



THE NATIONAL
WWII MUSEUM

presents



Los Veteranos: **Latinos in World War II**

Virtual Field Trip Videoconference

945 Magazine St.
New Orleans, LA 70130
(504)528-1944

www.nationalww2museum.org

With assistance from the U.S Latino & Latina World War II Oral History Project
University of Texas, Austin
Dr. Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, Director
Ms. Raquel Garza, Program Manager

The National WWII Museum
Los Veteranos: Latinos in World War II
Virtual Field Trip

TEACHER GUIDE

Before your Virtual Filed Trip

1. To better prepare your students for their National WWII Museum virtual field trip, please share with them the enclosed *The Latino Experience in WWII* (pp 4-8) and Vocabulary List (pp. 9-10).
2. Arrange to make a **Test Call** to The National WWII Museum at least two days before your Virtual Field Trip. E-mail virtualclassroom@nationalww2museum.org to arrange your test call.

On the day of your Virtual Field Trip

1. Dial The National WWII Museum's **IP address: 72.158.213.42** when you are ready to connect.
2. If there is a loss of connection during the videoconference, hang up and re-dial. The telephone number in the Museum's distance learning studio is 504-528-1944, x 351.
3. A Museum educator will greet your students and conduct the session. Students will be asked to participate by raising their hands. You may be asked to select students to answer certain questions or perform certain activities. You are required to remain in the room during the entire videoconference.

After your Virtual Field Trip

1. After the Virtual Field Trip, the Museum will e-mail an evaluation form to you. Please fill out this form and return to the Museum as soon as possible.
2. There are some post-videoconference activities which will reinforce the lessons explored during this videoconference.

The National WWII Museum
Los Veteranos: Latinos in World War II

Learning Outcomes

The National WWII Museum has created this Virtual Field Trip videoconference to introduce students to the history and lessons of Latinos and Latinas in WWII. By participating in this Virtual Field Trip videoconference, students will:

Learn the following vocabulary and personalities:

200 th Artillery Battalion	Latina
American G.I. Forum	Latino
Bataan Death March	Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez
“Bracero” Program	Pachuca
“Bushmasters”	Stereotype
Carmen Bozak	<i>The War</i> documentary
Discrimination	Xenophobia
Felix Longoria	Zoot Suit Riot
Guy Gabaldon	

Gain familiarity with the following geographic locations:

Italy	Southwestern United States
North Africa	Arizona
Germany	New Mexico
Philippine Islands	California

Gain an appreciation through historical example for the value of patriotism, courage, and tolerance.

Gain knowledge of several career opportunities related to the study of history, including:

- Museum Curator
- Artifact Collections Manager
- Museum Researcher
- Historical Researcher
- Documentarian
- Oral History Archivist

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Los Veteranos: Latinos in World War II

The Latino Experience of WWII

During World War II, up to 500,000 Latinos served in the American military. For many of those who served, the experience opened doors they never realized existed. For others, the experience proved traumatic and frustrating as they endured racism and discrimination. The National World War II Museum, in association with the World War II Latino and Latina Oral History Project at the University of Texas at Austin, presents this videoconference to give students the opportunity to explore the Latino experience of WWII, and thereby gain a greater understanding of the American experience of the war.

Latino Military Heritage

Latinos have participated in every major military conflict in American history. Spanish colonial soldiers fought against the British along the Gulf Coast during the American Revolutionary War. During the American Civil War, more than 2,500 Mexican Americans fought for the Confederacy and more than 1,000 for the Union. The Spanish American War saw an increase in the number of Latino soldiers, including Capt. Maximiliano Luna, a member of Teddy Roosevelt's "Rough Riders."



Maximiliano Luna,
C. 1898

In 1917, the U.S. government granted citizenship to Puerto Ricans. This gave military officials a greater pool of men to train for the Armed Forces on the eve of the U.S. entry into World War I. More than 18,000 Puerto Ricans served in the military during WWI, although they were mostly relegated to supply and transportation duties. Many were sent to the Panama Canal Zone, where the U.S. government suspected that Germany would try to launch an attack on this American-controlled waterway.



