Read the "Italian American Veterans" passage set.

Italian American Veterans

Source 1: John Antuono

Written for UCF VLP by Tyler Campbell

1 At the end of the 1800s, there was a large wave of immigrants who moved from the continent of Europe to the United States. Immigrants are people who move from one country to another country to live permanently in the new place. The immigrants who moved into the United States in the late 1800s came from European countries like Italy, Russia, Poland, Greece and Ireland. They moved to the United States because there were too many people and too few jobs in their home countries. These immigrants built new communities, businesses and lives in the United States and worked to defend their new country in both World War I and World War II.

2 Two of the immigrants who came to the United States at that time were an Italian couple Vincent and Christina Antuono. Once in the United States, the Antuonos found a home in Port Tampa, Florida. Mr. Vincent found work running a grocery store. On March 15, 1894, the Antuonos celebrated the birth of their son, John M. Antuono. John spent his childhood and school years in the Tampa bay area. He completed his high school education in the Tampa area before World War I began in 1914.

3 Three years after Antuono graduated from high school, the United States entered World War I and began drafting men into the armed services. The draft is required recruitment for the armed services. In other words, all men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one had to fill out a registration card to join the armed services. There were about 4.8 million Americans who served in the armed services in WWI and 2.8 million of them had been drafted into serviced.

4 As one of the 2.8 million draftees, Antuono served as an infantry solider in the US Army in WWI. He registered for the draft at age twenty-three and officially started in the US Army on October 8, 1917**.** Antuono first trained with Company I of the 324th Infantry in the 81st Division. The infantry is the part of the army that fights on foot. Infantry troops fight the enemy at close quarters and suffer the highest number of deaths during battles and warfare. In August of 1918 the 81st Division, known as the "Wildcats," was sent to the Western Front. The Western Front was the name of the area of France where the most fighting of WWI took place. Luckily for Antuono, he was moved out of the 81st before they were sent to the Western Front.

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5 After training with the 81st, Antuono was sent to Company L of the 124th Infantry in the 31st Division. While in the 124th Infantry, Antuono was promoted to the rank of Corporal. Two months after the 81st Division was sent to the Western Front, the 31st Division and Corporal Antuono were sent to France as well. When the 31st arrived, they were split apart and the soldiers were sent to replace the fallen in other Divisions across France. In the split, Antuono was sent to the 330th Infantry in the 83rd Division which did not see direct fighting either. They were also used as replacement troops. So after a month with the 330th, Corporal Antuono was sent to Company G of the Central Records Office in central France where he stayed until returning home. He returned to the United States in August 1919 and left the army on September 3, 1919.

6 After the war, Antuono worked many different jobs in the Tampa area. Many skilled cigar makers immigrated from Cuba to the Tampa area which then became the largest cigar making city in the country. By 1920, Antuono worked as a packer in one of Tampa's many cigar factories. Throughout the 1930's, he worked as a bookkeeper at a garage in the Tampa area. By 1940, he worked as an accountant but was unable to find steady work. Eventually, he found work as a bookkeeper for a cigar making company and stayed in the Tampa area for the rest of his life. At 98 years old, John M. Antuono died on March 20, 1992 in Tampa. He was laid to rest in Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida.

Antuono's gravesite at Florida National Cemetery. Image courtesy of UCF VLP.

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Source 2: William "JJ" Boese

Written for UCF VLP by Roberto Benitez

1 Historians estimate that over five million Italians immigrated to the United States through Ellis Island between 1870 and 1920. Ellis Island is an island in New York Bay just sound of the island of Manhattan. Ellis Island was the entry point for over 12 million immigrants to the United States from 1892 until 1954. Most of the Italian immigrants who came through Ellis Island were from southern regions of Italy which were rural, poor areas. Most of the Italian immigrants were males. In fact, there were three times more Italian males than Italian females who moved into the United States during that period. Many of the immigrants who went through Ellis Island stayed in the eastern states but some moved to states in the Midwest like Illinois.

2 Two of the immigrant families that made their way to Illinois were the families of Ernest and Ruth Boese. Mr. Ernest Boese's family was from Germany but he grew up in Illinois. Ruth's family was one of the many families who entered the United States through Ellis Island. They immigrated from Italy in 1920. Once married, Mr. and Mrs. Boese had a total of five children, three boys and two girls. On March 22, 1923, they celebrated the birth of their second son William "JJ" Boese in Joliet, Illinois.

