

TITLE:

Complete the Mission!

Honoring Veterans while Exploring the Military Branches

CONTRIBUTOR:

National Society Children of the American Revolution (N.S.C.A.R.)

Phone: (202) 638-3154

Email: hq@nscar.org

National Veterans Committee (2022 – 2023)

Samantha Jean Streseman, Co-Chair

Amy Sites, Senior Co-Chair

Dana Surwill, Co-Chair

Abbey Mosher, Senior Co-Chair

National Curriculum Committee (2022 – 2023)

Cagle Kaough, State President

Luke Byrd, National Librarian

Jennifer Tousey, curriculum advisor

Diana Brokaw, Senior State President

Jill Jackson, Senior National Librarian

Carrie Venable Byrd, curriculum advisor

TOPIC:

Patriotism: Veterans and Branches of the Military

GRADE LEVEL:

6 – 8*

**Can be adjusted for all age groups (young children through adults)*

TIME ALLOTMENT:

20 – 30 minutes

STANDARDS TO BE ADDRESSED:

(Texas) Title 19. Part 2. Chapter 113. Subchapter C. Rule 113.44 Throughout social studies in Kindergarten-Grade 12, students build a foundation in history; geography; economics; government; citizenship; culture; science, technology, and society; and social studies skills. The content, as appropriate for the grade level of course, enables students to understand importance of patriotism, function in a free enterprise society, and appreciate the basic democratic values of our state and nation... (TEC 28,002(h))

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVE AND LESSON OUTCOME:

The learner will:

- Identify the six branches of the United States military
- Recognize the responsibilities for each branch comprising the military to include:
 - The Coast Guard is primarily responsible for maritime SAR (Search and Rescue).
 - The Navy is responsible for America's forward-deployed force on, above, and below the water.
 - The Air Force provides quick, flexible, and lethal air capability.
 - The Army is tasked with ground forces protecting the United States.
 - The Space Force deals with space capabilities to the joint military force.
 - The National Guard supports responses to combat missions, domestic emergencies, humanitarian efforts, and homeland security operations.
- Distinguish between active-duty, civilian, and veteran service in the military.
- List three things about veterans.
- State the role of the National Guard.
- Engage in collaborative play.
- Develop hand-eye coordination and fine gross motor skills

MATERIALS, RESOURCES, AND TECHNOLOGY TO BE USED BY TEACHER / STUDENT:

- 2 small Nerf guns with 24 bullets
- 1 small (6"-10") stuffed animal
- 1 large (18"x24") plastic bin lid (such as a lid from a Rubbermaid bin)
- 24 Red Solo-style cups
- 1 frisbee
- 1 foam model airplane
- 1 Sea Foam Circle activity piece*
- 12 weighted balloons*
- 12-24 nickels
- Fun Facts about Veterans sheet*
- Air Force Activity Page (e.g., word search, coloring page)*
- Assorted crayons, colored pencils, pencils

**These items will need to be constructed prior to setting up the activity. Instructions for the construction of these items can be found under the "Procedures" portion of the Lesson Plan.*

INTRODUCTION OF TOPIC:

The primary purpose of "Complete the Mission" is for learners to become familiar with who veterans are and the branches of the United States military.

The **United States Military** is comprised of the following **Branches: Army, Coast Guard, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Space Force**. Each branch has the purpose to serve the American people, defend the United States, and protect National interests. Each branch has Active-Duty members – men and women who serve full-time under a signed commitment and have given an oath to our country for the support of its Constitution and defense. Active-duty members may be deployed (service in other countries or oceans, away from family). The military also has civilian workers, who do not wear a uniform, and they serve as paid staff for a military branch and are under no commitment or oath of service. <https://www.military.com> ; <https://www.defense.gov>

After serving for at least 180 days on active duty with an honorable discharge, a service member qualifies to be a **Veteran**. Reserve and national guard members will not be considered veterans unless they are activated for a minimum of 180 days. However, if someone serves in the national guard or reserves for more than 20 years, and never activated, they will also qualify to be a veteran. The United States currently has approximately 20 million veterans (11% are female). Of that 20 million, about 27% have a service-related disability. Veterans can be supported in many ways: volunteering at the local Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital, donating to or supporting the United Service Organizations (USO), or through the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. Many local communities also have programs to assist veterans, such as raising funds for a service animal. <https://www.va.gov> ; <https://www.uso.org> ; <https://nchv.org>

The origins of the modern-day **United States Army** were begun by the Second Continental Congress on June 14, 1775. The United States Army is tasked with the protection of the interests of the United States, primarily with “boots on the ground” military personnel. The Army is divided into full-time members and part-time members. Full-time members devote his/her primary livelihood to military life. Part-time membership is divided between the Army National Guard, the Civilian Army, and the Army Reserve. As of 2020, there were just over one million Army troops. The Army travels throughout the world in support of the task of the ground support for the United States. It works with the other United States military branches, as well as troops from other nations to complete tasks. Members are called “soldiers.” Army lands are called “posts.” <https://www.goarmy.com> ; <https://www.army.mil>

