

Oklahoma Declares War on Texas!



"Oklahoma Army National Guard soldiers standing guard at the old Red River toll bridge."

Oklahoma Academic Standards for Social Studies as of February 28, 2019

"It'll All Be Over Soon" - Red River Bridge War: This article fulfills the OKH.5.6 ("Analyze William H. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray's response to the conditions created by the Great Depression.") requirement of the Oklahoma History Content Standards. (OKH.5: The Student will examine the [sic] Oklahoma's political, social cultural, and economic transformation during the early decades following statehood.)

"Always Ready, Always There" - Titles 10 & 32: This article fulfills the USG.3.1 ("Examine the American system of federalism and evaluate the changes that have occurred in the relationship between the states and the national government over time.") requirement of the United States Government Content Standards. (USG.3: The student will analyze the fundamental principles of the American system of government resulting in a republic, as established in the Constitution of the United States, the supreme law of the land.)

"How Comanche Heritage Helped Win The War" - Code Talkers: This article fulfills the USH.5.3 ("Analyze the series of events affecting the outcome of World War II including major battles, military turning points, and key strategic decisions in both the European and Pacific Theaters of operation including Pearl Harbor, the D-Day Invasion, development and use of the atomic bomb, the island-hopping strategy, the Allied conferences at Yalta and Potsdam, and the contributions of Generals MacArthur and Eisenhower.") requirement of the United States History Content Standards. (USH.5: The student will analyze the United States role in international affairs by examining the major causes, events and effects of the nation's involvement in World War II, 1933-1946.)

AND

OKH.5 The student will examine the [sic] Oklahoma's political, social, cultural and economic transformation during the early decades following statehood.

OKH.5.9 Summarize and analyze the impact of mobilization for World War II including the establishment of military bases, prisoner of war, installations, and the contributions of Oklahomans to the war effort including the American Indian code talkers and the 45th Infantry Division.

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By Paul Clark

July of 1931 was a difficult period for the populace of Denison, Texas and Durant Oklahoma. The heat was sweltering, the Dust Bowl ravaged the land, jobs were scarce due to the Great Depression and a seventy-five-cent toll on the old bridge between Durant and Denison complicated the already dire economic situation of these mutually dependent towns. Each town eagerly awaited the opening of the new Denison-Durant Free Bridge. Since this bridge was to be free of tolls, it was expected to be an economic boon to local businesses. In addition, the governors of Oklahoma and Texas each anticipated the bridges opening to alleviate political concerns.

Texas Governor, Ross Sterling, wanted to see an end to a long legal battle with the Red River Bridge Company that had been ongoing since he was the Texas Highway Commissioner in 1928. Governor William "Alfalfa Bill" Murray of Oklahoma deeply desired some good news for Oklahomans as much of the state was reduced to dust-filled plains. Unfortunately, it was not to be. On the eve of the grand opening, the Red River Bridge Company was granted an injunction by the U.S. Court of the Southern District of Texas which closed the new bridge and began a long standoff between the states. Reluctant Texas state employees were forced to barricade the free bridge.

The Bridge War was an affair of court battles, standoffs, and back-room deals, which had been developing long before July 1931. The bridge standoff and court battles became national news. For the newspapers in New York and Washington, D.C., the Bridge War was a humorous distraction from the hardships of the Great Depression, but for the people on the Red River, it was a serious matter, and, in many cases, the difference between prosperity and poverty.

The issues that led to the Bridge War actually began in 1873, when Chickasaw citizen, Benjamin Colbert, converted his ferry service into a toll bridge and Mr. Colbert founded the Red River Bridge Company to manage it.



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HEAR for High Schools is designed to mitigate the impact of bullying in high schools – including cyber bullying. The proven program is delivered on a classroom-by-classroom basis by trained members of the National Guard at no cost to schools.



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Career Direction is a no-cost guidance workshop which has helped over 6 million American high school students to plan their futures. The National Guard recognizes that students entering adulthood face what may be their most critical and lasting life decisions.

