



**Captain Robert S. Marx:**  
**Decorated World War I Soldier & Founder of the Disabled American**  
**Veterans**  
**Lesson by Paul LaRue**

**Objective:** Introduce students to veterans' organizations and their connections to World War I.

**Grade Levels:** Middle or High School

**Content Area:** Social Studies

**Time Allotment:** 1 class period

**Connections to Ohio Model Curriculum:**

Social Studies—High School American History Content Statements: 1, 2, 4, 15, 16

**Skills:** Close reading, cause and effect of historical events

**Vocabulary:** American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), nativism

**Teacher Tip:** This lesson could be used for Veterans Day, Memorial Day, or as a Blizzard Bag assignment.

**Field Trip or to Visit:**

- The National Soldier's Home (Dayton, OH)
  - [www.nps.gov/nr/travel/veterans\\_affairs/central\\_branch.html](http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/veterans_affairs/central_branch.html)
  - To arrange a visit to the Soldier's Home, visit: [www.americanveteransheritage.org](http://www.americanveteransheritage.org)
- Ohio Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphans' Home (Xenia, OH)
  - [www.facebook.com/Ohio-Soldiers-Sailors-Orphans-Home-156361174417229/](https://www.facebook.com/Ohio-Soldiers-Sailors-Orphans-Home-156361174417229/)
- The National Veterans Memorial and Museum (Columbus, OH)
  - Located on West Broad Street, across from COSI
  - *Completion Date: Summer 2018*
  - For more information, please visit: [www.nationalvmm.org](http://www.nationalvmm.org)



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### Steps in Strategy:

- 1.) Students complete the warm-up activity (*approx. 5 minutes*).
- 2.) Ask students to read and respond to the compelling question (class discussion).  
*Teacher Hint: Consider the isolationism and formation of veterans' organizations. This question can be applied to current world affairs.*
- 3.) Use Setting the Stage to frame the lesson plan.
- 4.) Assign readings #1 and #2. These could be assigned readings for home from the day before.
- 5.) Students complete the short quiz (or use quiz as a class discussion).
- 6.) Re-visit the essential question. Discuss the impact of returning veterans on American Society.
- 7.) Extension Activities: (1) Research veterans' organizations in your community (see "Extension Activities")—this serves as an excellent service learning project. (2) Read the American Legion flier.

### Evaluation: Student Questions and Answers

- 1.) What was the veterans' organization for Union veterans from the Civil War?  
**Answer:** Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)
- 2.) The origin of the Veterans of Foreign Wars was organized by veterans of which wars?  
**Answer:** Spanish American Wars and Philippine Insurrection
- 3.) Which city hosted the inaugural Veterans of Foreign Wars meeting?  
**Answer:** Columbus, Ohio
- 4.) Which veterans' organization was chartered by Congress in 1919?  
**Answer:** American Legion
- 5.) What Ohioan organized the original Disabled American Veterans of World War I?  
**Answer:** Captain Robert Marx
- 6.) What city in Ohio hosted the inaugural meeting of the Disabled American Veterans of World War I?  
**Answer:** Cincinnati, Ohio



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**Research topics for a student, or the entire class:**

1.) See "Extension Activities." Have your class complete one or two of the extension activities.

## Warm-up Activity

Ask students to identify as many veterans' organizations as possible in one or two minutes. Compile a list of the students' responses. Ask students to list what local veterans' organizations do in their community.

## Compelling Question

How does the return of World War I veterans impact United States politics and policies toward veterans following the war?

## Setting the Stage

The United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917. By the War's end on November 11, 1918, more than four million Americans had been mobilized for military service, with two million men serving overseas, including 263,000 Ohioans. The United States lost 116,516 men killed in action, and another 204,000 men wounded.

## Reading #1: A Brief History of Ohio Veterans' Organizations and the Formation of the D.A.V.

Ohio has a rich history of veterans' organizations dating back to the end of the Civil War. Following the Civil War, Union veterans formed the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.). Ohio communities, both large and small, organized G.A.R. Posts. G.A.R. Posts organized Decoration Day Ceremonies, assisted veterans with pensions, and helped preserve the history of the Civil War.

