



THE Volunteers

Americans Join World War I, 1914-1919

CURRICULUM



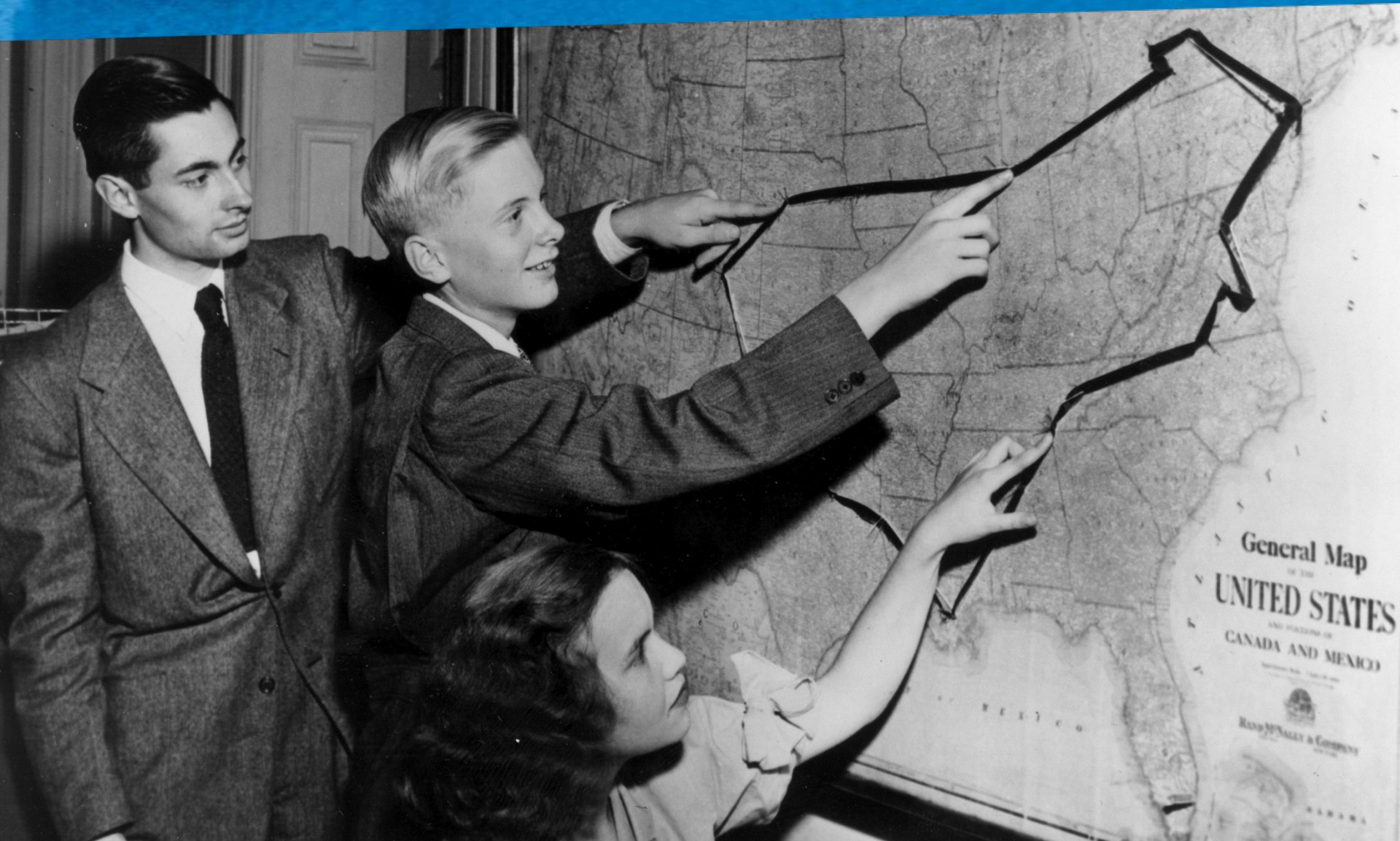
American Field Service



World War II



AFS Intercultural Programs



The Volunteers: Americans Join World War I, 1914-1919 Curriculum



INSTRUCTIONS

Activator

Why Do People Volunteer?

