

We the People

Freedom, Liberty,
Justice and Equality



FORT WORTH ISD JROTC

2018 Honors U.S. Military History Staff Ride

PHILADELPHIA, VALLEY FORGE, GETTYSBURG AND WASHINGTON, D.C.

FOREWORD

The annual Honors U.S. Military History Staff Ride is more than a ride; it's a story. It's an exploration of historic truths. It's a remarkable journey of seeking, acquiring, reflecting, learning, and growing for both cadets and instructors. It's the birth, the story, the challenges and the ideals of our Constitution, our democracy, our country, our foundation, our freedom. On this, our 8th Staff Ride, our cadets gained unique insights and a greater knowledge and understanding of their rights, responsibilities, sacrifices, and roles as citizens to strengthen and protect our democracy.

The Founding Fathers and designers of our democracy were extraordinary risk-takers, embodying "We the People." Against tremendous opposition they established a form of government

and developed a constitution with a framework granting **Freedom, Liberty, Equality** and **Justice** for all citizens.

Our story has been one which preserved individual dignity and equality that is ultimately realized in the social, economic and political life of the nation.

This journey of over 231 years as the world's premier democracy has been fraught with challenges and sacrifices as "We the People" work to achieve the principled ideas embodied in our Constitution. The framers knew that our Constitution was not a perfect document. From its inception to today, the Constitution has endured and adapted, inspired and motivated, changed and remained the same, challenged us and changed us. Our young people as citizens are the guardians, the

caretakers, the voices, and the engine of our democracy. Our young people as citizens are preservers of individual freedom, human dignity, and protectors of the values of life, liberty, and equality. Our young people as citizens are the molders and makers, the decision makers and pioneers, the key to our perpetual freedom, liberty, equality and justice.

Studying, challenging, and listening carefully were the hallmarks of this Staff Ride. Careful examination of history tells us why we must act, tells us what we must do, and tells us where we must go in order to fulfill and embody the ideals of our Constitution.

This Staff Ride produced disquiet and perplexity in most students while visiting the Holocaust Museum and the National Museum of African American

History & Culture. Coming face to face with the atrocities and complexities of human nature solidified the *why*, the *what*, and the *where* of our Constitution.

Finally, this Staff Ride provided an existential experience for every participant. Turn the pages. Travel along with FWISD cadets. Refresh your knowledge of the birth of our nation. Take a historic view of our ingenious Constitution and gain a renewed appreciation for the power of "We the People."

Experience their learning. Enjoy the journey.

LTC RICHARD CROSSLEY JR. (RET.)
Director of FWISD JROTC Programs



INTRODUCTION

The assignment for a group of 20 mostly Fort Worth ISD JROTC students was to link together the American Revolution, the Constitution, the Civil War (specifically Gettysburg), the atrocities of World War II, and the American Civil Rights movement, all under the over-arching theme of "We the People..."

The students spent five days in historic Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C. and Virginia searching for the answers. It was all a part of what's called an Experiential Staff Ride, hosted by the JROTC Department working in conjunction with the District's Social Studies Department. A Staff Ride is a study of a campaign or battle done on the grounds of the actual event.

This was the eighth Staff Ride conducted by the District as part of the Honors U.S. Military History program.

"We use the Staff Rides to provide a select group of students a greater understanding of our military heritage and the significance it has had on our country," said LTC Richard Crossley, director of JROTC Programs.

Each evening students were divided into groups for a period of reflection and to work on the task of completing an essay that summarizes

the personal feelings they discovered during the trip, as well as completing their primary assignment.

Evans Boodhna, a junior from South Hills High School, said "I learned that 'We the People' created the Constitution and that the United States would not be the same without us. It is our decision if we want something in the Constitution to change. This program has definitely prepared me to be a better citizen."

Student Stephanie Trevino, also a junior at South Hills High School told us: "I have learned so much more about the Constitution and how it is interpreted. Ultimately, the question is where do I stand and so I want to learn more so I can exactly determine where I stand as a citizen."

On Day 2 the group traveled to Valley Forge National Historic Park to visit the birthplace of the United States Army.

On the rolling fields near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, students stood on the very ground where the course of the Civil War changed.

Touching real artifacts of that great battle and reading the personal histories of some of its

participants left lasting impressions on the young people from Texas.

After spending the evening at the military base that houses the U.S. Navy's Elite Ceremonial Team, and the home of Marine One, the presidential helicopter, students boarded a bus for a day of touring two major museums.

The first stop was the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The museum is a living memorial to the Holocaust designed to inspire citizens and leaders worldwide to confront hatred, prevent genocide, and promote human dignity.

The afternoon of Day 4 was spent at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, just a few blocks away. It is the only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American life, history, and culture.

Put on your strolling shoes and look over the shoulders of our students as they see, many for the first time, man's struggles with man.



TRAVEL



This trip was inspiring, to say the least. The parameters that make up the city of Fort Worth and Dallas have confined me for a majority of my life, so being able to go beyond Texas was exciting. The flying was less than anticipated, but by being so scared out of my mind I was able to stay awake for the duration of the 3 hour trip. There goes Texas. There goes Arkansas. There goes Tennessee. Here comes Washington, D.C. We landed in Ronald Reagan National Airport, and as we landed I was able to catch a glimpse of the Washington Monument and the Pentagon. I had only seen them in pictures in my textbook, so it was mind-blowing.

To be honest, I was more nervous about the Staff Ride than excited. My first time getting on a plane and first time being far from home was not easy. Early Sunday morning, I stood giving goodbyes to my family and thought about how I was blessed: I had the opportunity very few teens my age get.

It all started on an early morning in a completely new environment. People in Washington have deer like we have dogs in our back yard, the houses were much bigger, there was fresh air and there was new soil.