The **United States Navy**, originally formed on October 13, 1775 by the direction of George Washington and formally in April 1798 by the United States Congress. According to the Department of Defense, the mission of the Navy is to provide support “above and below the water” through being a “...forward-deployed force” supporting physical presence for missions and deterrence. The Navy works with other branches and Nations to complete tasks. They have ships and submarines, but the branch also has planes that travel to support the defense of the ships. Members are called “sailors.” Naval lands are called “bases.” <https://www.navy.com> ; <https://navy.mil>

Founded through the powers of the Continental Congress on November 10, 1775, the **United States Marines** provide “boots on the ground” as water-to-ground landing forces. It was formally approved July 11, 1798 by Congressional Act. They work on land and sea. A famous Marine brigade was the “Devil Dogs” from World War I. The Marines also provide aid to non-combat evacuation and rescue efforts. The Marine Corps is an independent military branch; however, it

serves as a part of the Navy in one department. Members are called “Marines.” Marine lands are called “bases;” however, marines often live and work on other military lands.

<https://www.marines.com> ; <https://www.marines.mil>

The *United States Coast Guard*, established on August 4, 1790, as the “Revenue-Marine” when George Washington signed the Tariff Act (to enforce the trade laws and anti-smuggling). Later, it was reestablished as the United States Coast Guard on January 28, 1915. It operates as part of the Department of Homeland Security in times of peace, enforcing the nation's laws at sea. They protect the marine environment, guarding the nation's coastline and ports, as well as performing life-saving missions. During times of war or under the president's direction, they serve the nation by defending it from terrorism and foreign threats. Members are called “Coast Guardsman” or “Coastie” (informally). Most members live in civilian areas, but boats are stored at “bases.”

<https://www.gocoastguard.com> ; <https://www.uscg.mil>

The *United States Air Force* was initially envisioned August 1, 1907 as part of the Army Air Corps. On September 18, 1947, it was made into its own separate branch by the National Security Act (of Congress). The Air Force provides air, space, and cyberspace dominance through global vigilance, global reach, and global power. It provides rapid lethal or non-lethal and can deploy combat air capability anywhere in the world within a few hours. Members are called “Airmen.” Air Force lands are called “bases.”

<https://www.airforce.com> ; <https://www.af.mil>

The *United States Space Force* started on December 20, 2019, as the world’s first and only independent space force. Its mission is to provide space power to joint force commanders. It oversees our satellite and world communication systems, rocketry, and a joint role with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Members are called “Guardians.” Space Force lands are contained within Air Force bases or Army posts. Like the Marines, the Space Force is an independent military branch; however, it serves as a part of the Air Force in one department.

<https://www.spaceforce.com> ; <https://www.spaceforce.mil>

Note: The Merchant Marines is not a military branch. Its purpose is to transport cargo and passengers in peacetime. It can be called upon by the Navy to transport Naval personnel and cargo. Members are civilians. It is not part of the Department of Defense.

PROCEDURE FOR INSTRUCTION:

Materials to Make before the Activity:

- Sea Foam Circle Activity Piece: Cut a White poster board into a twelve-inch circle with a ten-inch inner circle hallowed out. The center circle should be large enough proportions for the stuffed animal to fit loosely inside.
- Weighted balloons – Blow up twelve black balloons halfway. Tie shut. Using scotch tape, attach a nickel to each of the tied ends of the balloon so that they may fall weighted to the floor.
- Fun Facts about Veterans – Write a list of at least 10 fun facts about Veterans. Try to include some information from the local area. General information may be found at the

Veterans Websites. As of 2022, information found from veteran websites listed in the Lesson Plan Introduction state that: 11% of veterans are women, 60% of veterans are under the age of 34, 80% of veterans have spent time in an overseas combat zone, Nearly 30% of Veterans have disabilities as a result of their service. Nearly 50,000 U.S. veterans are homeless. 94% of Veterans are proud of their service. Veteran Day (November 11) is to honor and thank all military personnel who served in the United States in all wars. (It is marked by parades, the U.S. Flag at half-mast, and a 2-minute period of silence at 11 a.m.). The red and black poppy flower is a symbol to memorialize veterans who fought and died in war.

- Air Force Activity Page – Go to the website for the National Museum of the United States Air Force (<http://nationalmuseum.af.mil>) and print out an assortment of word searches and/or coloring pages, enough for one each participant. (This website has general information word searches and pictures of planes and helicopters.)

Set-up Prior to the Activity:

- Prepare a large spread-out area, clear of chairs and tables, indoors with a minimum of 10x20ft.
- Place two lines of weighted balloons approximately eight inches apart. Place them alternately offset from each other in a scattered formation. They should be no more than eight inches apart from each other.
- Place the Sea Foam down on the floor with the frisbee within the 10x20ft space slightly away from the balloons
- In another spot, place the aircraft carrier and plane down.
- Set up the red Solo cups in two pyramids of six and three pyramids of three cups in another small space
- Make sure the facilitator has the paper with the chants and facts.

The Activity:

This activity leads the learners through a series of missions to better understand the branches of the United States military.

