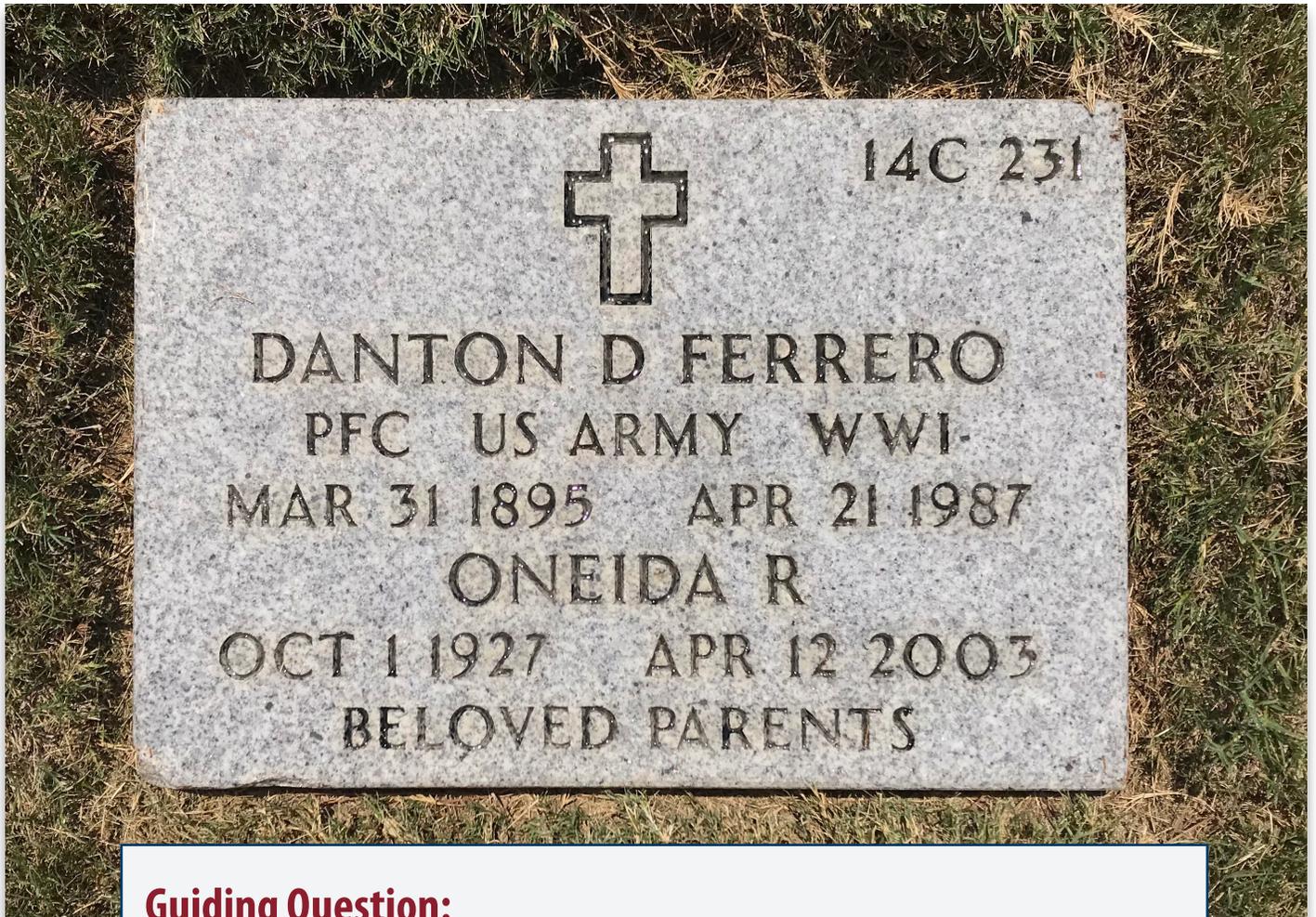


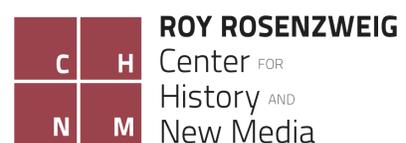
# Thinking Historically About Veterans' Stories

DEVELOPED BY KATHY TUCKER CARROLL



## Guiding Question:

How can students honor veterans' service by practicing the historical thinking skills necessary to research the stories behind the veterans interred at national cemeteries in their own communities?