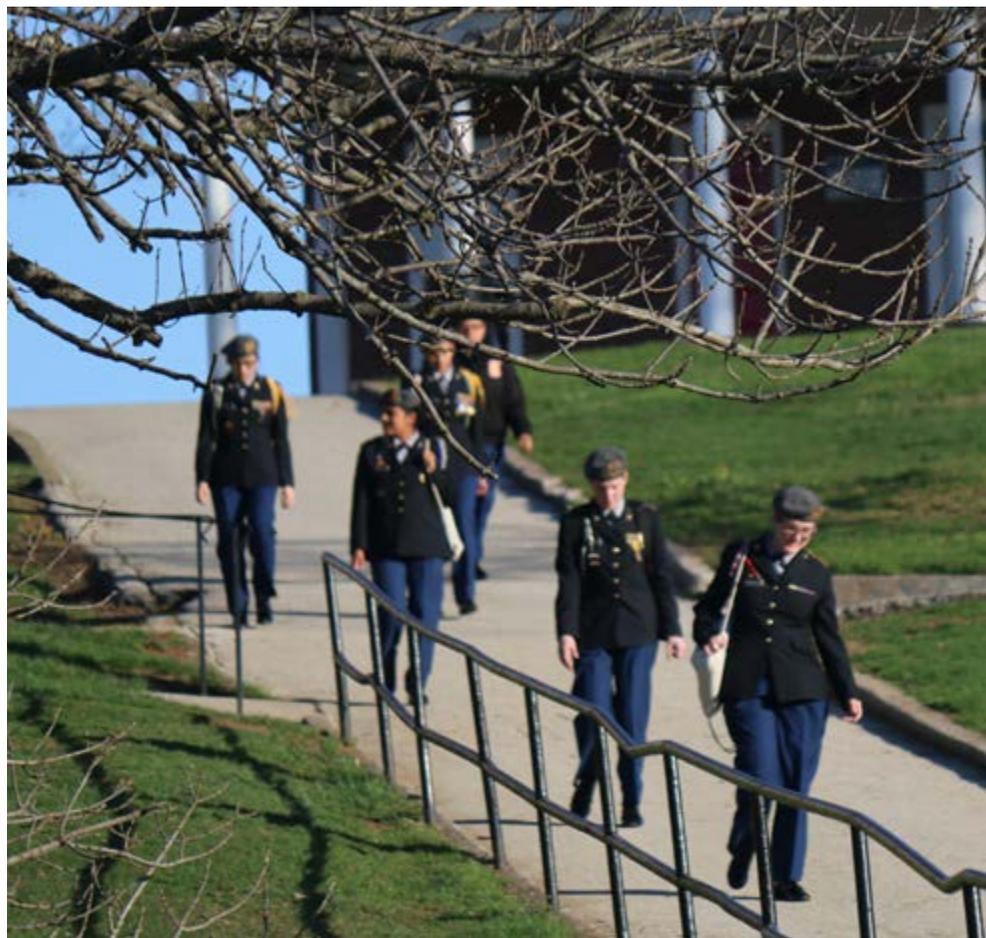


STEPHANIE TREVINO
South Hills High School



JOSELYN MARTINEZ
Dunbar High School





PHILADELPHIA



Before the Revolutionary War was the French and Indian War, which the British won. The British gained land from that war, but that is all- King George did not have enough money to pay his own soldiers, which means that the soldiers had killed innocent people to gain land and resources and nothing more in return. Those soldiers struggled to provide so that their families could survive.

King George decided to raise taxes in order to finish paying his war debt- taxes that some people could not afford to pay.

As a result of having no money, many British soldiers resorted to staying in the homes of local citizens and heard stories about the Minutemen, who were forming their own army to fight for what they believed in.



PAMELA REYES
O.D. Wyatt High School



During the first few days of the trip, we visited the American Revolution Museum, the Constitution Center, and Valley Forge National Park. We walked and discussed what America's founders had gone through to create America. Early Americans had to make sacrifices every day so that future Americans could live in a free country.

ASHLEY PEREZ
O.D. Wyatt High School





We went to Congress Hall and sat in the former congressional chairs where important decisions were once made, where our founding fathers established the first documents of the newly formed United States.



ZOUBIDA BEGHDAI
Southwest High School





I was blown away learning how this nation's army was created at Valley Forge. Our army consisted of only a small group of "ragtag" farmers and city folk, while our enemy was a worldwide power.

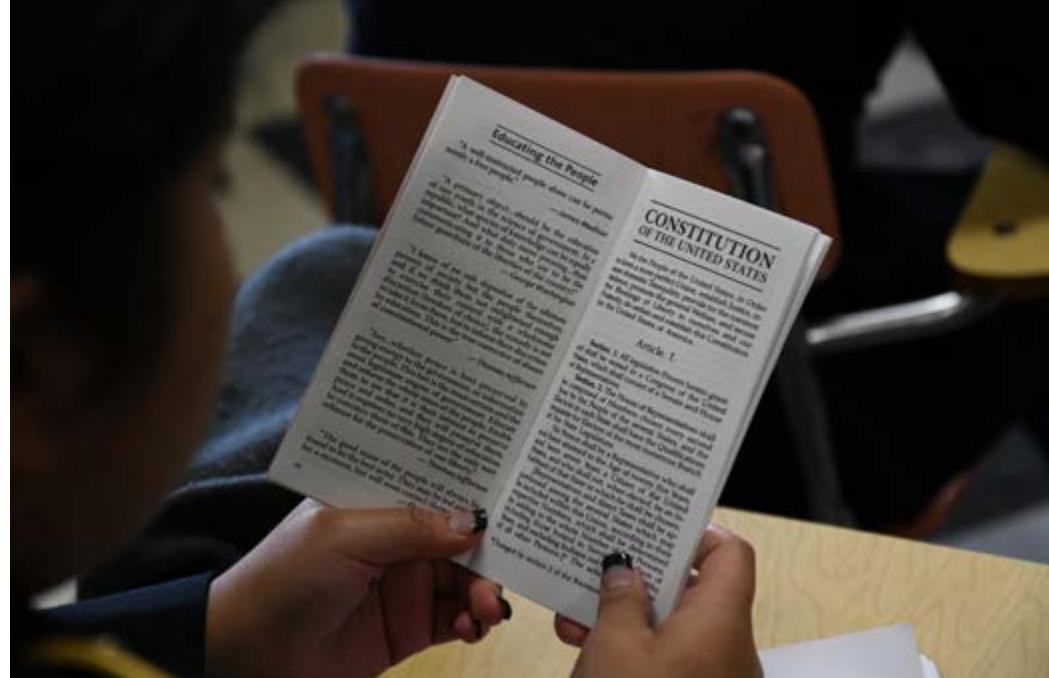
This truly opened my eyes and showed me that anyone can stand up to a power, even if the power is stronger than you.

I learned that we all need to stay proud for our country and that no matter who we are, we can stand up against anything that we think is unjust.



WILLIAM RUSSELL
Paschal High School





VALLEY FORGE

The most impactful place I experienced on this trip was Valley Forge National Park. As I marched across the field of what once was a training ground, I was encouraged to put myself in the shoes of a Continental soldier.

During the winter of 1777, enlistment within the Continental Army plummeted from approximately 12,000 to 6,000 because of the outbreak of epidemics and harsh weather. Supplies were scarce because brokers would rather sell to the more wealthy British. Continental Soldiers were given rations of only one-tenth the standard calorie intake of that time. Being put in this situation, I am confident even I would not have survived. To have to fight for freedom while also suffering from poverty, sickness and discrimination seems impossible.

George Washington referred to his men as naked because they were not equipped for the weather. Many loyalists resented the

soldiers, and doctors were not qualified to treat the epidemics at the time because of a lack of technology; however, those soldiers still persevered.

The soldiers at Valley Forge set an example for how to deal with adversity. I'm reminded of my life as a student: I currently take three AP courses and four Pre-AP/Honors courses; I do not have a single on-level class. I am part of JROTC, SPAT, Track, NHS, and am an active member in my church. Every day my stress piles up, and it seems like there is no end to my duties both inside and outside of school. I am experiencing a sort of adversity.

As the harsh winters went by, the soldiers remained steadfast, and I am inspired by them. I'm encouraged that I certainly can overcome my responsibilities. Now every time I am pushed to the brink of giving in, I am inspired to persevere.



ALEXANDER EVANS BOODHNA
South Hills High School







The next place we visited was Valley Forge, where the United States Army was born in June of 1778.

Most of the deaths at Valley Forge occurred because soldiers contracted diseases due to the harsh winter conditions. The Army dropped from 12,000 soldiers to 6,000 and little could be done. There was a night attack, which made things worse for the soldiers because if it's cold during the day, just imagine how it is at the night. Those soldiers *suffered* for what they believed in and so did their friends and family members.



PAMELA REYES
O.D. Wyatt High School

My second day in Philadelphia was gloomy, both emotionally and literally. I had struggled with confidence on the trip so far. I was invited to join the Staff Ride after someone canceled at the last minute, and in my rush to pack, I had left some important pieces of my uniform at home. I felt foolish and like I had failed as a Corps Commander and leader.

As we toured the training grounds of Valley Forge, however, I had a life-changing realization and learned a lesson I would not have learned from a book. Our tour guide, Paul, told us of the true challenges that our soldiers faced in their journey to freedom from tyranny. Running on little to no food, the men did not have clothes or proper homes to shield them from the elements. Battle victories were not within reach for the colonists, and hope began to dissipate.

At the time, the colonists may have seen themselves as failures, but they did not give up in their quest for freedom. All it took was time, training and trial.