OKLAHOMA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OK CHALLENGE



PowerPoint presentation taught by Oklahoma Army National Guard recruiter. Recruiter also will hand out items that will help prevent students from becoming distracted drivers. Training can be adjusted to fit the teacher's schedule.



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An Army National Guard representative will supply Army National Guard themed jerseys for the teams to use for the game. The Army National Guard representative will talk about the benefits of the Guard and answer any questions anyone may have.

SPEED TRACS

The Army National Guard uses SpeedTracs for "Challenges" that will not only drive your team's performance but produce the results you need! They run a competition with your sports team or school's PE program or anywhere you'd like to see performance improve...and build a great TEAM along the way!



In order for a high school student to graduate they must complete CPR certification. The Oklahoma Army National Guard has certified instructors that can come in and teach this course.

Always Ready, Always There

Because of this the National Guard is often the very first responder to a disaster, and will be the first to set up infrastructure to provide aid to the affected. This, along with their constant training for service in a, military, police, or other capacity means the National Guard always lives up to their motto of "Always Ready, Always There".



"National guard members aid in tornado relief."

Sources

Kenny A. Franks, Citizen Soldiers: Oklahoma's National Guard 1st Edition (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 19-20.
Garri Benjamin Hendell, "Domestic Use of the Armed Forces to Maintain Law and Order — Posse Comitatus Pitfalls at the Inauguration of the 44th President," Publius 41, no. 2 (2011): 336-48.
Ibid.
10 U.S. Code § 12406. 10 U.S. Code § 12407.
32 U.S. Code § 112. 32 U.S. Code § 907.
32 U.S. Code § 109. 32 U.S. Code § 508.
32 U.S. Code § 508. 10 U.S. Code § 12403.
10 U.S. Code § 12405. 10 U.S. Code § 12401.

Questions

1. Which US Code Title deals with the Federal Military?
2. What happens when the National Guard is federalized?
3. What does the Posse Comitatus Act do?
4. List some of the state level duties of the National Guard.



"Soldiers of the 45th Infantry Division during WWII"

Debate

Should the Governor of each state have military power and authority via the National Guard? Should there be limits to the gubernational power over the National Guard?

Critical Thinking

Why do you think the use of the military as a police force was troubling in the 1870s? What national events and sentiments might have led to the Posse Comitatus Act in 1876? What do you think is the origin of dual state and federal military units? Why do you think they are important to American History?

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16 so a hearing could be held to settle the matter. The attorney for the Red River Bridge Company, Joe Bailey Jr., stated that Texas had failed to pay the company for its losses before the bridge opened, as stipulated in the contract Sterling made. No one expected it would take very long to settle the legal issue because of the overwhelming popularity of the free bridge; however, neither the Texas governor, nor the Red River Company expected the owner of the other half of the free bridge to be offended by the injunction, but Oklahoma's governor was indeed offended.

A year of dealing with an economic depression had taken its toll on Alfalfa Bill's patience, he was unwilling to allow the legal wrangling in the Texas Court to delay the much-needed economic relief

for southern Oklahoma that the free bridge would provide. On July 16th, Murray sent in the Oklahoma National Guard to the bridge. The 36 guardsmen forcibly opened it, igniting the Bridge War. Murray asserted states' rights to control bridge structures and that federal courts did not have the jurisdiction over a bridge that was 50 percent owned by the State of Oklahoma.

Governor Sterling was incensed by Murray's actions, which could negatively impact the upcoming hearing in Texas, so he sent the famous Texas Rangers to close the bridge, which shut the next day. The Texas Rangers, led by Adjutant General W.W. Sterling (no relation to the governor) faced off with Adjutant General Charles Barrett and his 36 guardsmen. The standoff was long and exhausting for both sides, with neither expecting

"Texas Adjutant General Sterling standing in front of his barricade on the Texas side of the new Red River free bridge near Durant."

to go home for the foreseeable future.

