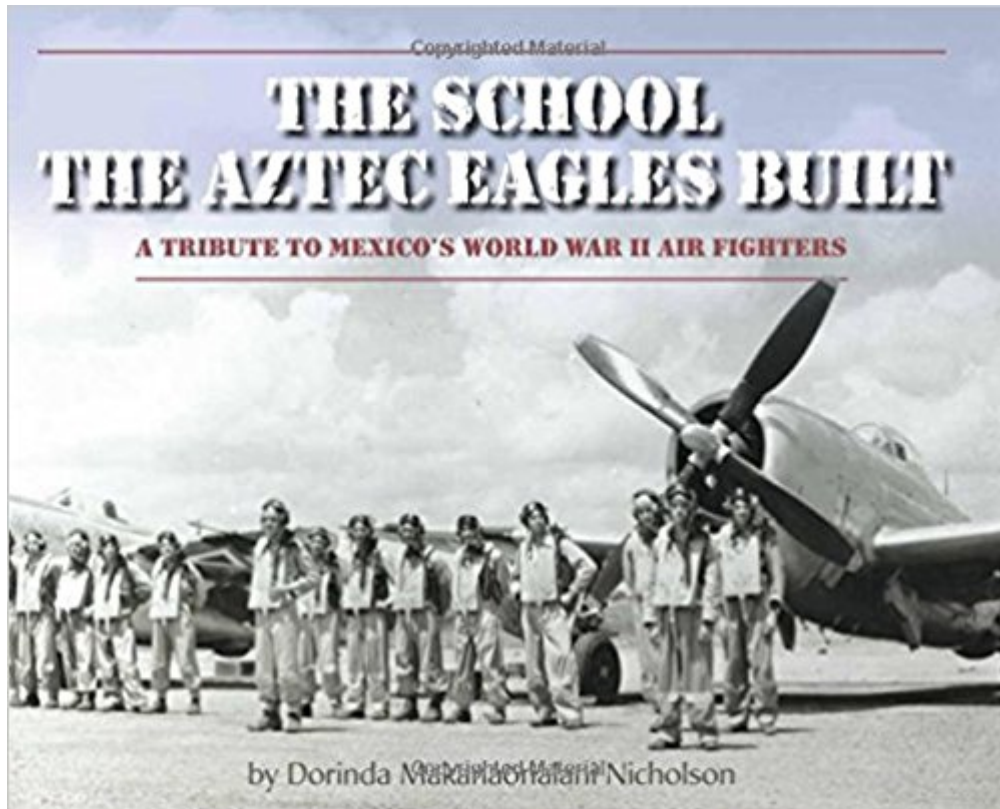




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# The School The Aztec Eagles Built



## Synopsis

In May 1942, German U-boats torpedoed two unarmed Mexican oil tankers off the Gulf Coast, forcing Mexico to enter World War II. With the help of United States President Roosevelt, Mexican President Camacho arranged to send one Air Force squadron to fight in the war. Thirty-eight of Mexico's top pilots, and about two hundred sixty additional military crew were carefully selected to form the 201st Air Force Squadron, also known as the Aztec Eagles. The squadron was the first unit in history to leave Mexico on a fighting mission. To mark this historic event, President Camacho asked the men if they had any last minute requests before they went to war. Sergeant Angel Bocanegra, a former teacher and now squadron ground crewmember, stepped forward and made a request. He asked that a school be built in his small village of Tepoztlan. The School the Aztec Eagles Built tells the exciting story of how a Mexican Air Force squadron and an unknown schoolteacher made their mark in history.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Gr 4-6 "A tribute to Air Fighter Squadron 201 (the Aztec Eagles) and Sgt. Ángel Bocanegra del Castillo, whose actions ensured the building of a school in the village of Tepoztlán, Mexico. The work begins with a quick refresher on relations between the United States and Mexico from 1830 to

World War II, leading up to the creation of the Mexican Expeditionary Air Force. Readers follow as the pilots train and eventually join the Pacific theater in the Philippines. Running parallel to this historical narrative is the account of Bocanegra del Castillo and his journey from schoolteacher to military pilot. When the president of Mexico, Ávila Camacho, asked the soon-to-deploy Aztec Eagles if they had any requests, Bocanegra del Castillo asked for a proper school to be built in his village of Tepoztlán. By the time the squadron returned to Mexico at the end of World War II, the school had been built and named after the squadron. The importance of the school to this community is strongly emphasized. The text briefly describes the military action in which the squadron was involved. Well-captioned vintage photos appear on every page. VERDICT The intersection of military history, biography, and the power of community is unique. An additional purchase for those looking for a multifaceted work of history.â Eldon Younce, Anthony Public Library, KS

DORINDA MAKANAÅCENALANI NICHOLSON was born in Hawai'i and was an eyewitness to the attack on Pearl Harbor when she was six years old. She believes it is her mission to bring World War II history to life for children. Her works have received starred reviews and awards, including the IRA Children's Book Award for nonfiction, Benjamin Franklin Award, and ALA Notable. In addition to being a writer, Nicholson is a Missouri Humanities Council member and an avid hula dancer. She and her husband live in Raytown, Missouri.

Though not directly involved in World War II, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor Mexico aided the United States with shipments of oil and war materials. As retaliation for these shipments, German U-boats torpedoed two of their ships. Mexico entered the war on May 28th, and volunteered its best air force pilots to assist the United States. No military unit in Mexico's history had ever left the country to fight, but Air Fighter Squadron 201 became the first to do so. Nicknamed the Aztec Eagles, the almost 300 pilots and support crew set off for the United States to be trained. When their training was completed, they went on to support General MacArthur in his Philippines campaign. Through period photographs, interviews, and careful research Nicholson tells the story of the courageous men of the Aztec Eagles. Her inspiration for their story was the unusual request from one of the support crewmembers, Sergeant Angel Bocanegra a former teacher, who asked the President of Mexico to build a school in his small village of Tepoztlán. The school still stands in their honor, and this book also honors those brave men who fought on behalf of both the United States and Mexico. Highly recommended for ages 10-14.

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