1. Ask students for single words or phrases they equate with the word “volunteer.” Collect their responses using the board or a Web tool such as Wordle.net or Padlet.com. Discuss their responses using these prompts:

- What ideas, beliefs, or feelings do students associate with the word “volunteer”?
- Based on this discussion, help students to develop a common definition or concept of “volunteering” expressed in their own words. (The definition generally includes these components: work or service done by free choice, performed for the benefit of others and with minimal compensation.

For more information, including the major types of volunteer service, its benefits, and the human rights values behind it, see these documents: “Definitions of Volunteering: Volunteering England Information Sheet” at <http://www.vcnw.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Definitions-of-volunteering.pdf>; United Nations Volunteers, “State of the World’s Volunteerism Report” at www.unv.org/swvr2011.html.

2. Invite students to ask themselves the following questions, then share answers with a partner:

- When is a time that you volunteered? (If a student cannot find an example with prompting, ask him or her

to answer when or where would you like to volunteer?)

- What motivated you to volunteer (or would motivate you to do so)?

Compare answers in the full group. How similar or different were students’ motives for volunteer service? What patterns do they discern? Move students toward critical thinking if needed: Do individuals ever volunteer out of self-interest—for example, to enhance a resume or college application? Do they think volunteering is beneficial to society even if it is not entirely altruistic?



Teaching Tip

Help students search for videos with volunteer testimonials. See for example the TED Talk of volunteer firefighter Mark Bezos at ted.com/talks/mark_bezos_a_life_lesson_from_a_volunteer_firefighter?language=en, the YouTube channel for Global Youth Service Day at youtube.com/user/youthservice, or the “Volunteer Voices” feature of the United Nations volunteers at unv.org.

Photograph
Repairing ambulances at the American Field Service headquarters in Paris, France.
Courtesy of the Archives of the American Field Service and AFS Intercultural Programs.

ROLE PLAY QUESTION SHEET: U.S. AMERICAN WAR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer Biography #2

**ELLEN NEWBOLD
LA MOTTE
(1873-1961)**



Volunteer Biography #3

**EUGENE
BULLARD
(1895-1961)**



Volunteer Biography #5

**JAMES ROGERS
MCCONNELL
(1887-1917)**



1. Tell us about your upbringing and early career:
What is your background?



2. What factors led you to volunteer for service in the European war?



3. What are your opinions about the war and U.S. neutrality during your service?



4. What kind of work does your organization do? What made you select the type of service that you chose to do? If you worked in more than one type of service, what made you change?



5. Do you feel **you** benefitted by performing war service?
Give a reason for your response.



6. Do you feel **others** benefitted from your service?
Give a reason for your response.



BACKGROUND ESSAY

U.S. American Volunteers in World War I, 1914-1917

By: PD Dr. Axel Jansen

When war broke out in Europe in August 1914, few Americans expected their country to abandon its traditional aloofness from European affairs. Even as late as 1916, it was not inevitable that the United States (U.S.) would enter the war. The U.S. had never fought a war abroad in Europe and until Germany declared unconditional submarine warfare in January 1917, few expected U.S. President Woodrow Wilson would ever take this step.

At a time when their country remained neutral, tens of thousands of Americans decided to volunteer for what was referred to as the "European War" as relief administrators, doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers, soldiers, and pilots. They volunteered for a variety of reasons ranging from a desire for adventure, for helping others, and for becoming part of an event of global significance.

During the period of U.S. neutrality from August 1914 through March 1917, most American volunteers aided the Allies. Great Britain attracted the largest number of volunteers, with tens of thousands of Americans serving in the British infantry or flying corps. Before the U.S. government insisted on a name change in November 1916, all-American battalions in the Canadian Expeditionary Forces were known as the "American Legion." They comprised Americans who lived in Canada, or had crossed the border after the outbreak of war, sometimes traveling north thousands of miles to volunteer for military service.