Valley Forge was the birthplace of the Army and where persevering through failure fostered leaders and heroes. It may take one sentence in a history lesson to say that we won the Revolutionary War, but that does not allow us to fully grasp the scope of their perseverance and the reality of their determination.



STEPHANIE TREVINO
South Hills High School

Walking the training grounds and lying down in the wooden cots the Continental soldiers slept in was awakening for me. They did not give up, didn't throw in the towel, despite having what seemed like the world against them. The colonists had a goal and nothing would deter them. Some people deserted and did not see themselves as capable, and disease ran rampant. Nonetheless, the colonists put their best foot forward and did not let anything set them back.

I took so many lessons away from these men who I will never meet. There were no more tears in my eyes and a new sense of power in my heart. I had minor setbacks, but nothing compared to theirs. If the colonists could endure and persevere through such challenges, I could overcome forgetting two coats.

My experience at Valley Forge inspired pride and reminded me of how I can learn from failure and use it to my advantage.

That was something no history teacher could tell me—it took me flying halfway across the United States to discover my potential. I am sometimes a failure, but I will learn from my mistakes and move forward.

If I give up too early, I will never know what could have been.







VALLEY FORGE MILITARY ACADEMY AND COLLEGE

Another aspect of this trip was our residence at Valley Forge Military Academy in Pennsylvania. It gave me a perspective into the college life we don't always think about in high school. I met new people and heard different opinions, which motivated me to work harder to secure a future for myself and achieve my goals.



ZOUBIDA BEGHDAI
Southwest High School

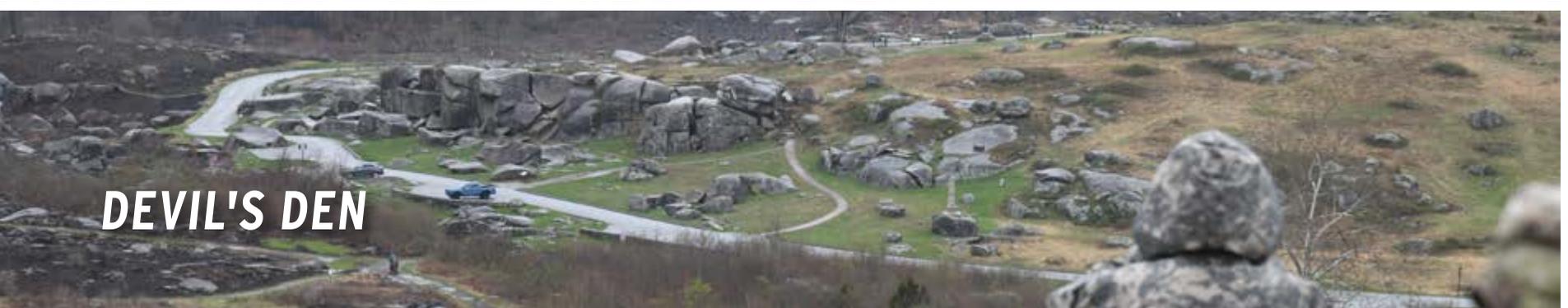




GETTYSBURG



DEVIL'S DEN



Stepping onto the Gettysburg battlefield felt like stepping into a time machine, to the same grounds where so many men lost their lives back in July of 1863.

During the Battle of Gettysburg, General George G. Meade's cavalry commander used the terrain to his advantage. As the town of Gettysburg emerged from a distance, he took notice of the many crossroads that led into town and the high terrain around it. This was a good site for battle and provided a chance to turn the war around.

General Meade quickly put his plan into action: with the rest of the army lagging behind, he decided to hold off the Confederates so the rest of the Union Army could catch up and establish a stronghold of the terrain. His quick decision-making helped the Union display their resilience in the battle. Beforehand, the Union had suffered a string of defeats, but they were ready to defend their home and turn the tide of war.

Gettysburg is known as the bloodiest battle of the Civil War and one had to be resilient to survive – just as I have been resilient in my life through the tragedy I've overcome.

We were given personal effects of the soldiers who lost their lives during the war. As I read some of the letters it reminded me of my own experience of loss. A few years ago I lost my best friend, who I had known since childhood. It was 9:00 p.m. when I saw the first post on social media about this tragedy; little did I know, it was about my best friend. He was involved in a fatal car accident and, to make matters worse, his grandmother and little brother also died that day. I went into a deep, black sadness after losing three people who I had grown to love. I had lost myself. My family worried for me, but I didn't want them to.

My best friend and I thought of each other as siblings. I did not know how to cope with the pain, but I knew I had to move on. I came up with different plans for how to overcome such

a tragic event and over time, my loved ones' deaths brought out my resilience.

The citizens of Gettysburg and the soldiers who fought there also had to emerge from their own pain, display resilience and learn to move on.

Since this Staff Ride, I have a whole new perspective on life. Just as the troops and soldiers sacrificed so much on the Gettysburg battlefield, so do we experience sacrifice in our personal lives and the battlefield of life itself. The Battle of Gettysburg had the magnitude to effect the outcome of the Civil War, and the future of the entire nation as a result; however, my small tragedy only affected myself, my family and close friends.

Everyone has battles of their own.

Gettysburg taught me that I have to be willing to change my plans when something goes wrong and that I have the capacity and resiliency to recover from whatever difficulties may arise.

AMERICA RIOS
North Side High School



I learned that around 60,000 soldiers died in three days of continuous fighting at Gettysburg, which is more than we lost in the entirety of the Vietnam War. The Civil War soldiers died for an idea they believed in: the idea that all men were created equal and free.

It is moments in our history like this that showcase the intensity of our values and freedoms in this nation today. Due to the actions of our ancestors before us, we now live

in a world that is completely contrasted by the one we started out with.

WE THE PEOPLE of America are affected daily by the actions of those before us.

After the day at Gettysburg we held a discussion about what we learned that day and what it means to us. During that time, I was able to further understand and educate myself on the importance of the trip. The trip wasn't

just meant to teach what happened in our nation and why; it was meant to teach us how history impacts our lives today, and how we can make an impact on the future by teaching others.

WE THE PEOPLE are created equal and because of those before us, we live with the unalienable rights of Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness, which we all too often take for granted.



CHASE DILULIO
Western Hills High School

The history of the United States mirrors the history of my country, which makes me feel I belong in the United States. When I first stepped into each place visited, I felt like I was seeing all the bad that happened to people. I imagined all the fighting, which led to thousands of

casualties and how the innocent fell victim to the cause of the wars. For a second, I imagined myself as one of the victims of the Gettysburg Battle. I saw the struggles of these victims and I could not even fathom going through what they had to go through.

I salute all those victims that did not give up. For me, knowing the history of the country you live in is important and I feel proud of myself for learning about United States history.



FNU HAMIDULLAH
Carter-Riverside High School







When first arriving in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Confederate troops were in position in the center of Gettysburg as Union soldiers entered. Confederate troops pushed the Union soldiers back to what is known as Cemetery Hill. This is the place where Union soldiers wanted to be so they could have a strategic advantage in the war by obtaining a higher ground.

The Union Commander put his troops in a fishhook-shaped formation to be able to fire

at any point of entry and from every angle on Little Round Top. Dan Sickle, who commanded one formation, disobeyed Union General Meade's orders and moved his troops forward, breaking the fishhook formation and leaving the Union without troops in one area.

If Confederate troops had been able to reach the location where Dan Sickle had his troops originally positioned, then the war would have been over. General Meade did not know

at the time what Dan Sickle had done. Meade, however, was able to see that his troops were not in proper position, so he sent soldiers to the appropriate location and those soldiers managed to arrive quickly ahead of the Confederate soldiers.

General Meade's orders were disobeyed by Dan Sickle, which could have cost many lives, but in the end the Union side did win the battle and led to the surrender of General Robert E Lee.



