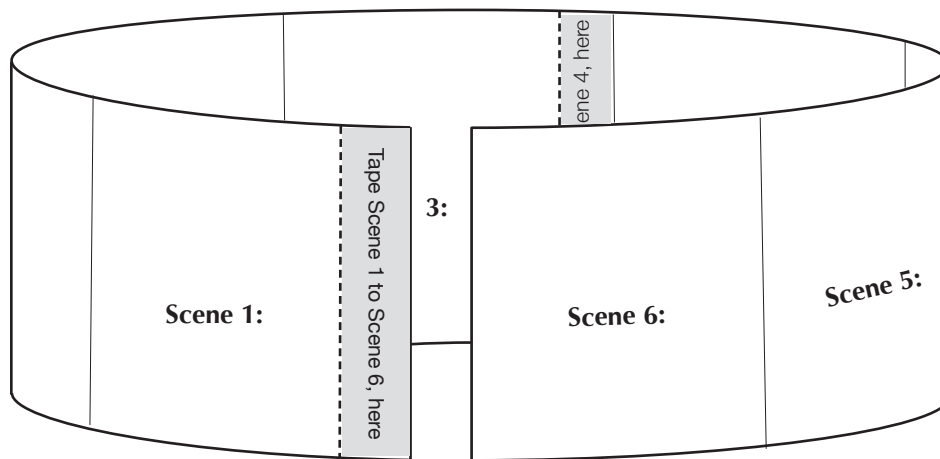
If you were a director, what kind of film would you make to portray Latinos and Latinas?



Film Strip Animation Activity

Choose a narrative to read about Richard Candelaria, Saragosa A. Garcia, or Jose M. Lopez; they all came back from WWII with honors and medals. Now imagine you are going to make a war film based on one of these accounts. Pick six important scenes that would be crucial to your “movie”, and sketch out your imagined scenes on the paper film strip.

*Make sure you sequence your story starting at Scene 1, or your “paper film” will not work. Draw your illustrations in the top box, and below you can write a sentence or two explaining your scene. When you are through, cut out the two strips, and tape the end of Scene 3 to Scene 4. You will then draw a television on construction paper and cut two slits for the paper strip to fit through. Once your paper strip is through the television “screen”, tape your strip together so it forms a loop. You are now ready to view your film!



EXAMPLE: film strip before placing in TV

TEKS Correlations

TEKS 5.23: *Culture*: student understands the contributions of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups to the United States

TEKS 5.26: *Social Studies Skills*: The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms

Tape Scene 3 to Scene 4, here

Scene 3:

Scene 2:

Scene 1:

Tape Scene 1 to Scene 6, here

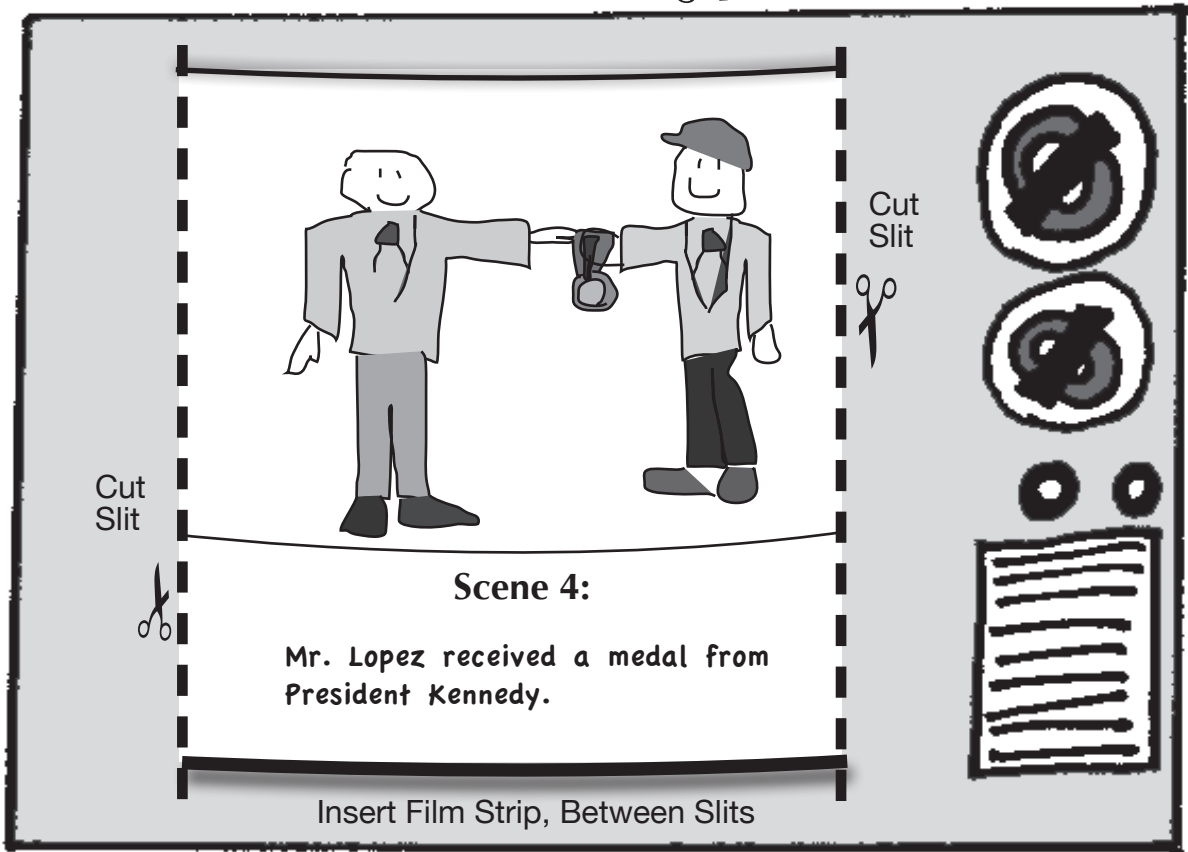




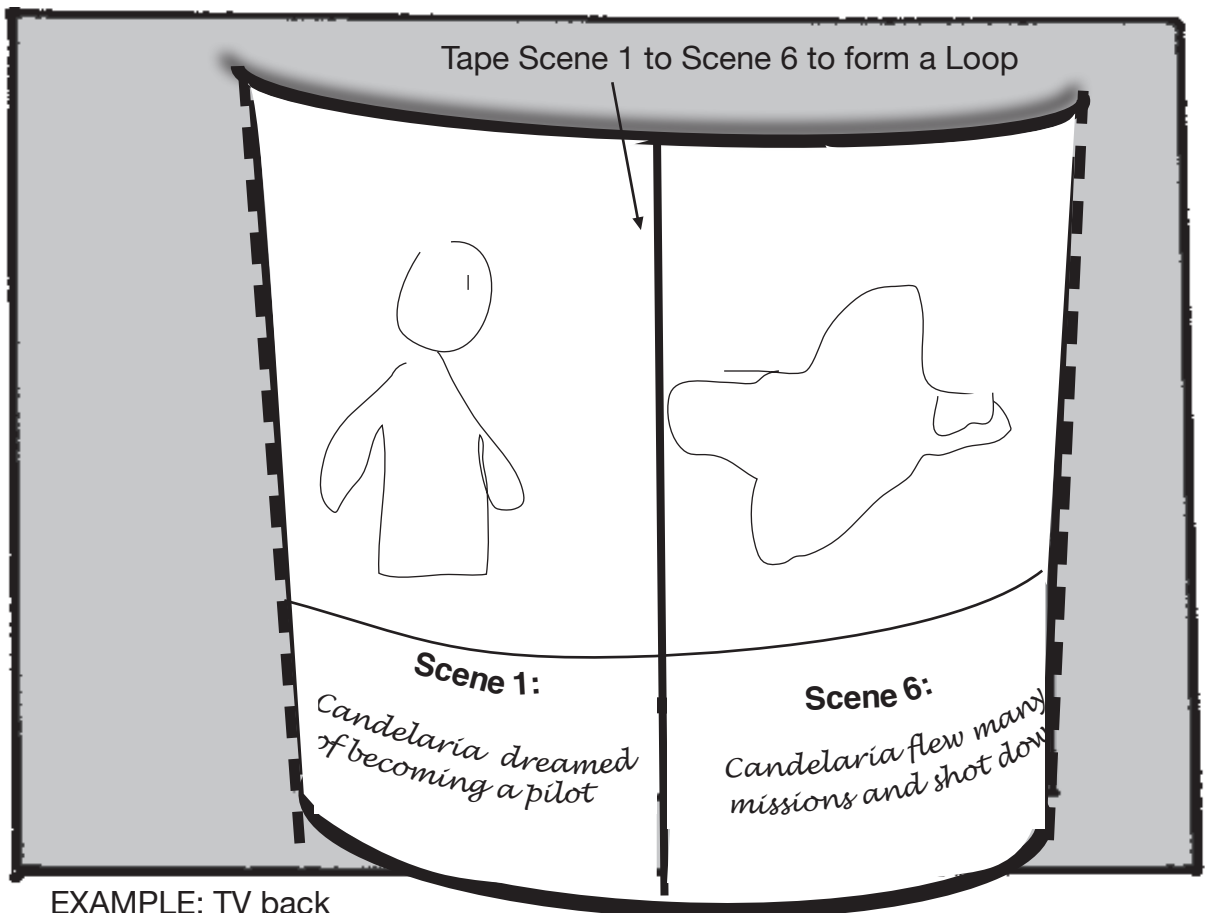
	Scene 6:
	Scene 5:
	Scene 4:



Draw your TV on Cardboard and Cut Out 



EXAMPLE: TV front



EXAMPLE: TV back

Narratives Story: Elisa Rodriguez

Themes: Civil service work, women's contributions, personal goals, role models, perseverance

Activity: Women's Roles in World War II

Seventy-seven-year-old Elisa Rodriguez is not shy about opening her mouth when something's not right. As a Mexican American woman and as a former employee of the United States Civil Service since World War II, she has developed strong opinions about her country, discrimination and the relationship between the two.

"We're in America, and everybody has to be treated equally," Mrs. Rodriguez says. "But if you don't have the guts to speak out for yourself, nobody's gonna do it for you." Mrs. Rodriguez a Waco native, was 21 when she got her first government job in 1943 at Blackland Army Airfield, a temporary training ground in Waco for World War II twin engine pilots. She had been working days at a local department store and going to night school to learn shorthand, typing and other administrative skill courses so she could find secretarial work. Mrs. Rodriguez says she had always aspired to become a secretary.

"Typing fascinated me," she says "You know, there weren't many secretaries back then." Ironically, she was turned down in her first application to work as a stenographer with a defense company in nearby McGregor, Texas. When she arrived in McGregor with a letter of recommendation, the facility's personnel director immediately told her that the position, which had been advertised in the Waco paper for weeks, was no longer available.

"I'm just the type of person that I want an answer. I don't want them to beat around the bush. So I says, 'Sir, are you just denying me a position because of my nationality?' And he grinned and said, 'Yes, if I hire you, the other secretaries will quit. ... We just have white secretaries,' " recalls Mrs. Rodriguez, hands in front of her, locked together by her fingers and resting on the white lace cloth covering her dining room table."I'm sorry that God didn't make me white, but I'm proud of who I am," she told the man.

Rodriguez asked if she could speak to the president of the company, but was promptly told that he was not in.



Elisa Rodriguez on the job at Blackland Army Airfield in 1943.



Elisa Rodriguez-continued

“Your gonna hear from somebody. I’m not gonna keep quiet about this,” said Mrs. Rodriguez on her way out the door.

She was quick to fulfill her threat. On her way back home, she stopped by the office of Mr. Earl, a lawyer friend of her family and the author of her rejected letter of recommendation. He called the company in McGregor and was immediately put through to the president. Mr. Earl proceeded to tell the man that if what his friend had just told him was true, he would call Washington and have the company’s defense contract broken with the government.

“He told him, ‘send her over,’ “ Mrs. Rodriguez recalls.

But she didn’t go straight back to McGregor. She went back to her house for lunch instead. When she got to the front porch, she checked the mailbox, where there was a letter from Blackland in response to a secretary’s job she had applied for a few weeks before. She immediately made the 12-mile bus ride to the base, where she got the job and started the next day. She made about \$2,000 a year, an average salary in those days, she says.

Work & Discrimination

The war provided Rodriguez with a decent job, but that was about it, she says. Being the only Latina at the base, she dealt with discrimination and prejudices routinely, she says.

“People would ask, ‘Why is it that you people have so many babies?’ They were always asking that. That was very personal and very rude, I thought,” says Rodriguez, who had eight brothers and sisters.

Rodriguez believes that discrimination is still as prevalent today as it was in 1945, when hundreds of Latinos returned to Texas after fighting for the U.S. in World War II.

“Some people don’t believe what goes on,” Rodriguez says. “Up till this day, it’s still the same. You work. You’re trying to get up in the world, but they [supervisors] bypass you.”

Rodriguez was bypassed for promotions she had been promised when she worked at Bergstrom Airforce base in Austin as a secretary and as an equal employment opportunity coordinator, she says. She was only getting paid to be a secretary, but she took on the coordinator responsibility in exchange for a future promotion and more money. She was desperate for a job because she was going through a divorce and both of her children, Rudy and Julie, were young at the time, she says.

Rodriguez never moved up at Bergstrom because she took her added responsibility as Equal Employment Opportunity coordinator too seriously, she says.

“I think I made a lot of waves while I was at Bergstrom. I was their advocate,” says Rodriguez of the minority veterans she served.



Elisa Rodriguez-continued

Her supervisor cringed every time he saw her coming down the hallway to his office because of the confrontations they would sometimes have, she says. For example, when a group of minority veterans working at the base called Mrs. Rodriguez and let her know that they were about to get laid off, she took action.

“All I cared about were those Vets,” she says. “They go to war, they fight for you and they get nothing but a reduction in force?”

There were several nonveteran Anglos at the base that were not in danger of losing their jobs, Mrs. Rodriguez says, so she made the march over to her supervisor’s office.

“Look, I think it’s your duty to do something about this,” says Mrs. Rodriguez, recounting her encounter with her supervisor. “You better start checking around the base and seeing all those nonveterans that are holding jobs. They’re the ones that should be laid off. If you don’t do this, I’m gonna do something about it. ... I’m gonna go to the paper, the Green Berets, tell the whole world what you’re doing to these Vets,” she said.

“I tell you. Those slips were taken back,” she adds, her eyes widening. “I didn’t get ahead very much, but at least I got it off my chest. I let them know,” says Mrs. Rodriguez about her decision to speak out instead of keep quiet.

Despite her belief that minorities still suffer from discrimination, Mrs. Rodriguez notes that they don’t tolerate as much as they used to. “A lot of poor people back then weren’t educated. They were afraid of stuttering, getting laughed at. They couldn’t express themselves clearly and they were timid. That’s why I was glad (to do it),” she says, “ Even if it was a hardship.”

Elisa Rodriguez Today & Yesterday

Mrs. Rodriguez now lives comfortably, in a two-story, pink brick house with green shutters in South Austin. Big band music, the favorite of she and her husband of 28 years, Ben, emanates from a black jam box, filling the photo-laden house with wartime tunes.

“Sometimes we’ll get in the kitchen and dance to it.” Says Rodriguez, who adds that ballroom dancing is a favorite pastime for her and Ben.

Back when Mrs. Rodriguez worked at Blackland Airforce Base, she vowed never to get married until she earned enough money to buy her parents a new house. Within about two years, she had enough money to buy them a wood-framed four-bedroom house. The house, which her son Rudy now owns, cost \$3,500 when she paid for it in 1945, she says.

Both of Mrs. Rodriguez’s parents were Mexican immigrants. Her father, who had a sixth-grade education, and who knew little English, worked odd jobs until he landed one with the Lone Star Gas Company in Waco, where he worked as a pipe fitter for more than 40 years, Mrs. Rodriguez says. She was the second of nine children, all of whom started working at a young age.



Elisa Rodriguez-continued

“I had to work all my life,” she says. “I was always the bread winner.”

Her three brothers grew up shining shoes and delivering the newspaper, she recalls. Mrs. Rodriguez, an honors student, got her first job at school, helping a teacher grade class work. At the same time, she worked as a maid for a local white woman in exchange for free piano lessons from her boss’s daughter.