While most Americans joined British units before 1917, nearly 6,000 American volunteers served on behalf of France. In August 1914, the American Ambulance

Hospital in the prosperous Paris suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine became the hub for American activity in France. The hospital attracted American nurses, who offered to work without pay, and medical teams led by physicians such as surgeon Harvey Cushing, head of Harvard University's Medical Unit in 1915. Groups dispatched by American universities brought the latest medical technology to treat the wounded. American business leaders in Paris also founded the American Relief Clearing House for France and her Allies (ARCH). During the period of U.S. neutrality and with the aid of the French government and private American support, ARCH provided transportation of relief goods from New York to Paris free of charge to the sender. Another relief organization was the American Fund for French Wounded (AFFW), founded by wealthy U.S. women with close ties to Paris in early 1915. AFFW members in France gathered clothing and other goods sent to them by its more than 150 American committees. Volunteer drivers delivered these goods to hospitals around France.

Nothing came to symbolize transatlantic volunteerism to the American public as boldly as driving an ambulance along the front in France. Organizations such as the American Volunteer Motor-Ambulance Corps (AVMAC) and the American Ambulance Field Service (later known as the American Field Service or AFS) attracted Americans eager for a challenging experience. Many ambulance drivers were recruited from universities such as Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. In a letter to the parents of a student who considered joining an ambulance service in France, Harvard President A. Lawrence Lowell noted, "They get an experience, an insight into a great historic struggle,



Extension Activity

Exploring Local Discourse through Archival Research

How did citizens in your state or community respond to the growing war in Europe? Use the Library of Congress's *Chronicling America* website at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov to explore regional newspapers and gain a better understanding of your community's response to World War I.

Chronicling America, a digital archive of historic newspapers supported by the Library of Congress and the National Endowment for the Humanities, provides access to more than seven million newspaper pages from around the United States between the years 1836 and 1922. Newspapers can

be searched by keyword, date, and place of publication, making it an excellent archival resource for the study of World War I on a local level. (Not all newspapers and locations are available; students may have to define their "local" community more broadly.)

1. One of the challenges of archival research is narrowing one's search to specific dates and events. Have students create a list or a timeline of key events and dates that they could use in their search. Brainstorm a list of keywords and dates to use to search the collection.

2. *Chronicling America* provides a list of all digitized newspapers (chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers) with a description of their place of publication and historical context for each paper. Have students look at the list for papers published near their community or in their state. Be sure to have students read the "More Info" section for the newspaper(s) they select to better understand what views and perspectives might be addressed in the paper.

