

Topic: Letters to and From Servicemen in World War II

Essential Question: “How do the letters of servicemen and women reveal the heroism of and sacrifices made by them during World War II?”

National Standard for United States History:

Era 8, Standard 3

The origins and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the United States role on world affairs.

Instructional Objectives: Students will be able to:

1. Explain why the letters of service men and women are historical sources.
2. Analyze letters of servicemen and women and their families for examples of courage and sacrifice

Background Description/Historical Significance:

These ten letters of servicemen home and the letters from home to the servicemen give insight into the reasons why men fought and the contributions that they made to the Allied victory in World War II. Andrew Carroll in *The Legacy Project* collected these letters. They can be categorized:

- Reasons for Enlisting
 - The Home Comforts
 - Combat Experiences
 - Love and War
 - Means to End the War
- A. The first letter in this series is William Czako, a young ensign from Fremont, Ohio, who wrote the letter to his sister Helen on the morning of December 7, 1941 aboard the U.S.S. *New Orleans*. While writing, hundreds of Japanese Zeroes were bombing the unsuspecting U.S. Pacific fleet in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Czako provided his sister with a dramatic moment-by-moment description of what he and his fellow sailors were experiencing.
- B. Lieutenant Randall Harris, is describing his combat experience in Sicily – the Allied invasion of Sicily, Operation Husky captured Sicily for the Allies. It was an amphibious and airborne operation followed by six weeks of land combat that launched the Italian campaign.
- C. The letter from Flora Ann Hinds was handed to her brother Charles Herbert Smith as he boarded a bus to leave for active duty in World War II. Smith went on to fly several

combat missions on a B24 bomber and twice survived being shot down. After the war, he went to college on the G.I. Bill.

- D. Sidney Diamond was born in 1922. He was a student at City College, New York City, when Pearl Harbor was bombed, he felt it was his duty to enlist. Diamond became a first lieutenant, fought on several islands in the Pacific, and was killed at Luzon. He won a “Silver Star” posthumously for his “courage, skill and determination.” He had written every day to his sweetheart Estelle Spero.
- E. Melvin Purvis served as a lieutenant colonel in World War II. Purvis survived the war and went on to head the Chicago office of the FBI.
- F. Earl P. Stevenson was a Harvard scientist and he recommended dropping bomb-wielding bats over enemy territory in order to help win the war. Throughout history, creatures, large and small have been “weaponized” to attack military and civilian populations. However, this plan was not utilized.
- G. Major Oscar Mitchell an African-American, served in the China-Burma-India Theatre. This letter from April 15, 1944 was written to his friend Sylvia Helene Hairston. His letter articulates his particular conscious reality of warfare.
- H. On June 6, 1944 (D-Day) Army Medic Corporal, Waverly B. Woodson, Jr. an African-American went in with the first wave. He would win the Bronze Star for his actions under fire. Almost a year before, he wrote to his father of the values his father had instilled in him growing up in Pennsylvania.
- I. On September 3, 1944, Lieutenant James Penton, serving with a tank destroyer in France that was pushing on Germany, sent his parents a letter and sketch that illustrated true grace under fire.
- J. On February 19, 1945, seventy five thousand American marines confronted twenty-two thousand Japanese soldiers on the tiny but heavily fortified and booby-trapped island of Iwo Jima. Using flamethrowers, grenades, artillery, machine guns, and at times even bayonets and knives during had-to-hand fighting, the Marines successfully captured the island, but at a cost of sixty-eight hundred lives and twenty-three thousand wounded. On March 13, a US Marine officer named Thomas Edwards sent his parents a letter from Iwo Jima that, although brief, said volumes about the strain the Marines were under.

In order to maintain historical accuracy of these primary sources spelling and punctuation has been left intact as written by the sender.

The World War II Memorial commemorates the sacrifices of ordinary individuals to preserve freedom for the world. The letters of servicemen reveal their heroism, their sacrifices and their contributions in the service of democracy and freedom.

