

Teacher Inquiry Kit: Grades K-5

Harry Kelch

Title	Staff Sergeant Harry Kelch, Cherokee Veteran of the 45th Infantry Division 
Author(s)	Keith Jones
Grade Level	K-5
Soldier	Harry Kelch
Tribal Affiliation	Cherokee
Branch of Service	United States Army
Dates of Service	1943-1945
Essential Question	What roles did Harry Kelch and the 45th Infantry Division play in the United States victory over Nazi Germany in World War II?
Contextual Paragraph	Staff Sergeant Harry R. Kelch was a veteran of the United States Army who saw combat as a member of the 3rd Battalion of the 180th Regiment in the 45th Infantry Division. Born in Ohio, Kelch identified himself as having some Cherokee ancestry; he said that his grandmother was fully Cherokee, and his grandfather was half-Cherokee. The 45th Infantry Division in which he served was well-known for its significant proportion of Indigenous soldiers drawn from Oklahoma, Colorado, and New Mexico. The 45th Division first saw combat in World War II in the invasion of Sicily, but Kelch's first action was

	<p>during the invasion of Italy and the Battle of Anzio that took place from January to May of 1944. After a successful invasion, the US and British armies stalled after taking the town of Anzio and were then surrounded for over 3 months by the German army. Kelch described the difficulties and horrors of this time, most especially the shelling from German artillery; Kelch described a situation in which the other man in his foxhole was killed instantly by a shell landing in their foxhole, while Kelch himself survived despite being thrown 30 feet. He would wonder, "Why did all these other men die, but I came back?" After breaking out of Anzio in May 1944, the 45th Division would participate in the liberation of Rome. Kelch told a story of this time when he and another soldier snuck out one night and went to Vatican City and spent 4 hours with the Pope before sneaking back into their quarters. Later, in April 1945, the 45th Division liberated the Dachau concentration camp near Munich, Germany. Kelch and his 180th Regiment were not the first American soldiers in the camp but arrived very shortly afterwards; he remembered that Dachau "was the most horrible sights you could ever see." After the war Kelch worked for 31 years for General Motors before retiring in 1978 at the age of 55. He passed away in 2014 in Cincinnati, Ohio, at the age of 91.</p>
<p>C3 Standards</p>	<p><u>C3 Standards:</u> Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts. (D2.His.1.6-8)</p> <p>Analyze how people's perspectives influenced what information is available in the historical sources they created. (D2.His.6.6-8)</p>
<p>Primary Source 1 Permanent Link</p>	

45th Infantry Division Shoulder Patch Insignia: https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/Division_insignia_of_the_United_States_Army?file=45th_Infantry_insignia_%2528thunderbird%2529.svg



157th Regiment Insignia: https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/Coats_of_arms_of_U.S._Infantry_Regiments?file=157th_Field_Artillery_Regiment_COA.png



179th Regiment Insignia: https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/Coats_of_arms_of_U.S._Infantry_Regiments?file=179th_InfantryCOA.png



180th Regiment Insignia: https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/Coats_of_arms_of_U.S._Infantry_Regiments?file=180th_infantrycoa.jpeg

Title of Primary Source

Shoulder Patch of the 45th Infantry Division, and Insignia of the 157th, 179th, and 180th Regiments of the 45th Infantry Division

Suggested questions for the source

1. Look carefully at the [shoulder patch worn by the soldiers of the 45th Infantry Division](#) during World War II. Then read [this short article about the symbolism of the thunderbird](#) in Native American cultures. Why do you think the thunderbird might have been chosen as a symbol to represent the soldiers of the 45th Infantry Division?
2. Look carefully at the [insignia for the 157th Regiment](#), which was one of the three U.S. Army regiments that made up the 45th Infantry Division. Describe what you see on the insignia and explain why you think those symbols may have been chosen.
3. Look carefully at the [insignia for the 179th Regiment](#), which was one of the three U.S. Army regiments that made up the 45th Infantry Division. Describe what you see on the insignia and explain why you think those symbols may have been chosen.
4. Look carefully at the [insignia for the 180th Regiment](#), which was one of the three U.S. Army regiments that made up the 45th Infantry Division (this was the regiment to which Staff Sergeant Harry Kelch belonged). Describe what you see on the insignia and explain why you think those symbols may have been chosen.
5. The 45th Infantry Division was largely made up of soldiers from Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Colorado, and because of this the division had a much larger proportion of soldiers of Native