3. Direct students to the "Advanced Search" tab. Once there, they can select a state or newspaper

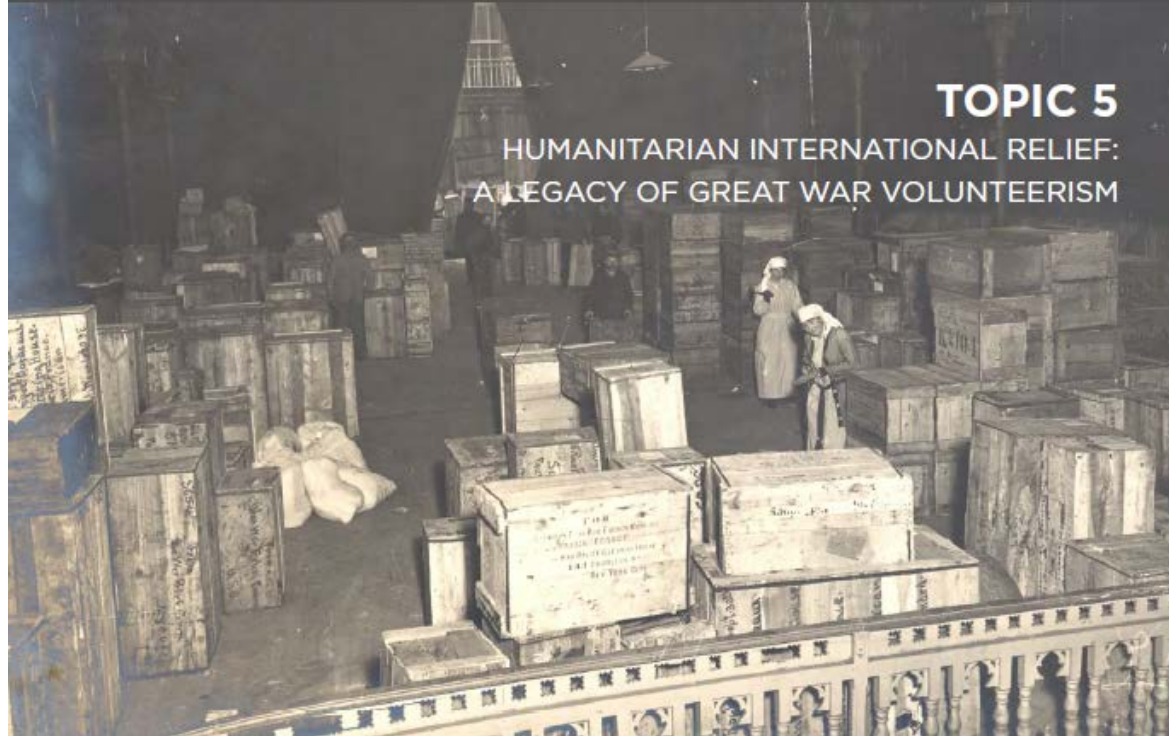


Global Classroom Tip

Connect with a local archive or historical society to find historical newspapers from your community or region that students can examine, to understand whether and how diverse or differing stances on the conflict were reflected in their own communities.

Photograph

Women's peace parade marching down Fifth Avenue in New York City on August 20, 1914.
George Grantham Bain Collection, Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



TOPIC 5

HUMANITARIAN INTERNATIONAL RELIEF: A LEGACY OF GREAT WAR VOLUNTEERISM

The devastation of the Great War unfolded on a scale unprecedented until that time in world history—a crisis that demanded a new type and scale of international response. These lesson plans explore the role United States volunteer organizations played in relieving the suffering of civilians during the humanitarian crisis of World War I. Designed for secondary school learners, the lesson plans help students trace the legacies of humanitarian relief work and humanitarian workers in the World War I era and throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Using primary sources that include artifacts, letters, journal entries, photographs, and early motion pictures, students will learn about the organizations and their volunteers. Finally, students are invited to consider the role the private sector and United States government played in relief efforts and the importance of public support in the success of such work.

The topic is divided into four interrelated lesson plans that could be taught independently or as a whole, depending upon grade level, instructional objectives, and time:

1. Activator, *What Is a Humanitarian Problem?*
2. Lesson I, *Comparison of Contemporary Humanitarian Workers to Humanitarian Workers During World War I*
3. Lesson II, *Organization and Mobilization of Public Support and Humanitarian Relief for Belgium and France During World War I*
4. Extension Activity, *Student-Designed Recruitment Campaign for Volunteer Assistance of Humanitarian Relief Efforts in Europe*

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Photograph
Shipping boxes at the Alcazar d'Étoilé, a café which became a depot and storage place for French hospitals and relief organizations in Paris. Courtesy of the Archives of the American Field Service and AFS Intercultural Programs.



TOPIC 2

U.S. AMERICAN WOMEN'S VOLUNTEERISM AND SUFFRAGE IN WORLD WAR I

What motivated U.S. American women to volunteer for war service during World War I, domestically and abroad? How did their volunteer roles challenge traditional formulations of female duty to home and family? This topic, designed for secondary school learners, helps students explore the ways that women's lives and roles were transformed by volunteer service before and after 1917 through diverse primary sources. The lesson plans invite students, as well, to consider the interplay between women's volunteer service and women's pursuit of political and professional equality during World War I.