Instructional Activities and Primary Source/Document Excerpts:

Document “A”:

Letter from William Czako to his sister, December 7, 1941(Gilder Lehrman Collection – Legacy Project – Carroll)

Letter from William Czako

December 7, 1941

“It is now 9:05 Sunday morning and we’ve been bombed now for over an hour. Our anti-aircraft guns are yammering and every so often a bomb strikes so close as to roc this ship Again a bomb. We’re helpless down here in the Forward Engine Room because our main engines are all torn down. We’re trying to get underway if possible. We were just struck by a bomb near the bow. We’re fighting back as much as possible because we have no power to load our guns, no power circuits to fire them. It is all being done by hand. This seems to you to be a nonchalant letter but it is the straight dope. There are only a handful of us down here as most of our men are ashore on Liberty. They really caught us sleeping this time. For a ship being in a Navy Yard for overall, we’re putting up a good fight. The first officer has come down here to take charge. We’ve lit off all the boilers that were not out of commission and are trying to get underway so that we will not be altogether helpless laying alongside the dock and be a stationery target. Those bombs are getting closer—God grant that they do not hit that loaded oil tanker that is lying right across from us. Ten million gallons of fuel oil would bathe this ship in an inferno of fire. There are laying near us and three other cruisers. They must be the targets including us. I am on the interior communications telephone and I can hear the various stations screaming orders at one another. A man just brought us our gas masks. We have four engines but at the best can only use 2. We’re getting steam up though. The firing of the guns have abated somewhat but we have received orders to get underway as quickly as steam can be raised. The firing has continued. Wave after wave of bombers must be coming. We’ve figured that some aircraft carriers must be the source of these fast diving planes. We’ve been struck several times now but fortunately there are no casualties as of yet. It seems funny to be writing like this when it may be your last. I’ve never figured it to be like this. The next bomb may be our last but I will keep writing until I am told to stop or am given another job. Some battleships that are tied up to the piers near the Fleet Air Base are reported to be on fire....There is another lull and only sporadic bursts from our pom poms. Preparations to get underway are still continuing. It seems impossible with all that machinery tore up but still we’ll do what we can. The order has come now to secure the general quarters. We were under fire for nearly two hours and I am going to sneak up to topside to see what happened.

Document “B”:

Letter from Lieutenant Randall Harris, July 10, 1943 (Legacy project – Carroll)

“I was in the first wave to hit the beach. My particular company landed on a mined area and proceeded to cross to our objective. My C.O. was killed at the same time I got hit thru both legs

in the thigh region, in the guts and in both shoulders. There was no pain to it and the wounds bled very little. ...I finally got thru the minefield and made a path for the men to follow and got them thru. We continued on our objective with me leading, a pistol in one hand and the other holding my guts. I kept thinking that if I was hit very bad I would feel my shoes fill up with blood but felt no signs so I kept on going...I looked and was surprised to find a big gob of guts sticking out about two inches above my peter so I sprinkled sulfa drugs on it and took the internal pills and put on a bandage - - at that time I didn't know about the holes in my legs. Half an hour later, the squads returned with some prisoners so I took them to the prison enclosure and proceeded to the medical dressing station where I was evacuated on a ship."

Document "C":

Letter from Flora Ann S. Hinds to Claude Herbert Smith, September 11, 1942(Gilder Lehrman Collection, Legacy Project – Carroll)

Arab Alabama
September 11, 1942

To Herbert, my brother,

Through all the years of a boy's life he dreams of a time when he might do some good, great thing. Because of it he will be loved and praised and honored by all who deep in their hearts cherish the four freedoms our fathers strove to attain through other days of "blood and sacrifice, sweat and tears".

That time has come for you. Tomorrow you go to camp and ah! How proud of you we are. Yours is a privilege as well as a duty. Make well of it. Only the best you can do is enough for the country that has mothered you from babyhood to manhood, straight and strong, God-loving and true to the ideals of this our America. There will be bright, beautiful days ahead; dark ones too. But on those days you will have these memories always with you: the orchard in bloom; the big trout you caught; the harvest moon about wide hay fields; white cranes on the lake, your arrowheads, framed; your bird hooks in rows, the autumn painted ridges; the winter's first snow; blazing logs on the hearth; the hound dog, Gal, possum hunting with you; fresh plowed fields and the trees first green; the smell on your hands of fresh, warm milk; the old turkey hen's nest under the gnarled rose bush; Twilight, your trumpet and you and "Star Dust" or "Concerto in B Minor"; a mother's goodnight kiss to her only son. All these and more are the dear, close things you have known and will come back to and in the years to come, in your heart you will feel: - These things I have loved and fought for, they are mine and my sons' who will come after me - my God, my home, my country.

