Stella Maris Productions presents an

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

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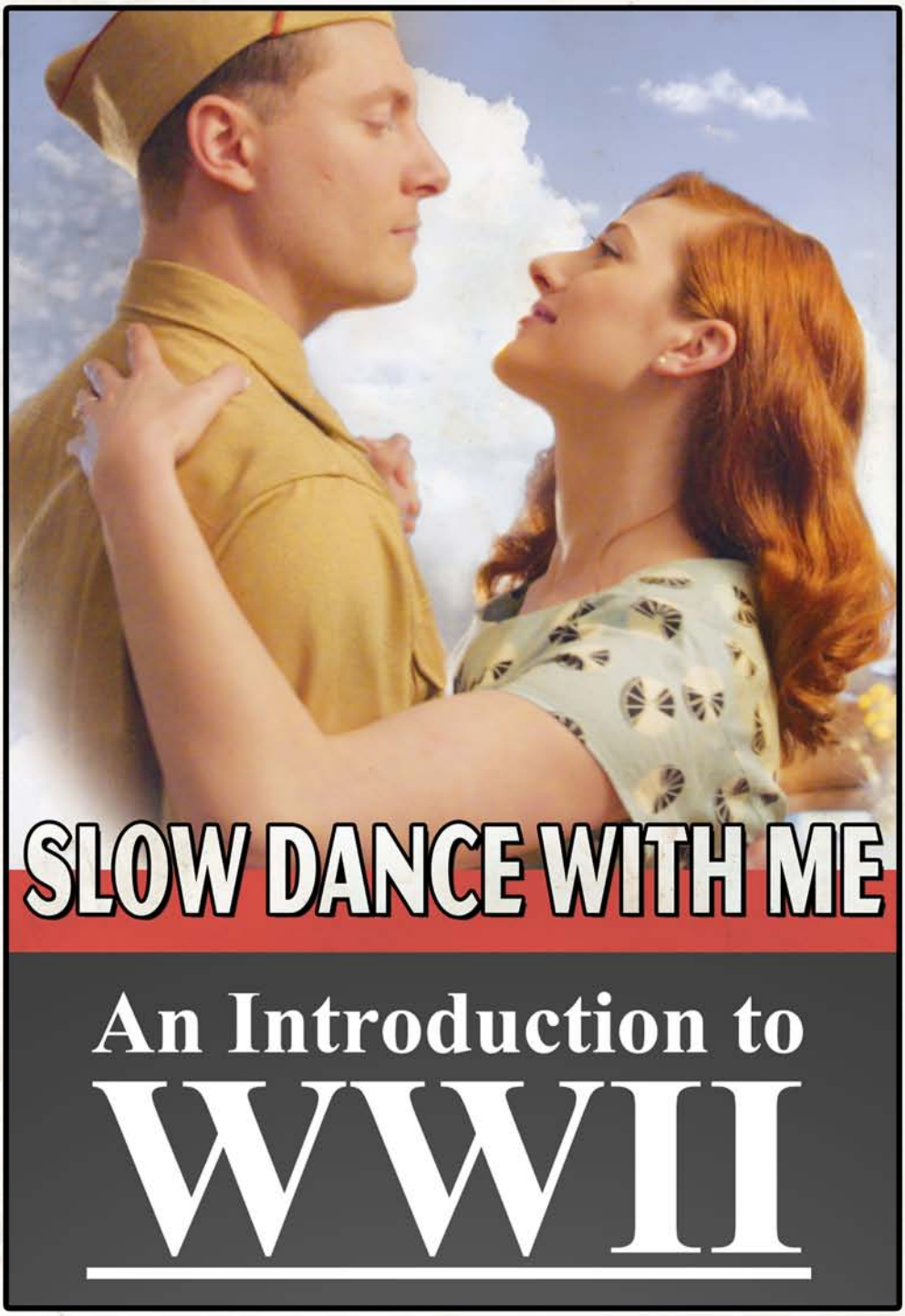

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Composition, cover, and interior were designed by Stella Maris Productions, LLC.

Printed in the U.S.A.

First Printing, June 2016

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A Note To Teachers

Dear Teachers,

As a fellow educator, I am always on the hunt for new and exciting ways to bring concepts to life in my classroom. As a filmmaker, I seek to portray stories that connect with audiences in unforgettable ways. It is with these ideas in mind that I am delighted to share this ***Educator's Guide to Slow Dance With Me and An Introduction to WWII***.

Although it is possible to use this guide in the classroom without a copy of the Slow Dance With Me DVD, I highly recommend obtaining a copy. The film faithfully establishes the period of WWII visually and will offer a great, historically accurate point of reference for visual learners. Further, as the film has no dialogue, it transcends language barriers that may impede learning for students who speak little or no English. The film may be obtained at a very reasonable price at **www.stellamarisfilms.com/store** .

