

## **LESSON PLAN: U.S. ARMY JUNIOR ROTC SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT**

***"FINDING THE LOST DOUGHBOYS OF WORLD WAR I"***

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**GRADES 9-12**

### **STANDARDS:**

National Standards for Social Studies Teachers. High school teachers can engage learners in a sophisticated analysis and reconstruction of the past. Learners can be encouraged to draw upon various forms of data in order to elaborate upon information provided by historical narratives; to distinguish between accepted historical facts and interpretations; to consider multiple perspectives in interpreting the past; to make choices regarding historical sources, drawing from bibliographical studies; and to utilize historical methodologies in analyzing and defending historical arguments.

Virginia Standards of Learning. (USII.5 c) explain the reasons for the United States' involvement in World War I and its international leadership role at the conclusion of the war.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

**Describe** the major events of the United States involvement in the First World War.

**Identify** U. S. military personnel who played a significant role in the First World War.

**Assess** the current status of the records available for military personnel who served during the First World War and the need to preserve and/or reconstruct their records as much as possible.

**Research** and identify resources available to reconstruct records of service.

**Develop** a plan to identify local citizens who served in the First World War, research their participation with available resources, and provide the results to the public.

### **PROCEDURES:**

Have students complete a **K/W/L** chart (ENCL 1) to determine what they already **Know** about the First World War/ what they **Want** to know/ and summarize what they have **Learned** through the process. As part of the process determine if any students know of relatives who served or may have served during the First World War. Provide examples of veterans whose stories were discovered by family members who knew little or nothing of their service. Explain that each student might have a relative who served about whom they are unaware, and that the project might lead them to discover that family member. All students will have the opportunity to research and relate to a person who served in the war.

Provide a brief outline of the major events of World War I as a reference for the students (ENCL 2). Introduce students to individuals whose combat experience made them famous at the time (Eddie Rickenbacker, Alvin York, and Charles Whittlesey and the “Lost Battalion”) and individuals who went on to greater fame for their roles in the Second World War (George Patton, Douglas MacArthur, George C. Marshall and Harry Truman). Highlight service members such as Henry Johnson whose exploits were lost or forgotten for a time.

Explain to the students that unlike the Civil War, most of the records of service for veterans of both the First and Second World Wars were destroyed in a fire in 1973 (ENCL 3) and the only records of many veterans’ service may only exist on grave markers, local community records, or family artifacts. Provide examples of soldiers whose stories have been discovered and made public (ENCL 4) and a personal example of a relative who served (ENCL 5-7b). Reiterate that the objective of the project is to identify veterans of World War I from the local community and bring their service to light.

Using the **K/W/L** chart help students brainstorm and develop a list of possible resources to identify World War I veterans from the local area. Guide them to identify resources that might not be familiar to them such as:

- Family members
- Family documents – (primary source and most valuable to students)
- Local veterans’ organizations (American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Military Order of World Wars, etc.)
- Local historical societies.
- Grave markers in local cemeteries – to include individual names, branch of service and units (ENCL 8).

As part of the project, arrange a visit to local cemeteries to locate veterans’ graves.

Compile a roster of veterans from the area who served in World War I. Use the available information such as dates of service and unit identification to search the internet and other sources to trace the veteran’s experience in the war (e.g. arrival in France, location and dates of training, battle experience, death, or return home). Additionally use the internet to explore the battlefields, cemeteries, and key monuments in France and Belgium to help the students connect the veterans’ experience to what remains today as a reminder of the war.

Collect, organize, and edit the results of the research to record the results of the project. Provide the results to the school (e.g. social studies), local organizations, and other individuals. Build on the project and expand the research to include the record of service of veterans of other wars.

#### **MODIFICATIONS:**

World history teachers can expand this lesson to connect students to other major world events through family members or local individuals who experienced these events (e.g. the aftermath of World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, the Cold War, etc.)

Teachers of state history courses may develop a similar project to help students connect with events in their own region through the experiences of individuals from the local area (e.g. the Revolutionary War, the Civil War and Reconstruction, the Civil Rights Movement, etc.)

Both history and English teachers can collaborate on the project to teach research methods by helping students discover a multitude of unknown or forgotten resources available locally which are connected to major national or world events.

#### **EXTENSIONS:**

Local Media: Invite the *Chatham Star Tribune*, *Danville Register and Bee*, *Channel 13*, and *Station WSL* to cover and/or report on the progress and results of the student's work.

Local historical organizations (Danville Virginia Historical Society and the Pittsylvania County History Research Center and Library) and veterans' groups (American Legion Post 325, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Roanoke Chapter of the Military Order of World Wars): Besides utilizing the resources of these organization, partner with them to share the results of the project and expand their records of local history.

National level: Provide the results of the project to the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the First Division Museum at Cantigny Park in Wheaton, Illinois, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs National Cemetery Administration both as a resource and as a model for similar research projects.

#### **SOURCES:**

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