Your most devoted sister
Flora Ann S. Hinds

Document "D":

Letter to Estelle Spero, December 25, 1944 from Sidney Diamond (G-L Collection, Legacy Project – Carroll)

Fort Dix, N. J.

6. P.M. - Monday

Bun! -

Since last we met, (ah platitudes!) much water has poured violently beneath the not to steady bridge! - yes, Estelle, the inevitable has happened, don't scold - I lost my temper!!! - got into a combat with fists. - These fisticuffs (if we might call them such) started suddenly, lasted a few moments - and were broken up when the party got rough! - Here are all the lurid details - I'll attempt to be as rational and unprejudiced as is possible. -

1. There exists a clique of three or four gentleman who feel it their responsibility to uphold the morale of the men by continually harassing the men with childish pranks such as half sheeting beds, smearing cold cream and shoe polish with an unsuspecting slumberers, shaving some.

2. All these a certain "guy" endured, realizing that it's to be expected during the first few days. As the days grew into a week and still the nuisances continued this same guy said - "enough!"

3. Mind you, this "guy" approached this thing in a coldly scientific manner. He reasoned as follows. a) These men would continue unless stopped b) not only would they molest newcomers but would enjoy bothering "Veterans" - taking advantage of friendships acquired. c) They had never been subjected to the same treatment d) and most important they did not realize what it was to be humbled

4. Well - "guy" was high lying comfortable loafing in bed - attempting to read. - suffering slightly from an overdose of cookies; a heavy dinner and an inoculation received in the afternoon when suddenly he found himself flying through the air, bed and all following him. - When he landed bed and all fell down on top of a big guy!!

5. - Well, why continue - verbal argument was useless - so now they don't bother him anymore and people think "guy used to play football!!

Let's discontinue these distasteful details and go to something of more interest to both of us, particularly myself -

question department

P. Piano lessons? Romantic poetry? Tommy Payne? Poison Ivy??? coed??? trip home? reports? Natalie? Pearl? You???

Again - keep clear of strange soldiers. Hit Romantic Poetry & hit it hard. Above all, sweet, take care of yourself. - You don't want me destitute of life - I couldn't stand your being ill - or somethin'!

miscellaneous

I don't like this Roy fello!!

You'll notice I've changed my hour of writing to you. It's a lot safer and easier on the "pot washer" Sid. It also gives me an opportunity to write more.

At present I'm seated at the same bench we occupied Sunday. The band is playing "As the Caissons go Rolling" - There's a ball game not far off - The soft cool breezes of the before

night, rustle through the paper; The sun plays gently upon the soldier across the table - It causes him to slight his position to the left. Pens scratch madly, tongues protrude, paper after paper is filled with details of each person's life. Here a soldier tells of a dream. There a boy writes of love. Another grins at a happy thought -

Yet, another saddens as he writes of fear!!

Darling, I have no regrets, [4] no longings, no homesickness except the gnawing hunger to be near you - to speak with you - to press your hand in mine and stroll -

I say this now with convictions - Love supersedes all! -

By the way, your photograph is a little closer to my heart. I now carry it in the money belt. - hmmm! -

After Joe and I left you last night we met Bob (Med Stud.) All of us proceeded to the theatre where we were entertained (???) by a motion picture of questionable worth entitled "Sorcery chic." with Edward G. Robinson - Home then & bed.

I know I'm getting lit but what the heck! - A very strange thing occurred today. You recall, I mentioned our sergeant as being the foulest mantled chap I'd encountered and that he seemed nothing less than [rein]! - Well I discover he has a four year scholarship to Syracuse University - quit after two years - to get married and won in a game of chance, for the first time when the draft numbers were drawn! -

Peculiar - very peculiar.

Yes I know this is growing into a manuscript but - well I like the new pen!!

[5] Stelle, I shall attempt, at least, to argue your thoughts of the unworthiness of the effort I am, through my own choosing, engaging in.

Our mutual friend Thomas Paine has aptly said "My country is the world and my religion is to do good!" Let's ponder over this for a moment. It is true as Goethe suggests that in peace time every one concerns himself with sweeping his own doorstep and minding his own business and things will go well; But, at present, the world which we recognize as our country fights hopelessly in a maelstrom as it is gradually and seemingly inevitably sucked into chaos. When a man drowns, one scarcely thinks of the future. One does not dream of future happiness-

There is no desire to wait and see!! -

"Love of country is more powerful than reason itself!" (Ovid)

If my neighbor whips his dog "tsk tsk". If he beats his own wife I look

away - were he, however to attack a strange girl - The matter is no longer a family affair but a community problem. J. G. Holland expresses it more adequately when he points out that "The man who lives his home best, and loves it most unselfishly, loves his country best. - 'Stelle - our country is the entire world and mankind our countrymen!!!

