



# NEBRASKA STATE GEOINQUIRIES

## GEOINQUIRY CONTRIBUTIONS AND CONTROVERSIES: NEBRASKA AND WORLD WAR II

**Summary:** *History is all around you. The events of the past had and continue to have a significant impact on our world today. This inquiry is an investigation into the connections between one of the major events in United States history, World War II, and the state of Nebraska. Students during this exercise will connect stories about events and people in Nebraska to World War II. The lesson does not tell all the stories but is a brief connection to some of the links between the state and the war. It is the hope that this activity will encourage teachers and students to dig deeper and discover more connections to this important topic.*

### Nebraska State Social Studies Standards

*This activity has been designed to meet the following Nebraska State Standards...*

#### Primary:

SS HS.4.2 (US) Analyze the complexity of the interaction of multiple perspectives to investigate causes and effects of significant events in the development of history.

SS HS.4.2.a (US) Identify and evaluate how considering multiple perspectives facilitates an understanding of history.

#### Secondary:

SS HS.3.5 Evaluate issues and/or events using geographic knowledge and geospatial skills to make informed decisions.

SS HS.3.5.a Apply geographic knowledge and skills to interpret the past and present in order to plan for the future.

### Lesson Objectives:

*By completing this activity students will have the ability to...*

- comprehend the sacrifices made by Nebraskans on the battlefields and the Homefront during WWII.
- utilize geospatial data, primary and secondary sources to analyze the impact of WWII on the people and places of Nebraska.
- compare and contrast the stories of Nebraskans in World War II that are not traditionally told regarding World War II.
- comprehend the impact of WWII on agricultural and industrial production during WWII in Nebraska.
- design a state monument honoring the contributions of Nebraskans to WWII.



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**URL:** <https://arccg.is/EGOqT>

### Activity:

Follow these steps to complete the Geoinquiry

 = A Mapping function students will need to complete

 = A piece of information or background students will need to know

 ask your question [answers will vary]

### Ask a Question:

**Guiding Inquiry Question: How significant was WWII to Nebraska?**

 = Open the map using the link above

 = In 1940 Nazi Germany was winning the war in Europe which caused Americans to be concerned about the defense of the United States. As a result, industry in the United States began converting to war production in August of 1940 and Congress authorized the President to mobilize the National Guard. Less than one month later, Congress passed the first peace-time draft. For Nebraska's 134<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, this meant they were no longer a state National Guard unit but part of the federal military. They joined other state National Guard units and became part of the 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. From the time the 134<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment landed at Omaha Beach on July 5- July 6, 1944 until they departed for the United States on the ship the Queen Mary after the war's end on September 5, 1945, they liberated or captured 124 towns. In the process the 134<sup>th</sup> suffered more than 10,200 casualties including over 1,200 soldiers who were killed in action. The stars on the map show the burial locations of soldiers from the 134<sup>th</sup> that were from Nebraska. These brave soldiers gave their lives to stop Nazi Germany and ensure our freedoms.

Ask a Question: **What patterns do you notice?**

 = Click on the star. Notice that some of the boxes have an arrow at the top right. Use the “+” and “-“ buttons in the upper left corner to zoom in and zoom out on the map. Click on the house icon to return the map to the original view.

 Click on the star by North Platte. How many men are buried at that location?

 Zoom in and click on the stars in Lincoln. How many men are buried at that location?

 How would you describe the locations of where the soldiers are buried across the state?

 What might explain the pattern of locations where the soldiers are buried across the state?



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#### **Collect New Information: *What is the significance of this place?***

 = Click on the word “Content” on the left. This opens the different layers of information found on the map. Click on the check-marked box to the left of Nebr 134<sup>th</sup> WWII Casualties Burial Locations. The blues stars will disappear from the map when the box is un-checked. Click on the box again to see the stars and information reappear on the map. Click the box next to “Normandy American Cemetery”. Put your cursor over the words “Normandy American Cemetery” and click. Move your cursor to the three dots. Put your cursor over “Zoom to” and click. You are now on the west coast of France in Google Earth.

? Why was this place created?

? Click on the photo of the arch. You are now in France at the Normandy American Cemetery. Click on the small icon of a person. Click on “2D”. Click on the small circles and explore the cemetery and the arched monument. What is the importance of this place?

? Click the tab for Google Earth closed and click on the star on the left. How many Nebraskans from the 134<sup>th</sup> are buried in the Normandy American Cemetery?

? Click [here](#) to access a map of European Battle Fields. Compare the map of the battles in Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge to location of soldiers buried from the 134<sup>th</sup>. What observations can you make?

? Why are some are some of the soldiers from the 134<sup>th</sup> buried in Nebraska and some in Europe?

#### **Analyze for Trends and Patterns: *How did Nebraska agriculture help to win WWII?***

 = Click on home button. In the content menu, check the box beside Nebraska Agriculture to turn on the layer. Click on the red round icon that appears in the center of the map. Click on the picture of agricultural fields.

? What patterns are visible on the graph?

? How important is the information in this graph to the effort of the United States to win World War II?

