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HVL LESSON TITLE:

RED BALL EXPRESS

DEVELOPED BY: ERIN COGGINS

RED BALL EXPRESS

GUIDING QUESTION:

What impact did the Red Ball Express have on winning the war?

OVERVIEW:

This lesson will introduce students to the Red Ball Express, and more specifically, to the African Americans serving in Europe.



SUBJECT(S):
Social Studies



VETERAN(S):
Arthur Hullett



DURATION:
60 minutes

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“Col. Bush would treat me like I was one of his peers. When nobody was around, you could do that. But when everyone else came around, it was a different picture.”

WWII Veteran Arthur Hullett

OVERVIEW:

This lesson will introduce students to the Red Ball Express, and more specifically, to the African Americans serving in Europe.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

With the destruction of the rail lines in Northern France, it became necessary to find an alternate means of getting supplies to the troops. On August 25, 1944, the Red Ball Express was born. The Red Ball Express was a convoy system that stretched from St. Lô in Normandy to Paris and eventually to the front along the French-German border. Between August and November 1944, the Red Ball Express truckers had delivered 412,193 tons of gas, oil, lubricants, ammunition, food, and other essentials. By 1944, there were over 200,000 African Americans serving in Europe, with roughly 90,000 driving for the Red Ball Express, making up 75% of the truck drivers who kept the “Red Ball” rolling. The Red Ball Express played an essential role in the Allied victory in Northern Europe.

OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

- Analyze primary and secondary sources.
- Identify the importance of the Red Ball Express in winning the war.

STANDARDS:

AL: SS: 14

Identify turning points in the European Theater, including key groups and people.

AL: Reading:1

Cite specific textual evidence to support the analysis of primary and secondary sources.

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MATERIALS & DOCUMENTS

[Arthur Hullett HVL Video](#)

Introduction Assignment Handout (Doc A)

We're Moving Up Poster (Doc B)

Red Ball Express Photograph (Doc C)

[Highway Express Route Map](#) (Doc D)

Museum Placard Directions (Doc E)

Rubric (Doc F)

PROCEDURES

ACTIVITY 01

- Distribute the Introduction Assignment Handout (Doc A) to all students. Tell students to direct their attention to the segment titled "Meeting Mr. Hullett."
- Show the Arthur Hullett HVL video. Have students complete the corresponding segment on Doc A.
- Discuss student answers.

ACTIVITY 02

- Project the WWII Poster (Doc B). Instruct students to answer the questions corresponding to the Poster Segment on Doc. A. After 5-7 minutes, discuss their answers.
- Project the Red Ball Express Photograph (Doc C). Ask students to point out some details they see in the photograph.
- Direct students to the Red Ball Express Facts segment on Doc A. Go over these facts as a class, stopping to check for understanding.

ACTIVITY 03

- Project the Highway Express Route Map (Doc D). Direct students to their copy of the map.
- Inform the class that the map shows the complexity of the routes between September 1944-February 1945. What do they notice? Discuss.
- Tell the students that one way on the Red Ball Express was approximately 534 miles and the trucks could only travel up to 25 miles per hour.
- Instruct students to figure out how long one way on the Red Ball would take in 1944.
- NOTE: Equation: $\text{Time} = \text{Distance} / \text{Rate}$, correct answer is roughly 21 hours.

ACTIVITY 04

- Distribute the Museum Placard Directions (Doc E). Read the directions to the class. Be sure to go over the Rubric (Doc F) with the class before they get started on the assignment.

INTRODUCTION ASSIGNMENT HANDOUT

SEGMENT ONE: VIDEO RESPONSE:

As you watch the video on Mr. Arthur Hullett, jot down some of the tasks he did while serving in the Army during WWII.

SEGMENT TWO: WE'RE MOVING UP

Answer the following questions pertaining to the WWII poster We're Moving Up.

1. What does the soldier mean by "We're Moving Up?"
2. What instructions does the soldier give?
3. What do you think were included in these supplies?
4. How do you think supplies were moved from location to location in battle zone Europe?
5. What dangers do you think those driving supply trucks encountered during the war?

SEGMENT THREE: RED BALL EXPRESS FACTS

- The Red Ball Express was a convoy system used to supply the troops in Western Europe during WWII.
- Most of the members of the Red Ball Express were African American.
- The Red Ball Express was a massive fleet of nearly 6,000, 2.5 ton General Motors cargo trucks.
- The need for supplies was so great that the Red Ball reached its peak performance within the first five days of operation.
- The convoy was necessary as Patton's Third Army was running low on fuel and supplies.
- The term Red Ball referred to the red ball on the freight trains that were carrying priority materials.
- At its peak, there were over 5,000 vehicles carrying over 12,000 supplies daily.
- The Red Ball Express gave the Allies a strategic advantage over the German infantry divisions, which were overly reliant on rail, wagon trains and horses to move troops and supplies.
- An armored division commander credited the Red Ball drivers with allowing tankers to refuel and rearm while fighting. The Black drivers "delivered gas under constant fire," he said. "Damned if I'd want their job. They have what it takes."