Pvt. Marcelino Serna

The few Latino soldiers who did see combat in Europe made their mark. One soldier, Private Marcelino Serna, received two Purple Hearts for wounds received while capturing 24 German soldiers single-handedly. Serna became the first Latino soldier to receive the Distinguished Service Cross. Another Latino soldier, Private David Barkeley, from Laredo TX, volunteered to swim the Meuse River, a battle line in France, to locate an enemy machine gun post. Under heavy fire he swam the width of the waterway, reached the other side, and destroyed the enemy position. As he swam back across the river, Barkley suffered cramps and drowned. Barkley received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his selfless devotion to duty and courage under fire.

Latinos during WWII

Figures on the number of Latinos who served in WWII are imprecise because data on Latinos as a separate group was not maintained. With the exception of the 65th Infantry Regiment from Puerto Rico, Latinos were not segregated into separate units, as African Americans were. In all, up to half a million Latinos served in the Armed Forces, including 53,000 Puerto Ricans and 350,000 Mexican Americans.

Latino servicemen earned praise in combat in defense of the Philippines, North Africa, the Aleutians, the Mediterranean, and throughout Europe. Latino soldiers distinguished themselves both as individuals and as members of elite units.

In the Pacific Theater, the 158th Regimental Combat Team, known as the Bushmasters, an Arizona National Guard unit, was made up of a large percentage of Latino and American Indian soldiers. This unit saw heavy combat in New Guinea and the Philippines. General Douglas MacArthur referred to the Bushmasters as “the greatest fighting combat team ever deployed in battle.”

During the defense of the Philippines, the 200th and the 515th Coast Artillery regiments from New Mexico were extremely effective in battle. Their fluency in Spanish made them particularly effective among the Spanish speaking Filipinos. After the war Lt. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright praised these two units: “They were the first to fire and last to lay down their arms and only reluctantly doing so after being given a direct order.” Many of these soldiers were among the survivors of the infamous “Bataan Death March.”

One of the most interesting stories from the Pacific Theater involving Latino bravery came from the island of Saipan. Guy Gabaldon, later nicknamed the “Pied Piper of Saipan,” was a Latino soldier who had been adopted by a Japanese-American couple at the age of twelve. At the outbreak of the war, the government moved his family to a Japanese American internment camp. Gabaldon joined the Marines when he turned seventeen.

With his fluency in the Japanese language, Gabaldon’s became an interpreter for the 2nd Marine Division during the invasion of Saipan, a Japanese-held island in the Marianas Islands. During the fighting, Gabaldon came across a large group of Japanese soldiers and, using his knowledge of Japanese and his persuasive talents, convinced more than 1,000 of them to surrender. Gabaldon was nominated for the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions, but received the Silver Star instead (later upgraded to the Navy Cross). His exploits were later made into a movie entitled, *Hell to Eternity*.



PFC Guy Gabaldon (right),
c. 1944

In the European Theater, Latinos of the 36th Infantry Division from Texas were some of the first American troops to land on Italian soil at Salerno and suffered heavy casualties during the controversial crossing of the Rapido River near Cassino. The 88th Infantry Division, composed mostly of draftees from Southwestern states, was ranked in the top 10 for combat effectiveness, and earned the highest praise from their German adversaries after the war.

Sergeant First Class Augustin Romero Calero was one of the most highly decorated soldiers of WWII. In 1945 Calero, fighting with the 65th Infantry Regiment, engaged the Germans at the Battle of Colmar Pocket, near Colmar, France. Calero attacked an enemy squad with his machine gun, killing 10 German soldiers and capturing another 21. For his actions he was awarded the Silver Star. He was wounded a total of four times and received a further 22 battle decoration, including the French *Croix de Guerre*.

