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Service and Citizenship: Examining the Historical Relationship between Immigration and Military Service in the United States

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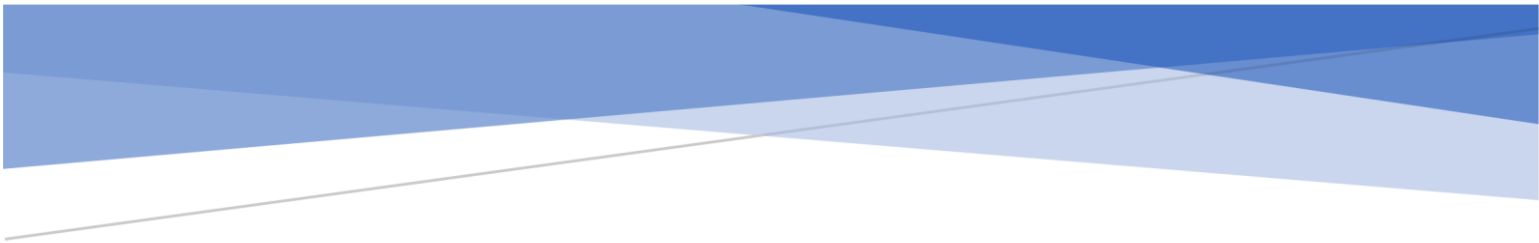
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Service and Citizenship:

Examining the Historical Relationship between
Immigration and Military Service in the United States

December 1, 2020

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Introduction

I was born into a military family. Maybe that is the reason that I never thought to question why so many of the soldiers I knew while growing up did not seem like the soldiers I saw on television or the movies. My father's army buddy spoke with a Hungarian accent. My brother formed a garage band with two boys who were the sons of a Filipino sergeant. I saw and heard people from all over the world at the commissary (that is the military lingo for grocery store for those not familiar). It was not until I had an internship researching and writing biographies for World War I soldiers that I realized how many foreign-born men were drafted into the US Army. The fact that I found most shocking about those drafted was that many of them were not yet American citizens. However, they were willing to serve in order to expedite their naturalization process. This led me to wonder when this practice began and what groups of people it affected. By the end of my research, I discovered that there were many different groups of people who found their greatest opportunity for gaining their political and civil rights, particularly during World War II, by offering service for citizenship.

I have laid out this paper in an orderly fashion as follows. I will begin with a history of immigration and military service, beginning with the Revolutionary War. I will then cover the historiography that informed my research. I then explain the research process that went into my capstone project, which was the creation of teachers' guides for the Kennesaw State University's Museum of History and Holocaust Education. Finally, I will discuss the importance of the study of military service in obtaining American citizenship and what it means today.

History

Throughout American history, various peoples have sought to gain the privileges of citizenship through military service. Even before there was a United States, men had volunteered military service for acceptance into American society. I was taught in elementary school about the friendly European soldiers, such as the Marquis de Lafayette, who came to America to help the colonies fight for American independence. However, in my research I found that these soldiers were mostly mercenary soldiers, who came to the American colonies to fight in return for money, as well as the prestige of higher rank, and the chance to gain military experience. On the other hand, some foreign soldiers were encouraged to stay once independence was achieved with the offer of land, in addition to pay. The Continental Army even offered land to Hessian soldiers in the hopes of luring them away from the British Army.¹

The Revolutionary experience set a precedent for offering citizenship to foreign-born men who were willing to fight in the American military. European immigrants fought in the hopes of speeding up the naturalization process, as well as, acquiring acceptance from the native-born populace. African Americans fought with the hope of gaining freedom from slavery and, after the Civil War, in the hopes of gaining full access to the rights that should have come with citizenship. Asian immigrants, who were barred from citizenship by the Naturalization Act of 1790, which established that only a “free white person” could become a US citizen (which changed to black or white persons after the Civil War), also fought in the hopes of proving their ability to assimilate into Anglo American society and to gain citizenship privileges.² American

¹ Daniel Krebs, "Desperate for Soldiers: The Recruitment of German Prisoners of War during the American War of Independence, 1776–83," *Transnational Soldiers*, 2013, 11.

² "The Naturalization Act of 1790." Accessed November 5, 2019.
<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/naturalization-act-of-1790>.

Indians, rendered wards of the State by federal law, fought to gain recognition as active citizens. Mexican Americans, whose nationality changed overnight with the shifting of the southwestern American border, experienced discrimination in their home states. It was quite common for the Irish, Dutch, and German immigrants to seek acceptance from the American public by joining the military during nineteenth century conflicts.³ These peoples, found their greatest opportunity for gaining their political and civil rights, particularly during World War I and World War II, by offering service for citizenship.

From 1870 to 1920, twenty-six million people immigrated to the United States from around the globe. This early twentieth century surge in immigration is important because it marks a time in American history when popular schools of thought, such as eugenics and nativism, led to increasingly restrictive immigration and naturalization policies.⁴ This ideology clashed with the nation's entry into global wars, causing an increased need for soldiers, making male immigrants from all countries and of all races desirable. However, the American government was conflicted about what exceptions it would willingly make to restrictions on citizenship. The American courts often used the Naturalization Act of 1790, which stated that only a "free white person" could become a US citizen, to prevent Asians and others considered "non-white" from gaining citizenship.⁵

Even after World War I, the service of immigrant soldiers was not enough to stem the growing xenophobic opinion of the American public. The passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 established restrictions on the number of immigrants from each country based on old

³ Christian B. Keller, "Flying Dutchmen and Drunken Irishmen: The Myths and Realities of Ethnic Civil War Soldiers," *The Journal of Military History* 73, no. 1 (2008): pp. 117-145, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jmh.0.0194>; David Graham, "A Fight for a Principle: The 24th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 104, no. 1/2 (April 1, 2011); Tyler V. Johnson, *Devotion to the Adopted Country: U.S. Immigrant Volunteers in the Mexican War* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2012).

⁴ Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*, 2nd ed. (New York: Perennial, 2002), 188.

⁵ "The Naturalization Act of 1790." Accessed November 5, 2019. <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/naturalization-act-of-1790>.

census records.⁶ Immigration from eastern and southern Europe was greatly restricted, which later created difficulties for Jewish refugees during WWII. Additionally, although Chinese immigration had been halted by the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, this new law virtually ended all immigration from Asia, including Japan and the Philippines. While the Western Hemisphere, including Mexico, was exempt from the quota restrictions, this legislation led to the establishment of the US Border Patrol and immigrants crossing US borders were then required to obtain visas before entering the country. At the same time, Native Americans were still not American citizens.

Due to the support of American Indians during World War I, Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act in 1924.⁷ Although this law naturalized American Indians, it did not lead to equal rights. For example, voting rights were established by state, and many states restricted Native American voting for many years after this legislation was passed. Additionally, African Americans were also restricted from voting by Jim Crow laws in the South, even though they had been given full citizenship with the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. With the onset of WWII, immigrants and citizens seeking civil rights that were denied them, joined the military in order to fight for the privileges of citizenship.

Historiography

Not surprisingly, the subject of military service and citizenship has earned the attention of historians and political scientists. In what follows, I will survey this scholarly literature, concentrating mostly on the twentieth century, with an emphasis on World War II which, with

⁶ "Immigration Act of 1924." Accessed October 2, 2019. <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/immigration-act-1924>.

⁷ "Indian Citizenship Act." Accessed October 2, 2019. <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/indian-citizenship-act>.

the large numbers of men joining the military, proved to be an important event for those seeking acceptance as citizens. I have included literature on several major ethnic or racial groups including: European Jews, Japanese Americans, African Americans, Irish Catholic immigrants, German immigrants and African Americans. The composition of ethnicities often changed depending on the immigration habits at the time of a particular war. Frequently, I have included Jewish immigrants with the Europeans, because they were not particularly restricted from immigrating any more than Christian Europeans, but became significant during World War II. Of particular interest is the participation of German Jews in the fight to liberate their own families and countrymen in Hitler's concentration camps. Also, Asians are often grouped together in much of the sources I have cited, but I have focused mostly on the Japanese and Filipino soldiers who played a major part in WWII. In addition to these two groups, I will also examine the service of American Indians, Mexican Americans, and African Americans in order to present a well-rounded view of minorities in the US military, who may not have enjoyed full privileges of citizenship.