This topic is divided into five interrelated lesson plans that could be taught independently or as a whole, depending upon grade level, instructional objectives, and time:

1. Activator, *Advancing Toward Women's Equality in the U.S.*
2. Lesson I, *Images and Ideas about Women Volunteers*
3. Lesson II, *A U.S. American Nurse in France: A Primary Source Analysis*
4. Lesson III, *Women's Volunteerism and Suffrage in the U.S.*
5. Extension Activity, *Rights for Women Around the Globe: A Century of Change*

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TOPIC 4

LOST GENERATION ARTISTS AND WRITERS AS WORLD WAR I VOLUNTEERS



How did the unprecedented death and destruction of World War I affect artists and writers? Specifically, how did volunteer service in the First World War shape the lives and perspectives of some American writers and artists, members of the “Lost Generation”? The lesson plans in this topic invite secondary school learners to explore how the volunteer service of some of the most famous U.S. American writers and artists—Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, E. E. Cummings, and Henry O. Tanner—was reflected through the aesthetics and themes of their work. It also invites students to interpret the poetry, prose, and artwork of these individuals and to infer what they intended to convey about war itself.

This topic is divided into three interrelated lesson plans that could be taught independently or as a whole, depending upon grade level, instructional objectives, and time:

1. Activator, *In Flanders Fields: One Writer's Response to War*
2. Lesson, *Lost Generation Artists and Writers: Volunteer Experience and Artistic Expression*
3. Extension Activity, *Researching the Literature of War*

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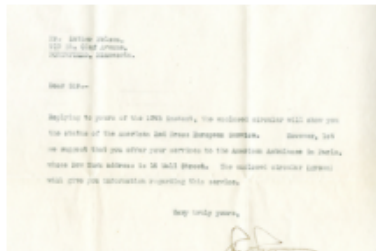




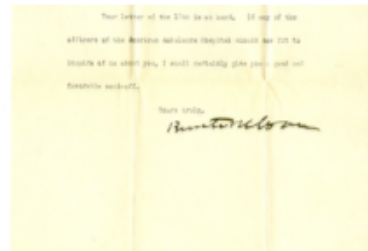
Luther Nelson

Luther Nelson was a native of Lanesboro, Minnesota, and the son of Minnesota State Senator S. A. Nelson. After graduating from St. Olaf College in June 1916 at the age of 22, Nelson joined the American Ambulance Hospital in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France as an ambulance driver. He worked there for several months, evacuating wounded soldiers from the train stations to the various military hospitals in and around Paris. However, Nelson wanted to work closer to the front lines—particularly near Verdun—and decided to enlist for a six-month term as an ambulance driver with the Norton-Harjes Ambulance Corps on September 1, 1916. Nelson saw some of the war's most severe fighting in Verdun with his unit before returning home to the United States in September 1917.

Luther Nelson at the American Ambulance Hospital, 1916



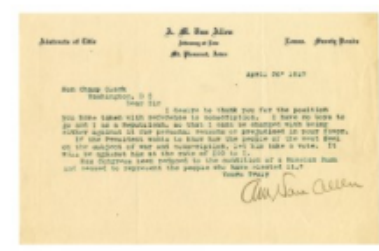
11 MAY 13, 1916



21 MAY 15, 1916



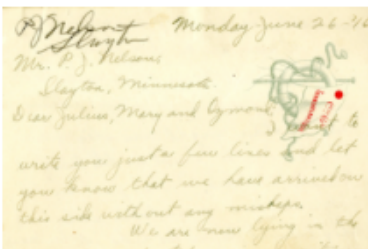
31 MAY 16, 1916



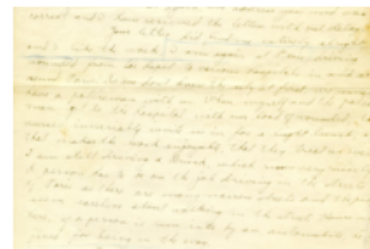
41 MAY 20, 1916



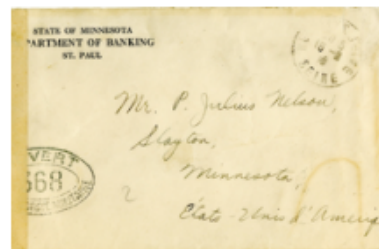
51 JUNE 17, 1916



61 JUNE 26, 1916



71 JULY 25, 1916



81 AUGUST 16, 1916

Stories from the Stacks

Stay updated with exciting projects and newly-digitized collections in the AFS Archives!



