Messages and Ground

American Indian Code Talkers and the 45th Infantry Division in World War II

OKH.C.7.6.B "contributions to the war effort by military personnel and specific units, including the American Indian Code Talkers and the 45th Infantry Division."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways Code Talkers helped the war effort, and circle two actions by the 45th Infantry Division. Number each marked detail to show which group contributed it.

Different Roles in the War

1. On June 6, 1944, Allied troops landed in Normandy, France, while radio operators faced a problem: enemy forces might hear their messages. Comanche soldiers serving with the U.S. Army's 4th Infantry Division sent battlefield messages in their language during the invasion. They used agreed-upon Comanche terms for military ideas that had no direct translation. These men were among the American Indian Code Talkers, who helped troops communicate while making messages difficult for enemy listeners to understand. Their work mattered because an intercepted order could reveal where soldiers were moving or when an attack might begin.

2. In the Pacific, Navajo Marines developed and used a code based on the Navajo language. They created special words for military equipment and transmitted reports, orders, and requests over radio. At Iwo Jima in 1945, Navajo Code Talkers passed messages during the fierce battle for the island. Their messages helped Marine units coordinate actions without waiting for a slower method of communication. The Japanese never broke the Navajo code during the war. Comanche and Navajo Code Talkers served in different campaigns and branches, but both made rapid, more secure communication possible for troops under fire.

3. The 45th Infantry Division, known as the Thunderbird Division, included many soldiers from Oklahoma and other Southwestern states, including American Indians. It was an Army combat unit, not a Code Talker unit. In 1943, the division fought in the invasion of Sicily and landed at Salerno, Italy. In 1944, its soldiers helped defend the Allied beachhead at Anzio against German attacks, then took part in the invasion of southern France. The division later fought into Germany. Its infantry and supporting personnel helped seize and hold ground, a different task from passing protected messages between units.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What did Comanche Code Talkers do during the Normandy invasion, and why did it matter?

2. How did Navajo Code Talkers help Marines during the battle for Iwo Jima?

3. Name two places where the 45th Infantry Division fought or landed. What kind of contribution did its soldiers make?

4. Why did the 45th Infantry Division's defense at Anzio matter to the Allied war effort?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 90 word museum exhibit label that links one specific Code Talker action with one action by the 45th Infantry Division. Explain how each helped the war effort and why it would be inaccurate to describe them as one unit.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.7.6.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways Code Talkers helped the war effort, and circle two actions by the 45th Infantry Division. Number each marked detail to show which group contributed it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What did Comanche Code Talkers do during the Normandy invasion, and why did it matter?	**They sent battlefield messages in Comanche, making the messages difficult for enemy listeners to understand.**
2	How did Navajo Code Talkers help Marines during the battle for Iwo Jima?	**They passed coded messages that helped Marine units coordinate their actions quickly and securely.**
3	Name two places where the 45th Infantry Division fought or landed. What kind of contribution did its soldiers make?	**Accept any two of Sicily, Salerno, Anzio, southern France, or Germany. Its soldiers fought to seize or hold ground.**
4	Why did the 45th Infantry Division's defense at Anzio matter to the Allied war effort?	**Defending the beachhead against German attacks helped Allied troops hold their position in Italy.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Different kinds of service helped Allied forces move forward. During the Normandy invasion, Comanche Code Talkers with the 4th Infantry Division sent battlefield messages in their language, making enemy interception less useful. In Italy, soldiers of the 45th Infantry Division helped defend the Allied beachhead at Anzio against German attacks. The Code Talkers protected communication, while the 45th helped hold ground. They did not form one unit: the Comanche soldiers served with the 4th Infantry Division, not the 45th.

Accept other accurate examples from the passage for the exhibit label, including Navajo Code Talkers at Iwo Jima. Look for a clear distinction between Code Talkers' communication work and the 45th Infantry Division's combat actions.