ELENA RODRIGUEZ-ALVARADO
Eastern Hills High School



As we walked around the battlefield, the park ranger was able to take us back in time and help us visualize what tactics the leaders considered as well as mistakes they made at this historic battle. The park ranger also explained what the citizens were doing and how they were affected before, during and after the Battle of Gettysburg. I enjoyed touching replicas and reading personal letters from some of the soldiers who died during this battle.

One particular story resonated with me: the guide told us about a Confederate regiment that, after walking for twenty-five miles, was asked to flank the Union Army around a hill called "Little Round Top." This unit had not rested, eaten or had water in their canteens. Yet they still charged up the hill several times, hungry and thirsty, but motivated to fight for their cause. As students learning about history, it is important that we understand the adversity these men faced before the battle and decisions that were made.



HUGO HERNANDEZ
North Side High School



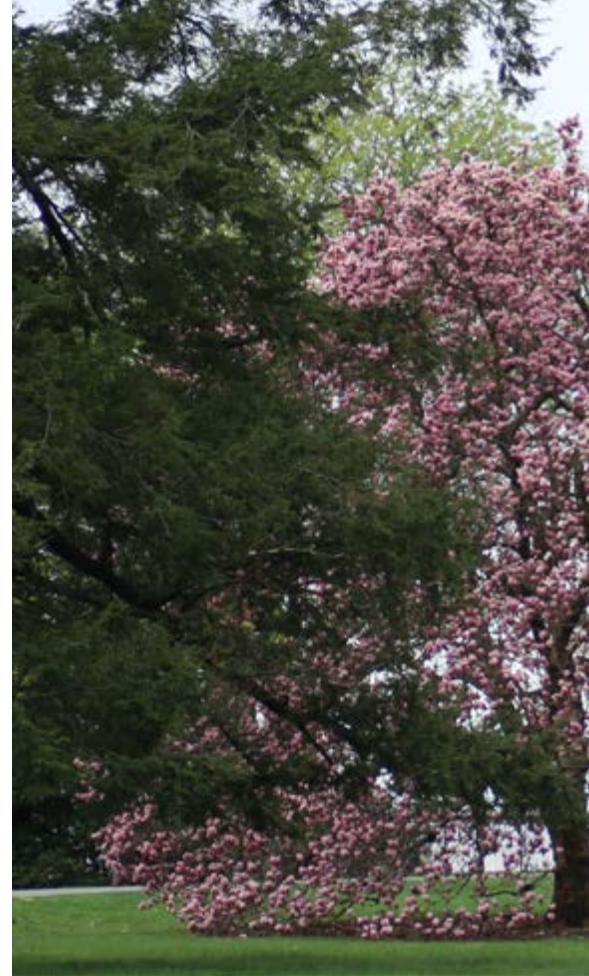


At Cemetery Hill, I stood in front of a grave that was almost one hundred and fifty-five years old. This graveyard is the resting place of some of the most influential people in our history.



ZOUBIDA BEGHDAI
Southwest High School







At the end of each night, we participated in a briefing on the day's events. Ms. Sharpe made these interesting and more personal by giving us small assignments that would relate to our personal lives. The experience and assignment that stuck out most to me was about Gettysburg.

The tour guide for Gettysburg was amazing; you could really tell he loved his job and the battlefield. The assignment Ms. Sharpe gave us for this location was to think of a place in our household that we could relate to this experience. I related the emotions I felt at the Gettysburg battlefield to my bedroom and a phone call.



MCKENZIE WILLIAMS
Southwest High School

I remember it being a Tuesday night in May, a few weeks before my sister's high school graduation. I was sitting in my bedroom on my bed and I heard my phone ring. I answered it and it was my mom, Lynda- she has been with me most of my life so I call her Mom. I had a terrible feeling about what she needed to tell me; you could hear the quivering in her voice. She told me, "Your dad has passed away." I just sat there for a minute in silence, trying to process what she had just said. She told me that he was sick when he went on his business trip to Florida. The doctor diagnosed him with bronchitis the week before and the change in pressure caused him to have a pulmonary

embolism and he dropped dead in the hotel lobby as soon as he got there. I was shocked and I could not believe what I was hearing.

I related the pain I felt that night to the pain the families felt when they got the letter that their loved ones had died in battle.

Sometimes we think of history as simply the past, with no relation to us or to the future. Gettysburg reminds me that what was- still is. And though our relations differ, the experiences are the same.









THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

Even after the Emancipation Proclamation, some black soldiers still were not allowed to be free in parts of the South.

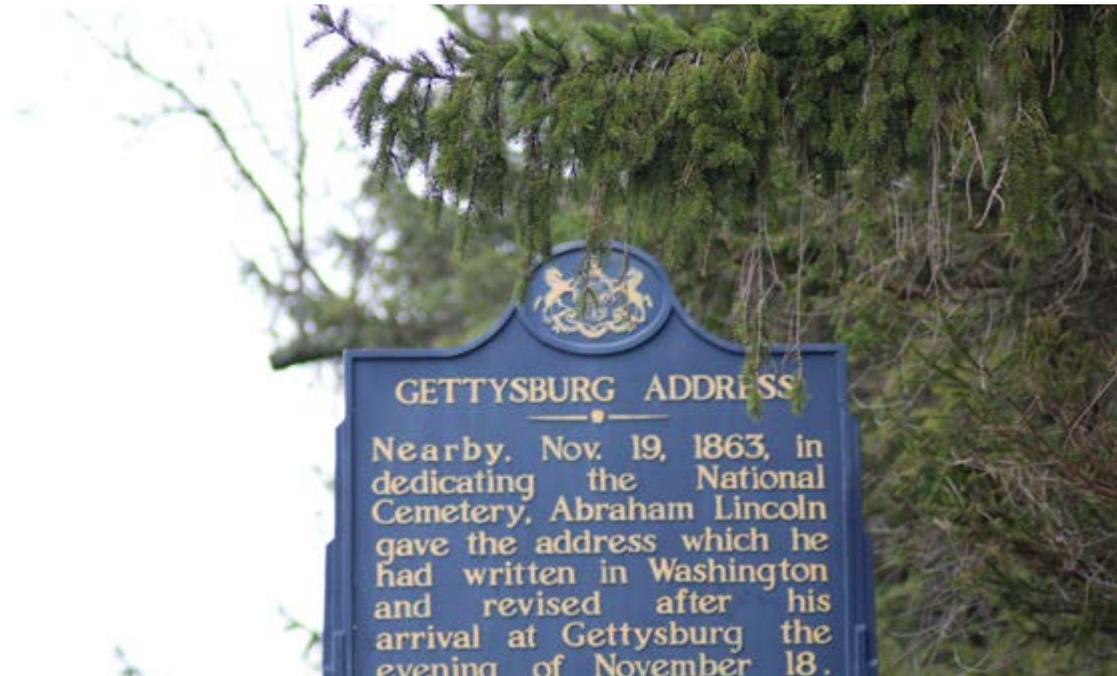
One slave by the name of Elizabeth Mambet (Freeman) was denied her rights to be free, so she told her master that she felt that she should be free, as the Emancipation Proclamation applied to her. When she told him this, the master's wife hit her with a cooking pan and she ran away.