Whew - what brought that on - cool off Sid - take a shower!! -

Patriotism knows no time no land, no sea - it is not Geographical! It is not scheduled!!

Oh well - hm - hm - hm, all right I hear your mother whistling - Good night sweetheart - Love -

Yours - always!

Sid

Document “E”:

Letter from Melvin Purvis to Roseanne Purvis, September 24, 1943(G-L Collection – Legacy Project)

Melvin Purvis to Rosanne Purvis
Dear Rosanne,

September 24, 1943

Finally, this morning my constant watching the mails for a letter from you was rewarded. Your letter dated the twentieth came and it would be difficult to say just how glad I was to have it. I assume the censors are holding up or delaying my letters because I have written you every day and it doesn't take all that time. I shall write you some every day. I think of nothing but you.

I know how you must feel, my Rosanne, and I know how I am at being away from you – But you must not be nervous, and you must not grieve about me. You must be strong for the sake of our little baby to come, and for the little boy, and for our future together. We must both live for the future when we can be together forever and ever. Each moment to me will be endless until I see you again. As most time is reckoned, that will not be long, but to us, I know how it will seem.

We must steel ourselves for the interval with the thought that I shall come back soon – You must remember what I told you about that. It is so true. You will realize it then and for every reason in our little world you must realize it now. You just believe and wait for me. I'll miss you more and more each moment I'll love you more and more all the time. Above all else take care of you. I must know you are doing that. Tell the little boy I love him and miss him all the time. I shall remember forever that you love me. That is all I want. I will love you forever more than anything in all the world, and more than anyone could ever love anybody – I adore you, my Rosanne

Melvin

Document "F":

Letter from Earl P. Stevenson to the Navy, July 10, 1942(G-L, Legacy Project)

Confidential

30 Charles River Road, Cambridge, Massachusetts
KPS-HBS July 10, 1942

Office of the Coordinator of Research and Development
Navy Department
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir,

When last in Washington the writer called at your office and presented an idea which has been brought to NDRC for its consideration and action. This idea, as will be evidenced by the attached correspondence, was first presented to the President of the United States last January and has since been brought to the attention of various individuals and organizations without, however, being finally disposed of in one way or another.

Briefly stated, the concept is to use the common American bat as a carrier for small incendiaries. The original proposal was to release these bats, for example, some hundreds of miles off the shores of Japan and at such a time as would permit the bat to travel to land, arriving shortly before daylight. The habit of the bat is such that with light it would seek a refuge by crawling into crevices under roofs, thatching, and generally into small places where conceivably fires could be very easily started by means of a bat-borne incendiary weighing approximately one ounce.

...Just how we could proceed experimentally to explore this idea is quite a problem. Doubtless there are many of the questions that could be answered by consulting the proper authorities, but NDRC has not thus far pursued the matter, as the first point to be determined is whether any of the Services would be interested in the idea. Obviously, this is not a major incendiary. From the standpoint of destruction it cannot be reckoned in the same class with other incendiaries now available. On the other hand, the use of such means might be very demoralizing, especially against a superstitious people. It cannot conceivably have any value as an incendiary for use against purely military objectives, as the chances are that the bats would seek the countryside rather than urban districts.

In submitting these papers to your Office it is my understanding that there is a group within the Navy which considers ideas originating within the Service, and that this suggestion might properly be submitted as having that origin. NDRC is prepared to go into this matter in whatever detail may be desired. The writer expects to be in Washington some time during the week of July 20 and will then follow up this letter by getting in touch with your Office.

Very truly yours,
Earl P. Stevenson

Document “G”:

Dear Sylvia,

Although most people think they are War Conscious, are they really? – so far removed from the far-flung battle fronts, can they be? You are really War Conscious when you see the airplanes, in formation, early in the morning, flying to meet their rendezvous...and see this same formation returning in the evenings. But the number is not the same! Twelve went out, nine returned. You stand there, looking up, watching them fly into the distance; into and part of the horizon, then disappear. You wonder, what really did happen. Those that went down in flames...Do they die as you see in the movies? I do not think so. Not with a smile on their lips and a happy gleam in their eyes, rather painfully and regretfully with the knowledge that this is it! You'd have to see the wounded streaming back from the front of the battle...above all, to see the light go out of men's eyes. Young men shaking from nervous exhaustion and crying like babies. Strong men they are, or were, who did not or will not have the chance, ever, to live normal lives...People may think they know what the War is like. Their knowledge is facts of the mind. Mine is the war-torn body, scared to soul's depth. When I was in the States, War was far away, unreal, I had seen pictures, but now I know.