Because I was researching scholarship concerning citizenship, I first attempted to establish what American citizenship represented to immigrants and American citizens. Judith N. Shklar asserts in her book, *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion*, that the fight for citizenship in America has not just been a demand for voting rights, but a “demand for inclusion in the polity” and a struggle to overcome “barriers to recognition.”⁸ Shklar further posits that citizenship as a right of inclusion has been denied to many, particularly black Americans and women, who viewed the ability to vote not only as a form of status or acceptance, but a duty

⁸ Judith N. Shklar, *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

much like military service. Her arguments are influential to my thesis because it explores the many aspects of citizenship and its importance to those who had to fight to obtain it.

Shklar argues that as early as the American Revolution, when the United States was not yet a country, the Founding Fathers turned to Europeans to assist in their fight for freedom from Great Britain. This was not a new idea, as Great Britain often used mercenary soldiers in order to maintain the British global empire. For example, German soldiers had been hired to fight for Britain in the Seven Years' War against France and Austria, as well as, to protect the interest of the East India company in British Colonial India. Often referred to as "Hessians," these soldiers hailed mostly from Hessen-Kassel, but other principalities contracted with Great Britain for the use of their armies. These soldiers were trained and maintained by various German principalities; whose rulers raised revenue by hiring out their country's military forces.

In an essay on attitudes towards foreigners in the colonies, "The Decision to Hire German Troops in the War of American Independence: Reactions in Britain and North America, 1774–1776," Friederike Baer discusses the consequences caused by the hiring of 40,000 German soldiers by the British Empire to fight colonial rebels during the American Revolution. Baer's argument revolves around hostile reactions by the American colonists, who viewed the hiring of outsiders to quash the rebellion as proof that the American colonies were not viewed as fellow British citizens, since the German mercenaries were previously used only on foreign enemies. She also points out that the American colonists were not averse to trying to persuade German soldiers to defect in return for liberty and land, thereby, making them future American citizens. She asserts that Congress, preparing for a perceived German invasion, hoped to "weaken the enemy by encouraging the men to desert," although she never offers any opinion of whether the

colonies would welcome the inclusion of men who were being portrayed as “violent enemies.”⁹ Baer claims that although there has been some analysis of the use of European mercenaries in the British army, particularly by Stephen Conway, there has been little academic analysis of reactions to their use by the public in Great Britain and the American Colonies. This essay is helpful in demonstrating the American colonists’ willingness to offer land and citizenship to foreign mercenaries in return for their military service.

As opposed as the colonists were to the use of mercenary soldiers by Great Britain, they also used foreign help during the Revolutionary War. Although historians have long accepted that these men were “volunteers,” Eric Spall argues in his thesis, “Foreigners in the Highest Trust: American Perceptions of European Mercenary Officers in the Continental Army,” that they were actually professional soldiers and were paid for their services, making them mercenaries, much like the German Hessians that fought for the British. However, even Spall agrees that, at least in some circumstances these men fought in the hopes of settling in the newly founded Republic after the war. The most notable case is Baron Frederick Wilhelm von Steuben who professed a wish to become “a Citizen of America” in exchange for his military expertise and service.¹⁰ On the other hand, early consensus among historians asserted that the Germans often eagerly defected to the Continental Army. However, more recent studies, such as those by Daniel Krebs, have established that the German mercenary troops were less likely to be tempted to join the colonists in their fight against the British in exchange for land and citizenship, although it certainly did happen to some degree. Overall, Krebs asserts that Revolutionary

⁹ Friederike Baer, “The Decision to Hire German Troops in the War of American Independence: Reactions in Britain and North America, 1774–1776,” *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 13, no. 1 (2015), 145-146.

¹⁰ Spall, Eric, “Foreigners in the Highest Trust: American Perceptions of European Mercenary Officers in the Continental Army,” *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 2014, 363; ¹⁰ James Hughes, “Those Who Passed Through: Unusual Visits to Unlikely Places: Baron von Steuben,” *New York History*, 2006, 488. Baron von Steuben was rewarded for his important contributions to the Continental Army not only with citizenship, but with a 16,000 acres parcel of land in upstate New York and a lifetime annual pension of \$2,500.

leaders chose to portray foreign soldiers in the Continental Army as volunteers “who were dedicated to Revolutionary ideals” rather than some form of compensation. For Krebs, it appears that the Continental Congress was much more receptive to including the Germans into American society than were the Europeans.

Little has been written about immigrants in the military in the years immediately following the Revolution. However, in *Devotion to the Adopted Country: U.S. Immigrant Volunteers in the Mexican War*, Tyler V. Johnson writes about the Irish Catholic and German immigrants who served during the Mexican War, which began in 1846. Johnson points to theory posed by earlier historians that American’s obsession with the definition of American citizenship during the early nineteenth century, combined with the influx of immigrants who differed from the Anglo-American majority, caused the American public to develop a nativist sentiment. Although some historians have declared that this nativism had diminished before the Mexican American War, Johnson argues that there is much evidence, particularly in ethnic newspapers, that proves deep prejudice against immigrants was still strong. Those ethnic newspapers, along with the support of the Catholic church, promoted ethnic regiments, highlighting their bravery and heroic exploits. Therefore, with the outbreak of war, immigrants and American Catholics had a rare opportunity to use their military service as a defense in the “debate over citizenship, the inclusion of immigrants, and in the fight against anti-Catholicism.”¹¹

During the Civil War, European immigrants again had an opportunity to prove their patriotism. Although there were ethnic and immigrant soldiers fighting for both the North and the South, there tended to be larger groups of immigrants in the northern industrial cities, where

¹¹ Tyler V. Johnson, *Devotion to the Adopted Country: U.S. Immigrant Volunteers in the Mexican War* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2012), 5.

they often organized into ethnic regiments. Because the South offered fewer income opportunities, most immigrants were dispersed throughout regular regiments, although there were some, such as the “Louisiana Tigers” who were composed primarily of ethnic and foreign-born soldiers.

The ethnic regiments in the North were enthusiastically promoted by their fellow nationals, ethnic politicians, and through the newspapers. Christian B. Keller estimates that German and Irish ethnics, the two largest ethnic populations at the time, made up approximately 27% of the Union Army alone but, despite the hopes and campaigning of fellow foreign-born residents, little credit was given to “this critical immigrant contribution” by the Anglo-American population.¹² Similarly, David Graham writes that the soldiers of the 24th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment felt a certain “otherness” which they hoped would change through their service in the war, making them more “Americanized.”¹³ Interestingly, both Keller and Graham use the book, *Melting Pot Soldiers*, as a source for their articles, although Keller is critical of the “incorrect and unsupported conclusion” of author, William L. Burton, who asserted that the war “Americanized” the immigrants, while Graham is apparently in full agreement of Burton’s assessment.¹⁴ Keller is equally disparaging of several writers’ evaluations of ethnic participation in the war, including that of Burton, as lacking in consistency, “scant and filiopietistic.”¹⁵ These characteristics will remain a problem for much research in the field for all historic periods, not just the Civil War.

¹² Christian B. Keller, “Flying Dutchmen and Drunken Irishmen: The Myths and Realities of Ethnic Civil War Soldiers,” *The Journal of Military History* 73, no. 1 (2008): pp. 117-145, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jmh.0.0194>, 126.

¹³ David Graham, “A Fight for a Principle: The 24th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 104, no. 1/2 (April 1, 2011): 45.

