

Lesson Plan on Famous Black Americans in the Military

Introduction: In this activity, students will learn about Black Americans and their roles in the history of the United States military.

Illinois Educational Standards Addressed:

16.A.3a Describe how historians use models for organizing historical interpretation (e.g., biographies, political events, issues and conflicts).

16.A.3b Make inferences about historical events and eras using historical maps and other historical sources.

16.A.3c Identify the differences between historical fact and interpretation.

16.A.4a Analyze and report historical events to determine cause-and-effect relationships.

16.A.4b Compare competing historical interpretations of an event.

16.A.5a Analyze historical and contemporary developments using methods of historical inquiry (pose questions, collect and analyze data, make and support inferences with evidence, report findings).

16.B.4b (W) Identify political ideas from the early modern historical era to the present which have had worldwide impact (e.g., nationalism/Sun Yat-Sen, non-violence/Ghandi, independence/Kenyatta).

16.B.5a (US) Describe how modern political positions are affected by differences in ideologies and viewpoints that have developed over time (e.g., political parties' positions on government intervention in the economy).

16.B.5b (US) Analyze how United States political history has been influenced by the nation's economic, social and environmental history.

16.D.4b (US) Describe unintended social consequences of political events in United States history (e.g., Civil War/emancipation, National Defense Highway Act/decline of inner cities, Vietnam War/anti-government activity).

16.D.5 (US) Analyze the relationship between an issue in United States social history and the related aspects of political, economic and environmental history.

Objectives:

Learn about famous Black Americans and their roles in the history of the United States military.

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In the classroom:

Provide the students with copies of the attached worksheets.

At the library:

Have students research the listed people in order to answer the questions on the worksheets.

Resources at the Pritzker Military Library:

(also available through interlibrary loan at your local library after your visit)

Baker, Vernon J. *Lasting valor*. New York: Bantam Books, 1999.

Call Number: D811.B285 1999.

Flipper, Henry Ossian, 1856-1940. *Black frontiersman: the memoirs of Henry O.*

Flipper, first Black graduate of West Point. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1997. Call Number: F786 .F575 1997.

Harris, Stephen L. *Harlem's Hell Fighters: the African-American 369th Infantry in*

World War I. Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, Inc., 2003.

Call Number: D570.33 369 TH .H37 2003.

Lanning, Michael Lee. *The African-American soldier: from Crispus Attucks to Colin*

Powell. Secaucus, New Jersey :Carol Publishing, 1997.

Call Number: UB418.A47 A35.

Mikaelian, Allen. *Medal of honor: profiles of America's military heroes from the Civil*

War to the present. New York: Hyperion, 2002.

Call Number: UB433.M53 2002.

Powell, Colin L. *My American journey*. New York: Random House, 1995.

Call Number: E840.5.P68 A3 1995.

Roth, David. *Sacred honor: a biography of Colin Powell*. Grand Rapids, MI:

Zondervan, 1993. Call Number: E840.5.P68 R67 1993.

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Black Military Heroes

Name _____

Date _____

Match the names of these Black military heroes with the information about them.

People:

- A. Thomas C. Butler
- B. Doris "Dorie" Miller
- C. Crispus Attucks
- D. Lemuel Haynes
- E. Vernon J. Baker
- F. Colin Powell
- G. Martin Robinson Delany
- H. Milton Olive III
- I. Henry O. Flipper
- J. Paul Cuffe
- K. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.
- L. James Reese Europe

1. ___ helped supply the American colonies during the American Revolution, smuggling goods past British patrol ships. He went on to build a large whaling and shipping business, and some historians consider him the father of black nationalism in the United States.

2. ___ led the 1770 uprising against British troops that resulted in the Boston Massacre. It is alleged that he cried out, "Don't be afraid!" as he led the crowd of protesters against armed British soldiers.

3. ___ served as a minuteman during the American Revolution, fighting at the siege of Boston and at Fort Ticonderoga. After the war he studied Greek and Latin and became a Congregationalist minister.

4. ___ recruited black soldiers and served as a field commander in the American Civil War. He earned the rank of major--the highest rank of any black soldier during the war. He also attended Harvard Medical School, bought and sold real estate, and wrote several books.

5. ___ became the first black to graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point, in 1877. He was later dishonorably discharged as a result of trumped-up charges, but the discharge was changed to honorable in 1976, and he was granted a full pardon in 1999.

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6. ___ led a black army unit in the Filipino Insurrection after the Spanish-American War, and his bravery earned official recognition in 1900 after he and 17 other men held off a force of nearly 250 enemy soldiers.
7. ___ served as a lieutenant in the segregated 369th Infantry Regiment (the "Harlem Hellfighters") during World War I, and became the first black officer to lead troops into combat during the war. His military band also helped popularize American jazz music in France.
8. ___ led his 25-man platoon in a daring assault against dug-in German positions during World War II, destroying six machine gun positions and killing 26 soldiers. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his efforts in 1997.
9. ___ led the 99th Pursuit Squadron and the 332nd Fighter Group (both part of the Tuskegee Airmen) during World War II, and became the first black general of the United States Air Force.
10. ___ served as a messman on the battleship West Virginia at Pearl Harbor. During the Japanese surprise attack in 1941, he carried the ship's commander to safety and then shot down at least two enemy aircraft. He received the Navy Cross for his valiant efforts.
11. ___ saved the lives of four other army soldiers during a firefight early in the Vietnam War by hurling his body onto a grenade that enemy soldiers had thrown. He was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.
12. ___ twice wounded in combat during the Vietnam War, served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Persian Gulf War, and was appointed secretary of state by President George W. Bush.

Answers to Black Military Heroes

1. J
2. C
3. D
4. G
5. I
6. A
7. L
8. E
9. K
10. B
11. H
12. F

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