The American Veterans of Foreign Service was organized by a group of veterans from the Spanish American War and the Philippine Insurrection in Columbus, Ohio, in 1899. In 1913 this organization and several other veterans' groups formed the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The Grand Army of the Republic served as a model for structure and organization. The VFW quickly attracted large numbers of veterans from around the country. Today, there are 367 active posts statewide in the Department of Ohio Veterans of Foreign Wars. At the conclusion of World War I there were more than four million veterans, with more than 200,000 having been wounded. As a result, in 1919 the U.S. Congress chartered the American Legion, an organization comprised of World War I veterans. Membership in the



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American Legion grew rapidly in the 1920s and 1930s. Franklin Post #1 (Columbus), organized in 1919, is the oldest Post in the Department of Ohio. Franklin Post #1 was located at the old Columbus Veterans Memorial. The old Veterans Memorial site is currently being transformed into the National Veterans Memorial and Museum. Today the American Legion Department of Ohio has approximately 547 active posts statewide.

Judge Robert Marx organized a meeting of disabled World War I veterans in Cincinnati on Christmas Day in 1919. Judge Marx himself had been severely wounded in combat in World War I. This organization was called the Disabled American Veterans of the World War. Judge Marx became the first national commander of the Disabled American Veterans, or, D.A.V. Today there are more than 75 active posts statewide.

Ohio's veterans' organizations are important community partners. Veterans' organizations provide and support youth programs, help veterans get health care, and promote citizenship and patriotism in their communities. Veterans' groups often organize Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies. Local Honor Guard units are composed of members of veterans' organizations. Honor Guards provide graveside services at veterans' funerals, including flag presentation to the family, the three-volley salute, and the playing of taps.

## Reading #2: Captain Robert S. Marx

Robert S. Marx was born in Cincinnati on January 28, 1889. Marx graduated from the University of Cincinnati Law School in 1909 and went into private practice in Cincinnati. He enlisted a month after the United States entered World War I. Marx was promoted to the rank of Captain, and found himself in command of a battalion on November 10, 1918, in one of the final battles of the war. Captain Marx was severely wounded in heavy combat leading his Battery. He completed a questionnaire in 1919 detailing his military service in World War I for the American Jewish Committee. In it, Captain Marx described his combat injury:

*(I was) "Severely wounded Nov. 10, 1918, in attack upon Baalon in Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Was acting as Operations Officer of 357th Infantry, having been in front line of attack for 74 continuous days without relief except 7 days changing sectors. On the night of Nov. 9-10, crossed the Meuse River at Sassay marching miles on nights so cold that our water froze in the canteen. Was ordered to attack the town of Baalon immediately. Third Bat. 357th Inf. having lost all officers above the grade of first lieutenant, I was ordered to take command of this, and press attack on Baalon. When I reached Battery headquarters, found the men digging in and gave directions and orders for an immediate advance. After a brief Period the advance commenced and was met with machine gun fire from both flanks and artillery fire from four sides. While leading my Battery forward, a high explosive shell landed close by, killing my intelligence officer and wounding me in some 14 places. I was carried to 5th Division First Aid Station at Monsay, reaching there about 9 A.M., Nov. 10, 1918; was sent in ambulance to Mobile Hospital #6 at Barennes near Grandpre, and was operated on in a tent by Dr. J.P. Wall,*



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*about 11:00 P.M., Nov. 11, 1918. On Nov. 18 was sent to A.R.C. N.H. #3, Paris, and finally transferred to U.S.A. G.H. #11, Cape May, from which place I was discharged."*

As a result of this, Captain Robert Marx was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross<sup>1</sup> and the Purple Heart. Captain Marx returned to Cincinnati following recovery from his wounds and became a prominent judge. Judge Marx met with a group of injured veterans on Christmas Day 1919. This group was called the Disabled Veterans of the World War, and Judge Robert Marx would serve as the first national Commander of the Disabled American Veterans. Judge Marx continued to serve his community until his death, September 6, 1960.

## **Support for Veterans Past, Present and Future**

### **The National Soldier's Home (Dayton) and the National Veterans Memorial and Museum (Columbus)**

The National Soldier's Home in Dayton was created by one of the last legislative items signed by President Lincoln before his assassination in 1865. Construction began on The National Soldier's Home in Dayton in 1867. In 1930, the Veterans Administration took over the operation of the Dayton Soldiers' Home. Today the site of Dayton Soldier's Home houses the Dayton National Cemetery, and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The Dayton Soldier's Home is celebrating 150 years of veterans' care.<sup>2</sup>

Tours of the Dayton Soldier's Home can be arranged, or students can complete the "Teaching with Historic Places" lesson on The Soldier's Home.<sup>3</sup>

The Ohio Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphans' Home was organized by the Grand Army of the Republic in 1869 to provide a home for children who had lost their fathers in the Civil War. The State of Ohio assumed control of the home in 1870. In 1901, the Home was the largest of its kind in the world. The State of Ohio closed the Home in 1997.