Document “H”:

June 21, 1943

Dear Dad:

Sunday was Father's day and by the time you get this letter, the day itself will have come and gone. But the day isn't important. Dad, when there are so many things I want to thank you for—the little things and the big things you have done for me.

I remember when you used to give me a dime or more too go to the movies. At the time I appreciated the sum but now that I look back on the past, I am even more appreciative of the things you have done for me.

I remember the time I wanted a bicycle and asked you to buy me one, for at that time there wasn't anything more than that. You told me to save up a certain amount and then you would get me it. After having worked and saved that amount, you added your money and obtained the bicycle. I really appreciated everything you did for me.

I remember my first year at college, when you practically paid all the expenses, hoping that I would be able to receive a better education than advantages than most fellows, so that we could start where you left off.

For all these things and many more, which you have done for me, I am deeply appreciative. For sometimes it was a sacrifice too to do some things for me.

And I know, Dad that while we're here, you and all the other fathers are behind us. I know it wasn't easy too to give up one or possibly two, too the U.S. Army, but we are here to finish a job which was done before so that we can

I don't think I've known you Dad, the way I do today. I never understood you as I do now. I thank you, Dad, for what you have done to make a world safe for future generations.

Tell Mom I said "Hello" and give her a big hug for me. Tell her I will write soon. But this is for you on Father's Day.

Love
Your son
Wave

Document "P":

3 September 1944

Dear Mother and Governor:

In the "Reader's Digest" there's a monthly article entitled "The Most Unforgettable Character I've Known,"--- or something of the sort. Well, not so long ago I met an unforgettable character myself....

My guns were in position in a small farmyard in the recently-wrested town of Vire, along the crest of the beautiful ridge, --- and but a stone's throw from the rubble-dusty haze rising above the warm ruins of the cities' downtown business section.

There was no "Business as Usual" in Vire that night, ---only "Nazi-Tactics as Usual" as the Butchers of Spirit and Property harassed the town from afar with artillery shells aimed at no spot in particular. My platoon crept into town as dusk merged into darkness, -- barely moving at all in the tortured streets so as to keep down dust---and resulting enemy observation.

And as the sun of early morning dissolved the fog, yawning faces appeared from the depths of holes in the ground, and the boys were moving about comparing notes about the night before. Considerable interest was shown in the truck, -- which had suffered three gashed tires, a perforated radiator, and other numerous shrapnel holes.

In the light of day I noticed a sprawling, peaceful convent to the immediate rear of the position,---with its courtyards and spires almost miraculously untouched. And while I sat there, - - in the protection of a bank, gazing at the convent and listening to the melodious chiming of its bells intermingle with the hideous wail of Jerry 88's---a solitary nun made her way deliberately through the yard, a bucket of water in one hand. It was a shock to hear her address me in perfect English, show identification papers, and hear that she was caring for the livestock in the absence of the terrorized farmer and his family.

And that's the sum and substance of my story. All morning long, as the whine of the Jerry artillery overhead kept the rest of us in our holes, that nun moved serenely and placidly about the skeleton of the burned-out barn,---and around the bodies of the dead, bloated cows;----milking the swollen cows, feeding and watering the chickens, collecting eggs.

And I know that our most argumentative and skeptical atheist was duly fascinated and impressed by that display of the power and force of that Sister's faith --- and complete fearlessness....It was not the sudden, stimulated and short-lived courage which drives a man to risk hot lead on a daring dash to aid a buddy, to me, it was far more than that.... It was the picture of a mellowed and complete faith,---it was serenity of mind and soul amidst man's savagery of arm and spirit...That nun hadn't spent two years of training, and "battle-conditioning" and crawling under fire... but her poise and expression and dogged pursuit of someone else's domestic duties in the midst of that inferno was something we will all remember;

--as we will the quarter-hourly chiming of the convent bells, as if in patient, long suffering defiance of the high explosive shells which ripped the city.....

