TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

TEXAS AND THE GREAT WAR

"THE WAR THAT WILL END WAR"

Credit: Wikimedia Commons

In the 1916 presidential election, Woodrow Wilson campaigned on "He Kept Us Out of War." While the Great War raged abroad, this slogan reassured Americans that their boys would not be shipped off to the killing fields of Europe. But on April 6, 1917, just a month after Wilson's second inauguration, the U.S. found itself joining the fight that in just three years had brought powerful empires to their knees.

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary by Serbian separatists was the spark that ignited the war. It was fueled by an ongoing arms race, rising nationalism, and decades of resentment and competition between powerful European nations. Dozens of nations and colonial territories eventually aligned themselves behind one of two opposing power blocs: the Triple Entente (or Allies), composed of the United Kingdom, France, and Russia, and the Central Powers, made up of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. Several nations maintained or attempted neutrality. By its end in 1918, this "war that will end war"—as author H.G. Wells famously put it—had transformed the world: industrialized death occurred on a never-before-seen scale; millions were killed or wounded; and global powers were weakened, embittered, or disintegrated.

Although the Allies and the U.S. were victorious, America paid a steep price. More than 116,000 Americans lost their lives, many due to the influenza pandemic that swept the globe at the end of the war. Another 200,000 Americans returned home wounded or with a permanent disability. The aftermath of war resulted in new organizations such as the American Legion, American Gold Star Mothers, and the American Battle Monuments Commission, all of which are still active.

In many ways, World War I is a forgotten war, overshadowed by the major conflicts that preceded and followed it. But its impact was profound. It normalized airplanes in skies and made death by machine gun, poison gas, or artillery the new normal for soldiers. It catalyzed reform movements, invigorated marginalized groups, and strained America's commitment to the protection of civil liberties within its own borders. It did all this while turning the U.S. into a creditor nation for the first time in its history, and granting it a new—albeit temporary—importance on the international stage. The U.S., and a bold, modern new world, had finally arrived.

Texas was at the forefront of much of this change. Thousands of its residents, along with new migrants from the rest of the U.S. and elsewhere, toiled on the home front in the agriculture, shipbuilding, oil, and timber sectors. City populations swelled: Beaumont doubled and Port Arthur tripled in size by the end of the decade, while places like San Antonio and Fort Worth cemented their status as nationally important centers of aviation. The war accelerated social change legislation, including women's suffrage and alcohol prohibition. The pressures of war also stoked racial violence, culminating in targeted attacks on African Americans during the "Red Summer" of 1919 and the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s.

Wars often serve as natural points in the past to reflect upon. We are frequently admonished to "never forget," a phrase with added poignancy when applied to a war that many of us today know little about. This publication is an invitation to seek out vestiges of the Great War in our state and explore the history of a war that fundamentally changed Texas, the U.S., and the world.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE WAR

1914

Credit: Wikimedia Commons

JUNE

June 28: Serbian separatist Gavrilo Princip assassinates Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian-Hungarian throne, and his wife, Sophie, in Sarajevo.

JULY

July 28: Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia, prompting various European nations and their colonial territories to declare war on each other over the following weeks and months.

AUGUST

» Germany invades Luxembourg and Belgium, and British forces arrive in France.

» Austria-Hungary invades Russia. The Battle of Tannenberg is a massive defeat for the Russian Second Army.

SEPTEMBER

The Allies halt the German advance into France at the First Battle of the Marne, resulting in the failure of the Schlieffen Plan, the German strategy for a quick, decisive victory in the West before the Russians could mobilize in the East.

OCTOBER

» Future U.S. President Herbert Hoover oversees distribution of food to Belgian and French civilians.

» French, Belgian, and British forces stop the German advance to the English Channel in the First Battle of Ypres in Belgium.

» The Ottoman Empire (Turkey) enters the war on the side of Germany.

» German forces holding the Chinese port city of Tsingtao surrender to Japanese forces.

DECEMBER

December 25: British and German forces make the famous Christmas football truce on the Western Front.

1915

FEBRUARY

Germany puts all shipping nations on notice that they enter British waters at their own risk, as the U-boat blockade of Britain begins.

APRIL

» Germany uses chlorine gas for the first time at the Second Battle of Ypres, killing more than 5,000 Allied troops.

» The Battle of Gallipoli begins as Turkish defenders repel French, British, and Commonwealth forces from the Dardanelles Strait, with heavy Allied losses.

Credit: Library of Congress

MAY

» May 7: German U-boat torpedoes and sinks the British passenger liner *Lusitania*, killing more than 1,000 civilians, including 128 Americans, and triggering a diplomatic crisis between the U.S. and Germany.

» Germany begins Zeppelin bombing air raids over British civilian centers.

AUGUST

Reports emerge for the first time in the U.S. and Europe about massacres of Armenian civilians by the Ottoman Empire.