The National Veterans Memorial and Museum is currently under construction in Columbus and is scheduled for completion in 2018. The National Veterans Memorial and Museum will recognize and educate the public on the service and sacrifice of our nation's veterans.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://valor.militarytimes.com/recipient.php?recipientid=13380>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?id=37>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/115dayton/115dayton.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nationalvmm.org>



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## Image #1



**Image:** Construction at the Ohio Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphans' Home

**Source:** Courtesy of the Ohio History Connection (State Archives Series 1039 AV)

**Note:** Dated ca. 1936, this photograph shows construction at the Ohio Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphans' Home, with work on curbs and gutters in the foreground. Cottages can be seen on the left.

## Image #2



**Image:** The Brown Hospital on the Soldier's Home campus (Dayton, OH) in 1931.

**Source:** Courtesy of the Ohio History Connection (State Archives Series 1039 AV)

**Note:** Lieutenant Charles C. Jackson, a decorated African American combat officer from World War I, went to the Brown Hospital in 1932 for medical services. In 1921 Congress passed legislation allowing WWI soldiers to receive outpatient care from the Soldier's Home Hospitals, similar to the role of Veterans Administration Hospitals today. Lieutenant Jackson's obituary listed him as a life member of The Disabled Veterans of World War I.



## Image #3



**Image:** Artist rendering of the National Veterans Memorial and Museum

**Source:** The National Veterans Memorial and Museum (Columbus, Ohio)

**Note:** The National Veterans Memorial and Museum, scheduled to be completed in 2018, is designed to honor the service and sacrifice of our nation's veterans.



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## Extension Activity #1

### Researching Veterans Organizations in Your Community

Almost every community in Ohio has a veterans' organization. Many communities have multiple veterans' organizations, such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans. There are other veterans' organizations. Many local veterans' organizations have a connection to World War I. An interesting class project is to have your students research the history of your local veterans' organizations.

#### Background

A name, affiliation, and number designate most veterans' organization posts (example: Homer Lawson American Legion Post #653). The tradition of a name and number goes back to the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). Union Army veterans organized the GAR. Ohio had several hundred GAR Posts. The numbers for posts were sequential, with #1 being the earliest post, and #300 being organized much later. The post name was generally derived one of three ways: it was named for a local soldier killed in combat, a decorated local soldier, or a high-ranking local soldier. There are exceptions: e.g. famous generals.

#### Examples of Veterans' Organizations and World War I

In Washington Court House, Ohio, there are five veterans' organizations: two American Legion Posts, two Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts, and one D.A.V. Post. The Posts were named as follows: American Legion Paul Hughey Post #25 was named for Lieutenant Paul Hughey. Lieutenant Hughey was a local World War I combat pilot who was killed in combat over France, September 14, 1918.

American Legion Homer Lawson Post #653 was named for Private Homer Lawson. Private Lawson was a local African American World War I soldier killed in combat in the Meuse-Argonne Campaign, September 28, 1918 (see a lesson plan on Private Homer Lawson under Additional Resources).

The Veterans of Foreign Wars O.E. Hardway Post #3762 was named for Major O.E. Hardway. Hardway served in World War I as Major of the 166th Regiment, part of the famous Rainbow Division.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Burnett-Ducey Post #4964 (inactive) was named for James A. "Red" Ducey. "Red" Ducey was a Marine serving in World War I. He was a two-time recipient of the Silver Star and the French Croix de Guerre for bravery. Every community has similar stories of local soldiers' service and sacrifice.



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### **Connect with Local Veterans Organizations**

The first step is for your class to identify local veterans' organizations. Contact your county Veterans Services Office, a great resource for your class, for a list of local veterans' organizations. Once you have a list of local veterans' organizations, contact the organizations. Introduce yourself and your class. Ask if the Post was named for a specific person.