Staff Sergeant Rudolf “Rudy” Davila was a member of the 3rd Infantry Division fighting around the Anzio beachhead, in Italy. With his unit pinned down by German fire, Davila crawled to the nearest machine gun post and fired more than 750 rounds to subdue the enemy. Davila

continued his assault by wiping out two more enemy machine gun posts single-handedly despite being seriously wounded. For his actions, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. After a review of his record more than 50 years later, Davila was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Bill Clinton in 2000.

Thirty-eight Latinos were awarded the Medal of Honor during WWII, the United States' highest military award for valor.

Latino Women in America's Service



Tech 4 Carmen Bozak

Participation of Latinas during WWII was rare due to the presence of cultural barriers that often prevented them from leaving families and traveling long distances. However bilingual women were highly sought after as linguists in fields such as cryptology, communications, and interpretation. Carmen Contreras-Bozak became the first Latino woman to serve in the Women's Army Corps. She served in Eisenhower's headquarters in Algeria, North Africa. Maria Salazar served in the Pacific as a member of the Army Medical Corps from 1943-45, where she contracted malaria and dysentery. Carmen Lozano Dumler, from Puerto Rico, trained as a nurse in San Juan and treated soldiers wounded in Europe at the Fort Reid hospital in Trinidad. These Latinas and many more broke through both gender and cultural barriers to serve their country.

Top Ranking Latinos

As a colonel commanding the 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Pedro Augusto del Valle led his men in the seizure and defense of Guadalcanal. In the Battle of Tenaru, del Valle's artillery units provided more than adequate support to wipe out entire Japanese units on the island. His men performed with such precision that not one could be singled out for commendation. Instead, del Valle wrote letters of commendation for every man in the unit. Del Valle's commanding officer at the time, Major General Alexander Van der Grift, recommended del Valle for a promotion to Brigadier General, and the Legion of Merit.



Lt. Gen. Pedro Augusto del Valle

Lieutenant General Elwood "Pete" Quesada became the commander of the 9th Fighter Command where he established an advanced headquarters on the Normandy beachhead after the invasion, and directed his aircraft in support of the invasion of the drive inland. Highly decorated in his own right, Quesada proved "the inherent flexibility of air power."

Brigadier General Terry de la Mesa Allen was the commander of the 1st Infantry Division in North Africa and Sicily and was later made commander of the 104th Infantry Division. The 104th Division landed in France and fought for 195 consecutive days. Allen's deputy commander was Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., son of the former president of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt.

Latinos on the Home Front

During the war a shortage occurred in manual labor that threatened the war effort. The United States government turned to Mexico to end the shortage. The Bracero Program, as it was entitled, allowed thousands of Mexican migrant workers to come to the United States

temporarily to help with the labor shortage and earn money to send home to their families. More than 50,000 Mexican agricultural workers and 75,000 Mexican railroad workers were legally allowed to work on a contract basis. The railroad workers program was suspended when the war ended. The agricultural worker program lasted until 1964 when both the Mexican and United States governments ended it following years of worker and human rights abuses against migrant workers. This guest worker program helped the U.S. solve its wartime labor shortage, but often at the expense of the migrants.

Famous Latinos also lent their talents to the war effort. Desi Arnaz, Cuban bandleader and later husband to Lucille Ball, was drafted into the Army in 1943. Because of an old knee injury, Arnaz entertained the troops by directing U.S.O. programs at a military hospital in the San Fernando Valley where he served until 1945.

One of the most popular Hollywood heartthrobs of the day, Cesar Romero, served admirably in the United States Coast Guard during the war years. Later, he would resume his acting career and later star as "The Joker" on the popular 1960s television series, "Batman."

Perhaps those most effective in raising the troops' morale were the Hollywood stars and starlets whose publicity photos soldiers often pasted into the footlockers. One of the most popular "pinup girls" of WWII was Margarita Cansino, or as she was better known, Rita Hayworth. Hayworth's photos made her brother, Pvt. Vernon Cansino, a popular man while he served at Camp Barkeley, in Abilene, Texas.