## Overview

During a visit to the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery, students will learn about the purpose of national cemeteries. They will see first-hand what information can be found on a grave marker and will learn how to generate research questions to learn more about the servicemember and his or her life.

## Objectives

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to:

- Explain the purpose of a national cemetery;
- Learn how to glean basic information about a veteran from his or her grave marker; and
- Practice the process of thinking historically to develop questions to begin research.



*Researching our veterans to uncover the “history mystery” behind their lives and honor their service in America’s armed forces is incredibly rewarding and fascinating work. The quest often begins simply with a name and a burial location. Asking good questions, selecting reliable sources, and corroborating answers are important research skills that are critical for practicing civic responsibility.*

— Kathy Carroll

**Carroll teaches at St. John’s Episcopal School in Dallas, Texas.**

## Spotlight: Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery

Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery is the sixth national cemetery in Texas and the 118th in the national cemetery system.

Currently, more than 1.5 million veterans live in the state of Texas and approximately 460,000 reside in the cemetery’s service area. The Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery has developed 152 acres of the 638-acre cemetery providing 85,778 casketed sites and 31,918 columbaria/garden niches for cremated remains. Fully developed, Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery will provide burial space for 280,000 eligible veterans and dependents.

### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

# Standards Connections

## Connections to Common Core

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

# Documents Used

## Primary Sources

Headstone of Dantón Demófilo Ferrero and Oneida Ferrero  
Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery  
Section 14C Site 231

Various headstones  
Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery  
Section 76

## Secondary Sources

Available Emblems of Belief  
National Cemetery Administration  
<https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/emblems.pdf>

Award Abbreviations  
National Cemetery Administration  
<https://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/docs/abbreviations/Awards.pdf>

Headstone and Marker Inscription Abbreviations  
National Cemetery Administration  
<https://www.cem.va.gov/hmm/abbreviations.asp>

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Map, Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

<https://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/cems/maps/DallasFtWorth916.pdf>

Veteran Profile, Private First Class Dantón Demófilo Ferrero

National Cemetery Administration

<https://www.cem.va.gov/legacy/>

## Materials

- Map, Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery
- Cemetery Field Guide
- Private First Class Dantón Demófilo Ferrero Veteran Profile
- Selected Burials List
- Historical Thinking Reflection Questions

## Activity Preparation

- Contact the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery to let them know of your plans in case any interments are being conducted in the areas you intend to visit (Sections 14C and 76).
- Familiarize yourself with the function of a national cemetery. Burial in a national cemetery is open to:
  - Members of the armed forces killed in action as well as veterans;
  - Members of the armed forces reserves who meet certain requirements; and
  - A veteran's spouse, widow or widower, minor children, and, under certain conditions, unmarried adult children with disabilities.
- Familiarize yourself with the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery Map, noting the locations of Section 14C and 76.
- Assign students to groups of two or three students each.
- Make one teacher copy of the Map, Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery.

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### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

- Make one copy for each student:
  - Cemetery Field Guide
  - Private First Class Dantón Demófilo Ferrero Veteran Profile
  - Historical Thinking Reflection Questions
- Pack pencils or pens for student use.

## Procedure

### Activity One: Field Trip Pre-Activity (15 minutes)

- Explain that the purpose of the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) is to provide a final resting place for those who die in the military, military veterans, and certain family members.
- Establish expectations for visiting the final resting places of American veterans and their families.
- Explain that cemeteries can be a good place to learn about a person or a community through the primary source information they offer.
- Make students aware of resources on the NCA website, including the Available Emblems of Belief, Headstone and Marker Inscription Abbreviations, and Award Abbreviations.
- Discuss how a person might use information from a grave marker to generate research questions to learn more about a person at a national cemetery.
- Assign students to groups (two or three students each) for the field trip activity the following day.