 = Close tab with the graph. Click on the box next to “Stories Not Often Heard”. Explore the information on these groups by clicking on the symbol and the “more info” inside the dialog box.

? What are the similarities and differences between these groups?

? Why do you think this layer is titled “Stories Not Often Heard”?



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#### **Share what You Have Found: *How significant was WWII to Nebraska?***

Using the information you have gathered by answer the questions evaluate how important WWII was to Nebraska by giving the state a letter grade. Justify the letter grade you gave the state by using evidence from inquiry. Share your grade and evidence with a partner and be prepared to discuss it with the class.

#### **OR**

Design a state memorial that depicts the impact of WWII on the state of Nebraska. Present your memorial at a gallery viewing in the school library.

#### **Develop an Action Plan: How significant was WWII to your town?**

Research and prepare a presentation about WWII in your town. How significant was it? Are there members of the 134<sup>th</sup> buried near or in your town? Are there memorials to veterans located in your community? What did your community produce to help with the war effort? What were significant issues during this time period?

Present your findings to one of the following:

- Your class
- At a PTA/Parent Teacher Association meeting
- To the local school board
- To the local city council



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### *Sources and Additional Readings:*

*Be sure to check out these resources to learn more*

- Nebraska and the Holocaust
  - Kaufmann story - <https://leoadambiga.com/2011/12/10/david-kaufmann-a-holocaust-rescuer-from-afar/>
  - Holocaust survivors in Nebraska - <http://www.ihene.org/nebraska-survivor-stories-1>
  - USC Shoah Foundation iWitness testimonies: <https://iwitness.usc.edu/sfi/Activity/>
  - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: <https://www.ushmm.org/>
- Higgins Boats
  - The Nebraska Boat Builder Who “Won The War For Us”  
<http://netnebraska.org/media/media.php?bin=NET&vidgroup=40175181&jwsorce=cl>
  - There’s No Other Monument In The World Like The Andrew Jackson Higgins National Memorial In Nebraska  
<http://www.visitcolumbusne.com/directory/listing/andrew-jackson-higgins-memorial/>
  - WWII Museum  
<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/visit/museum-campus-guide/louisiana-memorial-pavilion/bayou-battlefield-higgins-industries-during>
- 134<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment
  - 134th Infantry Regiment Website  
<http://www.coulthart.com/134/index.htm>
  - Nebraska National Guard Museum  
<http://nengm.org/>
- Nebraska Latino Soldiers
  - Generations of Nebraska Warriors  
<http://netnebraska.org/basic-page/news/generations-nebraska-warriors>
  - Scottsbluff Monument Honors Mexican-American Soldiers From Nebraska's Panhandle  
<http://netnebraska.org/article/news/1196576/scottsbluff-monument-honors-mexican-american-soldiers-nebraskas-panhandle>



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- Native Americans and WWII
  - Winnebago- “Lance Morgan: My uncle was denied burial in Sioux City because he was a Native American”  
[https://omaha.com/opinion/columnists/lance-morgan-my-uncle-was-denied-burial-in-sioux-city-because-he-was-a-native/article\\_2f989f28-a867-11eb-bc52-6744f8fa4625.html#utm\\_source=omaha.com&utm\\_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fnews-alert&utm\\_medium=PostUp&utm\\_content=f596f141eb91f3ec26071dc6133641c1984c6a70](https://omaha.com/opinion/columnists/lance-morgan-my-uncle-was-denied-burial-in-sioux-city-because-he-was-a-native/article_2f989f28-a867-11eb-bc52-6744f8fa4625.html#utm_source=omaha.com&utm_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fnews-alert&utm_medium=PostUp&utm_content=f596f141eb91f3ec26071dc6133641c1984c6a70)
  - Winnebago – Nebraska State Historical Society “The Indian Who Never Got Home: The Burial of Sergeant John R. Rice”  
<https://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1996IndianBurial.pdf>
  - Santee Sioux – “Santee Sioux continue to support Uncle Sam” Code Talkers  
[https://norfolkdailynews.com/news/santee-sioux-continue-to-support-uncle-sam/article\\_823d37ac-7b7a-11e2-bb58-001a4bcf6878.html](https://norfolkdailynews.com/news/santee-sioux-continue-to-support-uncle-sam/article_823d37ac-7b7a-11e2-bb58-001a4bcf6878.html)
- German Prisoner of War Camps in Nebraska
  - Camp Atlanta <https://history.nebraska.gov/blog/marker-monday-prisoners-war-dundy-county>
  - Fort Robinson <https://history.nebraska.gov/blog/marker-monday-german-pow-camp>
  - POWs Far from the Battleground. NET  
<https://www.nebraskastudies.org/en/1925-1949/pows-far-from-the-battleground/>



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- North Platte Canteen
  - Nebraska Education Television <https://www.nebraskastudies.org/en/1925-1949/on-the-home-front/the-north-platte-canteen/>
  - View from Google Earth <https://goo.gl/maps/F6HGPDy7cdoeYdPE7>
  - Video of artifacts - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrenIzOo-is>

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*This activity was developed by the Geographic Educators of Nebraska for free distribution and use for educational purposes.*