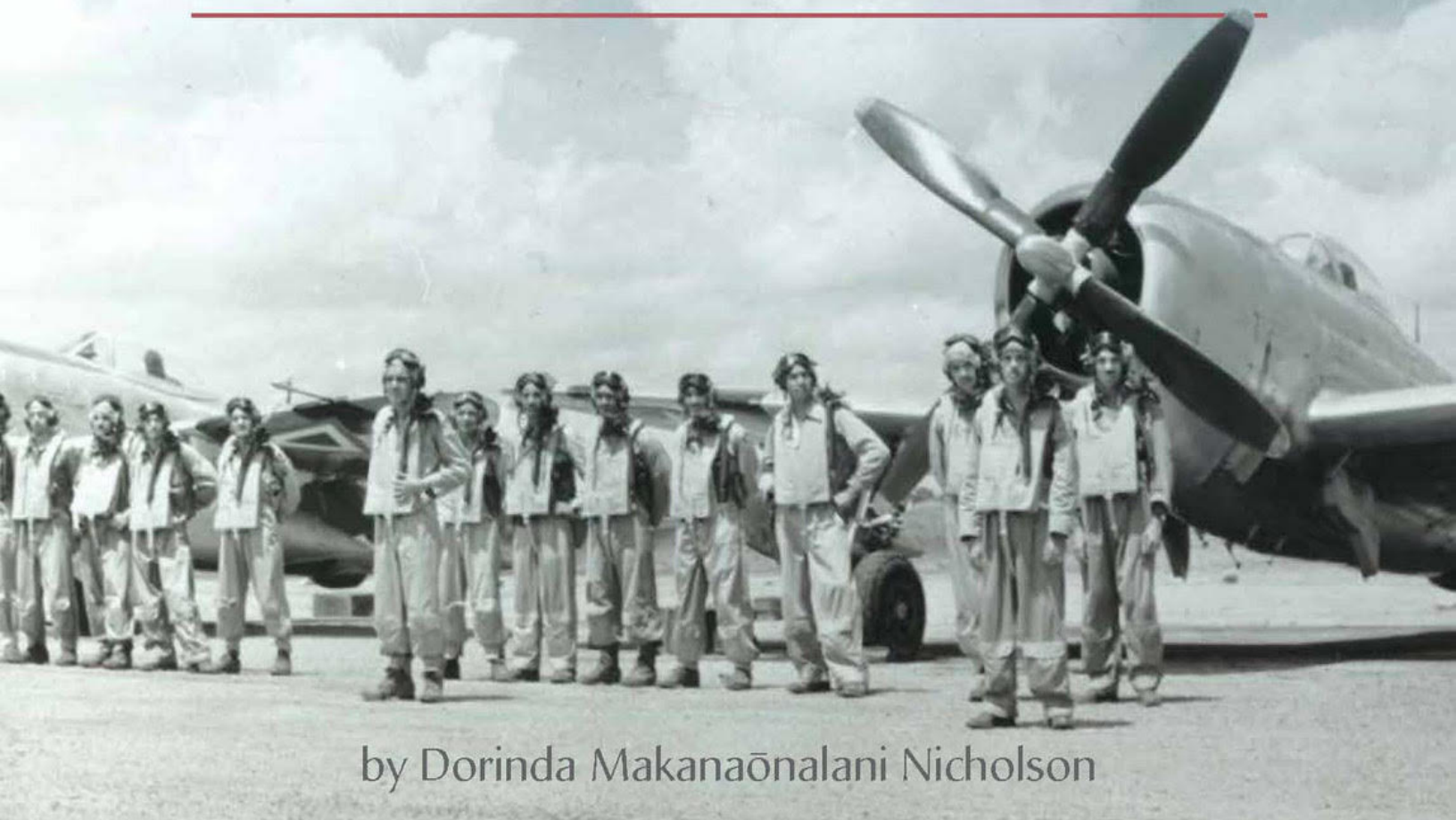

THE SCHOOL THE AZTEC EAGLES BUILT

A TRIBUTE TO MEXICO'S WORLD WAR II AIR FIGHTERS



by Dorinda Makanaōnalani Nicholson

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR
THE SCHOOL THE AZTEC EAGLES BUILT: A TRIBUTE TO MEXICO'S
WORLD WAR II AIR FIGHTERS, BY DORINDA MAKANAŌNALANI NICHOLSON

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The Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) founded the Américas Award in 1993 to encourage and commend authors, illustrators, and publishers who produce quality children's and young adult books that portray Latin America, the Caribbean, or Latinos in the United States, and to provide teachers with recommendations for classroom use. CLASP offers up to two annual book awards, together with a recommended list of titles. For more information concerning the Américas Award, including additional classroom resources, please visit the CLASP website at <http://www.claspprograms.org/>.