Mrs. Rodriguez used to play the piano frequently at St. Francis, her family’s church. Later on, she often played for veterans at the Veterans Administration Subregional Office in Austin, where she worked in the medical clinic for a few years after the war ended. There were so many shell-shocked soldiers returned from the war, that the Veterans’ Administration had to open another building in Austin to handle all of them, she says.

“A lot of the ones that were really, really bad had to be locked up,” she recalls.

Mrs. Rodriguez spent a lot of her time taking flowers to the wounded, often-downtrodden men at the facility’s hospital, as well as organizing entertaining events for them.

“I found it very rewarding to do something for the boys. It’s the least we could do,” she says.

TEKS Correlations

TEKS 5.23 *Social Studies*: The student understands the contributions of people of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups to the United States

TEKS 5.25(B), (C), (D) *Social Studies*: (B) analyze information/drawing inferences and conclusions (C) interpret information in visuals (D) identify different points of view about an issue or topic



Name _____

Date _____

Women's Roles in World War II



Elisa Rodriguez on the job at Blackland Army Airfield in 1943.

Hispanic women made a significant contribution to World War II in a variety of roles. They worked as airplane mechanics and ship welders, they planted "Victory Gardens," volunteered for the Red Cross and took over households when their husbands went off to war.

Look at the photo of Elisa Rodriguez. Just by looking at her picture, what kind of person might she be?



Name _____

Date _____

In her interview, Mrs. Rodriguez stated, “We’re in America, and everybody has to be treated equally, but if you don’t have the guts to speak out for yourself, nobody’s gonna do it for you.”

Are her words typical for a woman, especially a Hispanic woman, living in the 1940s?
Please explain:

Mrs. Rodriguez, a Waco native, worked in a department store by day, but she took night classes to learn shorthand, typing, and other administrative skill courses so she could become a secretary. Would most people consider her a role model? (Explain your answer):

How might her seemingly ordinary life been helpful for other Hispanics?



Narratives Story: Nicanor Aguilar

Themes: Social justice, discrimination, LULAC and WWII, equality

Activity: The League of United Latin American Citizens and World War II

Nicanor Aguilar is something of a renaissance man, both as a musician and, at a time when most people his age would be slowing down, as an athlete.

But his proudest accomplishment involves his efforts to end discrimination in his West Texas hometown after returning from the war.

Born Jan. 10, 1917 in Grand Falls in rural Texas, he spent most of his time helping his father, a tenant cotton farmer. The family of three brothers and two sisters helped pick cotton on the 100-acre farm.

In 1930, a schoolhouse was finally built for Mexican-American children next to a grouping of mesquite trees, but he left after one year to work with his father. No schools existed for Mexican-American children after elementary; entry into the “Anglo” schools was banned. Mr. Aguilar learned most of his English from the Anglo children with whom he played in town.

One of his younger sisters, Maria, was prevented from attending junior high. But then along came Laura Francis Murphy, a teacher who was an advocate for teaching disenfranchised Hispanic students.

“[Ms. Murphy] did a lot for the Mexicans,” Aguilar said.

His sister, Maria, ultimately became the first Hispanic to attend Grand Falls High School in 1942, thanks largely to Ms. Murphy.

Maria, an accomplished trumpet player with the family’s orchestra also won band competitions.

The entire Aguilar family was musically inclined. In 1927, at age 10, he began playing music with his father and, later, his brothers.

“We were bad, but we played good music,” Mr. Aguilar said, referring to his family’s Grand Falls Orchestra ensemble.



**Mr. Aguilar in Juarez,
Mexico on January 26, 1946**



Nicanor Aguilar-continued

The family played both Mexican and “American” music, including classics such as “Stardust.” Each family member was paid \$1 an hour to perform at weddings and other dances.

Mr. Aguilar started playing drums, but didn’t like it because he would have to read the music simultaneously and miss watching the people dancing on the dance floor. So his father put him on the violin, instead, so he could focus on his dual interests.

“I didn’t like the violin too well, but there I was. At least I could see the people,” he said, laughing. He would go on to play the clarinet, saxophone and piano for the next 50 years.

Mr. Aguilar proudly displayed a framed article from a 1946 edition of a regional newspaper headlined, “Aguilar’s Brought ‘Big Band Sound’ To West Texas” and a photo of the family playing.

This family bond helped inspire him to join the U.S. Army; younger brother Isabino Aguilar, had already enlisted. Mr. Aguilar received basic training at Camp Hood, Texas, and later Fort Ord, Calif., intent on fighting in Europe for his country and joining his kid brother in Germany. He joined the U.S. Infantry, inducted as a private in July 1945 and ending his service the next year.

Like many veterans, Mr. Aguilar is reticent in recalling war stories. In his interview, he focuses instead on the social battles he fought stateside. After the war, he found discrimination had not disappeared in his hometown.

“There was the same discrimination in Grand Falls, if not worse,” Aguilar recalls. “First, we’d work for a dollar a day. After the war, they raised it to \$2 [for] 10 hours. And the whites would get \$18 (a day) in the petroleum [field].”

Virtually none of the town’s petroleum jobs were available to Latinos. Mr. Aguilar managed to hold down such a job for one year with a small petroleum company, but only through a friend’s assistance.

Mr. Aguilar felt he had to act to end his town’s discriminatory climate.

“It wasn’t right,” he said. “I started calling other veterans and I told them, ‘We have to do something good.’ Toward that end, they secured assistance from a League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) associate.

“We would investigate. For example . . . I would see [signs that read] ‘No Mexicans, whites only.’ There was only one (restaurant) that would serve us. We would write reports so they could give us the reasons. Some would answer us well; others, not so well. I brought those reports to El Paso (Texas) and gave them to a LULAC associate. I don’t know what he did with them after that. Once, a more powerful LULAC associate came to see me from San Antonio and congratulated me.”



Nicanor Aguilar-continued

Gradually, the oppressive signs began coming down from diner windows.

In 1948, Mr. Aguilar moved to El Paso after a drought in Grand Falls, still continuing his work for LULAC. Today, he is a LULAC Member At Large.

Mr. Aguilar knows that it was the efforts of many people, like him, that led to changes.

“You don’t know the sacrifices we made,” Aguilar said.

In addition to his civil rights efforts, Aguilar started competing in the Senior Olympics when he was 65, participating in running, bicycling and other events.

Today, he displays his mounted awards: 37 medals, 10 ribbons and another 14 more awards he earned at the age of 85 earlier this year. In later correspondence, Mr. Aguilar noted that, all told, he has 67 awards, most of them for gold or first place. And he adds 14 of those were earned earlier this year at the age of 85.

In later correspondence, sent after being interviewed, Mr. Aguilar writes extensively about the discrimination of his youth, seemingly as vivid a memory as the war. Perhaps he internalized much of that personal history to himself earlier, preferring instead to record his thoughts at a more leisurely pace that would accommodate intermittent waves of emotion upon remembrance.

In the makeshift building – the one next to the mesquite trees – he soaked up whatever learning he could, he wrote.

“We had scraps of education in old abandoned houses with teachers perhaps not qualified. I was kept three years in the seventh grade because the state could not afford any more books. I had one choice: Stay ‘til I grew a beard or quit . . . ”

But he did not quit. And today, his story of simply growing resonates powerfully and speaks volumes.

TEKS Correlations

TEKS 5.19: *Citizenship*: The student understands the importance of individual participation in the democratic process

TEKS 5.21: *Citizenship*: The student understands the fundamental rights of American citizens guaranteed in the Bill of Rights and other amendments to the U.S. Constitution

TEKS 5.26: *Social Studies skills*: The student communicates in written forms



Narratives Story: Dennis Baca

Themes: World travel, Pacific front, new experiences

Activity: Mapping Dennis Baca's Journey

Dennis Baca still cries when he thinks of the friends he lost during World War II. Even now, 57 years after his discharge from the U.S. Army, his voice becomes choked with emotion as he recalls the battles, the hardships and the deaths that marked his days in the South Pacific.

The soft-spoken 76-year-old with the gentle face is uncomfortable talking about himself or his war experiences. He doesn't see his service during World War II as anything heroic. He was just doing his job, he said.

"I wish I could have finished high school, but they got me and drafted me, and I had to go and fight for my country. I'm glad I could fight for my country," said Mr. Baca.