### Activity Two: Initial Observation (15 minutes)

- Arrive at the cemetery and take students to Section 14C. Allow students to observe the grave markers in Section 14C.
- Distribute the Cemetery Field Guide. Direct students to answer questions one and two in Part A.
- Debrief with students.
  - Ask students to share the types of information they found. Possible answers to question two could include: men, women, spouses, killed in action (KIA), died after their time in the service was over, etc.

- Lead a discussion with students about how historians could use the information on the markers to discover more about the person buried there.
  - *What questions would they like to have answered?* Possible student responses could include: Why are different symbols inscribed on the grave markers? What do the abbreviations mean? Why are some buried alone? Why are some buried with spouses or other family members?
  - *Where would they look to find new answers?* Possible student responses could include: National Cemetery Administration website, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) records, Ancestry.com, newspaper obituaries, Findagrave.com, etc.

### Activity Three: PFC Dantón Demófilo Ferrero Grave Marker (30 minutes)

- Lead students to the area near Dantón Demófilo and Oneida Ferrero's grave marker at Site 231, near the back of the section 14C.
- Direct students to record the information on the Ferrero grave marker (question three).
- Direct students to write a brief narrative (two to four sentences) of Private First Class Ferrero's story based on the information they see on his grave marker (question four).
- Distribute a copy of Private First Class Dantón Demófilo Ferrero's Veteran Profile to each student. Explain that the process of discovering the information they are about to hear in the profile began by knowing only what is found on his grave marker and in the National Cemetery Administration database.
- Read the Veteran Profile aloud. Ask students to circle information that appears both in the profile and on the grave marker.
- Ask student to look at the items they circled. What questions helped to generate this information? Lead a brief discussion to give students insight into the process of developing research questions.
  - Students may note that that Ferrero's name in the profile (Dantón) differs from how it appears on the grave marker (Danton). What caused the appearance of his name to change? What research would help answer that question?
  - The grave marker indicates he and his wife were "Beloved Parents." How could a historian follow up on that claim? Who would they ask?

**Teacher Tip:** *Explain the numbering system on grave markers (section 14C, site 231) to students. Since Private First Class Ferrero's grave has a flat marker, the number appears in the upper right corner. The number appears on the back of upright headstones.*

- Explain to students that all of the information in the profile came from publicly available internet sources or through databases such as Ancestry or newspapers.com. How important was the process of asking questions and thinking about where to find the answers? Help students understand that not all questions can be answered. Because an interview with his children was not an available resource, information in the profile about him as a parent is limited.

### Activity Four: Selected Burials (45 minutes)

- Drive or walk to Section 76.
- Explain to students that the grave sites are ordered so that higher numbers are located closer to the administration building. Most of the markers on the Selected Burials List can be found in the rows closer to the building.
- Arrange students in previously assigned groups.
  - Assign each group one of the veterans on the Selected Burials List. Direct students to write down the name of the veteran, section, and site in the spaces provided on the Cemetery Field Guide, Part B.
  - Direct students to complete questions five through seven before returning to the teacher.
  - Remind students of appropriate behaviors and dismiss students to locate the grave of their assigned person.

## Assessment

- Direct each student to complete the Historical Thinking Reflection Questions for homework or as a quiet activity on the return journey.
- Collect the Cemetery Field Guide and Historical Thinking Reflection Questions from each student.

## Methods for Extension

- Students can research the lives of the servicemembers whose graves they visited at the cemetery. Teachers can share this work on a bulletin board or as part of a Veterans Day or Memorial Day ceremony in the school or community.
- Students interested in learning more about the symbols on the gravestones can visit the Available Emblems of Beliefs link on the NCA's website.
- Students interested in learning more about the abbreviation on the gravestones Headstone and Marker Inscription Abbreviations link on the NCA's website.