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THE SCHOOL THE AZTEC EAGLES BUILT: A TRIBUTE TO MEXICO'S WORLD WAR II AIR FIGHTERS

Recommended Grade levels

Upper elementary and middle schools

Recommended Subjects

Social Studies, U.S. history, world history, language arts

Connections to Common Core Standards

Please note that the standards listed below are Anchor Standards. Specific grade level standards can be found at <http://www.corestandards.org>.

English Language Arts Standards: Reading

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

English Language Arts Standards: Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

English Language Arts Standards: Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRASL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

English Language Arts Standards: Language

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

History/Social Studies: Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

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

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.3

Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history / social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

History/Social Studies: Craft and Structure

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5

Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

History/Social Studies: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8

Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Note to Teachers

Teachers may also consider using this book to address specific state history-social science standards that focus on the Mexican-American War, Mexican Revolution, U.S.–Mexican relations, and World War II.

The procedures used in this teacher’s guide are inspired by the “into, through, and beyond” literature approach described in the following article:

Brinton, D.M., Goodwin, J., & Ranks, L. (1994). Helping language minority students read and write analytically: The journey into, through, and beyond. In F. Peitzman & G. Gadda (Eds.), *With different eyes: Insights into teaching language minority students across the disciplines*, pp. 57–88. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Key Topics

Mexican-American War, Mexican Revolution, U.S.–Mexican relations, World War II

- Key Themes** promises, sacrifices, legacies
- Materials** Book, *The School the Aztec Eagles Built: A Tribute to Mexico's World War II Air Fighters*
Questions and Activity Strips
- Organizing Questions**
- How are sacrifices, promises, and legacies significant in students' lives?
 - What are some key historical events in U.S.–Mexican relations and how do their legacies continue to influence U.S.–Mexican relations?
 - How did Mexico contribute to U.S. efforts during World War II?
- Procedures**
1. **Into the literature:** To set the context for *The School the Aztec Eagles Built: A Tribute to Mexico's World War II Air Fighters*, ask students to identify Mexico's geographic location in relation to the United States. What U.S. states does it border? *California, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas*. Ask students what they know about the history of U.S.–Mexico relations. *Answers will vary*. Students may want to discuss topics such as the Mexican-American War. Point out that some basic information about Mexico's geographic location in relation to the United States the history of U.S.–Mexico relations will be briefly mentioned at the beginning of the book.
 2. Point out to students that the main focus of the book is Mexico's support of the United States during World War II. Three key themes of the book are promises (a declaration that one will do or refrain from doing something specified), sacrifices (the act of giving up something that you want to keep especially in order to get or do something else to help someone), and legacies (something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past). Ask some of the following questions:
 - a. What are some examples of promises that have been made or broken in students' experience?
 - b. What sorts of sacrifices have students made for the benefit of others?
 - c. What sacrifices by others have students observed?
 - d. What are some examples of legacies of key events or people?
 3. Ask the following question: What event prompted the United States to enter World War II? When did this take place? *The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941. On December 8, 1941, the United States declared war on Japan.*
 4. Point out that Mexico pledged support and aid to the United States after the U.S. entry into World War II. One of the ways that it supported the United States was through the delivery of war materials, including crude oil, to the United States. Two Mexican oil

tankers carrying crude oil to the United States in 1942 were attacked by Germany. This prompted Mexico to enter the war on the side of the United States and the Allied powers.