Mr. Baca was drafted in 1942, at the age of 18, shortly after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. After completing basic training in Fort Bliss, Texas, Baca went through infantry training at Camp Roberts, Calif.

"It was pretty tough. It was hot, sometimes 100, 110, 115 degrees," Mr. Baca recalled. "At the end of our training we had to make a 30-mile hike with a full field pack to see who would make it. Some guys didn't make it. They just collapsed."

Mr. Baca said he knew he would see combat soon but he says his unit, the Anti-Tank Platoon, 132nd Infantry Regiment, American Division, was unsure of its mission. "We got transferred at 2 o'clock in the morning. We didn't know if we were going to Japan or Germany. We didn't know what kind of clothes we needed. It was tough," said Mr. Baca.

After a three-week journey at sea, his platoon landed at New Caledonia, an island in the South Pacific. "We landed in barges, you know, in waves. We lost a lot of my friends here in the landing," recalls Mr. Baca.

After a few months on New Caledonia, his unit was moved to the Solomon Islands, a thinly populated and undeveloped area about 800 miles east of New Guinea.



**Dennis Baca in Joyahama, Japan
after the war in December 1945.**



Dennis Baca-continued

According to World War II historians, the region was pivotal to the Japanese control of the Pacific. Historians believe that if the Japanese had controlled the Solomon Islands, along with New Guinea, they would have been presented with a stepping-stone to Australia.

Some of the fiercest battles, including Guadalcanal, were fought there. Mr. Baca's 132nd Infantry joined the campaign on Guadalcanal on Dec. 8, 1942, at Mount Austen and fought through there and at the Gifu strongpoint. They were relieved Jan. 9, 1943. They then assaulted Verahue on Feb. 1 and captured Tenaro Village on Feb. 9, 1943. They moved to Fiji to regroup and attacked Bougainville in the Solomon Islands, on Jan. 12, 1944.

"They gave us machetes to cut through the jungle. It was all jungle, seems like it rained every day," Mr. Baca said. "Jungle, swamps and mosquitoes. That's where I saw a lot of my friends get killed."

He said, "A lot of nights we had to make foxholes and that's where we'd sleep. The mosquitoes — they were bad. They gave us mosquito nets to put over our heads and over our beds. There's where I got malaria. That's where I got jungle rot, all over my body."

They left Bougainville for the Philippines, arriving in Leyte on Jan. 26, 1945; they assaulted Cebu Island on March 26, 1945.

But Mr. Baca's worst memories came from battles. He remembers one battle in which an American patrol followed Japanese soldiers into a ravine, resulting in a disastrous ambush for the Americans.

"The Japanese had a lot of caves in there. And most of my friends got killed," he said. "By the time we got there, it was getting dark and we couldn't go in. We had to wait all night until we could go in to get them out. We could hear them moaning, my friends."

He paused to wipe away his tears, tormented by the memories of that event.

"They had all died by morning. And then we carried them out, down the hill."

He said he became very good friends with many of his fellow soldiers. He said he was seldom singled out or discriminated against even though he was one of very few Spanish-speaking soldiers in his platoon.

And while he says he didn't see a lot of blatant discrimination, he remembers one particularly bad experience.

"I got along great with most of the guys," he said. "But there was one lieutenant, Paul Silvers, who just didn't like me. He got into me and he just wouldn't let me up. He always gave me the worst details. Maybe it was because I was Hispanic. I could have been a sergeant or a corporal. But no promotions for Hispanics, I guess. He didn't even put it down that I got wounded. He kept me from getting a lot of things I'm entitled to."

"I went in a private, and I came out a private," he says, choking back tears.



Dennis Baca-continued



Dennis Baca, Left, with friend Bernard Ventura in 1945 in Japan after the war.

Mr. Baca believes the lieutenant's treatment kept him from receiving the Purple Heart. He said he was wounded in the left shoulder blade by shrapnel but claims the lieutenant did not note that in his file.

In spite of his brushes with death in battle, Mr. Baca said he was most concerned for his life when his unit began preparing to invade the Japanese mainland in 1945.

"We were in the Philippines. We got ready to hit the mainland in Japan, in August 1945. Then they dropped a bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the Japanese surrendered," he said. He believes the invasion would have cost the lives of a great many American soldiers.

On Sept. 2, 1945, Japan surrendered, and World War II was finally over.

For Dennis Baca, life would never be the same. When he arrived, there were no ticker-tape parades, no grand celebrations. Without fanfare, he was discharged from the Army on Dec. 3, 1945, and returned to Albuquerque.



Dennis Baca-continued

“A lot of things had changed in three years. It was hard to get a job until I started working at the VA. My folks didn’t recognize me because I was yellow from malaria. It took me years and years to get over it,” said Mr. Baca.

The war had left physical and emotional scars on Dennis Baca. He said he worked for many years as a nursing assistant at a VA hospital but often was plagued by bouts of depression and anxiety while on duty.

“That’s one thing you never forget. You know, sometimes, when I think about it, I just start crying. I saw a lot of my friends get killed, and it still comes back to me,” he said.

Sometimes he cries for his enemies, too.

“I know I killed a lot of them. I hate to say that, but it was our job. I don’t know how we made it. I guess God was with us. That’s one thing I believe in,” said Mr. Baca.

After years of medication and ongoing counseling, Mr. Baca is now able to talk about his experiences during the war.

“We were Spanish, but we were proud to serve our country. I’d do it again,” he said. “I’m too old now, but I’d do it again. We love this country. We’re Americans. We should fight for our country because this is the best country in the world. There’s no other country like this.”

TEKS Correlations

TEKS 5.6: *Geography*: The student uses geographic tools to collect, analyze, and interpret data.



Name _____

Date _____

Mapping Dennis Baca's Journey



Dennis Baca in Joyahama, Japan after the war in December 1945.

Dennis Baca was 18 years old when he got drafted. He survived some fierce battles fighting on the Pacific front. Read of the places his troops were sent and see if you can create a map showing the route he and his fellow soldiers traveled. You will need to use an atlas or globe.

- Label the ocean.
- His platoon landed at New Caledonia.
- From there they went to the Solomon Islands.
- On the Solomon Islands they fought at Guadalcanal, Mount Austen, Gifu, Verahue, Tenaro village, Fiji, and back to Bougainville in the Solomon Islands.
- From there they went to the Philippines, arriving in Leyte, then going to Cebu Island.



Name _____

Date _____

Draw your map in this space. Be sure to include a compass rose.



Narratives Lesson I: Timeline and Reflection

Narratives Story: *Louis Ramirez recalls brutality of war; but what still shines through is the camaraderie*—By Jennifer Nalewicki

Lesson Developed By: Edna Amador

OVERVIEW: Create a timeline and write a reflection on how WWII affects life in a personal manner.

TIME REQUIRED: 4 - 40 minute class periods (1st day to read the narrative, 2-3 days to list the sequence of events in a timeline and analyze his character, and, 4th day to type a reflection on what students think of his life.)

GRADE LEVEL/

SUBJECT: Appropriate for upper elementary to middle school.

- OBJECTIVES:**
1. Students will read a narrative in order to learn about Mr. Ramirez' experiences during WWII and its effects on his life.
 2. Students will list in chronological order the events of his life in a time line.
 3. Students will write a reflection on how a war affects people's lives.

MATERIALS: Copy of the narrative, timeline handout, pen paper and/or word processor

PROCEDURES: Student will work independently. Student will read Mr. Ramirez' narrative and list dates and events in the time line. After taking notes, student will use tone, word choice and quotes to draw generalizations on the affects of war. Student will present a reflection on their reading.

ASSESSMENT: Informal—one-to-one student conference to determine student's understanding of Mr. Ramirez's life events and their effects on his life.
Formal—timeline and student's reflection



Louis Ramirez recalls brutality of war; but what still shines through is the camaraderie –By Jennifer Nalewicki

Louis Ramirez has many memories of World War II — as the Battle of Saint Malo raged around him, smelling death and suffering in a German concentration camp and seeing death all around him. But his strongest memory is the camaraderie soldiers shared in his platoon helped him stay grounded while battling German soldiers on the front lines.

He considered the men in his platoon, the 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, his family, especially since they were together from the time they began military training in Fort Dix, N.J., and Fort Jackson, S.C., in 1941 until the war's end in 1945.