With or without the short film, this guide is intended to equip you with everything you need to introduce your students to WWII in a memorable way. The resources included are self-explanatory and can easily align to standards for English, social studies, and reading. If you happen to need a copy of the accompanying slide presentation ***An Introduction to WWII***, it may be downloaded for free from **www.stellamarisfilms.com/store** .

Finally, I wish you and your students the best in the classroom. I am always happy to hear from students and teachers about their experiences and welcome any feedback about the film or this guide. Feel free to reach out at **www.stellamarisfilms.com/contact** .

Happy learning,

David M. Warren

-David Michael Warren
8th Grade Teacher & Writer/Director of "Slow Dance With Me"

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Name_____

AN INTRODUCTION TO WWII Interactive Notes

Directions: Pay attention as your teacher displays the slideshow An Introduction to WWII. As you watch and listen, use the information to fill in the blanks below.

1. WWII was a global conflict that began _____ and lasted until Sept. 2, 1945.

2. Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany in 1933. _____ gained power and became a totalitarian regime.

3. Under Hitler's command, Germany began a campaign of so-called "ethnic cleansing", known as the Holocaust, in which approximately _____were killed.

4. Germany was soon joined by the military might of Italy and Japan to form the _____ _____.

5. On Dec. 7, 1941 the Japanese bombed the American fleet in _____, Hawaii. This surprise attack prompted U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and General Dwight D. Eisenhower to lead the U.S. into the war.

6. On June 6, 1944, The U.S. and Allied troops invaded Normandy, France. Known as _____, this was a major turning point in the war and was the largest amphibious invasion ever.

7. Although German and Italian forces had surrendered, Japanese forces continued to fight the Allies. In an effort to prevent more U.S. casualties, _____ decided to drop two atomic bombs in Japan.

8. The first bomb was dropped on the city of _____ and killed approximately 80,000 people. The second bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki, killing 40,000 people.

9. On Sept. 2, 1945, _____ agreed to unconditional surrender and ended WWII.

10. WWII resulted in the death of _____ worldwide and cost the United States an estimated 296 Billion Dollars.

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Name_____

AN INTRODUCTION TO WWII Interactive Notes
(ANSWER KEY)

Directions: Pay attention as your teacher displays the slideshow An Introduction to WWII. As you watch and listen, use the information to fill in the blanks below.

1. WWII was a global conflict that began **Sept.1st 1939** and lasted until Sept. 2, 1945.

2. Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany in 1933. **The Nazi Party** gained power and became a totalitarian regime.

3. Under Hitler's command, Germany began a campaign of so-called "ethnic cleansing", known as the Holocaust, in which approximately **6 million Jews** were killed.

4. Germany was soon joined by the military might of Italy and Japan to form the **Axis Powers.**

5. On Dec. 7, 1941 the Japanese bombed the American fleet in **Pearl Harbor**, Hawaii. This surprise attack prompted U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and General Dwight D. Eisenhower to lead the U.S. into the war.

6. On June 6, 1944, The U.S. and Allied troops invaded Normandy, France. Known as **D-Day**, this was a major turning point in the war and was the largest amphibious invasion ever.

7. Although German and Italian forces had surrendered, Japanese forces continued to fight the Allies. In an effort to prevent more U.S. casualties, **President Truman** decided to drop two atomic bombs in Japan.

8. The first bomb was dropped on the city of **Hiroshima** and killed approximately 80,000 people. The second bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki, killing 40,000 people.

9. On Sept. 2, 1945, **Japan** agreed to unconditional surrender and formally ended WWII.

10. WWII resulted in the death of **60 million people** worldwide and cost the United States an estimated 296 Billion Dollars.

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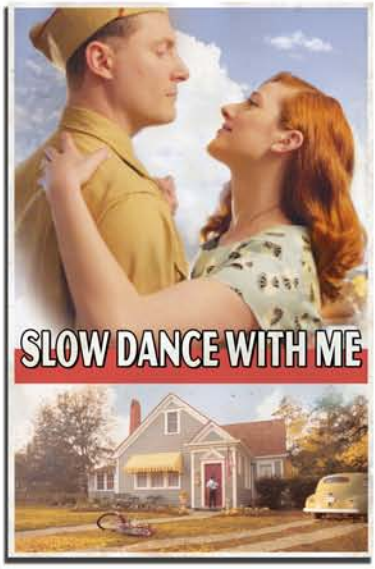

Short Film Discussion Questions

Teachers: After showing ***Slow Dance With Me*** to your class, encourage an open conversation about WWII with your students. Use the questions below as a guide.

The short film is available for instant streaming at
www.stellamarisfilms.com .

1. Which elements of the film clued you in to the setting of the film? How did you know that the story took place in the 1940's?