# Cemetery Field Guide

## Part A

1. What type of information is available on these grave markers about individual veterans?

Type	Example	Type	Example
Name		Date of Death	
Rank		Date of Birth	
Conflict		Job	
Battle Area		Grave Location	
Family		Personality	
Religious		Other	

2. What patterns do you notice about the individuals represented by these grave markers as a group?

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3. Gather around grave marker 14C-231. Record the FACTS that appear on this grave marker.

4. Based on what you know, write a brief narrative about the life of the veteran interred at 14C-231.

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### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

**Part B**

5. Name of veteran: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_ Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Make a quick sketch of the front and back of the gravestone.

Front	Back

6. Did anything about this grave marker surprise you?

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7. Circle three or four facts on the grave marker you could use to write a follow-up question. Create a follow-up question for each fact and write it below. Where might you find answers to these questions? (NCA resources, Ancestry.com, internet search, newspaper article, obituary, etc.).

	Follow-up Question	Where might you find the answer?
1		
2		
3		
4		

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**VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM**

# Selected Burials List

## Section 76, Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery

Name	Background	Section	Site
<b>Adair, Bernice</b>	U.S. Navy, World War II	76	329
<b>Evans, John Clayton</b>	Pearl Harbor Survivor, USS <i>Arizona</i> . His spouse's name (Ruth) appears on the reverse.	76	432
<b>Houston, Emily W.</b>	Lieutenant Junior Grade, U.S. Navy, World War II. Spouse of Robert C. Houston (76-448)	76	447
<b>Houston, Robert C.</b>	Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy, World War II and Korea. Spouse of Emily W. Houston (76-447)	76	448
<b>Ellis, Stavis</b>	Officer in charge of the motorcycle escort for President Kennedy's motorcade through Dallas. His spouse's name (Juanita) appears on the reverse.	76	782
<b>Craig, Clay A.</b>	Killed in Action, Iraq	76	1306
<b>Ayres, James H.</b>	Killed in Action, Vietnam. Group burial with Charles W. Stratton	76	1459
<b>Stratton, Charles W.</b>	Killed in Action, Vietnam. Group burial with James H. Ayers	76	1459
<b>Cope, Troy Gordon</b>	F-86 pilot during World War II and Korea. Killed in action, Korea	76	1542
<b>Hicks, Glenn Dale</b>	Killed in action, Iraq	76	1617
<b>Garcia, J. Adam</b>	Killed in action, Iraq	76	1668
<b>Courcy, Peter John</b>	Killed in action, Afghanistan	76	1658B
<b>Miller, Curtis Daniel</b>	Killed in action, Vietnam, identified in 2010	76	1658J
<b>Stone, James L.</b>	Medal of Honor recipient. Prisoner of War	76	1658L
<b>Benitez, Carlos A.</b>	Killed in action, Afghanistan	76	1658N
<b>Harris, Devon J.</b>	Killed in action, Afghanistan	76	1658R
<b>Dennany, James E.</b>	Killed in action in Vietnam in 1969, identified in 2011. Group burial with Robert L. Tucci	76	1658T
<b>Tucci, Robert L.</b>	Killed in action in Vietnam in 1969, identified in 2011. Group burial with James E. Dennany	76	1658T
<b>Pinson, Jr. Cloyde C.</b>	U.S. Marine Corps. Killed in action, Vietnam	76	1702A
<b>Pinson, Sr. Cloyde C.</b>	Instrumental in the development and securing the funding for Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery	76	1702B

### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

# Historical Thinking Reflection Questions

1. Write a brief narrative history of your veteran based on the information you have learned today.

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2. Write two new follow-up questions about your veteran. Where might you find the answers?

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3. What have you learned from visiting a national cemetery?

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4. How has your understanding of what it means to think historically changed?