¹⁴ Keller, “Flying Dutchmen and Drunken Irishmen,” 125.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Candice Bredbenner, in her article, “A Duty to Defend? The Evolution of Aliens’ Military Obligations to the United States, 1792 to 1946,” examines the changing military expectations throughout American history, with particular concentrations on the differences between the Civil War and World War I. She points out changes, such as differences in conscription laws, during the wars and argues that these changes were due to some degree to the changes in power from state to federal government. She also argues that the immigrant’s access to the rights of citizenship, such as voting, owning property, and holding office, have changed throughout America’s history, while they simultaneously have been obligated to perform one of the most demanding duties of citizenship – military service. When the United States government first instituted a military draft during the Civil War, it decided to make use of the many immigrants who lived within its borders. Secretary of State William Seward stated that men who had declared intent of applying for citizenship, as well as, those who had voted in local elections (many states allowed resident aliens to vote) must register for the draft. Although the government offered expedited naturalization for immigrants who served, declarants could avoid being drafted if they renounced their intention to become citizens, which would require leaving the United States within sixty-five days. When the draft was once more instituted during WWI, resident aliens were not only drafted, but were prohibited from ever becoming a US citizen should they refuse military service. Bredbenner notes that there have been many academic studies on the barring of military service based on race or gender, and their “unequal distribution of political privileges and rights,” but very little scholarship on the opposite spectrum, which is

state-imposed military requirements of noncitizens. This article explores the custom of US citizenship in exchange for military service which remains in use today.¹⁶

The years following the Civil War gave rise to the industrialization of the United States, attracting immigrants from other countries to work in the factories. By the turn of the century, as a result of the Spanish-American War, America had become an imperial power. In the book, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917*, Matthew Frye Jacobson asserts that there was a connection between the rapid industrialization in US, the beginning of American Imperialism, and mass migrations during the period between Reconstruction and World War I. The Professor of American Studies and History at Yale claims that industrialization led to the search for consumers for American-made products which, in turn, led to encounters with less developed countries, which eventually became territories of the US. As the consumer demand in less developed countries grew, the need for cheap labor also increased, leading to the rapid influx of immigrants searching for work in American factories. Like other historians, such as Gerstle (*American Crucible*) and King (*Making Americans*), Jacobson argues that Progressive Era ideas concerning “inferior” races, such as eugenics, was an important influence on American history. However, for Jacobson, these notions about race were used to justify the subjugation of the indigenous populations of American territories, as well as, the restrictions of citizenship rights on certain immigrants and ethnic Americans in the US.¹⁷ Jacobson’s theories are important to the study of citizenship and military service because he has a particular interest in those countries which often provided

¹⁶ Candice Bredbenner, “A Duty to Defend? The Evolution of Aliens’ Military Obligations to the United States, 1792 to 1946,” *Journal of Policy History* 24, no. 2 (2012), 224.

¹⁷ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (Brantford, Ont.: W. Ross MacDonald School, Resource Services Library, 2005).

individuals and territory for military personnel and expansion, such as the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii.

As covered in Jacobson's *Barbarian Virtues*, immigration to America continued to increase in the postbellum period. Irish (and to some degree, the German) immigrants had assimilated into American society, with the help of being able to vote for their own representatives and, combined with the support of ethnic newspapers, which worked to assist them in becoming Americanized. However, new European immigrants, mostly originating from Eastern and Southern European countries, began to challenge the Anglo-European cultural identity of the American citizen, provoking nativism and anti-immigrant sentiment among American citizens. Without immigration restrictions, the influx from Europe alone numbered more than eight million people between 1901 to 1910, the busiest decade of American immigration.¹⁸

In *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*, Roger Daniels asserts that this flood of new immigrants gave rise to eugenics, a manipulation of Darwin's theory of evolution, and the Immigration Restriction League, which argued for limits on American immigration. In 1917, despite a decrease in European immigration, due to the war in Europe, Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1917, one of the first to make any major restrictions on European immigration – barring “criminals; persons who failed to meet certain moral standards; persons with various diseases; paupers; assorted radicals; and illiterates.”¹⁹

¹⁸ Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*, 2nd ed. (New York: Perennial, 2002), 188.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 279.

Although Daniels maintains in this book that other historians are too “Eurocentric,” he goes into great detail concerning European migration. However, he gives little detail concerning the exploits of these immigrants in WWI. Nevertheless, Daniels not only encompasses European immigrants including Jewish populations, but immigration from other countries worldwide. His studies of immigrants from China, Japan, Philippines, and Central America and their migratory habits during both World Wars serve as a good source of supplemental information for studies on individuals immigrating to America who may view military service as a pathway to citizenship.

One of the Eurocentric writers that Daniels may have been referring to is Nancy Ford Gentile. Her book, entitled *Americans All! Foreign-born Soldiers in World War I*, was written in 2001 and concentrates only on the stories and biographies of European immigrants. Surprisingly, unlike many other historians who point to the eugenics movement as an explanation for the growing xenophobic opinions of the average American, Ford asserts that these fears were evident from the beginning of the Republic, when leaders expressed concern that non-Anglo immigrants would not be able to understand democratic ideologies. She also contends that during the Progressive Era, the Americanization Movement became dominated by ideas about scientific management and social welfare programs, rather than eugenics. When World War I began, roughly eighteen percent of the soldiers were foreign-born and spoke little English, causing the need to Americanize quickly. Ford expresses an optimistic view of the training program of the American Army, stating that the military showed “remarkable sensitivity and respect” for these soldiers by hiring “Progressive reformers and ethnic group leaders” so that the immigrant

soldiers could express their patriotism while keeping their ethnic pride.²⁰ This is a surprising assertion, although the fact that she concentrates primarily on European immigrants may be an explanation for the dissimilarity.

Similarly, *Forgotten Soldiers of World War I: America's Immigrant Doughboys*, a book written by two military historians, includes much personal and factual information on immigrant soldiers. Unlike Ford, this book not only contains biographies of soldiers from Europe, including European Jews, but other countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Central and South America are covered as well. They also include more information than Ford concerning the effort of the American government to expedite the naturalization process for immigrant soldiers, with many men taking their oaths at the training camps before shipping out for Europe; some ceremonies naturalizing hundreds of soldiers at one time. Surprisingly, there is no mention of the Progressive reformers that are so central to Ford's argument, only the mention of "Development Battalions" where soldiers with little language skills were sent to train.²¹ There is little in the way of a scholarly argument in this book other than to conclude that many of the soldiers still faced discrimination after their service in the war. However, the narrative is somewhat celebratory, which may be caused by a bias due to the military service of both of the writers, Alexander F. Barnes and Peter L. Belmonte.

Even before WWI began, the US government had begun to establish regulations which changed the definition of US citizenship, both legally and culturally, influencing and shaping American society for generations. Christopher Capozzola's article, "Legacies for Citizenship:

²⁰ Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All!: Foreign-Born Soldiers in World War I* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2011), 3.

²¹ Alexander Barnes and Peter L. Belmonte. *Forgotten Soldiers of World War I: America's Immigrant Doughboys* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd, 2018), 44.

Pinpointing Americans during and after World War I,” concentrates primarily on the legislation that was passed from the outbreak of the war in Europe to 1924, when some of the most restrictive immigrant regulations were passed. The most influential legislation, according to the author, Christopher Capozzola, was the Immigration Act of 1924, which he claims was set in motion during the war years, despite the fact that, as other historians (such as Roger Daniels) have stated, it reflected the politics of the day: “nativism, isolationism, eugenics, and a resurgent Ku Klux Klan.”²² Capozzola asserts that 1924 was the year which ended the “decade long remaking” of US citizenship, not only placing quota systems on the number of immigrants to America, but expanded exclusion of immigrants from Asia. The Indian Citizenship Act, which granted citizenship to Native Americans, whether they wanted it or not, combined with the earlier Jones Act of 1916, which granted citizenship to Puerto Ricans, were examples of groups which gained citizenship without equality.²³ He also points out that this year marked the beginning of the US Border Patrol. All of these things combined to, not only define the border of the United States, but the conditions of American citizenship.

In his book, *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, and the Origins of the Diverse Democracy*, Desmond S. King argues that through immigration restrictions, which limited the naturalization of certain groups and strengthened the “second-class position” of nonwhite American citizens, the US government was able to mold the American identity into a mainly white, protestant culture to which others must conform.²⁴ As Gerstle theorized in *American Crucible*, King points to the nativist and eugenics movements that became popular in the early

²² Christopher Capozzola, “Legacies for Citizenship: Pinpointing Americans during and after World War I,” *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 4 (August 2014): pp. 713-726, <https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhu041>, 719.

²³ The Indian Citizenship Act of June 2, 1924, Public Law 68-175, 43 STAT 253. <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/indian-citizenship-act>.

²⁴ Desmond S. King, *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, and the Origins of the Diverse Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass. London: Harvard University Press, 2002), 1-2.

twentieth century and were used to keep out those that were considered unable to assimilate. By controlling the number of undesirable immigrants and denying rights to nonwhite citizens, the American political system strove to define Americans as white and to keep Native Americans, Blacks, Asians and other nonwhite citizens inferior. King also examines each passage of legislation as proof of the effort to keep the perception of American identity white, preferably Anglo-Saxon.²⁵ This book analyzes the tactics that were used by the American polity to force non-White citizens and immigrants to assimilate to a white culture.