2. What do you think the young woman was doing before the telegram arrived? How would you pass the time if you lived in the WWII era?

3. Did the young woman actually dance with her husband in the film? How do you know?

4. The film shows a boy riding a bicycle and hand-delivering a telegram. Why don't we see more children working today?

5. How would you feel if a loved one was serving overseas?

6. Do we owe a sense of gratitude to our military servicemen and service-women and their families? Why, or why not?

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WWII Middle School Essay Prompt

Imagine living in a time without the internet, cell phones, social media, or other instant communication. Sending a single correspondence to someone at war could take weeks to deliver! If you were writing a letter to a loved one who was fighting overseas in World War II, what sort of message would you send? Would you mention difficulties at home? Why, or why not? How would you feel while you were waiting for a response? What sort of reply would you like to receive? Use the space below to respond.

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WWII High School Essay Prompt

In 1945, President Truman made the difficult decision to drop two atomic bombs in Japan, killing an estimated 120,000 people. This action led to the end of WWII, but the decision remains highly controversial to this day. Why do you think President Truman made this decision? Was this a necessary action, or one that could have been avoided? Wether dropping the bombs was necessary or not, what are some of the lasting effects of such a decision? Use your knowledge of WWII to respond below.

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Carefully read the article, then answer the questions that follow.

V-Mail, The Wonder of WWII by Frank W. Towers

V-Mail? What, you never heard of V-Mail? 65 years before today's high-tech E-Mail there was another way to send compressed messages around the world. It was called "V-Mail", the American way of transmitting U.S. soldier's mail in WWII. The setting up of V-Mail facilities was considered of prime importance.

It was most important during WWII for the morale of the soldiers overseas to get mail from home from wives, mothers, sweet-hearts, children and other members of one's family in order to let them know that they were not forgotten, and to keep them aware of what was going on at home during their absence.

Before V-Mail, the handling of thousands of letters going in both directions from the battle fields to home was a very difficult challenge during times of war. As we call it today, "snail-mail" then was even slower, as huge numbers of bags of letters had to be manually handled, loaded on to ships, then a long 10-15 day journey to the U.S.A., unloading, then sorting and sending it on to its destination, taking another week or ten days. Consequently it could realistically be nearly a month, or even more, for a letter to get home, be answered and a reply received by the soldier overseas. Today this can be accomplished in a matter of minutes!

Back in the 1940's, the U.S. military took advantage of the latest modern technology to speed up the process of getting the mail to and from the European and Pacific Theaters of Operations. This modern technique was called "V-Mail", which was thought to be short for Victory Mail, although in the early 40's Victory was not then assured and was still a long way off.

The V-Mail process was very simple. The soldiers wrote their letters on a special form, and then it was photographed onto microfilm. A reel of 16mm microfilm could contain up to 18,000 letters! In terms of bulk and weight, one roll of film took up only a fraction of the space that 18,000 letters would take, and weighed far less. It was then flown to the U.S.A. in empty planes that had come to the Theater of Operations loaded with urgent supplies, and upon arrival in the U.S.A. the film was developed, then the letters printed, again on a very special form of photo paper and then posted onwards to the addressee. This clever method was developed by the U.S. Postal Director, who actually got the idea from a system currently in use by the British Military services, which was called 'airgraph' mail.

This process may seem to be a laborious one, although with the collection of the mail, the actual photographing of each individual thousands and thousands of letters, and a mailing process at the home end, of developing and reprinting the film images, addressing the envelopes and mailing them on, it really did boil down to a space saving method of transporting mail. It is on record that for every 150,000 letters microfilmed as V-Mail, over a ton of shipping space was freed up.

V-Mail was also for families to use to send mail to soldiers and there were many major publicity programs in the U.S.A. to try to persuade families that using V-Mail was the patriotic thing to do. Its acceptance after first appearing in June 1942, was slow – only 35,000 letters sent by families that month – but one year later, in June 1943, several million letters were sent by this method. All correspondence, in both directions, still had to be censored in case any sensitive information was being sent in either direction.

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Carefully read the article, then answer the questions that follow.

V-Mail, The Wonder of WWII by Frank W. Towers (Cont'd)

Families were generally quite dubious to start with, as they did not like the idea of some unknown person opening their mail, but they soon became accustomed to this invasion of privacy, and they understood the reasons for it.

The V-Mail which went by air, speeded up the point-to-point delivery of mail to about a week, from the U.S.A. to Europe or the Pacific, whereas regular mail, which had to go by sea, could take up to a month or more, depending on the availability of space, and, postage had to be paid for this service, whereas the V-mail was Free!

Great care was taken to register, number and track the reels, and a master copy was made and kept at the point of origin, just in case of an accident and any reels were lost in crashes or fires. A duplicate reel could be issued almost instantly and forwarded to its destination. One wonders if any of those reels still exist somewhere in some archive??