3 When "JJ" was seven the Boese family still lived in Joliet and Mr. Boese supported his family by working as a brakeman in the railroad industry. A brakeman's job was to climb on top of a train and turn a large brake control by hand to stop a train when the airbrakes did not work. The work was very dangerous and brakemen risked their lives to stop trains. Dangerous situations like bad weather conditions caused fatal accidents. Regular work situations like trying to climb aboard the train caused injuries and fatal accidents. Mr. Boese worked as a brakeman in the railroad industry into the 1940s and he was able to support his family during the Great Depression. They were even able to buy and own their home in Joliet due to his hard work.

4 Information from the United States Census records shows the story of many Americans lives including "JJ" Boese. A census is an official count of the all the people of an area. The United States Census was created by the Constitution. Every ten years the government is in charge of collecting all of the census counts and information. The US Census counts the citizens of the US and collects information about them like their level of education, their birthplace, their age, their job and more.

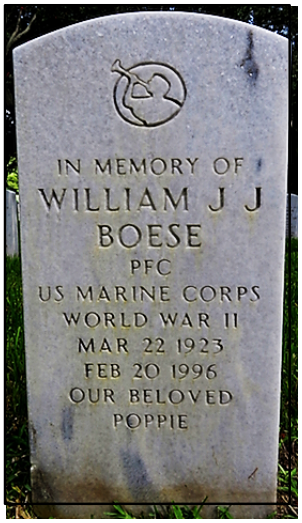
5 The 1940 US Census details information about "JJ" Boese himself. The census shows that Boese dropped out of school after his first year of high school. The census also lists his occupation as a "new worker." The 1940 Census used the phrase "new workers" to mean

people with no permanent job for a month or more. “New workers” were usually young people who finished their schooling but could not find work. So about a year before the United States began fighting in World War II, Boese was eighteen, had completed one year of high school, and could not find a steady job.

6 After the attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into World War II, thousands of young men joined all the branches of the armed services including the Marine Corps. Before World War II, the Marines were a branch of the armed services that was known for fighting America’s “small wars” south of the US border. During WWII, the Marine Corps became an amphibious force which means they fought on land and in the water. They gained the national respect as they fought in the Pacific Theater, in other words as they fought all over the Pacific Ocean.

7 During WWII, Boese joined the Marines and fought many missions in the Pacific Theater. In August 1942, nineteen-year-old Boese joined the Marine Corps. He went to San Diego, California to train as a Private First Class marine. By April of 1943, Boese began serving as part of the 4th Base Depot and was sent to the Russell Islands. The Russell Islands are a very small group of islands about 1,000 miles off the northeast coast of Australia. The Russell Islands served as the base for Operation Toenails. The mission of Operation Toenails was to capture and keep the Japanese out of another set of islands called the New Georgia Islands. The US wanted the New Georgia Islands because they were better for landing and holding planes. They were also in a better area for future missions. Marines like Boese helped to make sure that Operation Toenails was a success. In April of 1944, Boese joined the 5th Field Depot which was on Banika Island in the middle of another mission that ended up freeing the island of Guam from the Japanese.

8 After WWII, Boese return to life back to his hometown of Joliet. After he returned, he married his wife, Frances, and they had two daughters. He also followed in his father’s footsteps and worked for the local railroads. In the 1950s and 1960s, Boese worked a dangerous job as a railroad switchman moving train cars and hooking them together to make new trains. After World War II, people started using cars more than trains and railroad companies started to lose lots of money. By 1971, the US government had to step in to help the railroad companies. Boese probably stayed in the railroad industry into the 1970s before he moved his family to Florida in 1978. The family lived in Tampa and then moved to Odessa, Florida in 1979. Seventeen years later, Boese passed away on February 22, 1996 at the age of seventy-two. A memorial marker at Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida pays tribute to his life and service.



Boese’s memorial marker at Florida National Cemetery. Image courtesy of UCF VLP.

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Writing Prompt

Write an informative essay comparing the lives of these two Italian American veterans before, during and after their military service. Use information from the passages in your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

- read the passages;
- plan your response;
- write your response; and
- revise and edit your response.