While King argues that the immigration restrictions weakened the efforts for full citizenship by nonwhite American residents, Lucy E. Salyer argues that some Asian WWI soldiers were able to successfully secure their citizenship by exploiting the link the American government made between military service and citizenship during WWI. In 1918, the government required immediate naturalization of all foreign-born soldiers, without regard to the fact that Asian immigrants were barred by law from becoming citizens, beginning with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. In “Baptism by Fire: Race, Military Service, and US Citizenship Policy, 1918-1935,” Salyer follows the struggle for these men, with the help of American veteran groups, to gain their right to become citizens in the US courts. After years of courtroom battles, Asians finally gained passage of the Nye-Lea Act, which allowed citizenship for Asian veterans. Like Gary Gerstle, Salyer agrees that war “has often been critical to nation building and particularly to the expansion of civil and political membership.”²⁶ Salyer also

²⁶ Lucy E. Salyer, “Baptism by Fire: Race, Military Service, and U.S. Citizenship Policy, 1918-1935,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 3 (January 2004), 849. One of the Asian Americans mentioned in Salyer’s book was Tokie Slocum, whose life is documented in an article in the Densho Encyclopedia, which is an online resource that features reviewed articles concerning Japanese and Japanese American history. Adopted by a Caucasian family, he hoped to use his military service to gain citizenship. After the war, he fought for the citizenship of other Japanese soldiers by pushing for the passage of the Nye-Lea Act. Although Slocum had an early life that was very different than most Japanese Issei, his fight for citizenship for himself and other WWI

concur with Judith N. Shklar, and other historical scholars, that studies on war and citizenship usually focus on people who were already citizens, such as women and African Americans, but who hoped to improve their status in the “American polity.”²⁷ This article is important because it covers the attainment of citizenship for Asian immigrants and Asian Americans through military service.

Like Salyer, Angela M. Banks examines the conflict between American laws restricting citizenship versus American ideals that provided for naturalization when individuals are able to prove civic commitment through military service. Banks’ article, “Precarious Citizenship: Asian Immigrant Naturalization 1918 to 1925,” questions how one can evaluate an applicant’s ability to adopt American values in order to become a citizen of the United States using the court arguments and evaluations of Asian soldiers after World War I. Banks argues that Asians were prevented from becoming citizens, even after their service in the military, because they were considered culturally unable to assimilate, thus causing them to be “permanently foreign,” a term coined by Mai Ngai.²⁸ Despite these barriers to Asian American citizenship, 500 veterans of Asian descent were able to naturalize in the years following World War I, which Banks states “illustrates that the inaccuracy and unreliability of race was recognized” by the US Courts.²⁹ For this reason, although race is no longer used as a reason to exclude certain immigrants, she believes that it is important to examine tests of cultural assimilation used today when allowing immigrants to become American citizens. Because this article has such a deep legal examination

veterans makes him an important subject for the study of military service and citizenship rights. The article can be found at http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Tokutaro_Slocum/.

²⁷ Ibid, 850.

²⁸ Angela M. Banks, “Precarious Citizenship: Asian Immigrant Naturalization 1918 to 1925,” *Law & Inequality: A Journal of Theory and Practice* 37, no. 1 (April 3, 2019), 153.

²⁹ Ibid, 153.

of immigration statutes, it is important for military naturalization scholarship because it provides another side of the story of post-World War I Asian naturalizations.

When the United States entered World War II, America was still struggling to incorporate her many different cultures and ethnicities into a unified democracy. In *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*. Gerstle argues that the United States was shaped by two competing concepts: civic nationalism (the rights of all people established by the country's founding documents) and racial nationalism (that these rights only applied to those of the same color and ethnic background as the Founding Fathers). While many historians might agree that war is a unifying event that shapes national identity, Gerstle points out that soldiers during World War II were still being segregated. He states that the war helped white soldiers, regardless of ethnicity or religion, to assimilate more easily than Asian and Black soldiers who were kept segregated and therefore unable to conform. In fact, the image that most Americans imagined as a "multicultural platoon" was one created by popular culture, such as Hollywood movies, and always contained a mixture of "the Anglo Protestant, the Irish Catholic, and the eastern European Jew" but rarely included African American or Asian soldiers.³⁰ This conclusion agrees with previous scholars, such as Tyler V. Johnson (*Devotion to the Adopted Country*), who found that American media were responsible, to some degree, for the public's attitude towards assimilation.

Although Gerstle states that he disagrees with what he calls "whiteness scholars" who charge that race is central to every demonstration of nationalism, he does agree with the scholarship of those like Eric Foner, in that oppressed groups have often used the promise of national equality to achieve their civil rights. Gerstle's discussion of central themes of war and

³⁰ Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017) 205.

race, including the organizing of the American military by race during WWII, makes this book a valuable contribution to the study of service and citizenship.

Ronald T. Takaki, in *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II*, uses the “autobiographies, oral histories, conversations, letters, poems and songs” of ethnically and racially diverse peoples (such as Euro-Americans, African-Americans, Asian Americans, and Jewish refugees) to tell the story of what he sees as America’s somewhat hypocritical battle for Democracy using a segregated military.³¹ By utilizing the stories of everyday people who experienced the war, he follows the footsteps of the only historian that he mentions in his book, Studs Terkel, who published a book of oral histories of WWII. He proposes that many of the soldiers who fought in World War II battled, not only to end oppression overseas, but to end bigotry at home - in other words, a double victory. He states that his book gives the reader an “eye level view” of the history of the war, rather than concentrating on the views of political and military leaders.³² His arguments concerning the racism directed towards soldiers of many different ethnic backgrounds, particularly during the war, is important because it demonstrates how soldiers from different backgrounds claimed their citizenship rights through military service.

Once soldiers began to receive medals and other commendations, their exploits were popularized through news releases. In his article, “Becoming American: ‘Manila John’ Basilone, the Medal of Honor, and Italian-American Image, 1943-1945,” Michael Frontani asserts that the media attention to John Basilone, the first marine to earn a Medal of Honor during WWII, facilitated acceptance of Italian Americans into American society. As with other historians, he

³¹ Ronald T. Takaki, *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co, 2001), 5.

³² Ibid.

cites the popularity of the eugenics movement as one of the factors that contributed to the “inbetweenness” of Italian immigrants, a term that was originally coined by David Roediger. Once thought of as “dysfunctional, foreign, and often criminal,” an image which was probably propagated by the newspaper reports and popular movies containing mafia activity, Frontani theorizes that the newspapers’ assertion that Basilone was a hero changed the minds of Americans about what traits comprised the idea of “Americanness.”³³ This change in public opinion on those of Italian ethnicity was important not only to those of Italian heritage, but to elected officials who depended on the large number of Italian voters, and who hoped to soften attitudes against those considered enemy aliens during the war. This article adds an interesting view on ways of how military service, particularly heroic service, can change American opinions of who can be considered a valued citizen.

Another enemy alien population, German Americans, also played an important role in World War II. In her essay, “The Military Intelligence Training Center and the War against Nazism: Military Intelligence Training,” Patricia Kollander argues that the approximately two-thousand German-born soldiers who were trained at the Military Intelligence Training Center at Camp Ritchie, Maryland, were an effective weapon in defeating the Nazis during World War II, as well as, being important to the “denazification” of Germany afterwards. These soldiers, many of whom were new citizens or not yet naturalized, proved to be valuable assets to the war effort because of their language skills, familiarity with German customs and terrain, and interrogation training from Camp Ritchie. Most of the German and Austrian emigres were Jews who had escaped Nazi persecution and found discrimination in the United States for being German,

³³ Michael R. Frontani, “Becoming American: ‘Manila John’ Basilone, the Medal of Honor, and Italian-American Image, 1943-1945.” *Italian American Review* 4, no. 1 (2014): 27.

despite their obvious aversion to the German regime. Once the law was passed in 1942 that expedited the naturalization of the immigrant soldiers, sometimes requiring the naturalization ceremony to be performed at the war front, the German soldiers felt more accepted by their comrades. Kollander asserts that there has been little-to-no scholarship on the Camp Ritchie trainees, with most writing on the subject consisting of the soldiers' memoirs and oral histories.³⁴ This paper offers a scholarly description of the Ritchie Boys experiences in becoming naturalized through military service during World War II.