SEPTEMBER

Britain uses poison gas for the first time at the Battle of Loos.

Credit: Library of Congress

OCTOBER

British Red Cross nurse Edith Cavell is accused of spying and is executed by German firing squad.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE WAR

1916

JANUARY

January 11: Several American Smelting and Refining Company employees are removed from a train in Mexico and executed by Pancho Villa's guerillas.

FEBRUARY

The Battle of Verdun, the longest battle of the war, begins. Lasting until December, it results in stalemate and catastrophic casualties for both Germany and France, with hundreds of thousands dead or wounded. It also spawns the famous French cry, "They shall not pass," and German Gen. Erich von Falkenhayn's vow to "bleed France white."

Credit: Library of Congress

MARCH

» The British introduce the draft for men between the ages of 18 and 41.

» Pancho Villa's guerillas raid Columbus, New Mexico, resulting in 17 American deaths.

Credit: Library of Congress

» Almost 10,000 American troops led by Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing embark on the "Punitive Expedition" into northern Mexico to hunt down Villa and his men.

APRIL

Lafayette Escadrille, a French Army flying squadron composed of American volunteers, enters combat. San Antonio's Clyde Balsley is the first U.S. pilot in the squadron to be seriously injured, and he receives the French Medaille Militarie and Croix de Guerre.

Credit: dvidshub.net

MAY

» Germany suspends unrestricted submarine warfare to deter the U.S. from entering the war.

Credit: Library of Congress

» The Secretary of War orders National Guard units from Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico to ensure the security of American citizens along the U.S.-Mexico border.

» May 30: 20,000 people participate in a "preparedness" parade in Dallas.

» May 31: The British Royal Navy clashes with the German fleet off the coast of Denmark, with heavy losses on both sides, at the Battle of Jutland—the largest naval engagement of World War I.

JUNE

A detachment of the U.S. 10th Cavalry suffers heavy losses and is captured by Mexican troops at Carrizal, Mexico. They are eventually released, but relations between both countries fall to a new low.

JULY

The Battle of the Somme begins, resulting in more than 1 million total casualties by the time it ends four months later. On the first day alone, nearly 20,000 British troops are killed and 40,000 wounded.

Credit: Library of Congress

NOVEMBER

Woodrow Wilson is re-elected as president with the campaign slogan, "He Kept Us Out of War."

CHRONOLOGY OF THE WAR

1917

FEBRUARY

» Germany announces a return to unrestricted submarine warfare in hopes of starving Britain into submission, resulting in the U.S. severing diplomatic ties with Germany within days.

» February 24: Britain shares with the U.S. government the previously intercepted Zimmermann Telegram, which urges Mexico to attack the U.S. as Germany's ally. Soon after, American newspapers publish it, shocking the nation.

Credit: National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

APRIL

» April 1: The American steamer *Aztec* is sunk by a German U-boat, killing nearly 30 crewmembers.

» April 6: The U.S. declares war on Imperial Germany.

Are You Going to the Opening Game at Panther Park This Afternoon?

FORT WORTH RECORD

STATE OF WAR DECLARED

Credit: Tarrant County Archives

MAY

The U.S. Congress passes the Selective Service Act, requiring all men between the ages of 21 and 30 to register for possible military service.

JUNE

» June 5: The first of three national draft days occurs, ultimately registering nearly 1 million Texans. Almost 200,000 Texans end up serving through a combination of voluntary and compulsory service.

» June 15: The Espionage Act is passed by the U.S. Congress, followed later (May 1918) by the Sedition Act. These controversial new laws make it illegal to interfere with the war effort or criticize the U.S. government.

» June 25: First infantry divisions of the American Expeditionary Forces arrive in France.

JULY

The Third Battle of Ypres begins, lasting until November and killing 700,000.

AUGUST

Racial tensions and the presence of African American troops in Houston lead to the Camp Logan Riot, resulting in 17 deaths, the largest court martial in U.S. history, and the exclusion of black Regular Army troops in the war.

OCTOBER

The first units of the American Expeditionary Forces engage the enemy in support of the French.

Credit: NARA

NOVEMBER

The Russian government reveals to the world the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement to divide Arab lands between the French and British after the war. Implemented against Arab wishes, its arbitrary territorial divisions produce long-term discord in the Middle East.

DECEMBER

» December 7: The U.S. declares war on Austria-Hungary.

» December 15: Germany and Russia sign an armistice. The resulting Treaty of Brest-Litovsk between Germany and Russia's new Soviet regime brings an end to fighting on the Eastern Front in March 1918.

» December 18: In part due to hostility toward German American breweries, the U.S. Congress passes the 18th Amendment, prohibiting the manufacture, sale, or transportation of alcohol.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE WAR

1918

JANUARY

President Wilson gives his "Fourteen Points" speech to Congress, laying out his blueprint for democracy in the world.