Be sure to include

- an introduction;
- information from the passages as support; and
- a conclusion that is related to the information presented.

Your response should be in the form of a multiparagraph essay. Write your response in the space provided.

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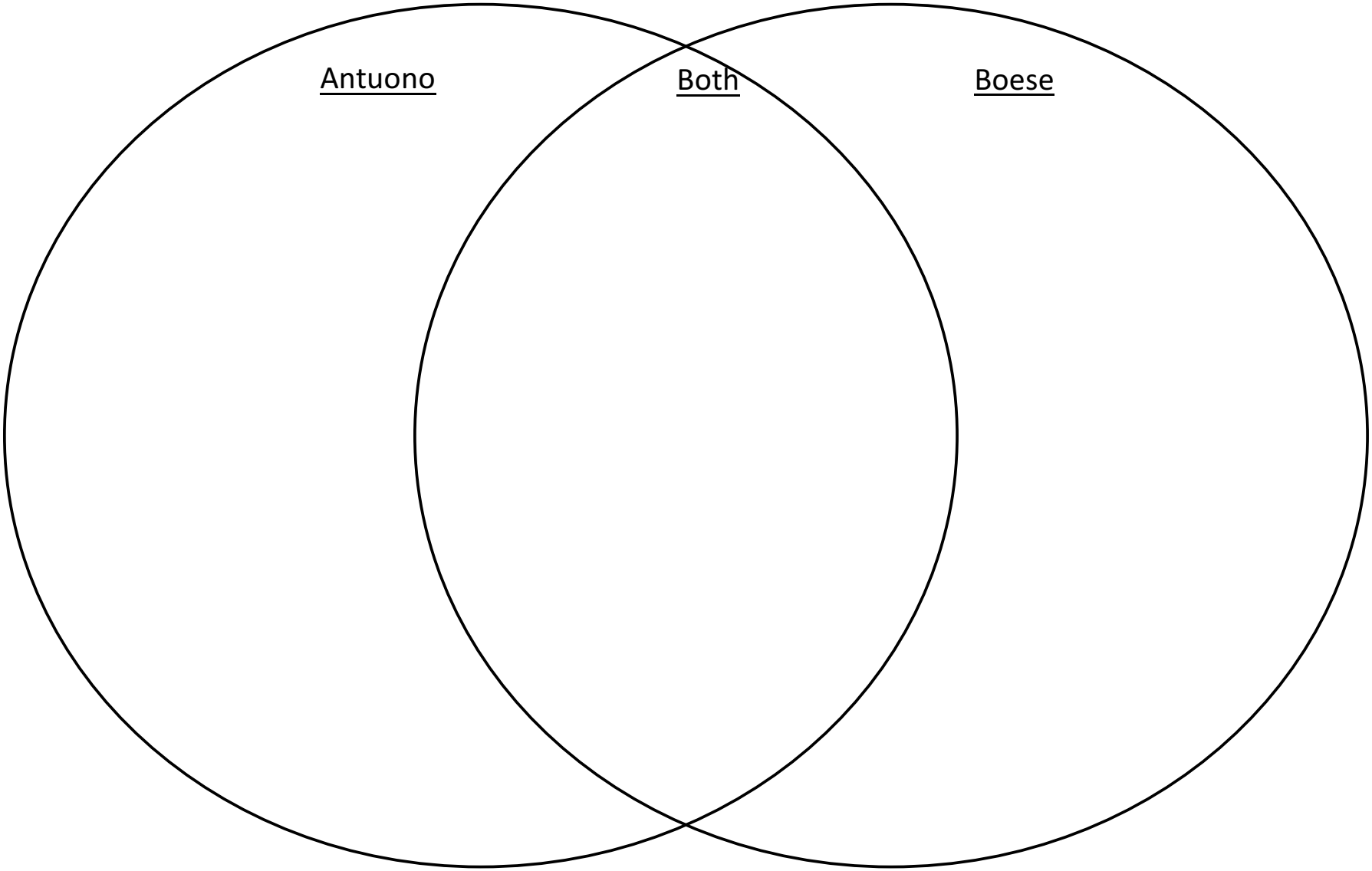

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