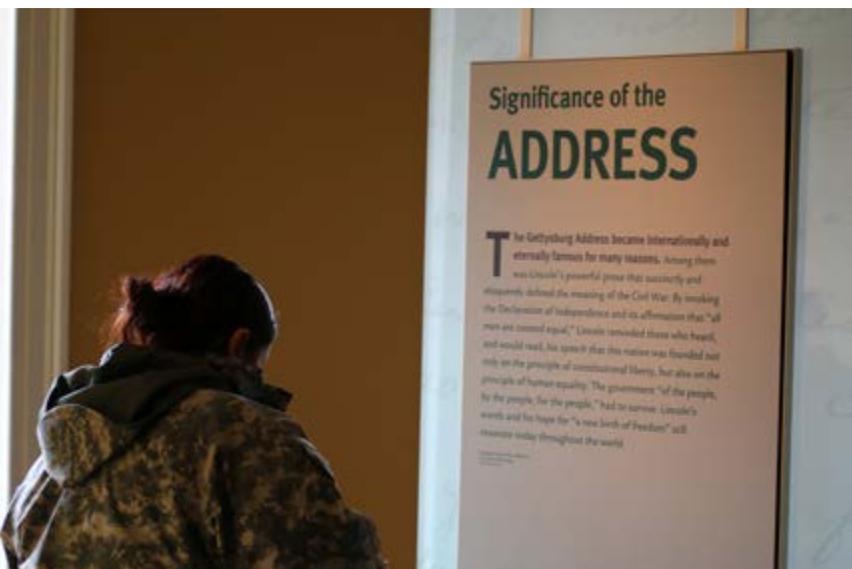
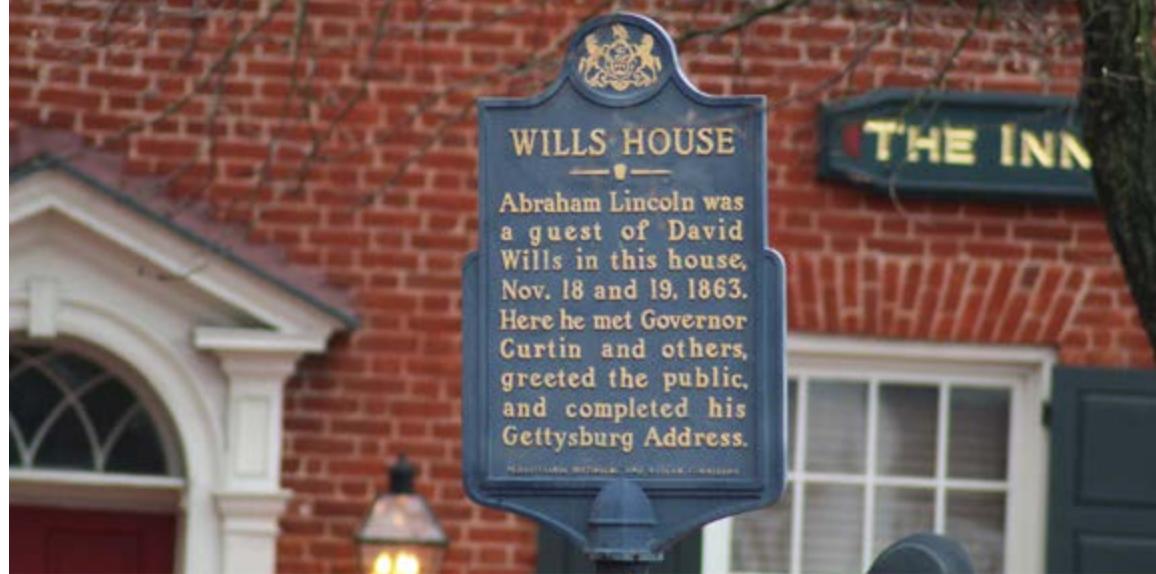
She told her story to anyone who would listen and found a lawyer who wanted to help. At the time, there was little to no chance of winning a legal case if you were a slave.

However, Mambet did win and she changed her name from Elizabeth Mambet to Elizabeth Freeman.



ELENA RODRIGUEZ-ALVARADO
Eastern Hills High School





UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



*First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out-
because I was not a Socialist.*

*Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out-
because I was not a Trade Unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out-
because I was not a Jew.*

Then they came for me- and there was no one left to speak for me.

MARTIN NIEMÖLLER



Before coming to the Holocaust Museum I was told to identify four kinds of people during this horrific event: the perpetrators, victims, collaborators, and bystanders. It is pretty obvious who the perpetrators and victims were during the Holocaust, but we do not always think so much about the other two.

Upon reading this poem by Martin Niemöller, the role of the bystander was made clear to me and I realized the impact that was made by people who knew what was going on, yet chose to remain silent. After some reflection I realized I never want to be a bystander and hope to have the internal fortitude to take action and use my voice to make a difference.

On the elevator ride into the Holocaust Museum on Thursday morning, a video began to play

reliving the American soldiers' initial reactions to walking across the concentration camps. As the doors opened and I walked through the first exhibit, I could feel the victims' pain through photographs and drawings- as if they were screaming for help through their eyes. I felt an immediate sinking in my chest, as if it were being crushed, and I as I kept walking, my head started clouding up with so many questions:

Why would people be willing to kill and torture other humans with no remorse?

How could they be able to live with themselves, knowing how much pain they caused to someone who did nothing to them?

Why would civilians not stand up when it is happening in their own country?

By the end of the tour, I knew exactly who the collaborators and bystanders were. I also knew what I wanted to be- I wanted to be someone who will be able to use my voice to prevent genocides like this from happening. I want to use my voice to bring change and be able to educate people on lessons we have learned in our past to create stronger and more educated people in the future.

This trip has opened my eyes to knowing what role I should take in society. I also know I will not be a bystander if an event like this happens again.

ANA GOMEZ
North Side High School





The Holocaust Museum was probably the most touching site of the whole week for me because, although it did not happen here in America, I was disturbed to just know that any human could be capable of doing those horrific things to millions of others, including those who were disabled, pregnant, old and very young. Nobody could imagine at the time how bad the genocide really was. Even with real-life survivors who have told their stories, there is no way of truly understanding the horrors unless you went through it.



LESLIE SERRANO
Southwest High School

Seeing the displays of clothes that those in the camps wore, or the propaganda made by the Nazis, made me realize that people like that still exist to this day. The truth is: people of all races, ethnicities, genders, ages, etc., should come together and make agreements instead of discriminating and forcing others to conform to their "norms."

Whether people like it or not, there is only one world for us all to live in and instead of pulling each other down because of our differences, we should build each other up. Those differences that we think are our weaknesses are also our greatest strengths.

We are the shoes, we are the last witnesses.