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# Private First Class Dantón D. Ferrero

RESEARCHED BY KATHY CARROLL

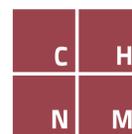


March 31, 1895 - April 21, 1987

**Hometown:** Valencia, Spain and Dayton, Ohio  
**Entered Service:** June 20, 1916  
**Unit:** 37<sup>th</sup> Division, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Machine Gun Company  
**Rank:** Private First Class, U.S. Army  
**Cemetery:** Section 14C, Site 231,  
Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery  
Dallas, Texas



**NHD**  
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During his youth in Dayton, Dantón attended St. Mary's School and won an award for excellence in Irish History in 1913. However, in 1915 he was arrested for stealing a bicycle. His father was out of the country on business, and he was placed in the custody of a woman in Dayton. Just over a month later, Ferrero took out an ad in the *Dayton Daily News* advertising himself as a language translator for hire.

**TWO BOYS ARE FOUND GUILTY.**  
St. Marys, O., June 7.—Clarence Venuti and Danton Ferrero, Italian boys, were found guilty in a hearing in Probate Court on a delinquency charge in connection with the theft of a bicycle. Venuti was given a suspended fine and jail sentence and sent to his father in Oklahoma. Ferrero was placed in the custody of a lady in Dayton during the absence of his father, a traveling salesman, in South America.

Article from the Muncie, Indiana *Star Press* detailing Ferrero's arrest for stealing a bicycle, June 8, 1915.  
Courtesy of Newspapers.com (20027061).

## Military Experience

One year later, Ferrero enlisted in the U.S. Army on June 20, 1916, and in accordance with the time, dropped the accent from his name. His military records list his birth year in 1895, indicating he may not have been truthful about his age. The United States was not yet at war, and Ferrero was still a Spanish citizen, a country which remained neutral in World War I.

When the United States entered the war in 1917, over one-third of the American population was either foreign born or a first generation American. Most of these Americans spoke a language other than English.

Before the war, Ferrero trained as part of a Machine Gun Company of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, Ohio National Guard. The National Guard unit became part of the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry (Buckeye) Division, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. When the unit set sail for France on the USS *Susquehanna*, Corporal Ferrero was in charge of a company of men.



Soldiers aboard the USS *Susquehanna* during World War I, December 31, 1917. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

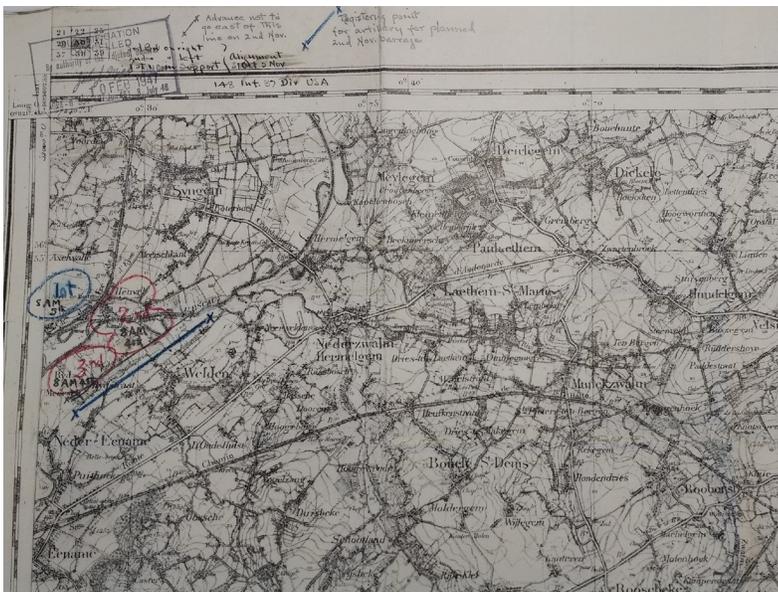
### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

## Vosges Mountains

The 37<sup>th</sup> Division fought in the trenches in the Baccarat sector near the Vosges Mountains in August and September. Here they encountered raids by enemy aircraft. In late September, the unit deployed as part of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in the Forest de Hess in the Avocourt sector west of Verdun. They were briefly transferred to the St. Mihiel sector near St. Germain, France.

On October 17, they were loaded onto French trains bound for Belgium. Under the command of the king of Belgium, they held a line between Ypres and Ghent that reached from the Lys River east to the Scheldt River. The Division crossed the Scheldt on November 2. A memorial to their service stands in the town of Oudenaarde, Belgium, near where they were stationed when the war ended on November 11.