“Those guys are like my brothers, they worry about me and I worry about them,” he said. “We care for (each other). It’s like a big family.”

The men would often pass the time spent traveling inside tanks to reach the next battlefield by telling each other jokes and stories to alleviate the stressful surroundings of the war. They always kept a keen eye for fear of being ambushed.

“We were always on guard, (there were) mines all over the place, so we were very careful. We didn’t want to die,” he said. “It was hard, but at the same time, we were not alone, we were a bunch of guys looking after each other.”

Born a U.S. citizen in Lajas, Puerto Rico, on Sept. 17, 1914 to a farmer father and schoolteacher mother, Ramirez was one of 11 children. Due to a case of malaria, Mr. Ramirez, in his early 30s, traveled to New York City where he could receive better health care. Once he recovered Mr. Ramirez decided to stay in New York.

After spending a year working on the factory floor of an eyeglass manufacturer and brushing up on his English skills by going to the movies and reading the newspaper, Mr. Ramirez was drafted by the U.S. Army in April 1941 and was stationed in Fort Jackson with the 102nd Cavalry Regiment.

The regiment left the United States, spent 12 days on ship and arrived in England on Oct. 6, 1942.



Sgt. First Class Louis Ramirez in Germany, 1961.



Louis Ramirez-continued

“I was seasick most of the time,” he said. “We were, of course, nervous but we stayed together. The regiment was reorganized in England in January 1944, his unit being renamed the 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Mechanized. They landed at Normandy on D Day and advanced into France during the Battle of Saint Malo, where they were met by enemy tanks, bombs and soldiers. That was their first whiff of combat.

“(The enemy) was bombarding us when we first got there,” he said.

Once the fighting ceased, all that was left was a field strewn with the bodies of horses, cattle and Germans. Mr. Ramirez said the smell of death permeated the air, but fortunately, for Ramirez and his platoon, no one was injured.

“My best memory was that we all looked out for each other. Nothing touched (us), thank God. (We) were in the middle of it, but nothing happened,” he said. “Maybe it was because we were good fighters, I don’t know.”

Mr. Ramirez feels the Battle of Saint Malo was the largest battle he participated in during World War II. But this does not mean he avoided the anguish of battle. He recalls walking through one of Hitler’s concentration camps and seeing the lifeless bodies of those once held captive.

“We saw people walking like skeletons, it made you sick,” he said. “We didn’t see much, we were just passing through, but the smell was awful. Just like a factory of cheese, you could smell it everywhere.”

By the time Mr. Ramirez arrived in Czechoslovakia in 1945, Germany surrendered. The war was over, but even today, the memories of war are embedded in his mind.

He chooses to remember the good times he had overseas, however, and the lifelong friends he made as opposed to dwelling on the difficulties he was faced with on a daily basis.

“I saw people dead on a beach in Normandy, I couldn’t believe it. That affects you a lot,” he said. “But then you keep going. You forget and you get used to everything that happens to you in life. Sometimes I remember things so vividly; sometimes I get tears in my eyes . . . I (try to) go easy in life, that is the way I live.”

After spending 11 months in combat against the Germans, Ramirez said he has no feelings of animosity toward them.

“My mom taught us to not hate anybody. I don’t hate the Japanese and the Germans, I know what they did was terrible, but I don’t have to hate them,” he said. “If they come to me with a gun, I am going to shoot them first, but that doesn’t mean I hate them. I am just defending myself.”



Louis Ramirez-continued

If anything, Mr. Ramirez uses his experiences as a World War II veteran as a means to get others interested in enlisting in the military so they, too, can serve their country. However, despite mentioning this opportunity to his granddaughter on several occasions to no avail, Ramirez said if he were given the chance, he would re-enlist.

“If (the military) would call me, I think I would go,” he said. “I am 90 and the way I feel is if they need me for anything, I would go. I still have patriotism in me. I am very proud of serving my country.”

TEKS Correlations

TEKS 5.10(E): use of text's structure or progression of ideas such as cause and effect or chronology to locate and recall information

TEKS 5.10(H): draw inferences such as conclusions or generalizations and support them with text evidence and experiences

TEKS 5.15(C): write to inform such as to explain, describe, report, and narrate

TEKS 5.12(K): recognize how style, tone, and mood contribute to the effect of the text

Narratives Lesson 1: Timeline (see p.52)

Name _____

Date _____

Date ↓

Date ↓

Date ↓

Date ↓

Date ↓

Date ↓



Narratives Lesson II: Female Soldier Life Map

Narratives Story: *Underage, Sally Salazar enlisted under assumed name; tropical ailments and the carnage of war left her physically and emotionally drained—By Therese Glenn*

Lesson Developed By: Edna Amador

OVERVIEW: Create a life map of a female soldier during WWII.

TIME REQUIRED: 4 - 40 minute class periods (Day One: read the narrative, Days Two and Three: decide which events most explain Ms. Salazar's life, and decide which graphics help tell her story, and Day Four: publish their life map to present to peers.)

GRADE LEVEL/

SUBJECT: Appropriate for upper elementary to middle school.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Student will read a narrative to develop images depicted by details.
2. Students will create a life map with images to show progression of events.
3. Student will present main idea using a life map.

MATERIALS: Copy of narrative, life map template, graphics from magazines, online graphics, or drawn

PROCEDURES: Student will read the narrative and select the events that best help tell Ms. Salazar's life story. Student will search for online graphics or draw pictures that will help tell the story. Place the graphics in order on a life map and come up with the main idea presented in the narrative. Student will write the main idea as a title for the life map.

ASSESSMENT: Informal—one-to-one student conference to determine student's understanding of Ms. Salazar's life events which best depict her life story.

Formal—life map and student presentation



**Underage, Sally Salazar enlisted under assumed name;
tropical ailments and the carnage of war left her physically
and emotionally drained – By Therese Glenn**

When Maria Sally Salazar illegally enlisted into the Army, she dreamed of traveling the world. She did not imagine her service would lead to six months in the hospital recovering from multiple illnesses and watching the end of the war from a hospital bed.

“The war in '41 woke us up,” Ms. Salazar said. “Everyone was talking about it. Everyone wanted to go.”

Ms. Salazar’s family was against her going, and at 19 she was too young to enlist without parental consent. Women who wanted to enlist at the time had to be 21, so Ms. Salazar told her parents she was going to visit her sister, took her older sister’s birth certificate, and went to San Antonio with a group of girls and enlisted.

The entire time she was in the service Ms. Salazar had to go by her sister’s name, ‘Amelia.’ When she left the service she had to hire a lawyer to correct the discharges so she could have her own name and age.

Ms. Salazar grew up in Laredo, Texas, with her parents and four brothers and five sisters. Laredo is about 150 miles southwest of San Antonio. In school she was very athletic and played on the basketball, volleyball, baseball and tennis teams.

At 16, Ms. Salazar became pregnant. Her father forbade Ms. Salazar to marry her child’s father so she could finish school. The child died six months after birth from pneumonia, and Ms. Salazar lost contact with the father during the war. She later found out that the father had become a colonel in the Army and had married.

“I was 16 and stupid,” Ms. Salazar said.

So Ms. Salazar saw the beginning of the war as an opportunity to travel and see the world.

After returning from San Antonio she managed to keep her enlistment a secret until her parents intercepted her acceptance letter. Her father wanted to report her, but Ms. Salazar’s mother was afraid of the legal repercussions for assuming another’s identity. So Ms. Salazar, under sister’s name Amelia, remained in the Army.

After basic training 17-year-old Pfc. Salazar was sent to New Guinea from 1943-1945, and then to the Philippines, not quite living up to her dreams of traveling to Europe.



Maria Sally Salazar in 1943.



Maria Sally Salazar-continued

“They painted a very pretty picture. You will go here, you will travel there,” Ms. Salazar said. “It didn’t happen that way. We were stuck in a jungle for a year and a half.”

Salazar was assigned to the Women’s Army Corp and worked specifically for the Surgeon General’s office.

“Anywhere they needed us we worked, but mostly in the medical field,” Ms. Salazar said.

She worked at a building they called the Pentagon Building, named after the one in Washington D.C. “The Pentagon” was the head of communication for the area. It was also the place where the numbers came in for wounded, missing, and dead soldiers

“It was pretty hard because we knew in the wee hours of the morn the men were leaving to take an island and with no supplies,” Ms. Salazar said. “We did what we could.”