- Depending upon the number of group participants, break participants into two groups of four to eight learners. If the group has more than sixteen learners, the facilitator can either make additional teams where some learners watch other teams conduct missions, rotating sidelined groups through, or the facilitator can make groups of three to six learners in the event of an overall smaller group of learners.
- Review information contained in the first two paragraphs of the Lesson Plan Introduction about the Branches of Military and Veterans.
- Determine which team goes first via a game of Paper, Rock, Scissors between assigned team leader/representatives, or utilize a different random decision.
- Introduce “Linus” a stuffed animal who will lead the participants through the activities.

Rotate teams through missions.

- Marine’s Mission (Marine Calls):
 - Read through the paragraph in the Lesson Plan Introduction about the Marines.
 - “Semper Fi” is a shortened form of *Semper Fidelis*, which is Latin for “Always Faithful.” It is a motto of every Marine – a commitment to the battles, loyalty to

each other, and our Nation. It was established in 1883 as a bond of brotherhood of Marines.

- “Oorah” is a battle cry common in the Marine Corps that was started in World War 2.
- Have the participants holler “Oo Rah!” after the following questions asked by “Linus”: “Are you ready to have some fun?” “Are you ready to learn some more about the Marines?”
- Have the participants go around greeting each other with “Semper Fi” and repeat back “Semper Fi” or “Oo Rah!”
- Space Force Mission (Navigating the Asteroids): Teams will work together to navigate the asteroid belt (inflated and weighted balloons).
 - Read through the paragraph in the Lesson Plan Introduction about the Space Force
 - The team will appoint a team leader who will direct the rest of the team through the asteroid belt.
 - The team leader will instruct the team where they are to go and will be the only one allowed to give instructions.
 - Quietly, the facilitator will move Linus to the center of the sea foam circle.
 - After teams have successfully navigated the asteroid belt, the facilitator should yell, “Oh no! Linus has been lost at sea!” as the facilitator prompts the learners to the next activity.
- Coast Guard Mission (Lost at Sea):
 - Read through the paragraph in the Lesson Plan Introduction about the Coast Guard.
 - The facilitator will lead the group of learners to the prepositioned sea foam disk.
 - Learners will take turns saving Linus from within the sea foam disk by throwing the frisbee to him. (The goal is to get the frisbee to Linus like the Coast Guard would rescue someone from the water with a life preserver.)
 - If the learner makes contact with the sea foam or Linus, they have saved him from drowning.
 - Each time Linus is saved, the learners are rewarded with a fact about veterans.
 - Once all learners have had the opportunity to save Linus, the team moves on to the next activity.
- Navy Mission (Air Craft Carrier Landing):
 - Read through the paragraph in the Lesson Plan Introduction about the Navy
 - Have one team of members (up to four) hold the bin lid “aircraft carrier.”
 - Have learners from the opposite team take turns shooting the approach to the aircraft carrier using the foam airplane.
 - The learners hold the aircraft carrier will gently roll the lid up and down and adjust the lid to replicate the movement of the ocean as learners from the other team attempt to stick the landing.
 - If necessary, rotate learners to achieve the mission.
 - Once each member of the team attempting to land the plane has had a turn and landed the plane, teams switch places.
 - As members land the plane, the facilitator rewards the learners with facts about the Air Force or Navy.

- The facilitator transitions the team to the red solo cup activity.
- Army Mission (Red Solo Cup Activity):
 - Read through the paragraph in the Lesson Plan Introduction about the Army.
 - Have the learners take turns shooting the Nerf gun at the red cups with Linus hidden behind them.
 - If a cup is knocked over, Linus is saved.
 - Each time Linus is saved, the facilitator gives a fun fact about veterans.
- Air Force Mission (Coloring Pages)
 - Read through the paragraph in the Lesson Plan Introduction about the Air Force.
 - Pass out a word search, coloring page, etc. (whatever is appropriate for the ages of participants). This activity can also be “taken home” to save time.

After the Activity:

- Put the chant and facts sheet away and collect the cups, frisbee, sea foam, Nerf gun and bullets, Rubbermaid bin lid, and model plane away with the chant and facts sheet.
- Pop the balloons and collect the change from them. Ask the teams what their favorite facts were and what they learned.

LESSON CLOSURE:

Ask the following: “Now that we’ve participated in these activities to learn about Veterans. I want to answer any questions you may have about Veterans and their history. What questions do you have?” (In the past some learners have wanted to know what resources were available to Veterans or how to help honor them.)

Optional: Challenge learners to create their own activity or game (e.g. trivia) to explore military and veteran areas and related terminology within the branches (e.g., names of installations, officer and enlisted ranks, acronyms).

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT UNDERSTANDING:

Review the objectives for possible assessment questions. Give a quick quiz to see how many of the objectives were achieved.

- Example: Name the six military branches and the function of at least one
- Example: Who is considered a veteran?
- Example: What is the difference between active duty, reservists, and those in the national guard?

Optional: Ask some general questions may include:

- Example: What are some ways we can help veterans?
- Example: Why is it important for us to know what the military does?