



FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
WACHMAN CENTER

**CLASSROOM LESSONS:
THE MILITARY IN U.S. DOMESTIC HISTORY**

The United States Military as an Agent of Change

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GRADE LEVEL: 10-11 U.S. History

OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the primary role of the U.S. military as one of defense.
- Understand the connection between military needs and social constraints.
- Explain and evaluate how the military, in attempts to carry out its primary objective, has brought about social change.

Standards: (Illinois State Standards)

- 14.A.4 - Analyze how national governments serve the purposes for which they were created.
- 14.D.4 0 Analyze roles and influences of individuals, groups or media in shaping current debate on national policies.

PROCEDURES:

Day 1 -

- Pre-discussion and activity
 - Breaking students into groups, have each group compose a list of 5 things they know about what the U.S. military does. (This list will most

likely consist of combat ops in Iraq, Afghanistan, NATO, etc). Have them also rank (on a scale of 1-5) how important *to their lives* that action was. (Be prepared to walk around to keep the students on task)

- After ten-fifteen minutes of this activity, have groups "act as ambassadors" to other groups to explain the items they have come up with. After ten minutes of this, have students reconnect with their original group and explain what they have learned to each other.
- Bring students together as a class and discuss the connections that had been made and the top results of what the student population had come up with - both ranking and original list.
- Assuming students DID NOT come up with social change, have them write a reflection on a role the military plays that does not have to do with combat. If they DID, then reflection question should be based around the social changes that are brought up.

Day 2 -

- Collect reflections.
- Hand out copies of Truman's Executive Order 9981
 - <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/9981.htm>
- Watch "Promoting Civil Rights"
<http://www.fpri.org/education/militaryindomestichistory/>
 - Clips about 9981 will do if time is a factor.
- Discuss Professor Parker's conclusions.
- Assign reading of EO9981 and additional reflection of how President Truman uses his role as Commander-in-Chief to bring about change even though it may go against his political or personal beliefs. Ask students to reflect upon this as they write their reflection.

Day 3 -

- Using the information students have gathered over the last two days, return to the original list that students had created on day one. Ask them if their position has changed. If it hasn't, ask them why they remain the same. If it has, prompt questions that lead to discussions based on how students' lives have been affected by social change in the military. Finally, ask students to evaluate if the military *should be* an agent of social change.