Similar to the program at the Military Intelligence Training Center at Camp Ritchie, the Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS) trained nearly 6,000 linguists, most of them Japanese Americans, for service in the Pacific sector of WWII. In the article, “‘They Are Our Human Secret Weapons’: The Military Intelligence Service and the Role of Japanese-Americans in the Pacific War and in the Occupation of Japan,” Kelli Y. Nakamura states that the efforts of the Nisei soldiers of the MISLS not only accelerated the end of the war through their efforts as translators and cultural interpreters, but they also contributed to rebuilding Japan after the war. Nakamura outlines the training, duties, and contributions of the Japanese American soldiers. Unlike the Japanese American combat soldiers in the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat, there has been little scholarly or popular research on the members of the MISLS. The reasons for the lack of recognition are partially due to the confidential classification of their work, obtaining information from the Japanese enemy, which was not available to the public until 1971. Also, there was the awkward issue of their dual identity as Japanese Americans who were “fighting for a government that had interred many of their family

³⁴ Patricia Kollander, "The Military Intelligence Training Center and the War against Nazism," *The Historian* 78, no. 2 (2016); Bruce B. Henderson, *Sons and Soldiers: The Untold Story of the Jews Who Escaped the Nazis and Returned with the U.S. Army to Fight Hitler* (New York, NY: William Morrow, 2018).

members at home while they were sent to fight the Japanese abroad.”³⁵ This essay is important for research on military naturalization because it is a somewhat unexplored subject that offers examples of Americans who were part of a community that was persecuted and interned, despite their citizenship, yet they were willing to carry out their civic duty as soldiers.

For the combat soldiers of Japanese descent, *Going for Broke: Japanese American Soldiers in the War against Nazi Germany*, tells the story of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the most decorated unit of WWII, which was a segregated unit composed of Japanese-Americans, many of whom were volunteers from Japanese internment camps. Written by James McCaffrey, this book is not a scholarly treatise; however, it does include an abundance of biographical information on the Japanese American soldiers who fought in this unit. This book tells the story of a group of segregated soldiers that performed the duties of citizenship without having the accompanying privileges.

In *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, Mae M. Ngai argues that restrictions on the number of immigrants allowed to legally enter the United States has encouraged the number of people entering the country illegally, creating an “impossible subject,” or a person who resides within a country without citizenship or rights. Like many modern historians, she asserts that the new immigration scholarship must be based on looking at ethnicity and race differently. She points to the “assimilation paradigm,” which marginalized race within scholarly studies and blamed the immigrant for being unable to assimilate due to deep cultural differences rather than American federal and social constructions.³⁶ Stating that

³⁵ Kelli Y. Nakamura, “‘They Are Our Human Secret Weapons’: The Military Intelligence Service and the Role of Japanese-Americans in the Pacific War and in the Occupation of Japan.” *The Historian* 70, no. 1 (March 2008), 56.

³⁶ Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014), xxii.; When Mae Ngai writes in *Impossible Subjects* of WWII and “the American liberation of the Philippines,”³⁶ she overlooks the number of Filipinos who actively participated in their own liberation from Japanese forces. The newspaper article, “Jose Calugas, Medal of Honor Winner, ‘death March’ Survivor,” is a biographical obituary of Jose Calugas, a

World War II was an important turning point in the history of Asian Americans, Ngai includes a chapter on the internment of Japanese Americans and the impact that it had on Asian immigration, as well as, foreign policy. Although Ngai concentrates on undocumented immigrants who are unable to enter the military, she also includes in-depth studies of those who were able to use military service as a pathway to citizenship. In particular, her inclusion of chapters on Filipinos, Mexicans, and Japanese are a valuable contribution to the study of military naturalization. Ngai also mentions that there is a similarity in Anglo Americans reaction towards the “unsettled response of nineteenth century Americans to the acculturated Native Americans.”³⁷

In the twentieth-century American West, Tejanos (Mexican Texans) joined the military for various reasons including adventure and assimilation. However, as Alex Mendoza asserts in his essay, “‘I Know No Other Country’: Téjanos and the American Wars of the Twentieth Century, 1917-1972,” WWII offered a deeper experience for Tejanos to demonstrate patriotism, as well as, a chance to obtain economic, educational and social opportunities. He maintains that Tejanos have been ignored by scholars until recently, when historians like Carole Christian and José Ramírez wrote about the Tejano military experience as it “pertains to citizenship,

member of the Philippine Scouts during WWII. After surviving the Bataan Death March and earning a Medal of Honor, Calugas was one of the Filipino soldiers who was offered American citizenship and continued service as an officer in the American army. Despite his citizenship and military service, he was unable to relocate his family to America until he retired in 1957. This article can be found at (Carol Beers, “Jose Calugas, Medal of Honor Winner, ‘death March’ Survivor,” *The Seattle Times* (Seattle, WA), January 24, 1998. <http://community.seattletimes.nwsources.com/archive/?date=19980124&slug=2730347>); Another Filipino soldier who was able to immigrate to America was Jesse M. Baltazar. In his autobiography Baltazar, a Filipino soldier, writes about his service in the United States Armed Forces, Far East (USAFFE) during World War II. Like Calugas, he was one of the few soldiers of the USAFFE that was able to use his service to immigrate to the United States, eventually serving as the first Filipino-born Officer in the United States Air Force. His story provides valuable insight into the question of service and citizenship because so many of the soldiers in the USAFFE, who were also in the Bataan Death March and survived, were not allowed to immigrate to the United States or to receive the benefits that they were promised. See the article at Carol Beers, “Jose Calugas, Medal of Honor Winner, ‘death March’ Survivor,” *The Seattle Times* (Seattle, WA), January 24, 1998. <http://community.seattletimes.nwsources.com/archive/?date=19980124&slug=2730347>.

³⁷ Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 110. For more information on the American Indian experience in World War II, *Code Talker* by Chester Nez and Judith Schiess Avila (New York: Penguin, 2012), is the story of one of the Navajo men who developed an uncrackable code for long distance communications using the Navajo language. Despite the fact that he was not even able to vote in his own state, Nez chose to join the military in order to do his duty as an American citizen.

acculturation, masculinity, and community.”³⁸ Although Mexican Americans fought in WWI, they still faced discrimination once they returned home to Texas.³⁹ Historians point to WWII, when 100,000 Mexican Americans joined the military to fight in the war, as the turning point for Tejanos pursuit of their political and social rights. This essay is one of few existing scholarly pieces on Mexican Americans in the military.

An article by James Burk, “Citizenship Status and Military Service: The Quest for Inclusion by Minorities and Conscientious Objectors,” examines the relationship between service in the military and citizenship, particularly concerning women, African Americans, and conscientious objectors. Burk notes that many scholars, including Judith Shklar, have asserted that military service is a characteristic of citizenship, therefore, “members of groups not recognized as full citizens could improve their social standing by performing military service.”⁴⁰ He also emphasizes the importance of military service to the African American community throughout American history because slaves were not allowed to use firearms, nor were they allowed to join the state militias. And yet, black soldiers still fought in a segregated military during WWII, only to return home to racism and limits on their citizenship. However, Burk claims that the military has often “been at the forefront of official efforts to end the stigma attached to race” following WWII and continuing to today.⁴¹ This article is useful for military

³⁸ Alex Mendoza, “I Know No Other Country’: Téjanos and the American Wars of the Twentieth Century, 1917-1972,” *Military History of the West* 41 (2011), 32.

³⁹ Maria-Cristina Garcia, “Garcia, Macario,” (June 15, 2010). <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fga76>. This article written for the Texas State Historical Association covered the life of Macario Garcia, a WWII veteran from Mexico. Garcia was awarded a Medal of Honor, a Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, and the Mérito Militar, the Mexican equivalent to the Medal of Honor. Despite his heroism and notoriety, he met with discrimination in Texas when he was refused service at a restaurant because he was Latino. This led to an altercation with the restaurant owner, who called the police and had Garcia arrested. As a result of his arrest, he became a symbol not only of the “plight of Hispanic soldiers who returned from the war, but the plight of the Hispanic community as a whole.”