The Red River Bridge Company secured an injunction against local officials and General Barrett in the U.S. Eastern District Court in Muskogee, Oklahoma to stop the standoff. Murray relieved the general and took command of the National Guard contingent himself driving south from the capitol in Oklahoma City. In Texas, during same timeframe, Denison's state senator, put a bill on the Texas Senate floor to end the standoff and open the bridge, which was passed and signed by Sterling. Murray's action in taking command and declaring martial law at the bridge escalated controversy, but eventually the courts ordered the bridge open. Murray ordered the Oklahoma guardsmen to remain for a few more weeks to insure the bridge remained open, but the bridge company had lost all ability to keep an injunction going. The conflict was over.

The Red River Bridge War was an event that was created due to the actions of many people. It was also a situation that escalated as more people, businesses, city and state governments, and federal courts were drawn into the conflict.

Always Ready, Always there



By Paul Clark

"Chinook helicopter preparing for take off."

The National Guard is an organization with a history dating to before the founding of the United States. It is an organization that has been shaped by numerous events, people, and laws. Of the Laws that have Shaped it, none can be said to have shaped it more than the US Code Titles 10 and 32. The US Code is then general law of the United States, divided by subject matter sorted under titles. Title 10 is the section dealing with The United States' Armed Forces, their regulations, rights, responsibilities, and their duties. Title 32 is the regulations, rights, responsibilities, and duties of the National Guard of the United States. These two Titles have given the guard a unique identity in comparison to other service branches. The Guard cannot work under both titles at the same time, If a Guardsman is acting under Title 10 regulations, they are acting as a member of the U.S. Army or U.S. Air Force, if they act under Title 32, it means the Guardsman is acting as a member of a state's National Guard. When a Guardsman acts as a member of the Army or Air Force, they have been federalized, and Title 32 no longer applies to them until they return to normal state level duties. A normal guardsman is usually a part of a chain of command under a state's governor,

but while federalized they are placed with the normal military command under the President of the United States. This dual aspect to National Guard duties has given the guard an identity of service, and two duties that has shaped the Guard greatly.

Generally, the National Guard is presumed to not be in federal service until ordered to be so under the law. This means that unless ordered by a lawful authority, usually the president with congressional approval, the National Guard can be presumed to be operating under state authority. A good example of guardsmen being federalized happened in June of 1916, when Woodrow Wilson called upon the entirety of the National Guard for service in the hunt for infamous Mexican Revolutionary Pancho Villa. The Guard was called upon to patrol the border so the Army may conduct raids and searches across the Mexican-American border to hunt Villa down and put an end to his attacks on American border settlements. The National Guard when mobilized under federal service in such a way are considered reservists in the Army, and after 1948, the Air force. An army reservist is somebody with a civilian job voluntarily called up to military service when the Armed Forces need the extra manpower,

manpower, which is what the Guard provides, in the case of the response to Pancho Villa's raids, it gave 110,000 extra men to patrol the massive Mexican-American Border.

All Reservists and National Guardsmen called up for federal service enjoy the full rights and responsibilities of a full time member of the Army of equivalent rank with exception to things explicitly outlined as exclusively to regulars. This sets the Guardsmen up as members of the military during their term of federal service. It places them under federal regulations for military duty and ensures they have the benefits of said service. Said restrictions mean they can no longer perform tasks traditionally delegated to the National Guard, like operating as police forces. During President Obama's first inauguration in 2009, the government had to ask the State of Maryland to use its guard as police and security on the National Mall to prevent running afoul of The Posse Comitatus Act. The Posse Comitatus Act was an 1876 Act of Congress that barred military forces from being used for police actions on US Soil. The National Guard when operating under gubernatorial authority and the Coast Guard are explicitly exempt from the PCA.

Oklahoma Declares War on Texas!

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"Charles Chibitty being recognized for his unique service in World War II"

Questions

1. Why were the Comanches able to adapt to Army life so easily?
2. How did the Code Talkers communicate things that had no code word?
3. When did the U.S. Government recognize the Code Talkers service officially?