And as I sketched the nun, ---some of the boys glanced over my shoulder...There was no title on the paper, ---but every one immediately recollected....

Well, there is nothing new to say. We seem to be doing things rapidly here in France,---but don't expect that daily collapse...These Germans are either crazymen or madmen,---and the fact that they are being cut off into little "pockets:" does not prevent their generals from driving them to the long drawn-out slaughter....

Received a letter from Bill Penton yesterday. Hardly seems possible he's been overseas two full years. Time flies here, though, ---And I rarely know what day of the week it is.

Do not worry when I don't have time to write. You know in the army "no news is good news."

Love to all,
Jim

Document "J":

Dear Folks:

Well here I am, still alive and well. Things are dragging out for the final showdown. The island has been pretty well secured, and we're all thankful. This place has been Hell and still is. It is just a hot dusty pile of sand and ashes.

It smells of death and is barren and desolate. Suribachi is bleak, and forbidding. The men sit listlessly. Nobody is in any sort of mood for kidding. There is death all around. A lot of the boys that landed when I did, are dead. Every time the ambulance goes by, I say to myself, "There but the grace of God, go I." It is the sight of our own dead that is terrible.

You see these youngsters, horribly mutilated by shrapnel, & artillery. There is no peacefulness in their death ----it came on them too violently and viciously. Many of them had no idea why they fought. They were so young. I am humble and grateful for being spared.

I would rather not write anymore today, and I will not mention any more about Iwo Jima in any later letters because I am sick about my friends who died, and so please just tell me about things at home, & don't mention this campaign anymore.

All my love to you both,

Materials:

Graphic Organizer for Analyzing letters

Motivation:

On the Atlantic (north) side of the National World War II Memorial has a quote from General Eisenhower's speech to his men on June 6, 1944(D-Day)

“You are about to embark upon the great crusade toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. I have full confidence in your courage and devotion to duty and skill in battle.”

- What does Eisenhower mean by “the eyes of the world are upon you”? Where have we heard that phrase before? (Note – This is a reference to Massachusetts Bay Governor John Winthrop's “City upon a Hill” sermon from 1630. It has been used as a recurring theme in the narrative of American exceptionalism and on the importance of defending and modeling liberty)
- Why do you think Eisenhower has called the D-Day invasion a “great crusade?”
- What assumption can you make about the training the troops have undergone, prior to the invasion, based on third sentence?

Activities:

1. Model for analyzing letters – Read the letter from Lieutenant Randall Harris and discuss the answers to the questions. Then use the same question prompts for the other documents in the lesson.

“I was in the first wave to hit the beach. My particular company landed on a mined area and proceeded to cross to our objective. My C.O. was killed at the same time I got hit thru both legs in the thigh region, in the guts and in both shoulders. There was no pain to it and the wounds bled very little. ...I finally got thru the minefield and made a path for the men to follow and got them thru. We continued on our objective with me leading, a pistol in one hand and the other holding my guts. I kept thinking that if I was hit very bad I would feel my shoes fill up with blood but felt no signs so I kept on going....I looked and was surprised to find a big gob of guts sticking out about two inches above my peter so I sprinkled sulfa drugs on it and took the internal pills and put on a bandage - - at that time I didn't know about the holes in my legs. Half an hour later, the squads returned with some prisoners so I took them to the prison enclosure and proceeded to the medical dressing station where I was evacuated on a ship.”

- Letter from Lieutenant Randall Harris, Pocahontas, Iowa, who landed at Gela, Sicily, with the 1st Rangers, July 10, 1943.

- a. Explain where the veteran was at the time that they either wrote or received this letter.

- b. Why were they there, what was going on in “their war” at the time, and how does this fit into the entire history of what was happening in WW II?
 - c. What human emotions or motivations do you see in the letters... fear, homesickness, anticipation of the future, tiredness from the realities of war, concern for the welfare of comrades in arms, etc.
2. Divide the students in groups of 3 and distribute the graphic organizer for analyzing the letters. Give each group one of the remaining nine letters and have them complete the graphic organizer.
 3. After each group has completed the task, reassemble the class and students should report their findings.
 4. As an option teachers may want the students to transfer the information from each groups graphic organizer to butcher or tablet paper to post on the walls around the classroom.

Summary:

The teacher can refer the students to the “essential question” which was posed at the start of the lesson: “How do the letters of servicemen and women reveal the heroism of World War II?”