We are the shoes from grandchildren and grandfathers

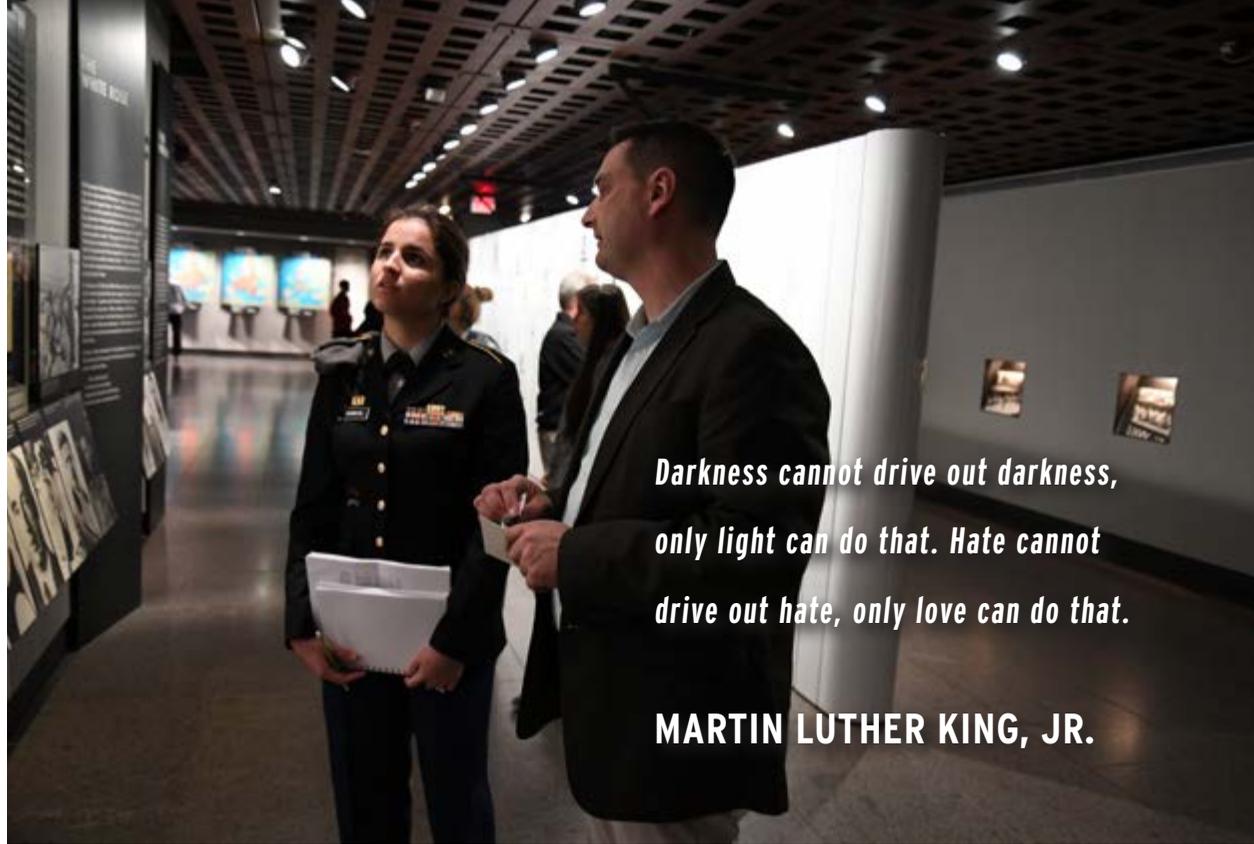
From Prague, Paris, Amsterdam,

And because we are only made of fabric and leather

And not of blood and flesh, each one of us avoided the hellfire.

YIDDISH POET MOSES SCHULSTEIN





*Darkness cannot drive out darkness,
only light can do that. Hate cannot
drive out hate, only love can do that.*

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

During the U.S. Military History Staff Ride, I saw a different side of the world as Dr. King talked about- a side that made me feel regret and sorrow.

At the end of the week, we went to the Holocaust Museum and the African American Museum. There, I learned about the dark side of people: people who felt they were more powerful ruled against those they felt were "inferior" to them. Jews and slaves both experienced ridicule and torture through experiments, starvation and beatings.

While I was in the museums learning about these groups of people, I noticed in the photos how their eyes revealed so much sadness, as if they expected to have no future for themselves. Those eyes filled me with sorrow and the urge to treat those around me with equality- disregarding their appearance, background or beliefs. No one should be made to feel inferior to another based on how they appear.

ASHLEY PEREZ
O.D. Wyatt High School



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY & CULTURE

Visiting the African American Museum had to be my favorite experience of the week—well, the one that I really connected with. It was encouraging and enlightening to learn about African American women and men who overcame many challenges and hardships. People who I had never really heard of, like Homer G. Phillips, who was an active attorney and political figure; 2nd Lieutenant Emily Perez; Arthur Ashe (a tennis player, like me); Mary McLeod Bethune.

It felt good to learn about these people and the contributions they made to our community, our country and ultimately our culture.

Overall, I was able to make a better connection between what I had already known and the new knowledge I gained from the museums and activities. I am thankful that I was granted the privilege of being allowed to go on this trip for the memories forged and experiences gained which will never be forgotten.

How far will a person go to gain their freedom?

Throughout this trip I saw and heard examples of suffering, hunger and death. But I also saw motivation, courage and hope.

Troops in the Continental Army while at Valley Forge had to deal with cold weather plus a shortage of food and lack of housing. Their courage while seeking independence and the motivation from General Washington kept the Army from collapsing and led to the end of the Revolutionary War in 1775.

The American concept of freedom would gain new meaning with the writing of the Constitution. However, many minorities such as African Americans, Hispanics and immigrant groups did not receive that same freedom.

African Americans dreamed of freedom since the Revolutionary War, but it wasn't until the end of the Civil War that they saw some steps toward freedom. But even then, African Americans dealt with racism and inequality for the next hundred years, yet never gave up on the pursuit of freedom.

Jesse Owens, an African American track and field athlete and four-time Olympic gold medalist, proved wrong the Nazi Germany idea of one superior race as he led his country to victory during the 1936 Olympics. African Americans continued to show that they were as brave and smart as white people, as they fought in both World Wars, the Korean War and Vietnam. It was not until the Korean War, however, that African Americans were allowed to fight alongside whites, and it was not long after that Martin Luther King, Jr. led in the political fight to gain civil rights for all African Americans in the United States.

Since the beginning of our country, the idea of freedom has inspired motivation and hope. But the idea of freedom wasn't the same to everyone in the beginning, as we see that African Americans dealt with many years of despair as they fought with courage and bravery to achieve their equality. This trip opened my eyes because I really didn't understand the cause for freedom until I saw the suffering and pain thousands endured to earn the rights we have today.

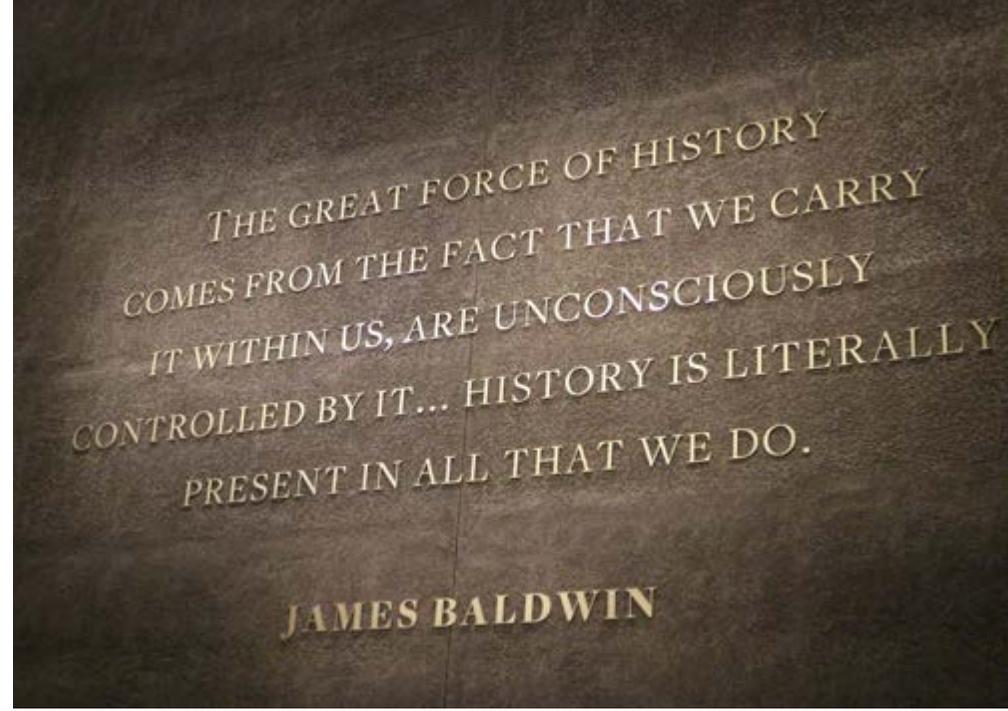


DAMIAN ANDERSON
Southwest High School



ALAN SANTILLAN
Carter-Riverside High School





1964

Freedom Summer

The summer of 1964 saw steady strides forward in the struggle for justice and equality. Civil rights organizations established a summer program to help African Americans register to vote in Mississippi. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was born to challenge the traditional Democratic Party in the state, which was dominated by segregationists.