Little is known about Ferrero's individual service during this time. He most likely encountered intense fighting during his service in France and Belgium. On June 24, 1919, Ferrero returned on the USS *Huntington* from Brest, France. He arrived in Boston on July 5, bound for Camp Devens, Massachusetts. No longer a corporal, Ferrero is listed as a private first class in the Quartermaster Corps.



Belgian operations map of the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, October 31 to November 1, 1918. National Archives and Records Administration (Record Group 120, Box 12, folder 237-32-6).

Form Special 1

**STATION LIST OF UNIT SINCE ARRIVAL IN THE AMERICAN E. F.**

Unit 148th Infantry Company Regt., Huzar Arrived (Quarters) Brest, July 5, 18  
(Dist. Separate Bn., etc.)

STATION (Give street, town and Department)	ARRIVED (Date)	LEFT (Date)	AUTHORITY	ATTACHED OR ASSIGNED TO	DETACHMENTS STATIONED AT
Brest - Finistere	7-5-18	7-9-18	Entrain Order 358	37th Div.	
Eveincourt - Haute Marne	7-18-18	7-29-18	F.O. # 1	37th Div.	
Fontenoy - Meurthe et Moselle	7-25-18	7-27-18	F.O. # 2	37th Div.	
Mahleinvilla	7-27-18	9-14-18	F.O. # 15	"	
Moyen, Vosges	9-14-18	9-17-18	F.O. # 17	"	
Feins, Meuse	9-17-18	9-20-18	F.O. # 18	"	
Forest De Hess-Argonne	9-20-18	10-1-18		"	
Resecourt - Meuse	10-1-18	10-2-18		"	

To be removed by headquarters of A. E. F. and by companies, battalions, other subordinate units. Headquarters will collect reports for all units arriving with it as present. All other documents will forward their report to the Stationing Officers of the Division, Corps, Army or service of the U. S. A. Stations that are serving. These reports will be forwarded to Stationing Officers in duplicate, one copy to be retained and two to be forwarded to the Stationing Division, A. E. F., U. S. A.

STATION (Give street, town and Department)	ARRIVED (Date)	LEFT (Date)	AUTHORITY	ATTACHED OR ASSIGNED TO	DETACHMENTS STATIONED AT
St. Germain - Meurthe et Moselle	10-4-18	10-9-18		37th Div.	
St. Benoit, - Meuse	10-9-18	10-16-18	F.O. # 31	"	
Foug - Meuse	10-17-18	10-20-18	F.O. # 32	"	
Gize - Belgium	10-22-18	10-23-18	F.O. # 33	"	
Rithem	10-23-18	10-23-18	F.O. # 36	"	
Thielt	10-23-18	10-20-18	F.O. # 35	"	
Thielt	10-20-18	11-4-18	F.O. # 41	"	
Thielt	11-5-18	11-9-18	F.O. # 42	"	
Daynes	11-9-18	11-10-18	F.O. # 44	"	
Cross Roads near Lorier	11-10-18	11-17-18	F.O. # 47	"	
Deckele	11-17-18	11-18-18	F.O. # 47	"	
Borsbeke	11-18-18	11-21-18	F.O. # 48	"	

To be removed by headquarters (P. & S.) and by companies, battalions, other subordinate units. Headquarters will collect reports for all units arriving with it as present. All other documents will forward their report to the Stationing Officers of the Division, Corps, Army or service of the U. S. A. Stations that are serving. These reports will be forwarded to Stationing Officers in duplicate, one copy to be retained and two to be forwarded to the Stationing Division, A. E. F., U. S. A.

Kerpoede	12-7-18	12-17-18	F.O. # 50	"	
Esquelbecq.	12-17-18	12-	F.O. # 54	"	

To be removed by headquarters (P. & S.) and by companies, battalions, other subordinate units. Headquarters will collect reports for all units arriving with it as present. All other documents will forward their report to the Stationing Officers of the Division, Corps, Army or service of the U. S. A. Stations that are serving. These reports will be forwarded to Stationing Officers in duplicate, one copy to be retained and two to be forwarded to the Stationing Division, A. E. F., U. S. A.