Analyze the letters by referring to the quote by Walter Lord at the National Memorial:

“They had no right to win. Yet they did, and in so doing, they changed the course of the war.... Even against the greatest of odds, there is something in the human spirit – a Magic blend of skill, faith and valor – That can lift men from certain defeat to incredible victory.’

Walter Lord on the Battle of Midway, June 4-7, 1942

Students can also discuss as a class the following questions based on the letters that have been analyzed:

1. What do these letters reveal about the courage of men in battle? About the reasons why men fought in World War II?
2. Do the letters illustrate ordinary men and women doing extraordinary things? Why or Why not?

ANALYZING LETTERS FROM THE WAR WORKSHEET

Purpose of Letter

- Reason to Fight____
- Conditions of War____
- Consequences of War____

Key Points

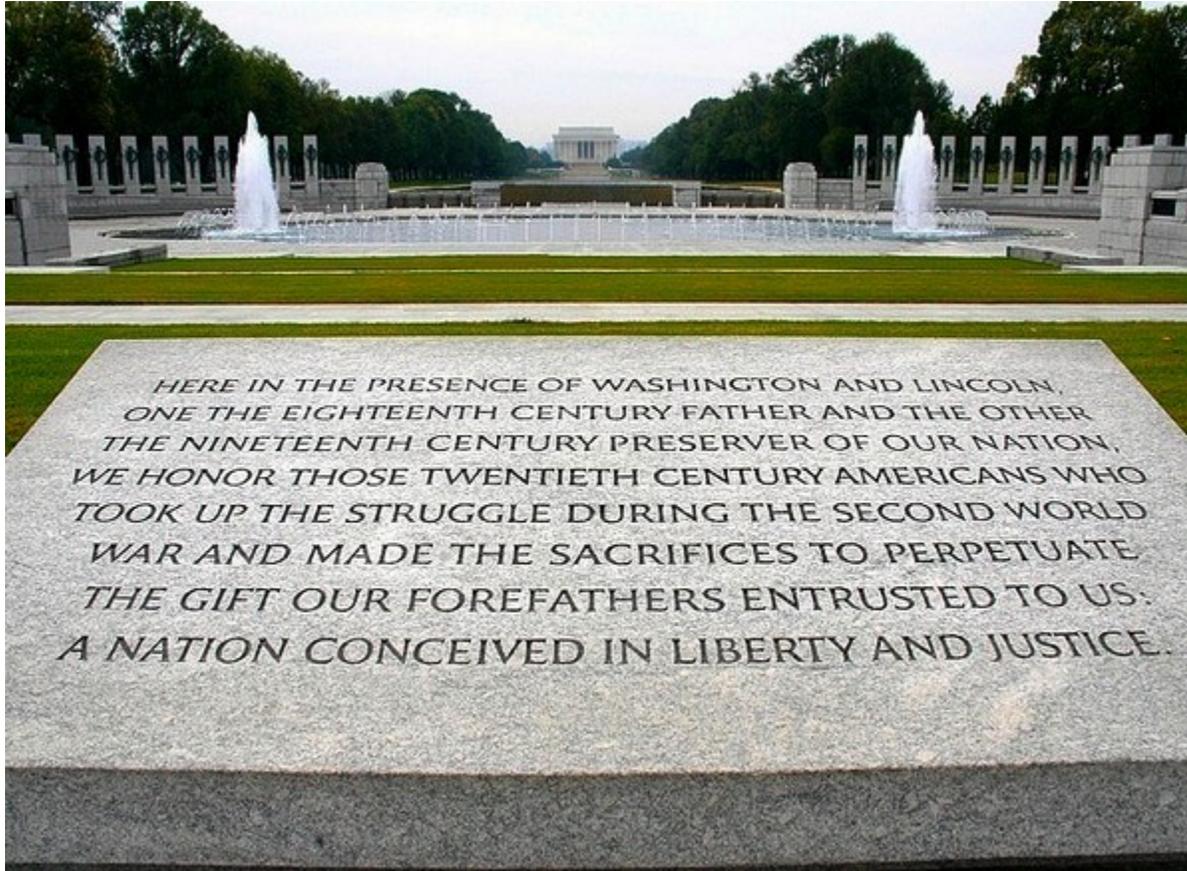
Questions Raised

1. _____
2. _____

Conclusions

World War II at the Memorial:

Image 1: The Announcement Stone



The National World War II Memorial is located on the National Mall, in Washington, D.C. between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial.