"Soldiers entrenched on the beach on D-day."

Discussion

What technology do we have today that did not exist in World War II?
What code word might those have?

Critical thinking

How do you think it felt for the Comanches to be forced to not speak their native language only to discover that the Army needed their language to win the war?

The country was embroiled in the Great Depression, and people were desperate. The citizens of Durant and Denison needed a free bridge because they could not afford to pay the toll for travel on the old bridge. Alfalfa Bill couldn't allow the free bridge to be closed. He had spared his citizens from an exorbitant toll. The Red River Bridge Company was trying to defend its livelihood against two states trying to squash it, and Sterling was trying to keep Texas on the path to recovery without scandal destroying his governorship in the cradle. These motives fueled the actions of the Red River Bridge war. It began and ended with the slam of a gavel, and the actions of men all desperate for economic prosperity.

Questions

1. Why was a new "free" bridge going to be built between Denison and Durant?
2. What agreement did Governor Sterling make with the Red River Bridge Company?
3. Why did Governor Murray send the National Guard to the free bridge? How did he justify it? How did Texas respond?
4. How did Governor Murray respond to court decisions? Was he successful?



"Oklahoma Guardsmen standing watch at the toll bridge near Durant, OK."

Discussion

Do you think Governor Murray's reactions were justified? Do you agree with his actions?

Critical thinking

What do you think people in Oklahoma thought about Governor Murray sending the National Guard to open the bridge? What about the people in Texas? Or people elsewhere in the United States, reading about the conflict in their newspapers?

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How Comanche Heritage Helped Win the War: Charles J. Chibitty and the Code Talkers



"Charles Chibitty in uniform."

Used with permission of the Army Heritage Center Foundation

Born in a small tent on November 20, 1921 in Oklahoma, Charles Chibitty, a Comanche Indian, grew up in an era when mainstream society strongly disapproved of Native American culture and language. At schools like the Haskell Indian School in Lawrence, KS, where Chibitty was educated, students were forbidden to speak their native languages and punished if they did. Ironically, while home for Christmas vacation in 1940, Chibitty learned that the Army Signal Corps wanted to recruit Comanche Indians fluent in their native tongue.

When Chibitty shared the news with his father, his father replied: "Go ahead, it might do you some good." Chibitty joined the Army on January 2, 1941, and was assigned to the 4th Infantry Division for training at Fort Benning, Georgia. Along with sixteen other Comanche Soldiers, Chibitty spent the next four years providing invaluable service as Army Code Talkers. The language they had been forbidden to speak as children became a code the German Army was unable to break. Many Indian Schools operated on a military model, so Chibitty and the other Comanches adapted easily to Army life.

Much of the training was familiar to them, and Chibitty later recalled: "When we first got to basic training, our drill instructors asked if we had been in the Army, and we said, 'No, we were in the Indian schools.'"

In April 1941, 2nd Lieutenant Hugh Foster, recently graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point, was given charge of the seventeen Comanche of the 4th Infantry Division. Their mission: create an unbreakable code.

Creating a code is always difficult, but aspects of the Comanche language added to the usual challenges. Many military terms had no equivalent in the Comanche language. For example, Comanche has only one word for "airplane" and no way to distinguish between a fighter, bomber, or other type of aircraft. "wah-kah-ray," meaning "turtle," Adolf Hitler became "po-sah-tai-vo," or "crazy white man," and so on.

other type of aircraft. To overcome this problem, the Code Talkers used other Comanche words as substitutes: "tank" became "wah-kah-ray," meaning "turtle," Adolf Hitler became "po-sah-tai-vo," or "crazy white man," and so on.

To communicate names of people and places that lacked specific code words, the Code Talkers learned to spell out the word using random Comanche words. "If the location started with the letter 'A,' then I would say 'araka' the Comanche word for 'alligator,'" Chibitty said. The specific word did not matter - a Code Talker could use any Comanche word that began with the letter "A" in the English language and complete the word using other Comanche words.