RED BALL EXPRESS
WE'RE MOVING UP

DOC B



RED BALL EXPRESS PHOTOGRAPH

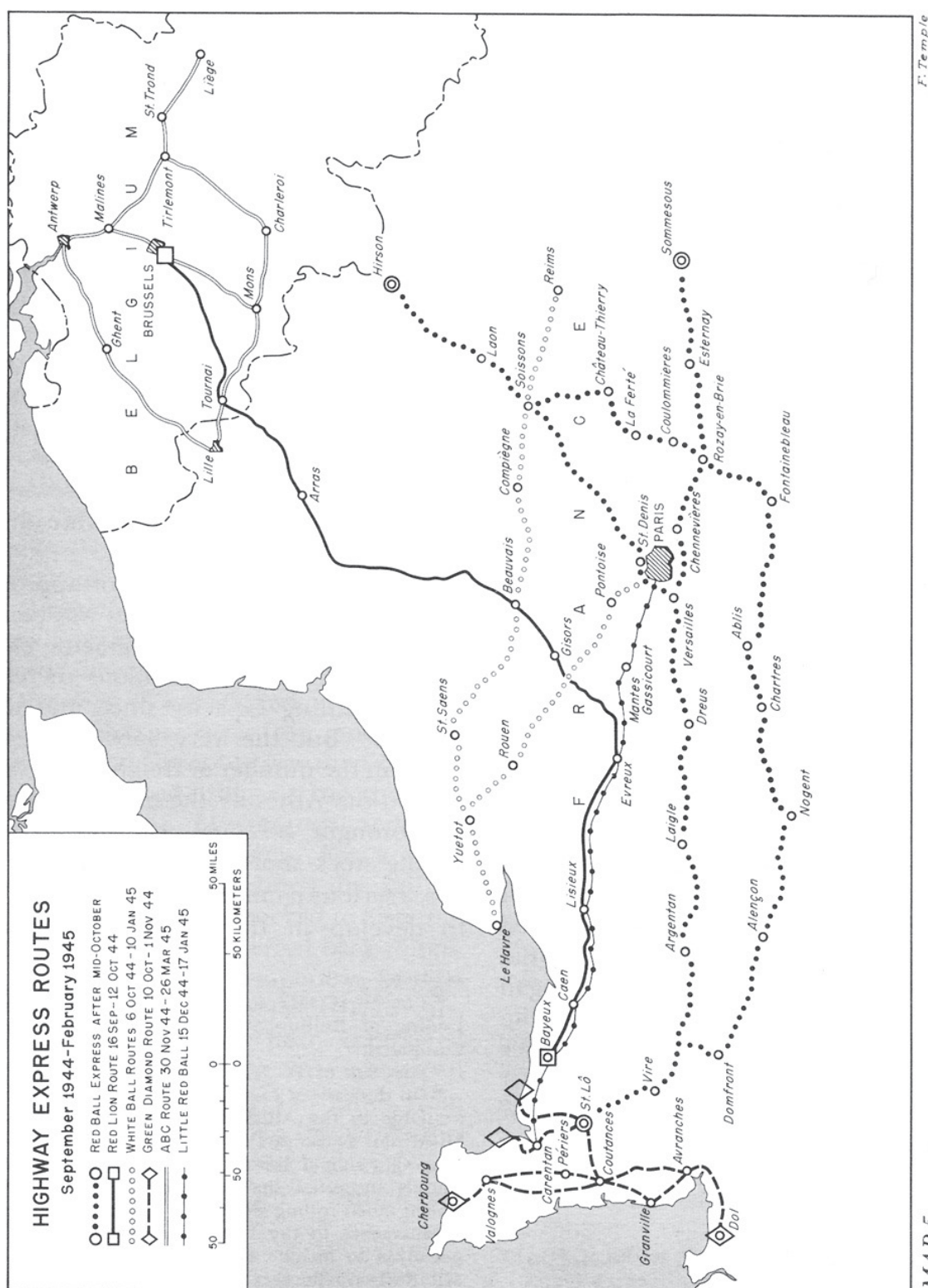


Soldiers from the 4185th Quartermaster Service Company (left to right), Pvt. Harold Hendricks, Staff Sgt. Carl Haines, Sgt. Theodore Cutright, Pvt. Lawrence Buckhalter, Pfc. Horace Deahl, and Pvt. David N. Hatcher, load trucks with rations bound for front line troops September 1944 in Liege, Belgium. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

RED BALL EXPRESS

EXPRESS ROUTE MAP

DOC D



CREATING A MUSEUM PLACARD

DIRECTIONS: Using the photograph below, you will create the informational text for a museum display on the Red Ball Express. The text should include information that you learned from the lesson or new information that you obtain via research on the Red Ball Express.



Photo: Library of Congress and National Archives

EXAMPLE

Dispatch Riders, many of whom were women, came to Bletchley Park from all over the country, riding in all weather, through the day and night.

Don R's as they were known, were responsible for collecting intercepted radio traffic from Y stations and delivering some of the vital intelligence produced at Bletchley Park.

"We came along Back Lane, there was an entrance with a metal gate, controlled by a guard in the sentry box. The reason for using this separate entrance at the back of the park was to reduce the noise for the occupants of the huts."

Dispatch Rider Nevel Horsfall, 1941

RED BALL EXPRESS
MUSEUM PLACARD ASSIGNMENT



MUSEUM PLACARD TEXT:

RED BALL EXPRESS

Rubric

DOC F



0-1 Points	2-3 Points	4-5 Points	List Score Here
Limited description. Only surface knowledge. Topic is not the focus.	Through factual knowledge. Focused on topic. Relevant facts included. Facts support.	Great depth of factual knowledge. Focused on topic. Proficient selection of relevant information.	
Little to no organization of information. No attempt to summarize research.	Uses evidence/support to illustrate history. Some understanding of historical significance.	Highly skillful connection of topic to a greater historical context. Fully articulates the context of history.	
Multiple spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization mistakes.	Few spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization mistakes.	Proper use of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.	
Information is not clearly presented. Information has been completely plagiarized.	Information is somewhat clear. Information has been somewhat plagiarized.	Information is clearly presented. Student has summarized using their own words.	