### **Research**

Once your class has the veterans' post namesake, your students can begin their research. Helpful sources (other than the Internet):

- 1.) The veterans' organization itself
  - a. Ask the post for any information they have
  - b. Students can possibly interview Post Commander
- 2.) Local Historical Society
  - a. Students can find out if the local historical society has any useful information
- 3.) Newspaper archives
  - a. Students can do research to see if any local newspapers exist. This may be done using the Internet, visiting your local library, or utilizing your local historical society
- 4.) Local genealogy organizations
  - a. These may be helpful. Try genealogy websites such as [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com)

### **Culminating Activity**

Have your students write a short history of your local veterans' organization(s). Organize an assembly for your classroom, or even the entire school. Veterans Day and Memorial Day are perfect times for your assembly. Invite local members of the Post(s), but be sure to include an open invitation to all veterans. Contact the local media—TV, newspaper, etc. The event could also be held at a local cemetery.



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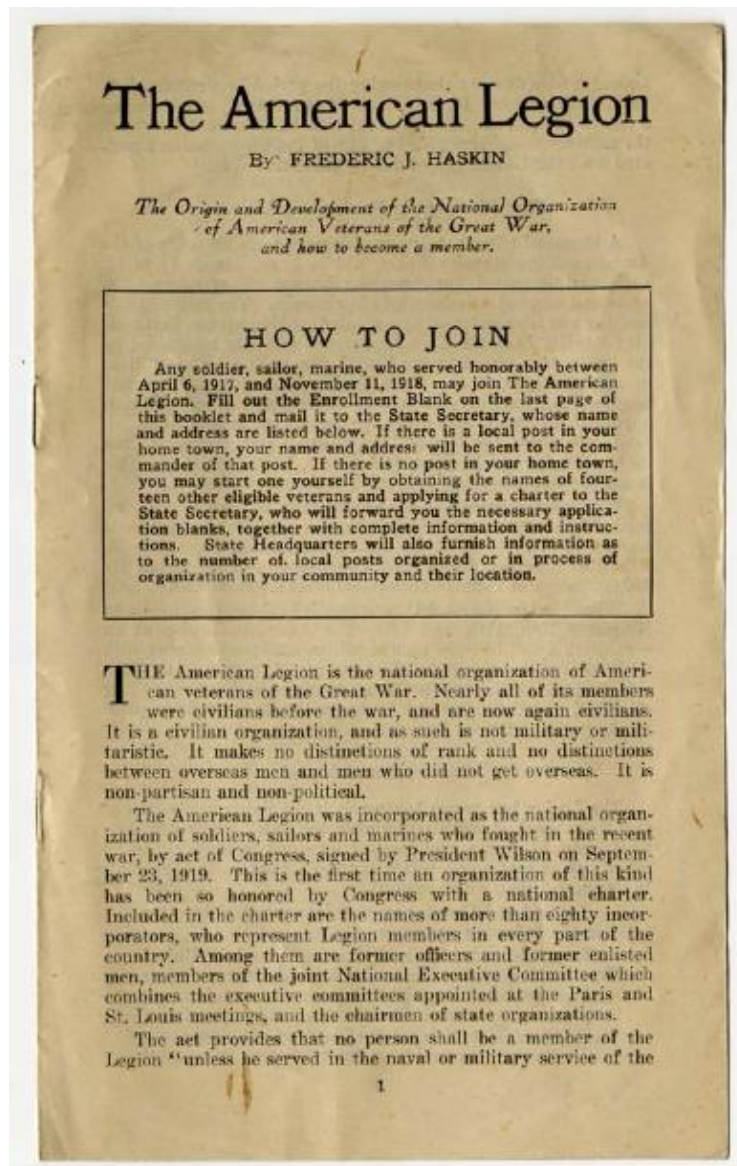


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## Extension Activity #2

Have students analyze the American Legion pamphlet below, also available at <http://cdm16007.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16007coll51/id/2588>. Ask students to identify examples of nativism from the pamphlet. Why would World War I veterans' organizations support nativism and isolationism?



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Sarah Lane: Educator  
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## Additional Resources

United States World War One Centennial Commission: [www.worldwar1centennial.org](http://www.worldwar1centennial.org)

Ohio World War I Centennial: American Legion Homer Lawson Post #653 lesson plan:  
[www.ohiohistoryhost.org/ohiomemory/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Searching-for-Homer-Lawson-Lesson-Plan.pdf](http://www.ohiohistoryhost.org/ohiomemory/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Searching-for-Homer-Lawson-Lesson-Plan.pdf)

The American Legion: [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

Veterans of Foreign Wars: [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org)

Disabled American Veterans: [www.ohiodav.org](http://www.ohiodav.org)



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This lesson plan was written by Paul LaRue. A retired thirty-year high school social studies teacher, Paul has received numerous state and national teaching awards. He serves as a member of the Ohio World War I Centennial Committee.

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