Once the code was finished, the Code Talkers were ready for action. Two Code Talkers were assigned to each of the three regiments in the 4th Infantry Division. Three stayed at headquarters and the rest were assigned to other Army Signal Corps divisions. According to Chibitty his job was to "be a Code Talker, to get to the frontlines and report back to the command post what kind of artillery was coming in on us" and other information. Every transmission the Code Talkers sent, either by radios

How Comanche Heritage Helped Win the War: Charles J. Chibitty and the Code Talkers

or telephone, used the Comanche code. Because their messages were in code, even another Comanche would not be able to decipher the message. The Germans did not stand a chance.

On D-Day, Chibitty and 13 other Code Talkers came ashore at Utah Beach as part of the 22nd Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division. Years later he still remembered the first message he transmitted that day: "Five miles to the right of the designated area and five miles inland the fighting is fierce and we need help."

Although communication remained Chibitty's primary role, his duties also included laying wire for landline communications between the regiments and headquarters. When it came to combat, Chibitty would "hit the ground like a prairie dog." He said he "wasn't made to fight, just to lay line and talk Indian, but I had to use my gun... It's like it's going to be you or them - and you want it to be them."

After storming Utah Beach, the 4th Infantry Division was involved in some of the fiercest battles of the war including the breakthrough at St. Lo, the Battle of the Bulge, and Hürtgen Forest.

The Battle of Hürtgen Forest was one of the most brutal battles of the war.

battles of the war. Memories of what happened in the Hürtgen Forest haunted Chibitty for years: "There was a real bad battle there, just like in Normandy. The bodies of American and German soldiers were lying on the ground. It was November, and it started snowing while we were there. It snowed heavy and deep. The next morning we heard a big roar. It was a road grader coming to keep the road open so we could get material up to the guys fighting on the front lines. The grader just went right over those bodies..." For years after the war the Code Talkers' work went unnoticed by everyone except members of their own tribe from whom Chibitty received a Cavalry officer's sabre, an honor comparable to the Medal of Honor among the Comanche.

The French government finally recognized the Code Talkers in 1989. The US government followed suit on December 3, 1999, honoring Chibitty during an emotional ceremony in the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes. The Military Intelligence Corps Association presented Chibitty with the Knowlton Award for making a significant contribution to Army intelligence, along with an American flag that had been flown over the US Capitol.



"Comanche Code Talkers in training."



"Soldiers loading artillery equipment."

Always Ready, Always There



"Officer Candidate school holds Graduation"

When Federalized, The National Guard lose this exemption.

Calling the National Guard to Federal Service is not something done lightly, Title Ten of the US Code explicitly condemns calling the Nation Guard into Federal Service for anything less than invasion, rebellion, and a great need for additional manpower in war. At the federal level this is the purpose of the National Guard, an extra pool of well-trained manpower beyond the reservists, meant to protect the nation in times of great emergency or to provide the military with more than enough well trained manpower to fill its wartime needs. This statement does not last indefinitely, the moment a federalized guardsman's commission runs out without them reenlisting he cannot be held in service, and the president normally sets a period that the federal service lasts, that may be shortened or extended as needed. These rules have made the National Guard important, as they are always ready for when they are needed to service the federal government in a national emergency or war.

On the state level, where most guardsmen will spend their careers, is no less important, and the Guards more prominent identity and culture appear, as the protectors of the individual states of The United States. One of the foremost duties of the National Guard is police actions. The National Guard can be requested to aid state police, and in coastal states, the US Coast Guard, to deal with the numerous drug smuggling rings that exist in the United States, so long as the Governor and the Secretary of Defense in Washington D.C. approve. The National Guard is working with state police forces across the nation to fight drug smuggling, so long as their other duties are not interfered with and the federal government sees no issue with their planned use. Additionally, when not in federal service during a national emergency, no duty due to the crisis may interfere with the authority of the guard to perform their functions as authorized by state-level laws. Meaning even in time of emergency, when not

called to serve the federal government all guardsmen maintain their authority and rights afforded to them by the U.S Code Title 32 and state law.