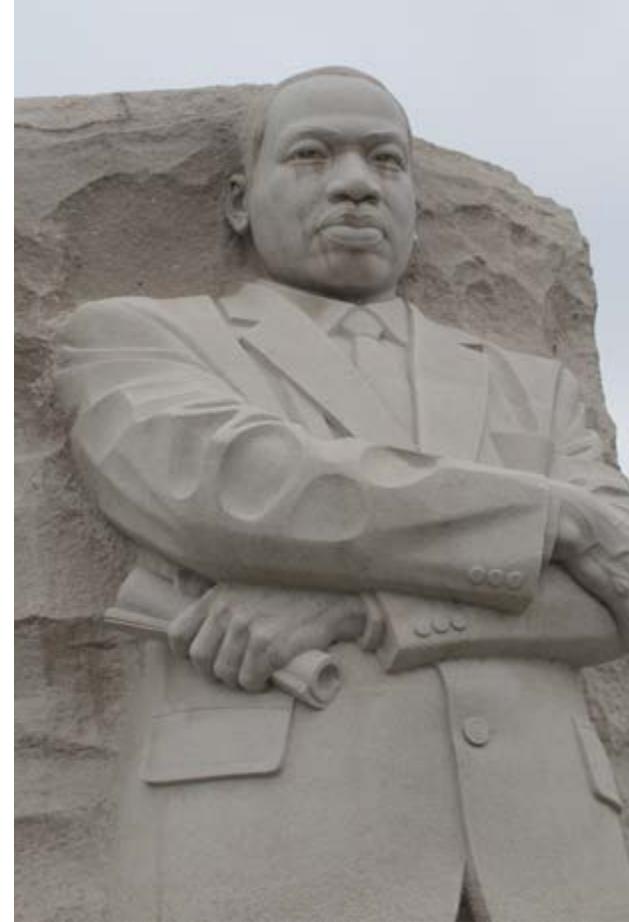


Standing in front of the Lincoln Memorial and looking over the Reflecting Pool towards the Washington Monument, I imagined Dr. Martin Luther King doing the same thing during his August 1963 "I Have A Dream" speech.

Getting to see other memorials such as the Vietnam Memorial, World War II Memorial and the Korean War Memorial made me feel proud of the sacrifice, honor, commitment, dedication and fortitude in our nation's history.



BRYAN EVANS
Southwest High School







WAR MEMORIALS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.





TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER



The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was guarded with such honor that it gave me unexplained tears. We were able to relate to these soldiers who sacrificed their lives- some who fought to prove themselves, and others who fought out of duty.



ZOUBIDA BEGHDAI
Southwest High School



REFLECTIONS

At the end of each day we would split up into groups and brief over our experiences from that day or answer any questions that were asked of us earlier. This was my favorite aspect of the trip because it was a time for all of us to come together and speak on what we felt was most important from that day.

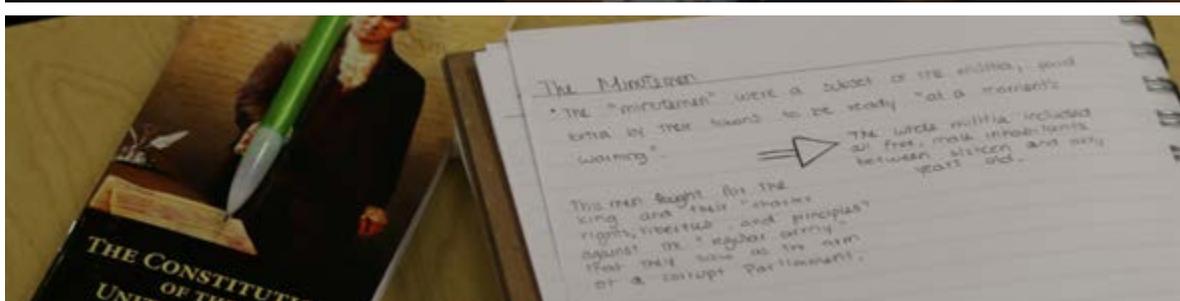
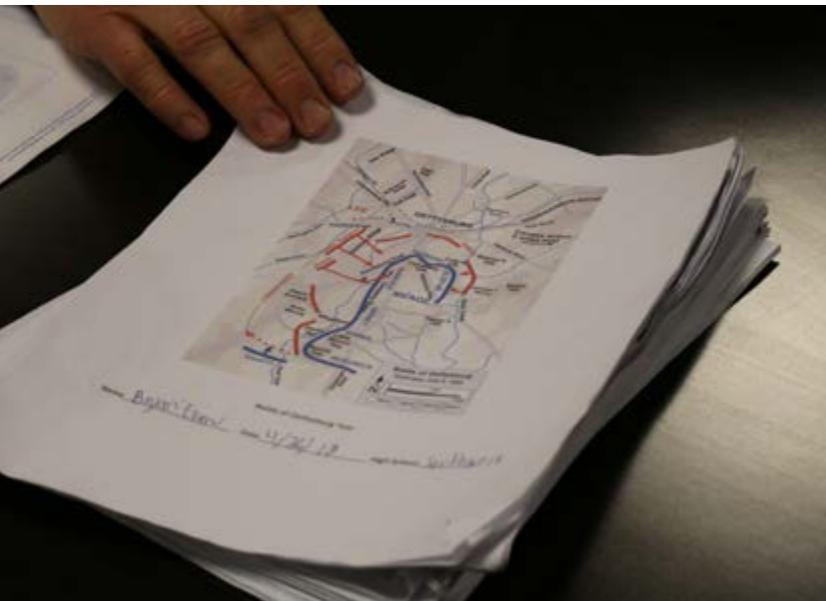
We all experienced so many emotions throughout the week: Fear. Anxiety. Compassion. Regret. Gratitude. Empathy. I think it is absolutely amazing that a group of high school students who barely knew each other were able to travel across the country together and be able to open up and express themselves in a manner that revealed their learning and experience gained.

I am not in the JROTC program at my school, but the warm welcome I received on this trip made me feel like I belonged with the cadets of the Fort Worth ISD JROTC program.



BRYAN EVANS
Southwest High School





PARK RANGERS



Throughout this Staff Ride, at every site, our Park Rangers and guides were exceptional. Passionate, professional, perceptive, personal and knowledgeable. Quickly establishing rapport, our guides promoted and inspired new perspectives and growth mindset in every staff ride participant.

They completely understood our expectations and learning needs, and they created a learning environment where cadets and instructors were always challenged to think critically, to collaborate and to communicate their ideas, thoughts, and opinions.







"A strong woman stands up for herself. A stronger woman stands up for everybody else."

Women are usually seen as the weaker sex; since time immemorial we have had to fight in order to be considered as active and helpful members of society, and to show that the female gender is useful for more than looking pretty and having kids.

Over 400 women served undercover during the Civil War, dressing as males in order to be able to serve and fight for their country and make a difference. For those strong women, sitting in a chair of a hospital serving as a nurse was not enough. For me, as a woman, that impacted me because I understand the need they felt to protect and serve their country.



GABRIELA RUSSINYOL
South Hills High School

Thanks to this experience I've learned that being a woman is not a weakness.

As a woman I can stand tall and protect the country where my future kids will grow up, just like other women in the past have done, even when they were underestimated and banned from "men's activities." Nowadays it's still not easy to be a woman, but we have more freedom, and I am going to use that to help others and make sure that future generations will have a safe environment to be raised in.

One woman can make a difference, but united women can do the impossible.