	<p>American descent (including SSG Harry Kelch, who was of Cherokee descent) than the typical U.S. Army division. How do the shoulder patch and regimental insignia reflect this connection to the Native American ancestries of many of the 45th Infantry soldiers? How do you think the soldiers of the division might have viewed the symbolism of the patch and insignia?</p>
<p>Primary Source 2 Permanent Link</p>	 <p>https://warfarehistorynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Q-45th-Anzio-5-e1657316988320.jpg</p>
<p>Title of Primary Source</p>	<p>U.S. Army Soldiers in Foxholes at the Battle of Anzio</p>
<p>Suggested questions for the source</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe what you see in this photograph of U.S. Army soldiers at the Battle of Anzio. 2. Look carefully at the terrain in the photograph. Describe what you see. 3. After examining the terrain, why do you think the foxholes were so important to the soldiers at Anzio? How would the foxholes protect the soldiers, particularly in this terrain?

<p>Primary Source 3 Permanent Link</p>	 <p>https://il.wp.com/www.world-at-war.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/13266011_1755572051355450_5932746632935289057_n.jpg?w=928&ssl=1</p>
<p>Title of Primary Source</p>	<p>The Bloody Battle in the Streets of Nuremberg, April 1945</p>
<p>Suggested questions for the source (3-5)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Look carefully at the photograph of U.S. Army soldiers on the streets of Nuremberg, Germany in April 1945. Describe what you see. 2. SSG Harry Kelch and the 45th Infantry Division participated in the Battle for Nuremberg in April 1945. Look carefully at the photograph and explain 3-5 reasons that urban warfare (fighting to capture a city) would have been especially dangerous and difficult. 3. Using the photograph, think about after the battle for the city is over. What challenges and obstacles are left for the citizens of the city. Think of at least 3 short-term and 3 long-term challenges.
<p>Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions. (2)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read this short article about the Nuremberg (Nürnberg) rallies to understand the importance of this city to Nazi Germany. Why would the U.S. Army capturing this city have extra importance?

<p>Primary Source 4 Permanent Link</p>	 <p>https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/dachau-after-liberation</p>
<p>Title of Primary Source</p>	<p>Video: Dachau After Liberation</p>
<p>Suggested questions for the source (3-5)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch this video that was recorded shortly after the 45th Infantry Division (of which SSG Harry Kelch was a soldier) liberated the Dachau concentration camp on April 29, 1945. After watching, describe what you observed in the video. 2. Thinking of what you saw in the video, what do you think U.S. soldiers like SSG Harry Kelch might have felt when seeing Dachau for the first time? 3. What are your own thoughts on seeing this footage of the Dachau concentration camp for the first time.
<p>Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions. (2)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take a few minutes to read this source that gives you the history of the Dachau concentration camp. Summarize what you learned about this place. 2. How do you think that the discovery of concentration camps like Dachau might have affected how U.S. soldiers thought about the importance of their service in the war?

Primary Source 5
Permanent Link



<https://www.dachautour.com/news/2018/10/1/identification-badges-at-dachau>

Title of Primary Source

Identification Badges at Dachau

Suggested questions for the source

1. When the 45th Infantry Division (in which SSG Harry Kelch was a soldier) liberated the Dachau concentration camp on April 29, 1945, they found prisoners there with different colored badges on their camp “uniform.” Carefully examine and read both [the chart and the explanation of the different badges](#), then write a short summary of what you learned.
2. Why do you think the Nazi SS guards had different badges like these within Dachau (especially when considering that EVERYONE at Dachau was a prisoner)?
3. How do you think that assigning numbers and badges like these dehumanized the prisoners at Dachau?

Possible discussion prompts beyond the questions. (2)

1. Are badges to identify people ever okay? Explain.
2. Think about your last answer—how does the *purpose* of the badge matter?

Works Cited

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