Margarita Cansino
(AKA Rita Hayworth)

Prior to World War II, Latinas work experience outside of the home was generally limited to migrant work with their families. There were very few educational or career opportunities for them. But during the war, with labor demand created when men left to serve in the military, Latinas worked in the physically demanding jobs of steel production, meat packing, and ammunition assembly. These jobs not only helped the United States win the war, but allowed these women workers to supplement family incomes, often at a time when husbands, fathers, or brothers were away fighting the war.

During the 1930s and 40s, Latino youths in the Southwestern U.S. developed their own sub-culture, which included distinctive fashions, music, and slang. These youths, rebelling both against Anglo culture and even against elements of their own culture, called themselves *Pachucos*. To the White community, Pachuco culture soon became synonymous with gang culture, and social tensions threatened to erupt in several urban areas. These tensions finally boiled over on the night of June 3, 1943, as eleven U.S. Navy sailors on shore leave in Los Angeles claimed they were attacked by a "group of Mexican kids." Soon after scores of sailors and Marines invaded the Latino community of East Los Angeles, targeting anyone they saw wearing a "zoot suit," a Pachuco style of clothing, featuring a long dress coat with baggy pants. Police arrested nine sailors, but soon set them free. The riots continued for another two nights and the sailors and Marines were portrayed in the press as heroes suppressing a "Mexican crime wave." In



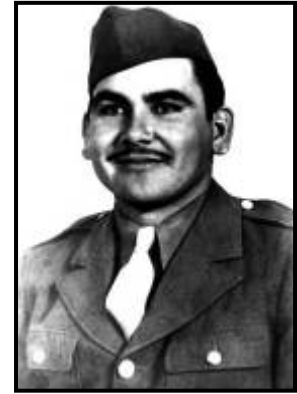
A Pachuco being arrested
during the Zoot Suit Riots of
June 1943.

some cases, police actually accompanied sailors and Marines and then arrested their beaten victims. This incident only helped to perpetuate the stereotype of Latino youths as rebellious, uneducated, and violent.

After the War

After WW II Latinos felt they deserved equal rights from the country for which they fought and died. Unfortunately, prejudice against Latinos in many parts of the country continued.

One incident in particular forced the family of a deceased soldier to suffer the indignity of racism. The owner of a funeral parlor refused a Latino family use of his facility for the wake and burial of their son, Private Felix Longoria, killed in the Philippines, because, “the Whites would not like it.” It took the intervention of a future president of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson, then a senator from Texas, to publicize the case so much that Longoria was eventually buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.



Pvt. Felix Longoria

The Latino experiences during the war helped shape leaders of later Latino and Chicano civil rights movements. The American G.I. Forum was founded in 1948 as a Congressionally-chartered Mexican American veterans and civil rights organization. Its motto is “Education is Our Freedom and Freedom should be Everybody's Business.” It originally sought to support the efforts of Latino servicemen who were trying to gain their rightful veterans’ benefits. Today, the AGIF operates chapters throughout the United States, with a focus on veteran's issues, education, and civil rights.

Recognizing the Valor

In 1999, Dr. Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez founded the U.S. Latino-Latina WWII Oral History Project, at the University of Texas, Austin. The project is dedicated to collecting interviews with and tributes to Latinos and Latinas of the WWII generation.



Dr. Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez
University of Texas, Austin

In 2006, documentarian Ken Burns released *The War*, a film that documents WWII through the experiences of four American towns. *The War* documented very little about Latinos, drawing protests from academics in the field of Latino studies. Dr. Rivas-Rodriguez launched a grass roots campaign to persuade Burns to re-cut his film and include stories from the Latino community during the war period. At first, Burns refused—production on the film had already been completed. But when Dr. Rivas-Rodriguez and fellow Latino advocates lobbied General Motors and Anheuser-Busch to pull their financial support from the film, Burns capitulated. In a statement to the *Austin American Statesman*, Dr. Rivas-Rodriguez stated that “For Mexican Americans, the war was a pivotal point, a watershed moment in our history. That’s why the omission is so glaring.”

