Oklahoma at War

Trace how home-front mobilization supported service overseas.

OKH.C.7.6 "Summarize and analyze the impact of Oklahoma's mobilization and engagement in World War II including establishment of military bases and prisoner of war installations contributions to the war effort by military personnel and specific..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways Oklahoma bases supported the war, circle one effect of prisoner of war installations, and number two ways Oklahoma-connected service members contributed on the battlefield.

From Oklahoma to the Front

1 In World War II, Oklahoma became more than a place soldiers left behind. At Tinker Field near Oklahoma City, workers repaired military aircraft and supplied parts, helping keep planes ready for missions. Altus Army Air Field trained bomber crews, so airmen could practice before entering combat. Building and operating these bases brought jobs, but it also increased demand for housing and services in nearby towns. Oklahoma's mobilization therefore reached beyond the runways: mechanics, instructors, and local families all felt its effects. A repaired engine or a trained crew could matter far from the state.

2 Camp Gruber, near Muskogee, served as an Army training center and later held German prisoners of war. Oklahoma also had smaller prisoner of war facilities. Guards and camp staff had to manage the prisoners, while some prisoners worked on farms under supervision. Their labor helped farmers when wartime military service left fewer local workers available. These installations did not turn prisoners into American soldiers; they show another way the war changed work and daily life at home. Training grounds, guard posts, and farm fields all became part of a statewide effort to support troops fighting overseas.

3 Oklahoma's wartime role also crossed the ocean. The 45th Infantry Division, rooted in the Oklahoma National Guard, fought in Sicily, Italy, southern France, and Germany. Its soldiers helped push back German forces, showing how a state-connected unit contributed directly to Allied campaigns. Comanche Code Talkers from Oklahoma served with the 4th Infantry Division in Europe. During the Normandy invasion, they sent battlefield messages in Comanche, a language German forces were unlikely to understand. The messages helped American units communicate without easily revealing their plans. Unlike a repaired plane or a farm harvest, these contributions reached the battlefield through fighting and communication.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Tinker Field and Altus Army Air Field support the war in different ways?

2. How did prisoner of war installations affect work in Oklahoma during the war?

3. Why did sending messages in Comanche help American units during the Normandy invasion?

4. How were the contributions of the 45th Infantry Division and the Comanche Code Talkers different, and what did they have in common?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 90 word museum label explaining how Oklahoma's work at home and service overseas supported the war effort. Include a named installation, prisoner of war facilities, the Comanche Code Talkers, and the 45th Infantry Division, and explain at least two cause-and-effect links.

ANSWER KEY

Oklahoma at War

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.7.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways Oklahoma bases supported the war, circle one effect of prisoner of war installations, and number two ways Oklahoma-connected service members contributed on the battlefield. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Tinker Field and Altus Army Air Field support the war in different ways?	**Tinker Field repaired aircraft and supplied parts to keep planes ready. Altus Army Air Field trained bomber crews before combat.**
2	How did prisoner of war installations affect work in Oklahoma during the war?	**They required guards and camp staff. Some prisoners also worked on farms under supervision, helping farmers with labor shortages.**
3	Why did sending messages in Comanche help American units during the Normandy invasion?	**German forces were unlikely to understand Comanche, so American units could communicate without easily revealing their plans.**
4	How were the contributions of the 45th Infantry Division and the Comanche Code Talkers different, and what did they have in common?	**The 45th fought German forces in Allied campaigns, while the Code Talkers sent battlefield messages. Both helped American forces overseas.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At Tinker Field, workers repaired aircraft and supplied parts, keeping planes ready for missions overseas. Oklahoma's prisoner of war facilities also affected the home front: supervised prisoners worked on farms when military service had reduced the local labor supply. Overseas, the 45th Infantry Division fought German forces across several campaigns, while Comanche Code Talkers sent messages during the Normandy invasion in a language German forces were unlikely to understand. Together, these efforts show how Oklahoma supported the war through maintenance, labor, combat, and communication.

Accept other accurate cause-and-effect links supported by the passage. The museum label should connect home-front work to the war effort and explain distinct contributions by both named military groups.