Station list of the 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in the American Expeditionary Force, July to December 1918. National Archives and Records Administration (Record Group 120, Box 11, folder 237-10-7).

### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

## Veteran Experience

Upon returning to the United States, Ferrero resumed his work as a language teacher and worked at Egly Register Company in a job similar to that of his father's at NCR. He had an active social life, and his name appeared frequently in the newspaper. He married in June 1920 and became a naturalized American citizen later that year. His son was born in August 1921.

Ferrero was involved in promoting the film industry in Dayton. The city hoped to become a second Hollywood. He enjoyed acting in local theater and film productions such as *Maid of the Falls* and *The Jewett Case*. Ferrero continued to travel for his job working for Egly. By 1930, he was no longer married or living in Dayton, and it is likely that Ferrero's primary residence was in Spain.

In 1937 Ferrero returned from Spain with his second wife. They settled in California, and Danton worked as an interpreter and resumed his work in film. Ferrero worked for Warner Brothers, Columbia Pictures, and MGM.



**Left:** "The Villain of the Piece", an article from the *Dayton Daily Herald*, recounting Ferrero's role in a local film, August 10, 1922. Courtesy of Newspapers.com (20026782).

**Middle:** Still image featuring Ferrero from *Verbena Tragica* (as the Doctor). Library of Congress (8355).

**Right:** Still image featuring Ferrero from *Monroe Doctrine* (as Spanish Ambassador), 1939. Courtesy of Turner Classic Movies.

### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

In 1939, the same year that *Gone With the Wind*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* were released, Ferrero starred as the Spanish ambassador in the short film *Monroe Doctrine*. It dramatized the history of the U.S. policy limiting European influence in the western hemisphere.

Ferrero also played a doctor in the Spanish language film *Verbena Tragica*. Hollywood movie studios were trying to open up Latin American markets by producing Spanish language films. Unfortunately, many actors in these films came from a variety of Spanish speaking countries, each with its own accent and dialect. Native speakers noticed the differences, and the films were not a commercial success.

When the United States entered World War II, men registered for the draft. On February 15, 1942, Danton D. Ferrero registered as well. He listed his birthdate as 1898, but the draft registrar notes that his "birthdate [is] doubtful." Due to the war, the film industry turned its attention to producing newsreels and films promoting American patriotism. Ferrero continued to narrate voiceovers for films by director Pete Smith, but his acting days were over.

In 1960, Ferrero married Oneida R. Paloma, a Cuban native, in White Plains, New York. They settled in Orange County, Florida. The couple had three children during the 1960s. In the 1970s Danton continued to be involved in his community giving lectures to the Rotary Club and other organizations such as the Spiritual Research Society.

# Commemoration

Little is publicly known about Ferrero's death on April 21, 1987. However, the historical record reveals life experiences that were extraordinary. He came to America as a small child with an unusual family story. He volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army although he was not an American citizen. He fought in brutal campaigns during World War I.

In 1996, *Verbena Tragica* was listed in the National Film Registry. It was selected by the National Film Preservation Board as a film recognized for "its importance to American cinema and the nation's cultural and historical heritage." *Verbena Tragica* represents Hollywood's attempt to reach out to a more diverse American and foreign audience. This collection, which also includes titles like *Star Wars* and *The Wizard of Oz*, is maintained by the Library of Congress.



*Verbena Tragica* in collection at Library of Congress.  
Library of Congress (8355).

Danton Ferrero was interred in another location before his remains were re-interred at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery, along with those of his wife Oneida, after her death in 2003.



**Left:** Audenarde American Monument in Oudenaarde, Belgium, 2018. Courtesy of Kathy Carroll.



**Right:** Marker for Danton D. and Oneida R. Ferrero at Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery in Dallas, Texas, 2018. Courtesy of Kathy Carroll.

## VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

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