The casualties were high in the area, and sometimes Pfc. Salazar was asked to help with the wounded men.

“Every time they told me ‘Private come over here and help’ I just stood there, just looking. I don’t think I heard anything,” Ms. Salazar said. “Finally I would go help. I was in shock.”

The high stress combined with the lack of adequate supplies took its toll on many of the women, including Pfc. Salazar.

Along with several of the other women, she said she could not stomach the food. She was reported for not going to the mess hall, punished for it, and eventually forced to sign-in to the hall.

“But still I couldn’t eat powdered eggs, canned meat, and I think the milk was powdered too. It was horrible,” Ms. Salazar said. “As soon as we got there everybody had lost weight.”

Several of the women became ill, but nothing could be done. Penicillin was the only antibiotic available at the time, and all of that had to be sent to the front. Pfc. Salazar said that sometimes the women would be sent to bed for a few days to rest, but usually they had to keep going because everyone was needed.

By end of the war Pfc. Salazar was hospitalized in Manila, the capital of the Philippines, with several illnesses including malaria, hepatitis, and diarrhea. After the atomic bomb was dropped, extra planes and ships were used to transfer people back to the states, starting with those who were most likely to survive. She was one of the first to go.

Once stateside Pfc. Salazar spent six months in General Hospital in Tacoma, Wash., and remembers watching the soldiers coming home. “We were sitting there . . . thinking ‘How can you celebrate? Look at us,” Ms. Salazar said.



Maria Sally Salazar-continued

Pfc. Salazar received a medical discharge, but re-entered the service because her family couldn't afford to pay her medical bills. To this day she suffers from five service-connected illnesses including chronic hepatitis and anemic dysentery. She also suffered from depression during the war, and still feels the emotional impact of those times.

"My nerves, they just won't leave me," Ms. Salazar said.

Pfc. Salazar left the service with two Bronze Stars,, two Combat Bars, the Disabled American Theater Campaign Medal, the WW2 Victory Medal and two Overseas Medals.

After the war, she finished high school and attended Laredo junior college. She married in 1978 and put her three stepchildren through college on her benefits. She recently divorced.

Although the war was hard on her, Ms. Salazar said she does not regret the time she gave and is very proud of her awards and recognitions she has received for her service.

"To me it was an experience I would not change for anything in the world because not just anybody can have that," said Ms. Salazar. "And my nightmares are with me, and my dreams are with me."

TEKS Correlations

TEKS 5.10(D): describe mental images that the text's descriptions evoke

TEKS 5.10(E): use the text's structure or progression of ideas such as cause and effect or chronology to locate and recall information

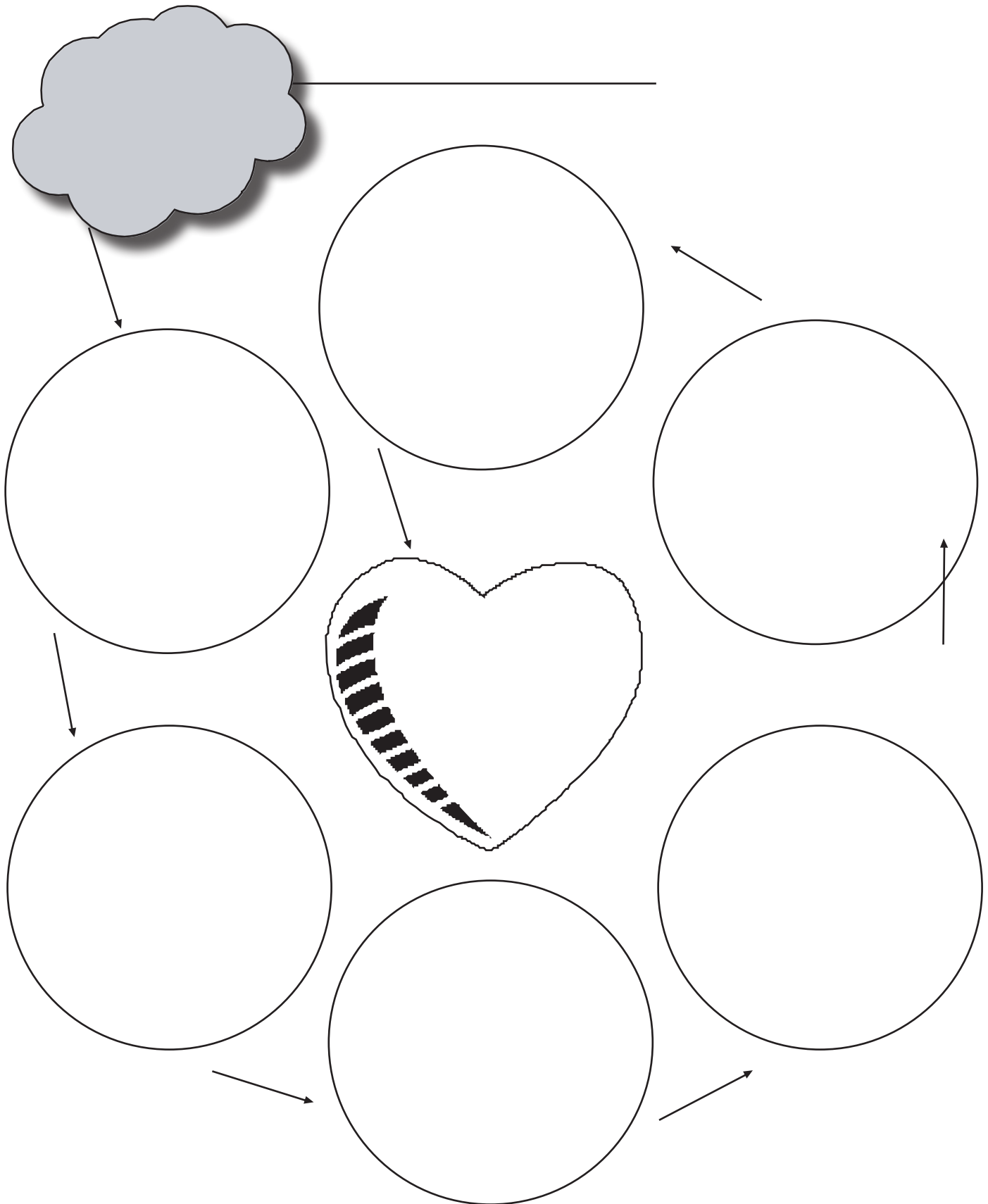
TEKS 5.10(F): determine the text's main ideas and how those ideas are supported with details

Narratives Lesson II: SCRATCH PAPER

Narratives Lesson II:
LIFE MAP (see p. 58)

Name _____

Date _____





Oral History

Background and Activities

What Is Oral History?

Oral history methods are the oldest kind of historical inquiry. Oral history was being done before people could write – and much before we had modern technologies, including audio and video recording equipment.

Oral history is a way of gathering and preserving historical information through recorded interviews of people about past events and ways of life. It involves tapping into people’s memories and can serve as the living history of people’s experiences. Oral history can be particularly useful when attempting to recover the history of people who have been historically absent or underrepresented in historical records.

The Voces Oral History Project uses oral history to unearth the varied and remarkable experiences of Latinos during the WWII era. The Voces Oral History Project uses oral histories to bring the stories about WWII generation Latinos and Latinas to light. From these archives we learn aspects of history and Latino contributions that have been missing from historical texts.

Sources:

Oral History Society webpage: <http://www.oralhistory.org.uk/>

Oral History Association webpage: http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/pub_eg.html



Overview:

The following section will include activities that will engage students in the use of oral history. It includes an oral history project that involves students interviewing family members or friends, as well as pre- and post-interview activities that will prepare students for the interview and help them to synthesize the information collected.

Procedure:

Begin the project by having students choose someone to interview. It can be either a family member or friend. Encourage them to choose an older person, as they will have varied life experiences to share. Choosing a family member is often especially meaningful because students will be able to share their project with their family after completion and have it around for years to come. The following activities will involve students asking whether this person was alive during World War II, where they lived, what it was like for them in their community, what types of things they did for work and what life was like during the war.