There are certain restrictions placed upon the states, namely, the state may not have any other military defense forces under state authority. This is something to prevent the states to build their own armies, and also established the National Guard as the sole state gendarmerie, or military police and defense force, with exception of the Military under federal command stationed in the state or territory.

Most importantly, the National Guard has been granted benefits towards it maintaining itself as full members of the state's community, they may aid charity organizations within reason. Ground transportation, administrative support, and air transportation for Special Olympians are within the National Guard's purview and rights. This helps maintain the National Guard as a friendly organization, who are not only in each state to defend it and provide support to serious police operations like riot suppression, but to help people, and make the state a better place. Title 32's regulations on charity and aid provided by the National Guard are designed to encourage guardsmen to take part in their communities as guardsmen and citizens, to be positive role models. the Guard has full leave to provide as much emergency medical and disaster relief as needed when such an event occurs.

Oklahoma Declares War on Texas!

Over the decades of operation, Colbert's bridge became unpopular because the 75-cent toll was too expensive for most people. This led to conflicts between the company and the cities of Durant and Denison, and eventually the states of Oklahoma and Texas.

Another actor involved with the bridge war was Governor Ross Sterling of Texas. Sterling was famous for being an incorruptible oilman with a strong work ethic. Sterling was an able businessman from a poor farming family, and a self-made billionaire. He was the founder of The Humble Oil Company, which was one of the few oil companies to compete against John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil. In later decades, Standard Oil would acquire Humble Oil and the two companies would become the Exxon Company. Sterling would eventually sell his stocks and become a newspaper baron in Houston, Texas. As a newspaperman, he fought against corrupt highway commissioners and other government employees, aiding in the election of anti-corruption candidate Dan Moody as Texas governor and becoming highway commissioner. As commissioner, Sterling would clean up corruption until 1930, when Moody announced he would not seek election

and Sterling announced he would run for governor. To finish up his term as commissioner and to help his campaign, Sterling made a deal with the Red River Bridge Company. Sterling agreed to pay the bridge company for their losses if they agree to end their lawsuits obstructing construction of the new free bridges along the Red River. This deal came to haunt Sterling as governor.

Across the Red River, a firebrand was elected Governor of Oklahoma. William H. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray was born in Toadsuck, Texas and as a young man moved to Tishomingo, Oklahoma, and married a woman from the Chickasaw tribe, thus becoming a member of the tribe himself. He was a farmer and lawyer in Tishomingo Murray was a smart man with a keen interest in science and theology, and a constitutional scholar as well. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, so named for his love of the crop from his farming days became a key leader in the Chickasaw community. Murray became a key figure in the formation of Oklahoma, writing portions of the constitution once the State of Sequoyah was folded into the State of Oklahoma. He served in the Oklahoma State legislature beginning in 1907

and in 1912 was elected as representative for Oklahoma in the US Congress. Murray was a fiery politician with enough legal knowledge to be a good politician, and had the background and political positions to make him popular with farmers and rural voters. In 1916, however, his political acumen was not enough to stop Isolationists from chasing him out of office because he supported U.S. intervention in World War I. After being forced out of politics, Murray left Oklahoma for Bolivia to start a farming community that would eventually failed due to the Stock Market crash of 1929. He returned to Oklahoma to run for governor, won, and had a host of problems to solve, including a very stubborn toll bridge company.

By late June 1931 the people of Denison and Durant grew eager to see the new, shiny free bridge open for use, and planned a large celebration to mark it's opening. However, the Red River Bridge company has been fighting the construction of the bridge for several years, and was in litigation with the State of Texas. Shortly before the anticipated opening, Judge Thomas Kennerly of the U.S. Federal Court in Houston ordered the bridge closed and the opening postponed until July



"National Guard soldiers standing in formation at the Red River toll bridge."