

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

Activity Title: Ethnic Groups in World War II

Areas of the museum to visit for this lesson plan: The George H.W. Bush Gallery

Teacher Note: If you are bringing a large group you will want to split them up into groups of 10- 25 and have them start at different locations. These smaller sizes allow all to access the various areas at one time.

Activity Objectives: The student understands important issues, events and individuals of the 20th Century and can summarize the contributions of people of various racial and ethnic groups in the development of Texas and the United States.

TEKS:

4th Grade:

113.15(b)(19)(A)

5th Grade:

113.16(b)(5)(C), 113.16(b)(13)(B),(C),(E), 113.16(b)(22)(C)

U.S. History Since 1877:

113.41(c)(7)(B),(C), 113.41(c)(17)(A), 113.41(c)(26)(A),(F)

World History Studies:

113.42(c)(24)(A)

Activity Description:

1. **Prior to the museum visit (Time Frame: 40 min.):** During World War II the United States was made up of many racial and ethnic groups just as it is today. During the war they all supported the war effort despite many hardships and prejudices. One of the flag raisers on Iwo Jima in the famous photograph was a

Native American. Japanese-Americans served as translators and intelligence specialists in the Pacific. Two Americans of German descent, Admiral Nimitz and General Eisenhower commanded huge numbers of men. African-Americans served in every theater of operations, mostly in segregated units under white officers. Hispanic-Americans volunteered by the thousands and served in all branches of the service. Chinese-Americans also fought and died in the Pacific.

a. What was the nickname of the famous African-American fighter squadron in World War II?

b. Who was the Japanese-American who fought in World War II and later served as a U.S. Senator from Hawaii?

c. The Native American "Code-Talkers" were primarily from what tribe?

d. The 90th Infantry Division was activated in Texas in 1942 and had many Hispanic-Americans, what was its nickname?

1. During the museum visit (Time Frame: 1.5 hrs.):

The George H.W. Bush Gallery

Pearl Harbor (# 150 on the map)

a. Which African-American was awarded the Navy Cross for bravery during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor? What city was he from?

Japanese Americans Exiled (# 170 on the map)

b. Who are Nisei?

c. Why were the Japanese-Americans moved away from the West Coast?

d. Pick any artifact on display and describe it.

e. How many Japanese-Americans were eventually housed in the relocation camps?

f. Two Army units were formed by Japanese-Americans. Which were they?

g. How many Japanese-Americans served in the U.S. military in the Pacific? What were their primary jobs?

Corregidor and Bataan (# 180 on the map)

Philippine Scouts were Filipinos serving in the U.S. Army in the Philippines.

h. On the Computer Interactive select “Commanders and Forces”, under U.S. & Allies select “Strength and Composition of U.S. Army troops in the Philippine Islands, 31 November 1941”. How many Philippine Scouts served with the U.S. Army?

i. On the Computer Interactive select “Medal of Honor”. What is the name of the Philippine Scout that received the Medal of Honor?

Solomons (# 250 on the map)

j. On the Computer Interactive select “New Guinea and the Solomons” then select “Medal of Honor”. Scroll down to Private George Watson and touch his

photo to bring up his Medal of Honor citation. What unit did Private Watson belong to?

Arsenal of Democracy (# 280 on the map)

k. How many African-Americans relocated during the war to find jobs?

l. On the Computer Interactive select "Pitching In" then select "Everybody's War", then select "Josephine's story". What did Josephine Ledesma do during the war?

m. On the Computer Interactive select "Pitching In" then select "Everybody's War", then select "Pitching in on the farm". What was the Bracero Program?

Texans Pitch In (# 290 on the map)

n. How many African-American Texans joined the military?

o. How many Japanese-Americans lived in Texas in 1940?

China-Burma-India (# 300 on the map)

p. On the Computer Interactive select "Commanders and Forces" then go to page 2 and select "American Forces in Burma" and go to the second page. The first two engineer units assigned to work on the Ledo Road were African-American units, what were these units?

On the same page in the Computer Interactive, what was the only African-American unit to serve in China?

Liberation of the Philippines (# 410 on the map)

q. Harry Akuna was a Japanese-American interpreter, listen to his story on the Oral History kiosk.

r. On the Computer Interactive select Medal of Honor. David Gonzales, Manuel Perez, Cleto Rodriguez and Ysmael Villegas received the Medal of Honor for actions during the liberation of the Philippines. What units were they assigned to?

Gonzales _____

Perez _____

Rodriguez _____

Villegas _____

s. On the Computer Interactive select Commanders and Forces, under U.S. and Allied select Commanders. The commanders of the U.S. 6th and 8th Armies were known as “MacArthur’s Germans”. Who were they?

6th Army Commander: _____

8th Army Commander: _____

Iwo Jima (# 420 on the map)

t. One of the flag raisers on Mount Suribachi was PFC Ira Hayes. Which tribe did he belong to?

Okinawa (# 430 on the map)

u. On the Computer Interactive select “Iwo Jima”, then select “Battle Timeline” and move the cursor at the bottom until you get to Navajo Code Talkers. What made the Navajo language so well suited for use as code?

v. On the Computer Interactive select “Okinawa” then select “Medal of Honor”. On Okinawa one Hispanic Marine, Harold Gonsalves, and one Army soldier, Alejandro Ruiz, were awarded the Medal of Honor. Where were they born?

Gonsalves

Ruiz

The Price of Freedom (# 470 on the map)

w. Over 13,000 Chinese-Americans served in the Army during the war. PFC Poy Chin was one of them who never came home. The first photo on the left as you enter this gallery shows his grave in the Marianas.

x. Seven Hispanics were awarded the Medal of Honor in the Pacific. We have already identified six. The seventh was Joe Martinez. Look on the wall where the names of all Pacific campaign Medal of Honor recipients are and find his name. On what island did he earn his Medal of Honor?

y. One African-American was awarded the Medal of Honor in the Pacific. His name was George Watson. Look on the wall where the names of all Pacific campaign Medal of Honor recipients are and find his name. What branch of the service did George Watson serve in?

z. One Chinese-American was awarded the Medal of Honor in the Pacific. Captain Francis Wai was assigned to the 24th Infantry Division and was killed leading an assault against a Japanese pillbox on 20 October 1944. On what island did this action take place?

3. After the museum visit: (Time Frame: varies):

Option 1: The student will interview someone from a particular racial or ethnic group who served in World War II and ask them how the war affected them and how they were treated because of their race or ethnic background. Did they encounter any prejudice? How did they overcome this prejudice? Did their racial or ethnic background give them any advantage (language, customs, heritage) during their military service?

Option 2: The teacher will arrange for a guest speaker who meets the criteria above. Sources for the speaker include the local chapters of the American Legion or VFW.

Note to teacher: This can be assigned as either a written or oral presentation and can be done either individually or as a group project.

Vocabulary:

racial ethnic prejudice segregation register draft
encounter advantage contribution translator squadron

Resources: To locate the areas in the museum relevant to this lesson plan you will need to download the two maps from the TEKS Based Lesson Plans page of this website.

Materials: pencil, paper

Technology Utilization: Touchscreen interactive in exhibit areas.

Accommodations: Students may require a printed copy of questions to answer during the museum visit.