⁴⁰ James Burk, “Citizenship Status and Military Service: The Quest for Inclusion by Minorities and Conscientious Objectors,” *Armed Forces & Society* 21, no. 4 (July 1995), paragraph 6.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, paragraph 15.

research in that Burk proposes that African Americans have long used military service as a tool to improve their social standing and citizenship rights.

Citing previous scholarship on citizenship and race in America, Deneesh Sohoni, Amin Deenesh Sohoni, and Amin Vafa agree that there have been two main principles of citizenship: Civic (shared values and beliefs) and Ethno-cultural (a common European heritage and culture). This article studies the efforts of Asian soldiers to gain American citizenship due to their service in the US military through the examination of court cases between 1900 and 1952. Through these lawsuits, the authors attempt to draw conclusions on how well government institutions, particularly the US judicial system, were able to control the “collective identity” of American citizens. Although the government passed a law in 1918 which allowed Filipino and Puerto Rican citizens who served in the American military to become American citizens, other Asians were still specifically excluded. It was not until after World War II, when the government passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, that all races were eligible for naturalization. Sohoni, et al., point out that military naturalization is often ignored by many historians that study the relationship between race and citizenship but use Mai Ngai and Lucy E. Salyer for their research. However, they assert that “the relationship between military naturalization, race, and other ascriptive characteristics” are still used in interpreting American citizenship.⁴² Because this article is specifically about gaining citizenship through military service, including soldiers from Japan, China, and the Philippines, it is essential to be included in a paper on military naturalization.

⁴² Deneesh Sohoni, Amin Deenesh Sohoni and Amin Vafa, “The Fight to Be American: Military Naturalization and Asian Citizenship,” *Asian American Law Journal* 17, no. 1 (2010), Section III, paragraph 6.

Mitchell Lemer, in his essay entitled “‘Is It for This We Fought and Bled?’: The Korean War and the Struggle for Civil Rights,” contends that the Korean War was a critical influence on the civil rights movement in the United States. He argues that conflicting attitudes toward the war within the African American community, and treatment of black soldiers in the battlefields, led to protests at home. Lemer finds that there has been a great deal of scholarship on African American soldiers throughout history but finds that scholarly interest in the Korean war has been lacking. This is unusual because the Korean War marked the first war after the desegregation of the US military, and although black soldiers found that the military sometimes failed to enforce the equality promised by Eisenhower, they felt it was a “first step towards progress and a gesture of good faith from the administration,” and it encouraged protests for civil rights after the war.⁴³ This essay is important as Lemer claims, the Korean War and African American service has been overlooked by scholars in the study of civil rights.

As fewer American soldiers joined the volunteer army after the Vietnam War, and the influx of undocumented immigrants caused the government to demand military assistance at the US borders, there was a shortage of military personnel by the end of the twentieth century. Darlene Goring wrote “In Service to America: Naturalization of Undocumented Alien Veterans” before 9/11. It is an outline of her plan to solve this problem. The plan calls for using the naturalization of undocumented aliens during peace time in order to lessen the shortage of soldiers in the US military. These soldiers would be used in conjunction with the INS to secure borders in order to prevent further influx of undocumented aliens. Goring, includes three different sections of her thesis including: Historic Examination of Alien Veteran, Congressional

⁴³ Mitchell Lemer, “‘Is It For This We Fought And Bled?’: The Korean War and the Struggle for Civil Rights,” *Journal of Military History* 82, no. 2 (April 2018), 522.

Bypasses, and Naturalization of Alien Veterans Unlawfully Present in the United States. She stresses that her plan would allow “qualified undocumented aliens to “earn” their place in American society,” recalling earlier historians who claimed that immigrants often joined the military to “earn” acceptance politically and socially.⁴⁴ Although Goring’s theory is somewhat outdated, she includes an annotated outline of naturalizing immigrants through military service throughout American history, which may inform any research for military naturalization.

In more recent years, the nationalities of immigrants have changed. As more people have begun to migrate from the Middle East and Central and South America, many have sought to become citizens through service in the military. In fact, the first American soldier to die in the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was not an American citizen – at least not until two U Senators from Georgia, Zell Miller and Zaxby Chambliss, introduced a bill calling for the immediate naturalization of soldiers killed in action. In this article, “Latino Immigrants in the American Discourses of Citizenship and Nationalism During the Iraqi War,” Hector Amaya reviews political speeches, the actions of Congress and news reports, particularly the biographies of deceased Latino soldiers, to argue that the deaths of non-citizen soldiers caused a “crisis of masculinity” which the government and media alleviated by ignoring the extreme poverty that forced Latino men into the military and emphasized their deaths as a sacrifice for the American dream.⁴⁵ Amaya uses the philosophy of Foucault to examine systems of power and Lauren Berlant and Dana Nelson to question ideas of citizenship. This essay is important for the study of Latino naturalization and military service during the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

⁴⁴ Darlene Goring, “In Service to America: Naturalization of Undocumented Alien Veterans,” *Seton Hall Law Review*, (January 1, 2000), 478.

⁴⁵ Hector Amaya, “Latino Immigrants in the American Discourses of Citizenship And Nationalism During the Iraqi War,” *Critical Discourse Studies* 4, no. 3 (December 2007), 253.

Since 2016, xenophobic attitudes of politicians, often prompted by public uneasiness, have caused changes in the vetting of immigrant soldiers. These changes have led to a shortage of military personnel in the US Army. According to an NPR article entitled, “US Army Is Discharging Immigrant Recruits Who Were Promised Citizenship,” recruits who are legal residents and have applied for military service through the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI) program are being turned away simply because the required multiple-layered security checks are taking too long due to lack of resources, meaning there are not enough personnel to process them. Others are being denied because they are deemed a security risk because of “foreign ties” in other countries, which are the normal ties of family members that any immigrant might have. The MAVNI program was created to offer opportunities for immigrants with special skills, such as language or medical abilities, to have an accelerated path to citizenship through military service.

Before 2017, recruits could apply for citizenship before entering basic training and could complete their naturalization process in ten weeks rather than the traditional ten months. Naturalization Offices were opened at select military bases across the country to enable soldiers to become citizens before they were sent to fight overseas. After 2017, the Department of Defense required that soldiers must serve 180 days and have a complete security check before citizenship is granted. The delays and changes in the processing of new immigrant recruits caused a sixteen percent drop in applications for naturalization due to hundreds of recruits’ applications being denied, terminated or withdrawn. This decrease in naturalizations led to the closure of many of the naturalization centers at military posts in the US and overseas. As application approval continued to decline, the US military has begun to fail to meet its

enrollment requirements. The military is dependent on immigrant recruits due to the lack of interest of American citizens.⁴⁶

Capstone Project

When I began my internship several years ago, I researched fallen American soldiers who were buried at the Suresnes American Cemetery near Paris. A noticeable percentage of these soldiers were recent immigrants, mostly from Southern and Eastern Europe. During my research, I was surprised to find that at the same time the United States was depending on these foreign-born soldiers to fight for America, legislation was passed that limited the number of people allowed to immigrate to the United States. For example, on February 5, 1917, Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1917, one of the first to make any major restrictions on European immigration – barring “criminals; persons who failed to meet certain moral standards; persons with various diseases; paupers; assorted radicals; and illiterates.”⁴⁷ It also completely blocked immigration from the “Asiatic Barred Zone” which included most of Asia, with the exceptions of Japan which had a “gentlemen’s agreement” and the Philippines which was an American territory. Just months later, the United States entered the war.

Despite the overall discrimination of immigrants by the American public, unnaturalized immigrants were required to register for, and were subject to, the military draft. However, the American public found service by soldiers that were not yet citizens distasteful. Therefore, the government required immediate naturalization of all foreign-born soldiers which necessitated an

⁴⁶ Tara Copp, “US Closes Naturalization Offices at Military Basic Training Sites,” (Military Times. Military Times, March 6, 2018). <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2018/03/06/us-closes-naturalization-offices-at-military-basic-training-sites/>; Noel Wiehe “Expediting the Citizenship Process at Benning,” www.army.mil. March 3, 2015. Accessed September 24, 2019. https://www.army.mil/article/143809/expediting_the_citizenship_process_at_benning.; Vanessa Romo, “U.S. Army Is Discharging Immigrant Recruits Who Were Promised Citizenship,” NPR. NPR, July 9, 2018. Accessed September 25, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2018/07/09/626773440/u-s-army-is-discharging-immigrant-recruits-who-were-promised-citizenship>.

