Courage in Action

Military contributions during World War II

SS24.5.9b "Explain the military contributions of Americans during World War II, including the achievements of the Tuskegee Airmen and Alabama Medal of Honor recipients."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one action by the Tuskegee Airmen and one action by each Alabama Medal of Honor recipient. Circle words that show how each action helped other service members.

Protecting Others in World War II

1 World War II took Americans into battle on land and in the air. Soldiers fought to take back places held by enemy forces. Air crews attacked targets and protected other planes. One group of Black pilots trained near Tuskegee, Alabama. They served in a military that separated Black and white people. Even with unfair limits, these pilots proved their skill through dangerous missions.

2 The Tuskegee Airmen included pilots and other workers who kept planes flying. The 332nd Fighter Group flew fighter planes with red tails. In Europe, its pilots escorted bombers, flying beside them to guard against enemy fighters. This protection helped bomber crews reach their targets and return. Their record challenged the false idea that Black Americans could not succeed as military pilots.

3 Two men from Alabama also earned the Medal of Honor for actions in World War II. Henry E. Erwin carried a burning smoke bomb through his bomber and threw it outside, helping save the crew. Army officer Jack L. Treadwell attacked enemy machine-gun positions in Germany, allowing other soldiers to advance. Their brave actions protected fellow service members and helped the larger fight.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Tuskegee Airmen help bomber crews complete their missions?

2. How did the Tuskegee Airmen's military service challenge an unfair belief?

3. How did Henry E. Erwin's action help his fellow crew members?

4. How did Jack L. Treadwell's action help other soldiers?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence museum label comparing the Tuskegee Airmen with either Erwin or Treadwell. Explain one goal they shared, how their actions differed, and why both mattered.

Courage in Action

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one action by the Tuskegee Airmen and one action by each Alabama Medal of Honor recipient. Circle words that show how each action helped other service members. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Tuskegee Airmen help bomber crews complete their missions?	**They escorted bombers and guarded them against enemy fighters, helping the crews reach their targets and return.**
2	How did the Tuskegee Airmen's military service challenge an unfair belief?	**Their success as military pilots challenged the false belief that Black Americans could not do that work.**
3	How did Henry E. Erwin's action help his fellow crew members?	**He carried a burning smoke bomb out of their bomber, helping save the crew.**
4	How did Jack L. Treadwell's action help other soldiers?	**He attacked enemy machine-gun positions so other soldiers could advance.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Tuskegee Airmen and Henry E. Erwin both helped protect people serving in the air. The airmen guarded bombers against enemy fighters, while Erwin carried a burning smoke bomb out of his bomber. Both actions helped air crews survive and continue their missions.

Accept explanations in the student's own words that connect each action to its effect. For the museum label, look for a shared goal, a clear difference between the actions, and why both contributed to the war effort.