Because of the public outcry that occurred during the whole controversy, more scholarship exploring the Latino experience during World War II has been conducted.

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Glossary

200th Artillery Battalion: a unit composed of mainly Latinos from the southwest United States, these men were captured during the defense of Bataan and suffered through the “Bataan Death March,” with many men perishing during that cruel imprisonment.

American G.I. Forum: American G. I. Forum is a civil-rights organization devoted to securing equal rights for Hispanic Americans and addressed veteran concern such as hospital care.

Arnaz, Desi: Desi Arnaz, Cuban bandleader and later husband to Lucille Ball, was drafted into the Army in 1943. Because of an old knee injury, Arnaz entertained the troops by directing U.S.O. programs at a military hospital in the San Fernando Valley where he served until 1945.

Bataan Death March: After the fall of Bataan and the collapse of American defenses there after the Japanese invasion of the Philippines, in April 1942, the Japanese marched American and Filipino prisoners of war across the Philippine peninsula, often without water in tropical heat. Many Americans and Filipino prisoners died as a result.

Battle of Tenaru: As a colonel commanding the Commander, 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Pedro Augusto del Valle led his men in the seizure and defense of Guadalcanal. In the Battle of Tenaru, del Valle’s artillery units provided more than adequate support to wipe out entire Japanese units on the island. His men performed with such precision that not one could be singled out for commendation.

“Bracero” Program: On August 4, 1942, the United States and the Mexican government instituted the Bracero Program. Under this program, Mexican migrant workers came to the United States where there was a guarantee for a job.

Bozak, Carmen: One of the members of the 149th WAAC Post Headquarters Company, Tech 4 Carmen Bozak, served in North Africa with distinction as a member in Eisenhower’s Algiers headquarters. Every Tech 4 Bozak withstood German air raids and remembered that women were not treated like regular service personnel.

“Bushmasters”: One of the most distinguished units in the Pacific Theater was the 158th Regimental Combat Team. Known as the “Bushmasters,” this unit was originally an Arizona National Guard unit composed mostly of Latino soldiers.

Candelaria, Lt. Richard: Lt. Candelaria shot down six German ME-109s, making himself an “ace.” (An “ace is one who shoots down five or more planes in air-to-air combat). Candelaria was actually one of the first pilots to engage and shoot down a German ME-262, one of Hitler’s jet aircraft).

Farragut, David F.: One of the most famous naval commanders in the history of the nation, David F. Farragut (1801-1870), invaded the lower Mississippi Valley, opening the way for the conquest of the South. Also, he brought the confederate stalemate in Mobile Bay in 1864. Farragut’s father was Spanish.

Gabaldon, PFC Guy: Joined the Marine Corps at seventeen and was fluent in Japanese because he

was adopted by a Japanese couple. Gabaldon captured one thousand Japanese troops by merely convincing them to surrender. Gabaldon did not get awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor even though he captured more troops than Alvin C. York during World War I.

Latina: A Latin woman; a person of Hispanic, especially Latin-American, descent, often one living in the United States.

Latino: A Latin man; a person of Hispanic, especially Latin-American, descent, often one living in the United States

Longoria, Private Felix: The owner of a funeral parlor refused the family of Private Felix Longoria to use his facility for the wake and burial of this brave soldier killed in the Philippines because he stated the “whites would not like it.” It took the intervention of a future president of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson, then a senator from Texas, Congressman John Lyle, and President Truman’s own military aide, General Harry Vaughn, to publicize the case so much that Longoria was eventually buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.

“Pachuca”: Mexican American youths that donned garish outfits in order to assert their independence.