5. **Through the Literature:** Divide the class into small groups of 2–3 students. Distribute one of the Question and Activity Strips to each group. There are a total of 16 Question and Activity Strips. Each strip corresponds with a section of the book. The corresponding page numbers of the book are noted at the top of each strip.
6. Read the book, *The School the Aztec Eagles Built: A Tribute to Mexico's World War II Air Fighters*, to the students. Each group should pay special attention to the corresponding section of the book as it is read.
7. Allow student groups the rest of the class period and homework time, if necessary, to work on the questions and activities on the Question and Activity Strips. Allow students access to the book.
8. During the next class period, allow each student group five minutes each to present a summary of its responses to the questions and their project.
9. **Beyond the Literature:** Choose among the following:
 - a. Have students write a one-page textbook entry about Squadron 201 for either a U.S. or world history textbook. What information would you highlight? What images would you include?
 - b. Have students develop a blueprint for a monument to Squadron 201. Where would they build it? What perspectives would they include? Who would they highlight? What quotes would they highlight from book?
 - c. Have students write their reflections on one of the key themes (promises, sacrifices, legacies) in the book. A sample reflection written by Aime Chao, Live Oak School, San Francisco, is included below.

“Promises” by Aime Chao

Promises are not to be broken; they are to be fulfilled to show trust and compassion towards another. Many promises may end up broken, and they are made to assure another that one will do, give or arrange something as pledged. Throughout my life, I have made promises with others. For example, I vowed stay close to some friends during their difficult times, I committed myself to help someone find who they were, and I swore that I would try my best to assist others. I made promises often because I didn't want to see others suffer, in doing so I sacrificed many things I shouldn't have, like my happiness and opportunities to improve myself. By sacrificing so much to help others close to me, I began to feel myself fall and stumble while they learned to walk again. I found myself drifting away from those who I helped as they were taken and befriended by others. I always told myself that making others happy would make me happy, and that should mean I would be

pleased for pulling others out of the darkness and shining a light to guide them out, but I wasn't any happier, instead I was falling into that darkness that I removed so many out of, and I couldn't find a way out. Making a promise to myself was something new, something I didn't know how to do at first, I had always fulfilled promises to others, so how would I do the same for myself? The first promise I made to myself was to smile and stay optimistic; the second was that I needed to look out for myself. Lastly, I promised to discover who I was; I didn't want to be defined by my appearance, interests, or intellect, I desired to understand my personality and what I lacked. To fulfill these promises I changed schools and a circle of friends. By recalling my early childhood in San Francisco where I used to laugh and not have a care in the world. I moved back to the foggy city where I found what I truly enjoyed doing: art, music, laughter, and being me, a quirky hardworking girl. I learned a deeper understanding of inclusion and a more nuanced sense of acceptance. Although it took me a few years to slowly climb out of that darkness that seized, I did manage and those promises I made to myself, they may have cracks, but they haven't broken yet, and that's all that seems to matter for now.

QUESTION AND ACTIVITY STRIPS

1. Mexico and the United States Join Forces, pp. 4–5

Give some historic examples of how Mexico and the United States were not allies.

What factors led to the U.S.–Mexican War?

What was the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo?

What factors led to reconciliation between Mexico and the United States?

What was the significance of the formation of the Mexican Expeditionary Air Force?

Activity: Analyze the primary source document, “Americans All: Let’s Fight for Victory” on page 5. What does it symbolize? Develop a new poster that is representative of another U.S.–Mexican united effort that is represented in this book.

2. Ángel Bacanegra: Tepoztlán, Morelos, Mexico, p. 6

Locate Tepoztlán, Morelos, Mexico, on a map.

What was the Mexican Revolution?

How did Ángel’s father influence Ángel’s career?

Activity: In this section, Ángel’s career is influenced by his father. Each student should write a paragraph about someone who has made a significant impact on your life. In what ways did this person influence your life?

3. World War II Comes to North America: 1941–42, p. 7

What resulted from the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941?

What were the Axis and Allied nations?

What factors led Mexico’s declaration of war on the Axis nations?

Activity: Develop a political cartoon that is representative of something described on this page. Consider questions such as: Whose perspective will you represent and why? What symbols, if any, will you incorporate? Will you add a caption? Where would you like to have your political cartoon published? Which country would you like to have your political cartoon published?