AFS Remembers Edwin R. Masback, Jr. (1917-2017)



A New Exhibition Honors AFS Volunteer Efforts During WWI



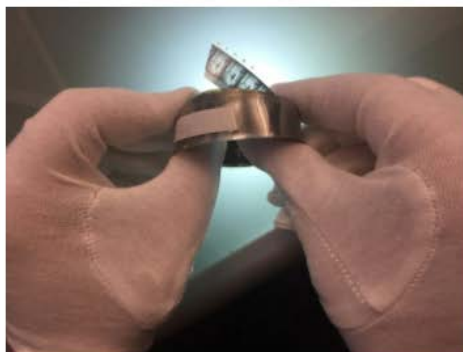
Photographs in the AFS Archives: Arthur Howe, Jr. Collection

AFS History

[View Our Timeline](#)

AFS Intercultural Programs began as the American Ambulance Field Service, a volunteer ambulance corps created in April 1915 by A. Piatt Andrew. Learn about how AFS was transformed from a wartime humanitarian aid organization into a groundbreaking international secondary school exchange, volunteer, and intercultural learning organization in our timeline!

Accessing the Archives



— What's in the AFS Archives?

The AFS Archives contains more than 500 cubic feet of unique documents, photographs, memorabilia, and audio-visual material dating from as early as 1915, when AFS was founded as a volunteer ambulance corps in France. The collections are organized into four chronological record groups.

[View our collection list](#) →

+ How can I conduct research in the AFS Archives?

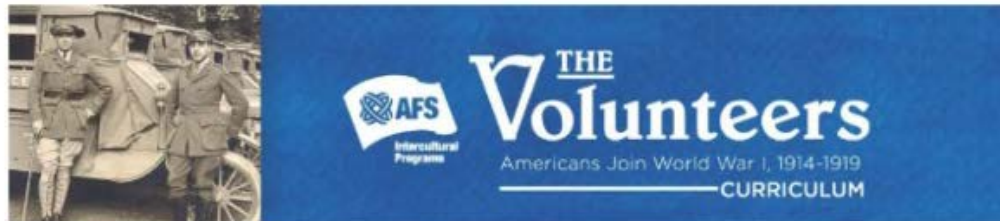
+ Can the AFS Archives staff answer my reference request?

Around the World

Одавање почести прошлости и гледање у будућност: нови курикулум за школе

[AFS International](#) је у марту објавио нови курикулум намјењен за кориштење у средњим школама цијелог свијета као додатни материјал, посебно на часовима историје, књижевности, грађанског образовања и друштвених наука. Курикулум је резултат заједничког рада Архива, Одјела за образовање, универзитетских професора из Њемачке и САД-а и других стручњака из ове области. Курикулум одаје почаст прошлости с посебним фокусом на улогу америчких волонтера—возача амбулантних возила у Првом свјетском рату, те гледа у будућност говорећи о значају волонтеризма за јачање интеркултуралне компетенције и глобално грађанско образовање.

[Курикулум \(на енглеском језику\) можете преузети овдје.](#)



Website



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Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures

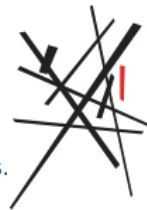
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**THE UNITED STATES
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**PRIMARY
SOURCE**
Global learning matters.



**THE NATIONAL
WWI MUSEUM
AND MEMORIAL**



Flanders
State of the Art

All photographs used in this presentation are courtesy of the Archives of the American Field Service and AFS Intercultural Programs, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Musée franco-américain du château de Blérancourt, Virginia Military Institute, Dennis Gordon, Ronald Poteat, National Museum of the United States Air Force, and the Library of Congress