Rivas-Rodriguez, Dr. Maggie: Director of the World War II Latino & Latina Oral History Project which preserves the oral histories of Latino and Latina veterans who are still alive. Dr. Rivas-Rodriguez launched a grass roots campaign to call Ken Burns’ film, *The War*, to task for not portraying Latinos and Latinas in the film. Burns later added 29 minutes of footage to the film, documenting Latinos and their contribution to the war effort.

The War: Documentary film chronicling the World War II through the eyes of four American towns. Ken Burns, the producer of the film, originally omitted any mention of Latinos and Latinas from the film, sparking a protest from the Latino community.

Zenophobia: The fear and dislike of foreigners or anyone different.

Zoot Suit Riots: Race riots which occurred in June 1943, when sailors on leave took to beating Mexican youths in Los Angeles. The riot took over three days and although the police arrested some military personnel, they were released. Their victims, who were young Mexicans, were held.

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Student Activity #1
Analyzing an Editorial Cartoon



1. What is the "Ken Burns Effect" as alluded to by the cartoonist?
2. Although Burns included other minorities in his documentary *The War*, do you think his omission of Latinos was intentional? Why or why not? How could you find out more?

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Student Activity #2
Primary Source Reading & Evaluation

Directions: This is a citation for acts of bravery and a recommendation for the Silver Star, our nation's second highest military award. Read the following citation and determine what type of character traits the winner would have to possess to win this honor.

HEADQUARTERS, EIGHTH AIR FORCE
Office of the Commanding General
APO 634

GENERAL ORDERS 15 July 1945

E X T R A C T

NUMBER 115 SECTION

AWARDS OF THE SILVER STAR I

1. Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, 22 September 1943, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Letter, Hg., USSTAF, AG 200.6, 3 April 1944, Subject: "Awards and Decoration", the SILVER STAR is awarded to the following-named officers:

RICHARD G. CANDELARIA, O-766418, Captain, then First Lieutenant, Army Air Forces, United States Army. For gallantry in action while escorting heavy bombers over Germany, 7 April 1945. When adverse weather caused Captain Candelaria to become separated from his Squadron, he continued on alone to rendezvous with the bombers. Observing two (2) ME-262 jets attacking the formation, he intercepted and dispersed them, probably destroying one (1) of the fighters. Still alone and completely ignoring the odds and personal danger, Captain Candelaria attacked approximately fifteen (15) hostile fighters. Selecting the lead plane for his initial target, he shot it down in flames and then gallantly engaged the remaining aircraft until assistance arrived. Captain Candelaria's courage, tenacity of purpose, and determination to destroy the enemy at any cost are borne out by the fact that during this action he shot down four (4) ME-109's and one probable (1) ME-262 jet, thus preventing serious damage being inflicted on the bombers. Entered military service from California

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL LARSON:

OFFICIAL:
S/Lindsey I. Braxton
T/LINDSEY I. BRAXTON
Colonel, A.C.D.
Adjutant General

EMIL C. KIEL
Brigadier General, U.S.A.
Chief of Staff

DISTRIBUTION: P.

CERTIFIED, A TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

LAWRENCE J. POWERS, JR.
LT/COL, AF, CAL AND

How are the character traits you described different from the stereotype of Latinos which have been perpetuated throughout much of the Latino experience in the United States?

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Post Conference Discussion Questions

1. If you were a young Latino or Latina during WWII, would you have enlisted or answered the draft to fight for the United States? Explain your answer.
2. Discover if there are any Latinos or Latinas of the WWII generation (75-years old or older) living in your neighborhood. Interview them with some of these questions and some of your own:
 - a. Did you serve in the military during WWII?
 - b. What unit were you with? Where did you take basic training?
 - c. Did anything you experienced in civilian life prepare you for the military?
 - d. Did you ever experience any discrimination either in the United States or while overseas?
 - e. Did you witness any discrimination either in the United States or while overseas?
 - f. Did you learn any lessons during WWII or in the military that stayed with you through the rest of your life?

After the interview is concluded, put together a short narrative to share with your class. What did you learn about the individual you interviewed?

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