4. Mexico Breaks Tradition: 1943–44, pp. 8–9

What was the significance of U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt’s visit to Mexico and meetings with Mexican President Ávila Camacho?

How did the Bracero Program contribute to the U.S. war effort?

Why do you think President Ávila Camacho was initially reluctant to send Mexican troops to fight overseas?

Activity: Examine the photograph of the braceros. “Bracero” means to work with one’s arms. Many worked as farm laborers. Develop a group poem from the perspective of one of the braceros. What might he have been thinking prior to departure for the United States?

5. A Teacher’s Request: July 20, 1944, pp. 10–11

Examine the photos. What types of feelings are evoked from the men?

When President Ávila Camacho asked if the departing soldiers had any last-minute or special requests, Ángel Bocanegra del Castillo requested that he wanted a school to be built in his hometown. Why do you think this was his request?

Activity: If you were asked if you had a special request prior to embarking on a difficult journey, what would you request and why? Each student should write a response to this question.

6. Pocatello Air Force Base, Idaho, USA: Late July–November 27, 1944, pp. 12–15

What is Mexico’s Independence Day?

Describe the soldiers’ training.

What was the significance of the Women’s Army Corps (WAC)?

Activity: Write a letter from Ángel or Hector to his family in Mexico.

7. Greenville, Texas, USA: Late November 1944–Mid March 1945, pp. 16–17

Describe some of the difficulties the soldiers faced in Greenville.

What was the primary military mission of Air Squadron 201 or Aztec Eagles?

Activity: Write an editorial to a fictitious local Greenville newspaper from the perspective of the Mexican soldiers who encountered discrimination.

8. California, USA–Manila, Philippines: March 27–April 30, 1945, pp. 18–21

What were some of the challenges that the soldiers faced on the USS Fairisle?

How did soldiers pass the time?

Who was U.S. General Douglas MacArthur?

While the soldiers were overseas, what was happening in Ángel Bocanegra’s hometown?

Activity: During the long voyage across the Pacific, some Squadron 201 pilots played Mexican melodies. Write lyrics for one of the melodies.

9. Porac Airfield, Philippines: May 1–June 1945, pp. 22–23

What role did Douglas MacArthur play in World War II?

What do you think contributed to the mixed feelings toward the Mexican pilots among the U.S. pilots and their group crews?

Activity: While trying to liberate Luzon from the Japanese, Squadron 201 lost two men. Write short eulogies for these two men.

10. Ferry Missions, Biak Island, July 14–21, 1945, pp. 24–25

What are ferry missions?

Describe the mixture of emotions that is evoked from this description.

Activity: The P-47D-30 aircraft featured insignia of both countries. Discuss the designs and redraw the planes with a different way of depicting the insignia of both countries.

11. Combat Missions: July–August 1945, pp. 26–27

What are “very long range” missions?

What are kamikaze pilots?

What is the significance of the atomic bombings of Japan?

Activity: Calculate the distance between Manila and Formosa (Taiwan), a former colony of Japan.

12. Tributes to Squadron 201, September–October 23, 1945, p. 28

What is “friendly fire”?

Activity: Design a monument for the five Mexican pilots who died assisting the United States and Filipino troops in the liberation of Luzon.

13. Plaza de la Constitución, Mexico City, Mexico: November 18, 1945, p. 29

What are your reactions to the two photographs?

Activity: Write a short speech on behalf of President Ávila Camacho that he will deliver on November 18, 1945.

14. Tepoztlan, Morelos, Mexico: November 25, 1945, pp. 30–31

What are some key lessons that can be learned from this story?

Activity: Develop a conversation between the men of Squadron 201 with the 2006 students at Escuela Escuadron 201.

15. A Lasting Legacy, p. 32

How has Squadron 201 affected U.S.–Mexican relations over time?

Activity: If you could build another monument to Squadron 201, where would you build it and why? What would you feature in its design?

16. Author’s Note, p. 33

Through the book, *The School the Aztec Eagles Built: A Tribute to Mexico’s World War II Air Fighters*, how has Dorinda Makanaōnalani Nicholson helped to preserve the story of Squadron 201?

Activity: If you could interview Ángel Bocanegro’s wife, Laura, what five questions would you ask her?