Credit: Wikimedia Commons

FEBRUARY

SS Tuscania is torpedoed and sunk by *UB-77* off Scotland, while transporting American troops to Europe. More than 200 people are killed, including dozens of Texans.

MAY

May 28–30: The first U.S.-led operation of the war, the Battle of Cantigny, begins.

Credit: Wikimedia Commons

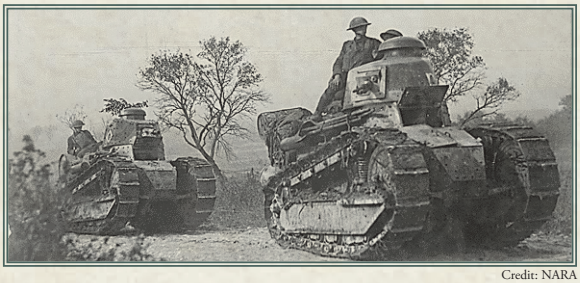
JUNE

- June 2: The first American ship torpedoed in U.S. waters by a German U-boat sinks off New Jersey.
- June: The U.S. Army and U.S. Marines halt the German advance at Château-Thierry after weeks of bloody fighting.
- Meanwhile, U.S. 36th and 90th Infantry Divisions, primarily men from Texas and Oklahoma, begin arriving in France in large numbers.

Credit: NARA

JULY

July 15: The Second Battle of the Marne begins, which concludes in three weeks with the halting of the German advance. Franco-American forces, including tanks, place Germany on the defensive for the rest of the war.



Credit: NARA

AUGUST

August 8–9: The British, French, and Commonwealth victory at the Battle of Amiens convinces the German high command that defeat is inevitable.

SEPTEMBER

- At St. Mihiel, the American Expeditionary Forces and French forces push back the Germans, setting up the final confrontation in the war: the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Fighting lasts until November 11 and is the bloodiest battle of the war for the U.S., with 26,000 deaths.
- The influenza outbreak, which had been building momentum for months, reaches a crisis point. By 1920, it kills more than 50 million people.

Credit: Library of Congress

NOVEMBER

November 11: Ceasefire is reached in a railway carriage in France's Forest of Compiègne with the signing of an armistice at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

DECEMBER

December 1: U.S. and British forces enter and occupy German territory.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE WAR

1919

JANUARY

» January 16: Prohibition goes into effect with the ratification of the 18th Amendment, forbidding the manufacture, sale, or transport of alcohol.

» January 18: Following the November 1918 armistice, negotiations over the terms of German surrender begin in Paris.

JUNE

June 28: The Treaty of Versailles is signed by all major combatants except the U.S.

Credit: Wikimedia Commons

SEPTEMBER

September 16: Congress approves a charter for the American Legion. Membership in the veterans' organization grows rapidly, and local posts are created across the country.

1920

Credit: Wikimedia Commons

MARCH

On its second attempt, the U.S. Congress fails to ratify the Treaty of Versailles. Having also failed to join the newly created League of Nations, the U.S. retreats back into isolationism.

Credit: Library of Congress

BY THE NUMBERS:

U.S. ENTERS WAR WITH ROUGHLY **130,000** MEN IN ITS REGULAR ARMY.

BY THE END, MORE THAN **4 million** ARE IN SERVICE.

990,522 TEXANS REGISTER FOR SELECTIVE SERVICE.

198,000 TEXANS —INCLUDING A SMALL NUMBER OF WOMEN— SERVE.

2 million

U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL GO OVERSEAS.

AMERICAN CASUALTIES:

116,516 DEAD

204,002 WOUNDED

5,000+ TEXAN DEATHS

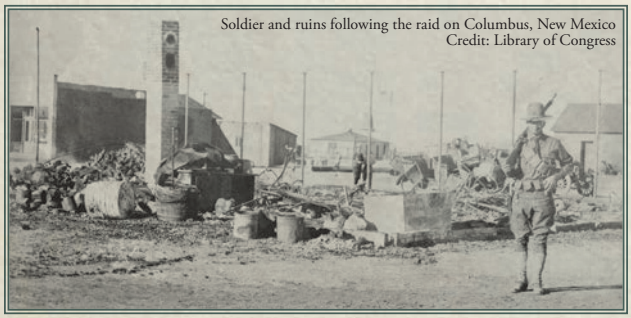
NEARLY HALF OF THE U.S. MILITARY'S MOBILIZATION AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR THE WAR ARE IN **THE LONE STAR STATE.**

DISORDER ON THE BORDER

The Mexican Revolution (1910–1920) brought instability to the borderlands of the Southwest U.S. The political upheaval and power struggle in Mexico unleashed great anxiety on both sides of the border, where familial and cultural ties ran deep. Tensions were further exacerbated by the short-term occupation of Veracruz in 1914 by U.S. Marines, and by the influx of political and economic refugees into South Texas. In the power vacuum, Gen. Venustiano Carranza declared himself president of Mexico, but grew frustrated with U.S. President Wilson's refusal to recognize the legitimacy of his claim. He consequently turned a blind eye to cross-border raids carried out by insurgents in South Texas.