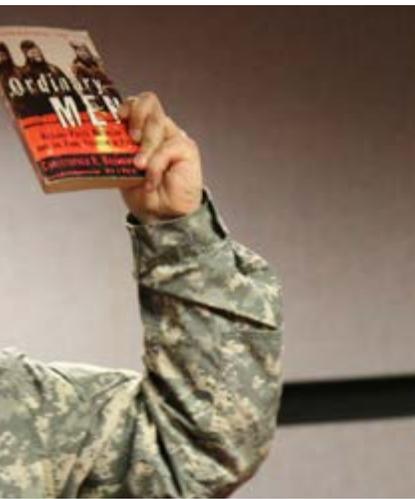


THE STAFF

The instructional staff who supported this experience included career military professionals from FWISD high schools, the social studies director from FWISD and an English department head from North Side High School. The diversity and knowledge provided by this cadre enhanced the learning curve of our cadets in a unique and inspirational manner.

Countless history lessons came to life in classrooms and field experiential settings. So much was presented- from the American Revolution and our Constitution, through the Civil War and the continuing evolution of our civil rights, to the travesty of a World at War and the Holocaust. This cadre of impassioned veteran educators, civilian and military alike, gave our cadets opportunities to learn about a past that holds the key to our future success as a free democracy.







The videography and photography was provided by highly experienced FWISD Communications Department personnel knowledgeable of the FWISD learning process. The imagery displayed in this journal is a result of years of experience on field trips and staff rides with the JROTC department. These images provide the faces behind the voices of our cadets and educators on a continually evolving road to success.



Find our videos at:
FWISD.ORG/STAFFRIDE
or
YOUTUBE.COM/FWISDNEWS

FWISD JROTC Staff Ride 2018 All Days



CONCLUSION

Students learn about much more than war in the U.S. Military History course. Under the tutelage of service member leaders, students interact with the past in powerful ways and come to better understand how they will shape our future. "Staff Rides" are a powerful experiential learning activity built into the curriculum that uniquely serves that mission.

The 2018 Staff Ride was a once in a lifetime opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of our nation's core values. In Philadelphia, students visited sites that were pivotal to our nation's founding – Museum of the American Revolution, Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, and the U.S. Constitution Center – where they grappled with better understanding the type of nation the American Revolution created, what the founders meant by liberty and equality, and how "We the People" embody those values today.

The visit to Gettysburg National Military Park was about more than military strategy for students. They witnessed the battlefield through the spirit of Abraham Lincoln's famous address, as a place with a history representing a nation's promise to a "new birth of freedom." What it means to be a citizen leader took on new meaning for students at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and National Museum of African-American History & Culture. Students learned about the dangers of silence and indifference when confronted with human suffering and infringement of civil rights, as well as how African-Americans have pushed "We the People" to live up to the founding promises of freedom, justice and human equality through American history. By the staff ride's end, students better understood their responsibility as future citizen leaders to protect and advance our nation's core values.

JOSEPH NIEDZIELA

Director of Social Studies, FWISD

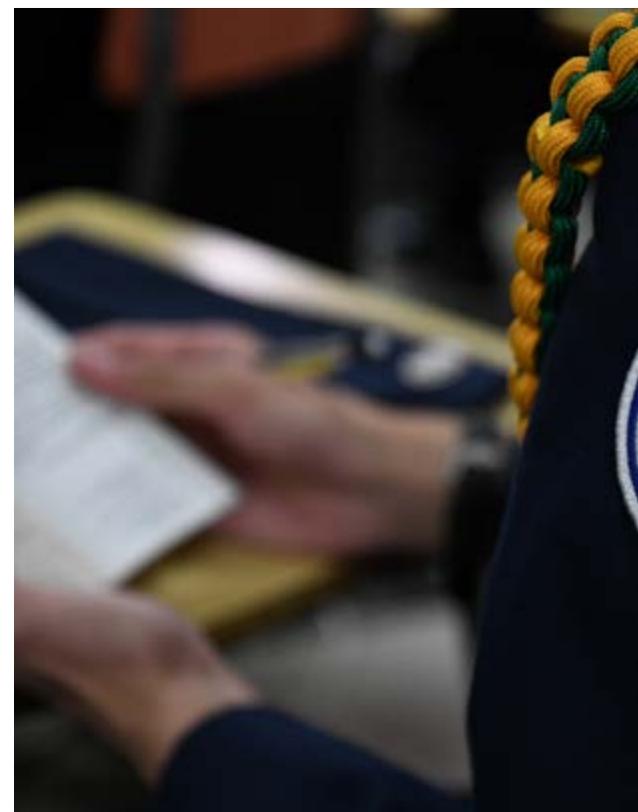
CLOSING THOUGHTS

This staff ride, which we enjoyed with about 1% of our approximately 2,200 FWISD cadets, took on a unique and historic theme which I would term the evolution of a country. From the founding of our country, through all its growing pains, our students had a life-experience over five fast-paced yet extremely memorable days. Our cadets gelled as a team while instructors, faculty, staff and even a bus driver enjoyed an appreciation for our American diversities and commonalities. The days, weeks, months and years ahead will no doubt provide recall of what we learned: how we, as a people, grew through our national birth and maturity pains. Valley Forge, Independence

Hall, the Liberty Bell, Gettysburg, the very room of David Will's house where Abraham Lincoln polished off the Gettysburg Address, the American Holocaust Museum, African American Museum and our National Mall's monuments and memorials- I am left with a key phrase one of the leaders we stood in front of on the last day of the trip gave us, an image of hope that our path of freedom presented. That phrase is, "I have a dream...", and that image is teachers helping our cadets learn to ensure that our American experiment will continue to great fruition, and that these cadets will be the next generation of leaders in this awesome and blessed nation!

COL RUSSELL MALESKY, USAF (RET.)

Western Hills AFJROTC Senior Aerospace Science Instructor





On 22 April 2018, twenty FWISD students in the FWISD's Military History course embarked on a journey that would challenge, change, and enhance their understanding of American History. These students were thrust into a virtual time machine and were given a unique opportunity to visit pivotal points in our nation's history, from the very beginning to the modern day. They started by gaining a better understanding of the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence and later found themselves sitting in Independence Hall discussing the issues facing our founding fathers. The next day these students found themselves standing on the very ground that witnessed the birth of the United States Army. They acquired a real appreciation of the hardships faced by the Army, as well as their families, and learned of the diversity of the troops rarely discussed in history books.

From the birth of a nation to its near destruction, we found ourselves at the Gettysburg Battlefield. We experienced expert accounts of the battle, as well as the impact on the civilian population and life-changing decisions they had to make. We explored the monumental challenges faced by Abraham Lincoln in his efforts to preserve the union and were made aware of the human cost.

Our journey fast-forwarded us through time to the era of our greatest generation and the nightmare they faced called the Holocaust. The students were left in awe and all had the same burning question of "Why?" They were clearly made aware of the cost of inaction on the part of those who have the ability to make a difference. Our next stop at the African American Museum took us through a whirlwind of history as we chronicled the African American experience in the United States from colonial times to the present. Here the students were provided insight into the African American struggle, and more importantly the ability of a people to unite, overcome and achieve greatness.

On our last day we visited the WW II, Korea and Vietnam Memorials, as well as Arlington National Cemetery. The students obtained a true appreciation for the cost of freedom and the sacrifices made by men and women in our nation's military every day. While this abbreviated time line provides a bird's eye view of this incredible journey, the true benefit of this experience is found in the words of the students themselves. I invite you to read their thoughts and share in this unique experience.

COL STEVE SCIONEUX, U.S. ARMY (RET.)
Southwest AJROTC Senior Army Instructor





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



FWISD.ORG/STAFFRIDE

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U.S. MILITARY HISTORY

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INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

