

OBSERVANCE

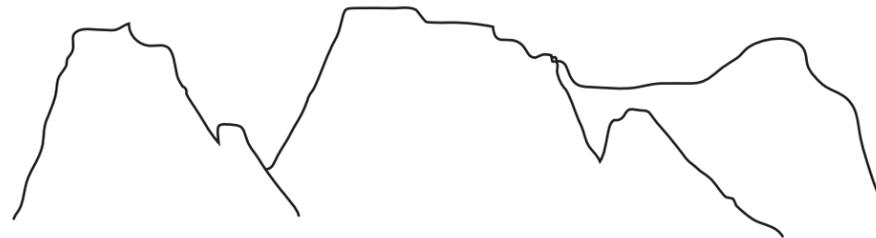
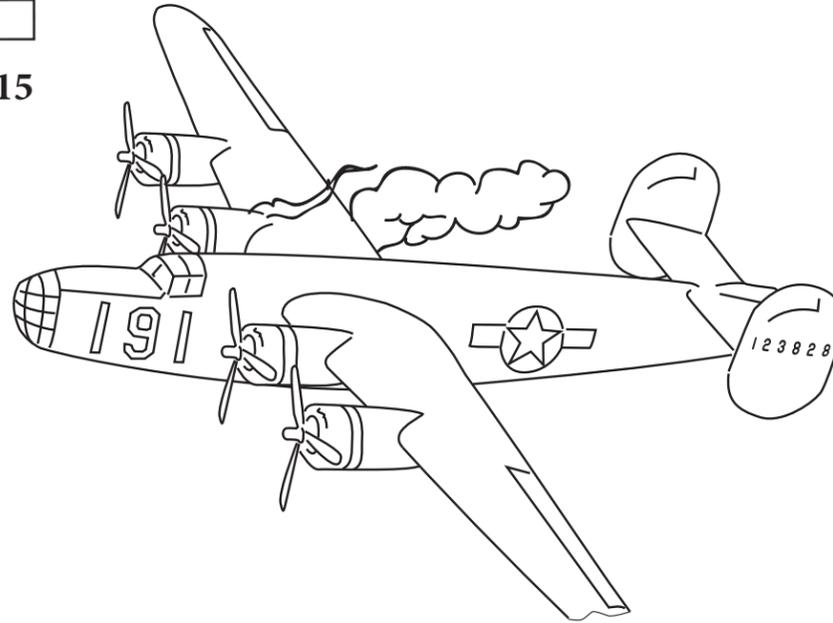
September 15 – October 15



The Department of Defense (DoD) joins the nation in paying tribute to Hispanic Americans who demonstrated selfless service and sacrifice in the U.S. Armed Forces: Army, Army Air Forces, Marine Corps, Navy, Coast Guard, National Guard, and the home front during World War II.

Hispanic Americans fought in every major battle in the European Theatre in which the U.S. Armed Forces were involved, from North Africa to the Battle of the Bulge, and in the Pacific Theater of Operations, from Bataan to Okinawa.

Staff Sergeant Ladislao "L.C." Castro



Returning from a bombing mission, L.C. Castro and the rest of the crew could see the cliffs of Dover across the English Channel from their B-24 bomber the "T-Bar." A 4-foot section of the wing was missing, the fuel gauges empty, and the control cables severed. The bomber began a downward spiral toward occupied France.

Orders came to abandon the bomber, Castro was the first out. "I didn't open my parachute till I was real close to the ground," he said in 2001. He gathered his parachute and limped away, finding cover in a haystack. He saw his crewmembers drifting down as the Germans shot at them. All nine were captured.

Castro, however, began life as an "evadee" (airmen who eluded capture).

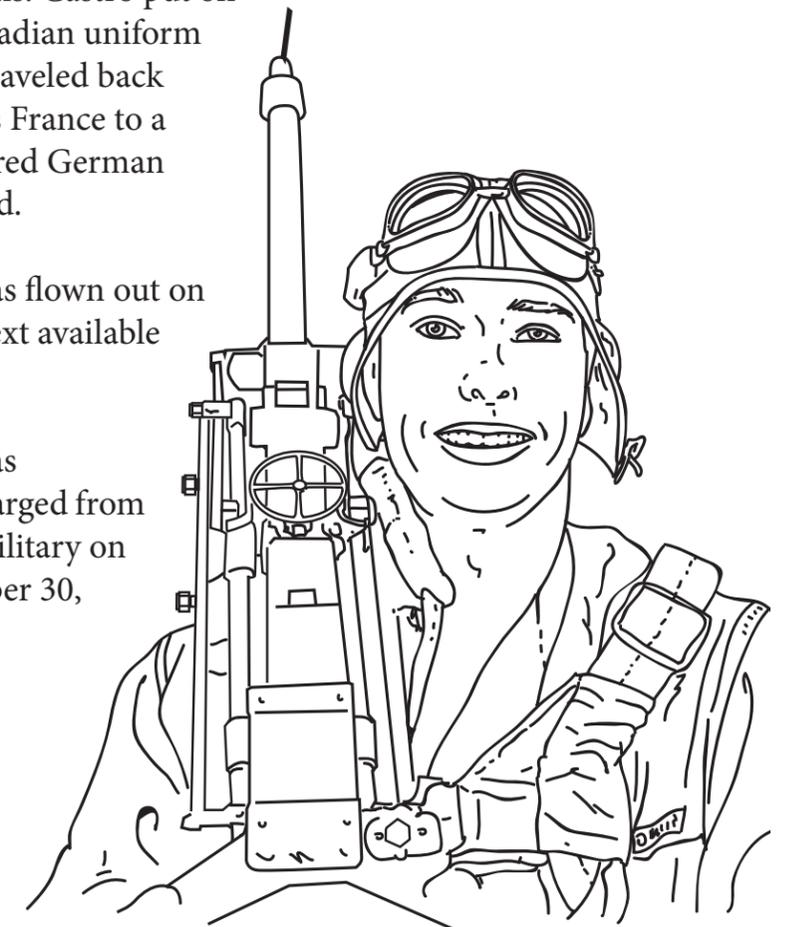
He was discovered the next morning, not by the Germans, but by a barking dog! The French villagers hid him in a barn. They fed, clothed him, and brought a doctor to treat his injuries. He was moved from house to house, until the French Underground (the resistance movement in France), picked him up. He was taken to a house in Amiens where 16 other allied airmen were in hiding. He hid there for five months.

Finally, in the face of the advancing Allied armies, the Germans retreated from Amiens. He and the other airmen celebrated in the streets with French resistance fighters.

On September 1st, 1944, the Canadian Army liberated Amiens. Castro put on a Canadian uniform and traveled back across France to a captured German airfield.

He was flown out on the next available flight.

He was discharged from the military on October 30, 1945.





Hero Street USA is located in Silvis, Illinois. Over 100 young Hispanic American men and women from Second Street have served in the United States Military Forces.

Researched and documented by the DoD (there is no other street of comparable size) that has had as many men and women serve as the 1 1/2 block long street in Silvis. Of these military men and women, six of them were killed in action during World War II and two during the Korean War.

Because of the contributions of these Hispanic Americans the street was renamed Hero Street USA in May 1967, by former Mayor of Silvis, William Tatmen.

In October 1971, a city park was built and dedicated as Hero Street Park in honor of the deceased servicemen from WWII.

The monument contains pictures and biographies of the eight veterans who died serving their country during World War II: Claro Soliz, Frank Sandoval, Joseph Gomez, Johnny Munos, Joe Sandoval, Peter Masias, Tony Pompa, and William Sandoval.