⁴⁷ Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*, 2nd ed. (New York: Perennial, 2002), 279.

effort by the American government to expedite the naturalization process. Immigrant soldiers, sometimes hundreds at a time, took their oaths at the training camps before shipping out for Europe.⁴⁸ There were also some attempts to “Americanize” the soldiers and teach them to speak English. However, this effort was made mostly for those who immigrated from European countries.⁴⁹ On the other hand, men from Asian countries were still drafted into the US Army and served during the war, despite the restrictions on their eligibility for citizenship. It took seventeen years of courtroom battles before the passage of the Nye-Lea Act in 1935, which allowed citizenship of Asian veterans of World War I.⁵⁰

Still, there does not seem to be much evidence that immigrant participation in World War I, made much difference in the xenophobic attitudes of the American public as evidenced by the passage of restrictive laws such as the Immigration Act of 1924, also known as the Johnson-Reed Act.⁵¹ This legislation not only put quotas and limitations on immigrants from eastern and southern Europe, it almost completely banned all immigration from Asia. This act was seen as an insult to many Asian countries, particularly Japan. These restrictions not only played an important factor in the crumbling relationship between Japan and the United States, it also created difficulties for the escape of Jewish refugees from Europe during WWII.

Even after various groups gained citizenship, they often did not gain the rights or acceptance that citizenship should have provided. For example, African Americans were restricted from voting by Jim Crow laws in the South, even though they had been given full citizenship with the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. Also, Native Americans were not

⁴⁸ Alexander Barnes and Peter L. Belmonte. *Forgotten Soldiers of World War I: America's Immigrant Doughboys* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd, 2018), 19; Lucy E. Salyer, “Baptism by Fire: Race, Military Service, and U.S. Citizenship Policy, 1918-1935,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 3 (January 2004), 849.

⁴⁹ Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All!: Foreign-Born Soldiers in World War I* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2011), 3.

⁵⁰ Salyer, 850.

⁵¹ “Immigration Act of 1924.” Accessed October 2, 2019. <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/immigration-act-1924>.

granted citizenship until Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act in 1924.⁵² Although this law naturalized American Indians, voting rights were established by state, and many states restricted Native American voting for many years after this legislation was passed. With the onset of WWII, immigrants and citizens seeking civil rights that were denied them, joined the military in order to fight for the privileges of citizenship. As historian, Ronald Takaki asserted, many of these soldiers in World War II fought for a double victory, not only to end oppression overseas, but to end bigotry at home.⁵³

I first became interested in the subject of immigrants in the military when I began my internship several years ago. I researched fallen American soldiers who were buried at the Suresnes American Cemetery near Paris. While preparing biographies for these men, I noticed a large percentage of these soldiers were recent immigrants, mostly from Southern and Eastern Europe. In addition to these soldiers being recent immigrants, I found that many of them were not yet American citizens. During my research, I was surprised to find that at the same time the United States was depending on these foreign-born soldiers to fight for America, legislation was passed that limited the number of people allowed to immigrate to the United States.

I decided to continue my research as a thesis for my capstone experience. As part of my experience, I prepared teachers' guides for the Kennesaw State University's Museum of History and Holocaust Education. Although World War II presented an important turning point for many different groups, I chose to concentrate on two groups in particular: European Jews and Japanese Americans. These groups fit in well with the exhibits that were already featured at the museum. They also offered a unique perspective on citizenship and military service. Both groups fought against the country of their own ancestry, which meant they would be executed as traitors should

⁵² "Indian Citizenship Act." Accessed October 2, 2019. <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/indian-citizenship-act>.

⁵³ Ronald T. Takaki, *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co, 2001), 5.

they be captured by the enemy. Also, both were sought out by the US military for their linguistic skills which were lacking among most Americans and were important for the gathering of military intelligence from the enemy.

I first discovered the Ritchie Boys while doing preliminary research for my capstone project. The Ritchie Boys were soldiers who were trained at the Military Intelligence Training Center at Camp Ritchie, Maryland. Approximately two-thousand of these soldiers were German-born, many of whom were new citizens or not yet naturalized. Most of the German and Austrian emigres were Jews who had escaped Nazi persecution and were classified as “enemy aliens” by the United States, despite their obvious aversion to the German regime. However, the US Army soon found that these men had something that the American armed forces desperately needed. Their ability to speak the German language, familiarity with German customs and terrain, and newly acquired interrogation training made them valuable assets to the war effort, serving in the Military Intelligence Service. These men would use their knowledge of the German language and culture to interrogate prisoners, translate captured documents and radio messages, and other reconnoitering duties. The only problem was their lack of citizenship papers. When the Second War Powers Act was passed in 1942, the naturalization of immigrant soldiers was expedited, sometimes requiring the naturalization ceremony to be performed on foreign soil, even at the war front. After the war, they assisted in preparing for war crimes trials and reconstruction of war-torn areas.⁵⁴

For the “Ritchie Boys” Teachers’ Guides, I concentrated on four particular soldiers. Three of them were German Jews and one was an Italian Jew. I chose these soldiers primarily

⁵⁴ Second War Powers Act, 56 Stat. 176, Senate Bill 2208, March 27, 1942; Kollander, “The Military Intelligence Training Center and the War against Naziism,”; Henderson, *Sons and Soldiers*.

because they had biographies or autobiographies written about them. Since soldiers working in the intelligence field were often sworn to secrecy, these men were often hesitant about talking or writing about their military services and their stories were not a well-known to much of the public. These men wanted to serve in the US Army for many reasons. In addition to receiving expedited naturalization, they were grateful for finding asylum in America and wanted to repay their adopted country. They also hoped to fight against the regime that had taken away so much from them and their families. Finally, they hoped to rescue friends and family members who had been left behind, possibly in concentration camps.

These soldiers' stories have been documented in several biographical books. Although these accounts are not scholarly research, they are important because they are personal stories of individuals during the war. One such account is *Witness to the Storm: A Jewish Journey From Nazi Berlin to the 82nd Airborne, 1920-1945*, an autobiography by Werner T. Angress, a German Jew who escaped from Nazi Germany, immigrating to the United States. Angress trained at Ft. Ritchie to become an interrogator, eventually becoming a naturalized citizen in order to serve with the 82nd Airborne Division. His style of writing is very conversational, which makes this book easy to read. While an autobiography may hold some bias due to the personal proximity that the author had to the events discussed in the book, it does give the reader an insight to the motivations of immigrants in military service. This book provides a specific example of an immigrant who was granted citizenship in return for military service.⁵⁵

Another book about a Camp Ritchie boy, *Someday You Will Understand: My Father's Private World War II*, is a biography of Walter Wolff, a Jewish man who immigrated to the

⁵⁵ Werner T. Angress, *Witness to the Storm: A Jewish Journey From the Nazi Berlin to the 82nd Airborne, 1920-1945* (Indiana University Press edition. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2019).

United States from Belgium, eventually became one of the “Ritchie Boys,” and was drafted into the U.S. Army before he was naturalized. It is written by Wolff’s daughter, who used the copious amounts of his wartime letters and photographs to compose her father’s memoirs of the war, and his post-war service with the Pentagon.⁵⁶ Again, this is a personal story as told by the soldier’s own child; therefore, the author may show some partiality. However, the use of personal letters from the front gives details of the war and a first-person view of events as they happened.

The last German refugee biography, *"I Must Be a Part of This War:" a German American's Fight against Hitler and Nazism*, was written by Patricia Kollander and John O’Sullivan, a professor and associate professor of history at Florida Atlantic University. The only scholarly work based on the life of a Ritchie Boy, this biography on Kurt Frank Korf uses personal interviews given to the writers before Korf’s death, along with his WWII papers and documents to relate the story of Korf’s stint in the U.S. Army before becoming an American citizen.⁵⁷ His narrative is another story of a refugee from Hitler’s Germany who was naturalized after he served in the American military.

