

A Curriculum Guide and Study Outline for “Jews in America’s Military”

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Introduction:

Why should our Jewish students study, learn and be proud of Jews serving in America’s military for over 350 years?

The answer is that for over 350 years the anti-Semites have accused Jews of not being in America’s military. They would have the country believe this outlandish lie.

In 2004, when Jews throughout the country were celebrating and commemorating 350 years in America, it was important that we also remember and commemorate our Jews who valiantly served in America’s military and are now serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and other far away hostile areas.

It is important that the students recognize that Jews have fought in every major skirmish, every battle and every expedition and every war in America’s defense.

Over one million Jews have served in America’s military. Thousands have given their lives, many more have been wounded, and they have received many decorations and medals for bravery.

This exhibit, “Jews in America’s Military,” is a stimulus for teachers and students to expand their study, research and exploration of Jews in America’s armed forces. It is the

springboard for further investigation and knowledge about the Jewish sacrifices and contributions that were made to defend our country.

This “Curriculum Guide and Study Outline is for the “Jews in America’s Military” virtual exhibit. It is a guide for instructors to teach and for students to study, using the exhibit as an initial source for information.

Included in the booklet are internet links which will take teachers and students to other sources for more detailed information on Jews in America’s military.

Curriculum and Study Objectives With Activities For “For Jews in America’s Military”

The following lessons, objectives and activities are for use in all the grades in your school. These objectives and activities should meet the level of skills competency of your class. Many of these activities can be applied to individual students or to groups.

OBJECTIVES:

New Amsterdam
War of 1812
Civil War
American-Indian Wars
Spanish American War
World War I
World War II
Korean War
Vietnam War

Desert Storm

Today's American military actions: Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti and other hostile areas.

OBJECTIVES: JEWISH MIGRATIONS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE MILITARY

Sephardic migration to America (1654-1815)

German-Jewish migration to America (1815-1877)

Eastern European Jewish migration (from Russia and its annexed territories:

Poland, Lithuania and Austria-Hungry, (1880-1925).

The fourth period of migration to America (1934-1943)

Jewish migration following World War II to the present

QUESTIONS TO BE RAISED:

How many Jews in the military were killed, wounded and received decorations for bravery in each war?

What is America's Medal of Honor?

How many Jews received this award and in what wars?

What Jewish officer was nicknamed the "Paul Revere of the South in the Revolutionary War?"

Who was Uriah Phillips Levy and what were some of his accomplishments?

Who were the Jewish recipients of the Medal of Honor in the Civil War?

When were rabbis accepted as chaplains in the military, and what accomplishments did they achieve during the years?

What prompted the formation of the Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America?

What role did Vice Admiral Adolph Marix have in the Spanish-American War?

Who was Sgt. Benjamin Kaufman in World War I, and what did he accomplish in peace-time after the war?

In World War II, how many Jews were in the military, killed, wounded and received awards for bravery?

Why did it take over 55 years for Captain Ben Salomon to receive the Medal of Honor for heroism in World War II?

In the Korean War, what bravery did Major Melvin Garten display?

Where is the National Museum of American Jewish Military History, and can you name and describe three of their exhibits?

Why is Hyman George Rickover called the “father of nuclear submarines”?

In Vietnam, who were the two Jewish Medal of Honor recipients, and what bravery did they display?

Does any student know of Jewish men and women who were in the military?

Does any student know of Jewish men and women who are involved in today's military?

ACTIVITIES:

Students to create a list of family members and people they know, who have been in the military.

Each student should have their relationship, branch of service, dates served, rank, awards received, combat if any. This list can be a collage on a poster; a computer slide show; a booklet with scanned pictures and written text; and a written report.

Students to record oral interviews with Jewish veterans. They can inquire whether the veterans experienced anti-Semitism in the military and in the fighting areas. They can use these interviews for classroom discussions.

The teacher can invite veterans to the classroom to talk about their military experiences.

The class can create a scrapbook on the sacrifices and heroism of our Jewish men and women in today's military.

In the Jewish press, as well as The Jewish Veteran, official magazine of the JWV, they will find many articles and items relating to their heroic involvement. Many of these articles can be read in class which can be the basis for their discussions.

Where possible, the class can make arrangements to visit the National Museum of American Jewish Military History in Washington, DC. The Museum will arrange for a docent to guide the class as they go through the exhibits. The address and phone number is the same as the JWV.

When it is not possible to visit the Museum, they can arrange to have the traveling exhibits on display in your school. Contact them for more information.

ADDENDA:

We are commemorating the role of Jews in America military from 1654 to the present.

Most of our students are unaware of the great Jewish tradition in our military service. They are unaware of the many sacrifices Jews have made in America's military.

They are unaware that Jews gave the best years of their lives to serve, fight and defend our country from its enemies.

It is our responsibility, as well as yours as a teacher, to make our students aware that we have never shirked our responsibility to defend and maintain our democracy.

Many of our students may one day be in our country's military. It is important that they know of the valiant Jewish tradition of service in our country's military.