Wartime Oklahoma Sites

Military bases and prisoner of war camps during World War II

OKH.C.7.6.A "establishment of military bases and prisoner of war installations"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the names of three wartime installations, circle the words that tell each site's job, and number two effects these sites had on nearby communities.

Different Jobs in One War

1 After the United States entered World War II, Oklahoma became a place to prepare troops and keep aircraft flying. The federal government established Camp Gruber near Muskogee in 1942. Soldiers trained there before being sent to fight, and construction brought new workers to the area. Near Oklahoma City, the Army Air Forces established an aircraft depot later named Tinker Field. Workers there repaired and supplied planes. Its location near rail lines and a large labor force helped support that work. These installations served different purposes: one trained soldiers, while the other kept military aircraft ready for service.

2 The war also brought enemy prisoners to Oklahoma. The federal government opened Camp Tonkawa in northern Oklahoma in 1943 to hold German prisoners of war, or POWs, captured overseas. Unlike trainees at Camp Gruber, these men were detained under guard. Camp Tonkawa required barracks, fences, guards, and staff, making it an installation with a different job from an air depot or training camp. Prisoners at Oklahoma camps sometimes worked on nearby farms when civilian workers were scarce. Their labor helped harvest crops, but rules and guards still governed where they could go.

3 Together, these sites show how wartime needs changed Oklahoma beyond the battlefield. Camp Gruber prepared people for combat, Tinker Field maintained equipment, and Camp Tonkawa held captured enemy soldiers. The federal government needed land, transportation, workers, and supplies to operate them. Nearby towns gained construction jobs and business from military spending, while farms could receive POW labor. Yet the camps also brought the costs of war close to home: residents lived alongside guarded prisoners, and many workers and service members eventually left when wartime demand fell. Each site had a distinct purpose within the larger war effort.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why was Camp Gruber established, and what did soldiers do there?

2. How did Tinker Field's job differ from Camp Gruber's, and what helped Tinker Field do its work?

3. Why did the government open Camp Tonkawa? How were the people held there treated differently from trainees at Camp Gruber?

4. Give one effect of a military base and one effect of a POW installation on people in nearby Oklahoma communities.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 65 to 85 word museum label explaining why Oklahoma had both military bases and POW installations during World War II. Name two sites with different jobs, explain how each supported the war effort, and describe one benefit and one challenge for nearby communities.

ANSWER KEY

Wartime Oklahoma Sites

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.7.6.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the names of three wartime installations, circle the words that tell each site's job, and number two effects these sites had on nearby communities. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why was Camp Gruber established, and what did soldiers do there?	**It was established to prepare troops for war. Soldiers trained there before being sent to fight.**
2	How did Tinker Field's job differ from Camp Gruber's, and what helped Tinker Field do its work?	**Tinker Field repaired and supplied aircraft instead of training soldiers. Nearby rail lines and a large labor force supported its work.**
3	Why did the government open Camp Tonkawa? How were the people held there treated differently from trainees at Camp Gruber?	**Camp Tonkawa held German POWs captured overseas. They were detained under guard, unlike soldiers training at Camp Gruber.**
4	Give one effect of a military base and one effect of a POW installation on people in nearby Oklahoma communities.	**Construction at Camp Gruber brought workers to the area. Prisoners at Oklahoma POW camps sometimes provided labor for nearby farms.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Oklahoma's wartime installations did not all do the same job. At Camp Gruber, soldiers trained before going to fight. At Camp Tonkawa, guards held German prisoners of war. Training troops and holding captured soldiers met different needs created by the conflict. Nearby communities gained construction jobs, and prisoners at Oklahoma camps sometimes helped farms harvest crops. Residents also had to adjust to living near a guarded camp and to changes when wartime work ended.

Accept other passage-supported examples of local effects, such as business from military spending or POW farm labor. The museum label should distinguish the jobs of two named sites and include both a benefit and a challenge for nearby communities.