TEKS Correlations

TEKS 5.5: *History*: The student understands important issues, events, and individuals of the 20th century

TEKS 5.19(A): *Citizenship*: The student understands the importance of individual participation in the democratic process) can explain how individuals can participate in civic affairs

TEKS 5.23(B): *Culture*: describe customs, celebrations, and traditions of selected racial, ethnic, and religious groups in the United States

TEKS 5.25(A): *Social Studies Skills*: The student applies critical thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources) differentiate between, locate, and use primary and secondary sources such as interviews to acquire information about the United States. TEKS 5.25(D): identify different points of view about an issue or topic and TEKS 5.25(E): identify the elements of frame of reference that influenced the participants in an event

TEKS 5.26(D): *Social Studies Skills*: The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms create written and visual material such as journal entries, reports, graphic organizers, outlines, and bibliographies, and TEKS 5.26(E): use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation



Preparing for the Oral History Interviews

In-Class Activity: Fish Bowl Interviews

OVERVIEW: Fish bowl interviews will involve teacher and students doing mock interviews with each other in front of the class. This will allow students to get practice with the interview process and to see it modeled.

LEARNING

OBJECTIVES: Students will:

- Understand the process of conducting an oral history interview.
- Explore ideas for their interview.
- Ask questions that will inform their oral history interview.

PROCEDURES: Begin by explaining the interview process to your students using the “steps to conducting an oral history” listed below. The teacher and guest should sit either in front of the class or in the middle of a circle of students, facing each other. Prior to the interview, the teacher should explain what he/she wants the students to observe; the teacher could also brainstorm with them and uncover what they would like to learn from the interview. This will give the teacher an opportunity to model how interviews should be approached. Then, have students break up into teams of two and interview each other. Use the questions below or configure your own.

Sample Interview Questions:

CHILDHOOD/EARLY LIFE

What is your full name?

Were you named after somebody else?

Did you have a nickname as you were growing up?

Where were you born and when?

Who are your parents and where are they from?

Where were your grandparents from?

Do you remember hearing your grandparents describe their lives? What did they say?

What was your hometown like? Was it in the city or country?

What historical events were occurring when you were a child?

What is your favorite memory of your childhood?

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

What would you consider to be the most important inventions that have been made during your lifetime?



CHILDHOOD/EARLY LIFE-continued

How is the world now different from what it was like when you were a child?
What types of things did you do as a child? What kinds of chores did you do?
What were some hard times your family went through?

SCHOOLING

What were your schools like?
How did you get to school?
What was your favorite subject in school and why?
What languages did you speak at home and at school? What was that like?
What was your least favorite subject in school and why?
Who was your favorite teacher and why were they special?

ADOLESCENCE

Did you and your friends have a special hang-out where you liked to spend time?
Were you ever given any special awards for your studies or school activities?
How many years of education have you completed?
Do you have a college degree? If so, what was your field of study?
Were there any fads during your youth that you remember vividly?
Do you remember your first date? Describe the circumstances.
Name a good friend that you have known for the longest period of time? How many years have you been friends?

CULTURAL TRADITIONS AND FAMILY LIFE

What types of family traditions did you have? Which were your favorite?
Are you married? If so, how did you meet the person that you would later marry?
Do you remember where you went on the first date with your spouse?
How would you describe your spouse? What do (did) you admire most about them?
Do you have children? If so, how many? What were their names, birth dates and birthplaces?
What was the funniest thing you can remember that one of your children said or did?
What kinds of jobs have you had? How did you decide on your career?
What were the hardest choices that you ever had to make? Do you feel like you made the right choices?
Who was the person that had the most positive influence on your life? Who were they and what did they do?
What wars have been fought during your lifetime? How did you feel about them?
If you served in the military, when and where did you serve and what were your duties?
What U.S. President have you admired the most and why?

Pre-Interview Brainstorm

Use this graph to brainstorm ideas for your interview.

Idea(s) for interview subject(s)

FACTS:

What types of information about this person's life do I want to know?

Examples:

Where they were born
Early childhood –schools, games played, etc.
Adolescence
Adult life
Family
Work

LIFE EXPERIENCES:

What are some interesting life experiences that I could ask this person about?

Examples:

World War II
The Great Depression
Cultural/religious life
Their work
A certain life achievement
Immigration

WHO:

**Who were the important people in this person's life?
Who influenced them?
Who taught them?**

Examples:

Teachers
Friends
Mentors

Oral History Interview

My Interview with: _____

Your Name: _____

School: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Directions:

Think of your questions ahead of time and write them down here.

Below the space after each question, fill in the answers your interview subject gives you.

1. Question:

Answer:

2. Question:

Answer:

3. Question:

Answer:

4. Question:

Answer:

5. Question:

Answer:

Name _____

Date _____

Oral History Interview: Follow Up Activity

Write a story about your interview. Who is this person and what was their life like?

Name _____

Date _____

Oral History Interview: Follow Up Activity

What was the most interesting thing you learned about this person?

Illustrate this below:



Teacher Resources

From the Voces Oral History Project Educator Guide activity developer, Diana Garcia, 5th grade AISD history teacher:

“As I began looking on the internet, at the library, and at a book store for lists of World War II books written for children, I learned that there are many, MANY books out there, but I did not come across one single book that reflected the roles of Latinos and Latinas in WW II. Nonetheless, I found some useful books that could serve as multicultural resources, that could be used to support and model why our students must develop tolerance, empathy, courage, and activism.

I always preview my books before reading them to a class, and I practice not crying while reading if the book is especially sad. I suggest you also preview books to see if they are suitable for your particular students. All of the books listed are suitable for 5th graders, in my opinion, but each class has its special needs and “climate.”

SOME BOOKS ON WWII

Picture Books:

Amis, Nancy. *The Orphans of Normandy: A True Story of World War Two Told Through Drawings By Children*. Atheneum Books, 2003.

(A good book to use so your students can see the war's effects on the lives of children.)

Deedy, Carmen A. *The Yellow Star: The Legend of King Christian X of Denmark*. Peachtree, 2000.

(This true story honors the courage of King Christian X who chose to help the Jews in his country.)

Hausfater-Douieb, Rachel. *El Nino Estrella*. Edelvives, 2003.

(This is a Spanish translation of a French book. I could not find an English translation. I love this simple, poetic book about a little boy who must hide from the Nazis, the “hunters of stars.”)

Kodama, Tatsuhara. *Shin's Tricycle*. Walker and Company, 1995.

(A little boy in Hiroshima, Japan finally gets a tricycle, but he is soon a victim of the atomic bomb.)

Noguchi, Rick and Deneen Jenley. *Flowers from Mariko*. Lee & Low Books, 2001.

(A little girl tries to cheer up her parents after they are released from a Japanese American relocation camp, and they find out the father's truck has been stolen.)



Say, Allen. *The Bicycle Man*. Walter Lorraine Books, 1982.

(Two American soldiers interact with Japanese school children in this simple, yet poignant tale. I have to add that Allen Say has several other beautiful books that deal with Japanese Americans and WWII. His books are simply stunning and human. Go to his official website to learn more.)

Chapter Books:

Opdyke, Irene Gut and Jennifer Armstrong. *In My Hands: Memories of a Holocaust Rescuer*. Dell Laurel-Leaf Books, 2004.

(This memoir tells of the bravery of a Polish, Catholic teenager who helped smuggle Jews out of a prison camp.)

Perl, Lila and Marion Blumenthal Lazan. *Four Perfect Pebbles: A Holocaust Story*. Scholastic, 1997.

(This memoir tells of a Jewish family, living in Germany, who escaped to Holland only to find Holland occupied by Nazis soon after.)

Zullo, Allan & Maria Bovsum. *Survivors: True Stories of Children in the Holocaust*. Scholastic, 2004.

(This book contains the true stories of nine children who survived the Holocaust, and this book will definitely give your students a "picture" of how horrific the war was for the children living through it.)

Informational Books:

Nathan, Amy. *Count on Us-Women in the Military*. National Geographic Books, 2004.

(This book, full of photos, tells of the many roles women played in WWII, the Vietnam War, and the Korean War.)

Schroeder, Peter W. & Dagmar Schroeder-Hildebrand. *Six-Million Paper Clips: The Making of a Children's Holocaust Memorial*. Kar-Ben Publishing, 2004.