In the European Theater of Operations, the processing of microfilm was done by the US Signal Corps, but in the U.S.A., the Kodak Company had contracts to handle this type of mail. By the end of WWII there were 9 V-Mail stations and nine under contract, located strategically all over the U.S.A.

To start the process, the soldier would write his letter on the V-Mail form, which was furnished free, and usually hand it directly to his Platoon leader, or some other Officer, who had been designated as an Official Censor. The Officer was bound to read this letter, and obliterate any remarks containing sensitive information – dates, places, town names, unit designations, higher commanding officer's names or any other type of information, that if captured by the enemy, it would be of no intelligence value. He was also bound to maintain confidentiality of the information contained therein, except in repeated cases of violation of the censorship rules. Then punishment was meted out accordingly by the soldier's Commanding Officer.

Since the individual soldier was obliged to destroy all personal material before any offensive operation took place, very little of the mail received by the soldier has survived the war. Thus, the most of the V-Mail that exists today is that which the soldier sent to their loved ones at home.

© Frank W. Towers
6 June 2003

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V-Mail Questions

After reading ***V-Mail, The Wonder of WWII*** by Frank W. Towers, answer the questions below.

1. How long could it realistically take for a letter to reach its destination during WWII?

2. Where did the idea of the V-Mail process come from?

3.Why did the idea of V-Mail not immediately catch on in the U.S.?

4.Why do you suppose V-Mail postage was free of charge?

5. What sort of information needed to be censored from V-Mail?

6. Why do very few V-Mail artifacts exist today?

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Name_____

V-Mail Questions (ANSWER KEY)

After reading ***V-Mail, The Wonder of WWII*** by Frank W. Towers, answer the questions below.

1. How long could it realistically take for a letter to reach its destination during WWII?

It could realistically take nearly a month or more for a letter to reach its destination during WWII.

2. Where did the idea of the V-Mail process come from?

The idea for V-Mail was first used by the British Military services, which called it "airgraph" mail.

3.Why did the idea of V-Mail not immediately catch on in the U.S.?

People were concerned about their privacy because all of the V-Mail was opened and screened before it was delivered.

4.Why do you suppose V-Mail postage was free of charge?

(Answers may vary) V-Mail postage was free of charge because communications with families and loved ones would boost the morale of the soldiers. This was considered of prime importance.

5. What sort of information needed to be censored from V-Mail?

Any sensitive information such as dates, places, town names, unit designations, higher commanding officer's names had to be censored.

6. Why do very few V-Mail artifacts exist today?

Soldiers had to destroy all personal materials before an offensive operation took place.

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Teachers, *Educate your students on the importance of supporting our Heroes. Ask them to…*

OPERATION GRATITUDE
SAYING "THANK YOU" TO ALL WHO SERVE

WRITE A LETTER!

Writing a letter is a meaningful way for Americans to show their support for all who serve.

As a class project, your students will engage in a multi-disciplinary activity providing lessons in: Grammar, Writing Skills, Civics, History, Social Studies, and Art!

Don't know where to start? Have students:

- Start with a salutation, such as "**Dear Hero**" or "**Dear Brave One**"
- Students can write to a: Deployed Troop, New Recruit, Veteran, First Responder, Wounded Warrior
- **Note:** A Deployed Troop is currently overseas in harm's way. A Veteran has served our country in the past. A New Recruit just completed Boot Camp and has sworn to serve for the next 4+ years. A First Responder serves as a firefighter, a paramedic or in law enforcement. A Wounded Warrior was injured in combat. All deserve to be thanked for their commitment & bravery
- Express their thanks for our Military Members' selfless service
- Share about themselves, eg. Family, Pets, and favorite Sports or Hobbies, Movies
- Include students' FIRST NAMES ONLY - Please include the School Name/Teacher, Contact Info(mailing address or email) on every letter so recipients can write back
- Are your students too young to write letters? Consider drawing or painting pictures instead -- Please avoid glitter!

Put all loose artwork and letters/cards in a large envelope or box (*Please, NO INDIVIDUAL ENVELOPES) and ship to:

OPERATION GRATITUDE
21100 Lassen Street
Chatsworth, CA 91311

* **Please download, fill out and include this Donation Form** in each large envelope/box (Form is on our website)
(Send Deployed Troops/New Recruit/Wounded Warrior/Veteran/First Responder letters separately & mark each)

For more information visit us on the web at www.OperationGratitude.com
on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OperationGratitude
or send an email to Info@operationgratitude.com

Operation Gratitude sends 200,000+ Care Packages each year to Troops, Veterans, New Recruits, First Responders & Wounded Warriors. Of all the items included in these packages, the most cherished are the personal letters of appreciation! Our goal is to include several letters and drawings in every Care Package and tell our heroes "WE CARE!"