The book, *Unavoidable Hope: A Jewish Soldier's Fight to Save His Family from Fascism*, is a biography of Alessandro (Alex) Sabbadini, an Italian immigrant who was Jewish. Written by Sabbadini’s son, Roger Allen Sabbadini, this book is billed as a fight against Fascism, although Hitler had already invaded Italy by the time Sabbadini and his unit landed in Anzio in 1944. He was one of the few Italian Jews who joined the army and fought in the U.S. 5th Army, using his language skills to help advance his unit through Italy. Sabbadini was naturalized on the

⁵⁶ Nina Wolff Feld, *Someday You Will Understand: My Father's Private World War II* (New York, NY: Arcade Publishing, 2014).

⁵⁷ Patricia Kollander and John OSullivan, *"I Must Be a Part of This War" a German American's Fight against Hitler and Nazism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005).

battlefields of Tunisia in 1942 before going on to fight in Sicily, where he earned his Purple Heart.⁵⁸ Because of his unique exploits, this book is a notable addition to the study of military naturalization and World War II, despite the fact that it is not written by a historian.

These men's stories are an integral part of my Ritchie Boys project. They are combined with: an overview of their training at the Military Intelligence Training Center at Camp Ritchie, a timeline which includes federal immigration legislation, a vocabulary page, a teachers' resources page, and three student activity pages. These made up the bulk of the Teachers' Guide for the "Ritchie Boys" unit.

While researching the Ritchie Boys, I discovered another group who served in the US Army during World War II in the Military Intelligence Service. These men were born in the United States but were of Japanese heritage. These second-generation Japanese Americans are known as "Nisei." Despite being fully American, they were incarcerated in Japanese internment camps as "alien enemies," along with members of their family who were born in Japan and were legally unable to become American citizens. Ironically, many of the men who were assigned to train at the Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS) were drafted from inside the walls of these internment camps.

While their friends and family remained behind the walls of the camps, these men strengthened their knowledge of their ancestral language at the MISLS. They also learned methods of interrogation, translation, and map reading. The efforts of the Nisei soldiers of the MISLS not only accelerated the end of the war through their efforts as translators and cultural

⁵⁸ Roger Allen Sabbadini, *Unavoidable Hope: A Jewish Soldier's Fight to Save His Family from Fascism* (Bend, OR: Alighieri Publishers LLC, 2017).

interpreters, but they also contributed to the reconstruction of Japan after the war. Unlike the Japanese American soldiers in the 442nd Infantry Battalion who fought in Europe, these soldiers served on the Pacific front, which meant that they may come face to face with former friends or family members, in addition to the dangers of being perceived as traitors if captured. They also differed from the 442nd Infantry in that they were not segregated from white soldiers but were dispersed throughout US military forces.⁵⁹

Again, I concentrated on four soldiers for the “Nisei Linguists” teachers’ guides. Much like the Ritchie Boys, these men were sworn to secrecy during their service in the military. However, there are many Japanese American websites which feature information on these men. The US Army website also includes much information on their services as well as photographs, both formal and in the field. These men joined the Army despite the discrimination they experienced because they wanted to prove their loyalty to the United States. They also hoped to obtain a better life for their families who may have been interned during their service. As with the Ritchie Boys, I have included biographies on the Nisei soldiers. In the case of the Nisei soldiers, much of my research on their lives was limited to obituaries, service records, and information from various websites.⁶⁰ However, I did find two biographies that offer personal stories similar to an oral history.

One of these books is *Rising Son: A U.S. Soldiers Secret and Heroic Role in World War II*, written by Sandra Vea, an educator of twenty-five years. In this book, Vea retells the war

⁵⁹ Kelli Y. Nakamura, “‘They Are Our Human Secret Weapons’: The Military Intelligence Service and the Role of Japanese-Americans in the Pacific War and in the Occupation of Japan.” *The Historian* 70, no. 1 (March 2008); James C. McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service during World War II* (Washington DC: Books Dept of the Army, 2006); James C. McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service during World War II* (Dept. of the Army: Books Express Pub., 2011).

⁶⁰ The main websites used for Nisei military service included the US Army website at www.army.mil, the Go For Broke National Education Center at www.goforbroke.com, the Japanese American Veterans Association at www.JAVADC.org, and the Japanese American website at www.densho.org.

stories of her partner's father, Masao Abe. Abe was already in the US Army when World War II began. Later he was trained at the MISLS and posted to duty on various islands in the Pacific. Known for using his language skills to talk enemy soldiers out of hiding, he worked in Japan after the war using his language skills to assist in reconstruction. Although this book has not been peer reviewed, it offers the personal narrative of a Nisei soldier.⁶¹

The second book, *Midnight in Broad Daylight: A Japanese American Family Caught between Two Worlds*, was written by an educator for the University of Hawaii system and the Punahou School in Honolulu. This book recounts the story of Harry Fukuhara, a Nisei soldier who was recruited from the internment camp at the Gila River Relocation Center. After his training at the MISLS, Fukuhara fought bravely throughout the war, even after the bombing of Hiroshima, where his mother and brothers lived. Fukuhara's biography offers a unique point of view on the harrowing life of the Nisei soldiers.

I included these two biographies along with two others on Roy Matsumoto and Kan Tagami. The rest of my "Nisei Linguists" teachers' guides included: a timeline, vocabulary, overview, teachers' resource page, and two student activity guides. The timeline also includes an extensive listing of immigration legislation restricting the immigration of Asian persons, beginning with the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Although these Nisei soldiers fought to be recognized as full citizens of the United States, it was not until the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952 that America ended the exclusion of all Asian immigration and naturalization in the United States. It was at this time that many of the Japanese Issei (first generation immigrants) who were forced into

⁶¹ Vea, Sandra. *Rising Son: A U.S. Soldiers Secret and Heroic Role in World War II*. Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 2019.

internment camps during the war, were finally granted citizenship. Therefore, the sacrifices made by the Nisei soldiers did not automatically grant benefits to their parents after the war, but probably contributed to the eventual naturalization of their families. It is interesting to note that this same statute still allowed more immigrants from Northern and Western Europe and attempted to block persons from Communist countries who were perceived as a threat to national security.⁶²

The Importance of Service and Citizenship

As a child, I always thought that the US military was automatically inclusive. It never occurred to me that immigrants and even US citizens might be denied the right to join the military, especially during a major conflict. In my research on service and citizenship, I found that military service did not always circumvent the laws that were set to control the racial composition of the American public. I felt that it was important to emphasize immigration laws in my Teachers' Guides because these laws were relevant to the men who fought in World War II, and they are still relevant today. For example, in 2017 President Donald Trump attempted to pass an Executive Order preventing the immigration of all citizens coming from seven Muslim countries into the United States by citing the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952.⁶³

There have also been delays and changes in the processing of new immigrant recruits which caused a sixteen percent drop in applications for naturalization due to hundreds of recruits' applications being denied, terminated or withdrawn. As application approval continues

⁶² Patrick McCarran, "The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (The McCarran-Walter Act)," U.S. Department of State, accessed November 07, 2020, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/immigration-act>.

⁶³ Olivia B. Waxman, "What to Know About the 1952 Law Invoked by President Trump's Immigration Order," *Time.com*, February 06, 2017, accessed February 06, 2017, <https://time.com/4656940/donald-trump-immigration-order-1952/>.

to decline, the US military has begun to fail to meet its enrollment requirements.⁶⁴ If this trend continues, not only will this threaten the long-held precedent of accepting immigrants into military service in exchange for citizenship, but it also threatens the security of the country.

With the recent change of the presidency, questions arise about the future of immigrants in the American military. Will President Joe Biden reverse the trend and ease the naturalization process for immigrants who are willing to join the US military in exchange for citizenship? What restrictions, if any, will be made on the ethnic and religious composition of our military? As for my own beliefs, the US military should be as it was when I was an army brat – a path to citizenship through military service.

⁶⁴ Noel Wiehe “Expediting the Citizenship Process at Benning,” www.army.mil. March 3, 2015. Accessed September 24, 2019. https://www.army.mil/article/143809/expediting_the_citizenship_process_at_benning; Vanessa Romo, “U.S. Army Is Discharging Immigrant Recruits Who Were Promised Citizenship,” NPR. NPR, July 9, 2018. Accessed September 25, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2018/07/09/626773440/u-s-army-is-discharging-immigrant-recruits-who-were-promised-citizenship>.