(Wow! This book explains the true story of how some middle school students in Whitwell, Tennessee got involved with collecting 6,000,000 paper clips to symbolize the Jews killed in WW II. This moving and inspiring book is a must-have for all teachers, and there is even a documentary film, "Paper Clips," that recounts how the teachers, students, and citizens of Whitwell mobilized to create their Children's Holocaust Memorial.)

Of course all school libraries have informational books on WWII, and let's not forget the classics:

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank

The Cay by Theodore Taylor

The Devil's Arithmetic by Jane Yolen

Journey to Topaz by Yoshiko Uchida

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry

Sadako and the 1000 Paper Cranes by Alexander Coerr

A good website to check out for more books and information on WWII:

"World War II As Seen Through Children's Literature" By Laura Pringleton

<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1997/2/97.02.03.x.html>

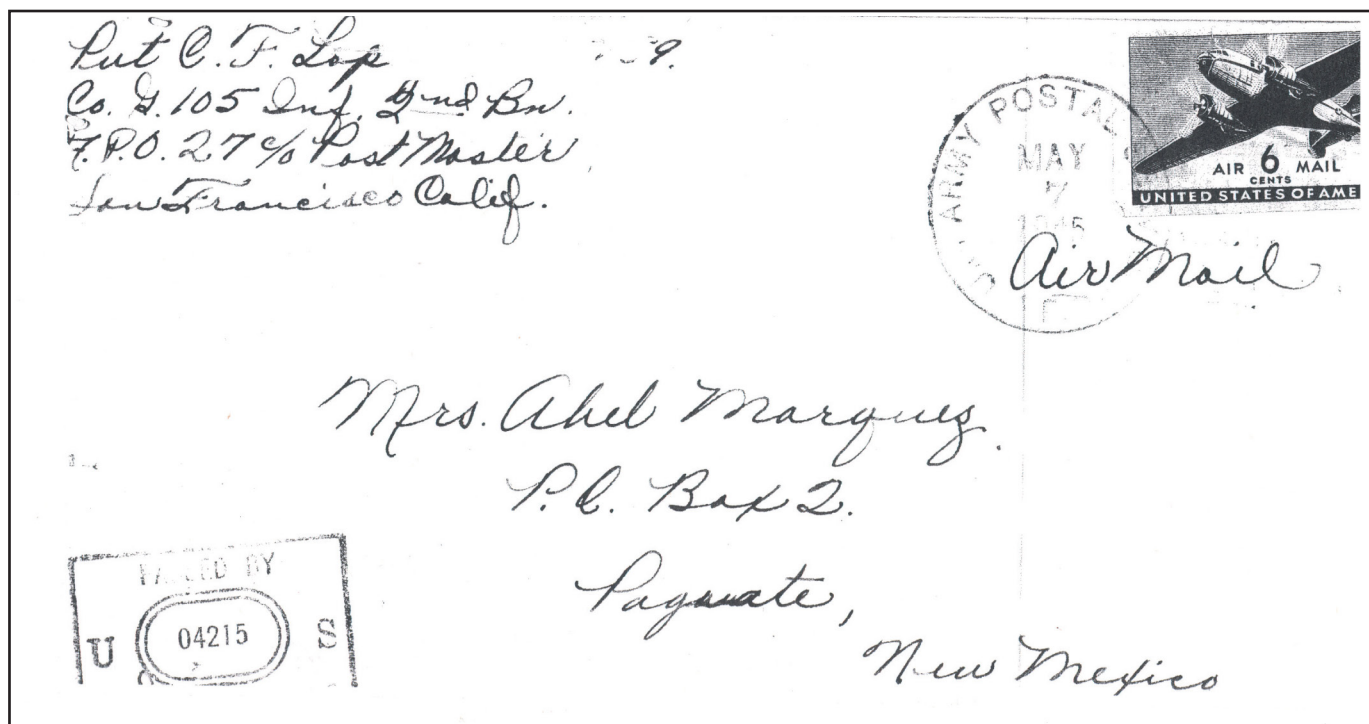


Primary Sources

Primary Sources: A soldier's letter home, A letter from the Navy thanking a lieutenant for service, discharge papers, and a letter recognizing a Silver Star recipient

The following are copies of primary sources which you can use with your class to generate discussion and/or activities about Latinos and World War II:

Primary Source: Crecencio Lopez's Letter Home - Outer Envelope



Primary Source:
Crecencio Lopez's Letter Home

Okinawa
May 4, 1945

Dearest Mama,

This are just a few lines to let you know, that I'm alright. Thanks to God. And hoping that you will be the same when you receive this letter. How is Vilia and her kids? I haven't heard from them for a long long time. I hope ~~I~~ they are alright. Mama I haven't had any mail from home since I left the Marianas. In fact we haven't had a mail call here on this Island.

This place seems to look fine, There is lot of farming done all over the Island.

How is every thing going on at home, How is Luis and Lolo getting along with the cattle?

I've written to Trinnie two letters since I been here and besides that I wrote to you a few letters while I was on board ship. So Good-Bye.. Mama + God Bless you
Your lovingly Son,
Crecencio.

Primary Source:

Letter from the Navy thanking Beatrice Kissinger for her service

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

October 4, 1946

My dear Lieutenant (jg) Amado:

I have addressed this letter to reach you after all the formalities of your separation from active service are completed. I have done so because, without formality but as clearly as I know how to say it, I want the Navy's pride in you, which it is my privilege to express, to reach into your civil life and to remain with you always.

You have served in the greatest Navy in the world.

It crushed two enemy fleets at once, receiving their surrenders only four months apart.

It brought our land-based airpower within bombing range of the enemy, and set our ground armies on the beachheads of final victory.

It performed the multitude of tasks necessary to support these military operations.

No other Navy at any time has done so much. For your part in these achievements you deserve to be proud as long as you live. The Nation which you served at a time of crisis will remember you with gratitude.

The best wishes of the Navy go with you into your future life. Good luck!

Sincerely yours,



James Forrestal

Lieut. (jg) Beatrice Mary Amado
125 West St.
Nogales, Arizona

Primary Source:
Discharge papers for Dennis Baca



Honorable Discharge

This is to certify that

DENNIS J BACA 38 351 099 Private First Class

Anti-Tank 132nd Infantry

Army of the United States

*is hereby Honorably Discharged from the military
service of the United States of America.*

*This certificate is awarded as a testimonial of Honest
and Faithful Service to this country.*

Given at SEPARATION CENTER
Fort Bliss Texas

Date 3 December 1945

Robert Marnfeld
ROBERT MARNFELD
Major Coast Artillery Corps

Primary Source: Silver Star notification for Richard Candelaria

HEADQUARTERS, EIGHTH AIR FORCE
Office of the Commanding General
APO 634

GENERAL ORDERS

15 July 1945

E X T R A C T

NUMBER 115

SECTION

AWARDS OF THE SILVER STAR 1

1. Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, 22 September 1943, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Letter, Hg., USSTAF, AG 200.6, 3 April 1944, Subject: "Awards and Decoration", the SILVER STAR is awarded to the following-named officers:

RICHARD G. CANDELARIA, O-766418, Captain, then First Lieutenant, Army Air Forces, United States Army. For gallantry in action while escorting heavy bombers over Germany, 7 April 1945. When adverse weather caused Captain Candelaria to become separated from his Squadron, he continued on alone to rendezvous with the bombers. Observing two (2) ME-262 jets attacking the formation, he intercepted and dispersed them, probably destroying one (1) of the fighters. Still alone and completely ignoring the odds and personal danger, Captain Candelaria attacked approximately fifteen (15) hostile fighters. Selecting the lead plane for his initial target, he shot it down in flames and then gallantly engaged the remaining aircraft until assistance arrived. Captain Candelaria's courage, tenacity of purpose, and determination to destroy the enemy at any cost are borne out by the fact that during this action he shot down four (4) ME-109's and one probable (1) ME-262 Jet, thus preventing serious damage being inflicted on the bombers. Entered military services from California

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL LARSON:


OFFICIAL:

S/Lindsey I. Braxton
T/LINDSEY I. BRAXTON
Colonel, A.C.D.
Adjutant General

EMIL C. KIEL
Brigadier General, U.S.A.
Chief of Staff

DISTRIBUTION: F.

CERTIFIED, A TRUE EXTRACT COPY:


LAWRENCE J. POWELL, JR.
LT/COL, AF, CAL AND
Adjutant General