



FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT TO FIGHT

AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCES IN WWII

Our newest exhibit, *Fighting for the Right to Fight*, chronicles the stories of the thousands of African Americans who rushed to enlist at the start of the war, intent on serving the country that treated them as second-class citizens. This special exhibit will discuss how hopes of equality inspired many to enlist, the discouraging reality of the segregated non-combat roles given to black recruits, and the continuing fight for “Double Victory” that laid the groundwork for the Civil Rights Movement.

For more information visit us online, or give us a call today.

FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT TO FIGHT

AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCES IN WWII

righttofightexhibit.org

FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT TO FIGHT THEMES

1. Discrimination and Segregation
2. Military Service
3. Medals of Honor
4. Home front and Aftermath

The National WWII Museum is dedicated to providing materials you can use in your classroom to teach about the war. We offer free, primary-source driven lesson plans, image galleries, and other resources to make teaching WWII easier for you and more interactive for your students. Education materials at The National WWII Museum assist all teachers in meeting the new Common Core standards. Every lesson, program, and initiative is designed to build students' core knowledge while addressing the skills that they need to be college and career ready. A crucial part of the Museum's mission—to understand what World War II means today—provides relevancy to all of our education materials.

In this guide, students will be able to understand the complexities of racial inequality and segregation during wartime America. They will examine the struggles African Americans faced on the Home front and abroad by using primary and secondary sources, key vocabulary words and terms and literary sources.

LESSON PLANS

Fighting for the Right to Fight: African American Attitudes About WWII

Grade Level: 6-12

OBJECTIVES

By examining multiple primary sources, students will be able to engage in a historical debate about African American responses to wartime racial discrimination and to write about the war from the perspective of a young African American who was alive at the time.

SUMMARY

Even after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor plunged the United States into World War II, African Americans fiercely debated their role in the war effort. What part could – or should – they play in the segregated military and discriminatory defense industries? Should they fight abroad for a country that denied them basic rights at home? Would support for the war help – or hurt – their own struggle for freedom? By examining African Americans'

campaigns for full access to military service and defense industry jobs, this lesson allows students to explore these questions from the perspectives of those who confronted them during the war.

Fighting in the Jim Crow Army: African American Soldiers' Experiences in WWII

Grade Level: 6-12

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to analyze oral history interviews in order to describe African Americans' military experiences during WWII.

SUMMARY

In this lesson, students will analyze oral histories in order to gain insight into African Americans' military experiences during World War II. They will synthesize what they learn by writing their own journal entry or letter home from the perspective of an African American serving in World War II.

A Double Victory? The Legacy of African Americans in World War II

Grade Level: 6-12

OBJECTIVES

By analyzing a range of primary and secondary source materials, students will develop an interpretation about the war's impact upon African Americans and provide evidence to support their conclusion.

SUMMARY

History is not simply what happened in the past but how people make sense of it. As a result, historians often disagree with each other or even change their own opinions about the meaning of particular historical events, such as World War II's impact upon African Americans and the Civil Rights Movement. Since primary and secondary sources – and the evidence contained within them – are the building blocks upon which historians construct their interpretations, students will examine multiple sources in order to determine which interpretation of the war's legacy for African Americans they find most convincing.

**All classroom materials are designed to meet Common Core and National Historical Thinking Standards*