1. How are the sentiments inscribed on the Announcement Stone reflected in the letters you read as part of this lesson?
2. The Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial honor specific men, while the World War II Memorial honors a generation of individuals. Based on the letters you read in this lesson how is it that an entire generation of American human beings came to be honored in a national memorial?

Study the images of sculptor Ray Kaskey's bas-relief panel that depict the following:

- Air War/B-17 Crew
- Paratroopers
- D-Day
- Tanks in Combat
- Medics on Battlefield
- Amphibious Landing

- Jungle Warfare
- Field Burial

1. How do Kaskey's relief panels capture the essence of the letters you read in this lesson? Do you think Kaskey's panels reflect what you learned in this lesson? If, so explain how.
2. How well do you think that the servicemen's duties as described in the letters you read captured in the various bas-reliefs at the World War II Memorial

Image 2: Bas-relief panel "Air War/B-17 Crew"



Image 3: Bas-relief panel “Paratroopers”



Image 4: Bas-relief panel “D-Day”



Image 5: Bas-relief panel “Tanks in Combat”



Image 6: Bas-relief panel “Medics on Battlefield”



Image 7: Bas-relief panel “Amphibious Landing”



Image 8: Bas-relief panel “Jungle Warfare”



Image 9: Bas-relief panel “Field Burial”



3. Examine the image of the pillars of states and territories. Notice that they are all connected by ropes. What does this tell you about the memorial's design based on what you have learned in this lesson? What does this design tell you about the nation and the American people from 1941-1945.

Image 10: Pacific Victory Arch and State and Territory Pillars

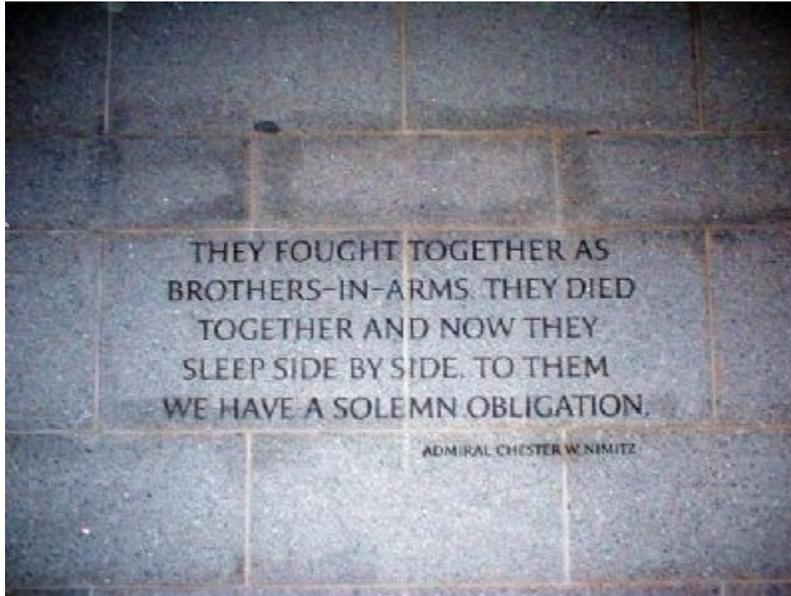


Image 11: Atlantic Victory Arch and State and Territory Pillars



4. Study the quote below by Admiral Chester Nimitz, a key leader in the Pacific Theatre, who helped strategize the defeat of Imperial Japan. How does his quote, as part of the National World War II Memorial reinforce what you learned in this lesson and in the sentiments expressed in these various letters?

Image 12:



5. Study the field of Gold Stars. There are 4,048 Gold Stars on the WW II Memorial, as part of a feature called, the Freedom Wall. Each star represents 100 American service men and women killed in the war. During the war family members, who had sons and daughters serving overseas, hung banners in the windows of their homes with a blue star for each child in the service. If a child was killed the family received a banner with a gold star indicating the family's loss. An organization that today continues this tradition and sometimes serves as volunteers at the 20th War Memorials on the National Mall is the Gold Star Mothers. A Gold Star Mother knows intimately the price that is paid for serving the country.

How is the sacrifice of the men and women revealed in the letters you read and this lesson reflected in this memorial feature?

Image 13: Freedom Wall