By January 1915, the situation between the two nations had almost reached a breaking point. A revolutionary manifesto surfaced—known as the Plan of San Diego—that called on Hispanics to wage a race war against Anglos and reclaim the Southwest U.S. as a Hispanic republic. The backlash by Anglo-Texans against their Tejano neighbors in the Rio Grande Valley was immediate, resulting in hundreds of deaths and lingering distrust in the region.

U.S. recognition of Carranza's claim in late 1915 should have calmed the situation, but instead emboldened Francisco "Pancho" Villa, one of Carranza's former allies and fiercest critics. Villa's disillusionment with both governments led to a sustained guerilla warfare campaign against U.S. citizens, culminating in a March 1916 raid on Columbus, New Mexico, which killed over a dozen people. This affront proved too much for President Wilson, who sent 10,000 American troops into Northern Mexico under the leadership of U.S. Army Gen. John J. Pershing.



Soldier and ruins following the raid on Columbus, New Mexico
Credit: Library of Congress

Pancho Villa
Credit: Library of Congress

From the beginning, this "Punitive Expedition" met hostility from the Mexican public and acting government. Villa proved elusive, and his men used their familiarity with the terrain to their advantage as they harassed U.S. troops moving farther into the country. A crisis occurred on June 21, 1916, when a detachment of the U.S. 10th Cavalry arrived at the town of Carrizal and encountered Mexican federal troops instead of Villa's bandits. The ensuing fighting resulted in several deaths and the capture of U.S. soldiers. Voices in the U.S. called for war, but cooler heads prevailed. Neither government saw value in a military escalation, and by early February 1917, the U.S. had agreed to withdraw from Mexico.

The U.S. failed to capture or kill Villa, but the Punitive Expedition had other impacts, including preparing the U.S. for conflict in Europe. The same month the U.S. withdrew from Mexico, British intelligence shared with President Wilson a cable intercepted from the German foreign minister, Arthur Zimmermann. It contained an offer to help Mexico reclaim its lost American territory, including Texas, in exchange for allying with Germany if the U.S. joined the war in Europe. The Zimmermann Telegram, as it became known, turned the tide of public opinion. Following on the heels of Germany's resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare—which guaranteed the loss of more American vessels—U.S. neutrality in the Great War was no longer a viable option.

WAR AT SEA

USS Texas
Credit: Library of Congress

For centuries, Western European powers fought to control the world's oceans. By the turn of the 20th century, Germany's competition with naval superpower Great Britain had led to a disastrous arms race that helped propel the world toward confrontation. Although Britain managed to maintain its maritime dominance, Imperial Germany had one undeniable, and deadly, advantage: the *unterseeboot*, or U-boat submarine.

From 1914 onward, Britain's strategy to end the war depended on a successful naval blockade of Germany. Half of Great Britain's war budget went to the officially neutral U.S., and the blockade of Germany meant the Allies had a monopoly on purchasing American bullets, high-explosive shells, grains, and steel. However, Britain's superior surface fleet proved especially vulnerable to submarine attacks. By mid-1915, U-boats had sunk almost 750,000 tons of British goods, severely imperiling the country's ability to import the food and war supplies it badly needed. Each nation was determined to starve the other into submission.

For Germany, unrestricted submarine warfare was always a calculated risk. It upset neutral nations like the U.S., and relations between both countries reached a new low in May 1915 with the sinking of the British passenger ship *Lusitania*. U.S. anger at the loss of life—particularly the 128 Americans killed—forced Germany to suspend unrestricted warfare in the Atlantic.

The new policy couldn't last. Worsening conditions at home forced Germany to announce in February 1917 that it would resume unrestricted warfare in the Atlantic, and the U.S. responded by breaking off diplomatic relations. When news broke about the British interception of the Zimmermann Telegram (pg. 15), American neutrality was doomed. The nation was outraged and at war.

The problem of how to protect Allied shipping and transatlantic sea routes continued to trouble the Allies. One of the most painful reminders of this naval vulnerability was the sinking of the troop passenger ship *SS Tuscania* in February 1918 off the western coast of Scotland—more than 200 Americans, including several Texans, died in the torpedo attack. To offset such losses, southeastern Texas, particularly Orange and Beaumont, became a center for redoubled shipbuilding efforts. Eventually, the U-boat threat was neutralized, thanks in large part to the use of the convoy system. One of the most famous convoy ships from the era, the dreadnought battleship *USS Texas* (pg. 54), would go on to play an important role in the Second World War.

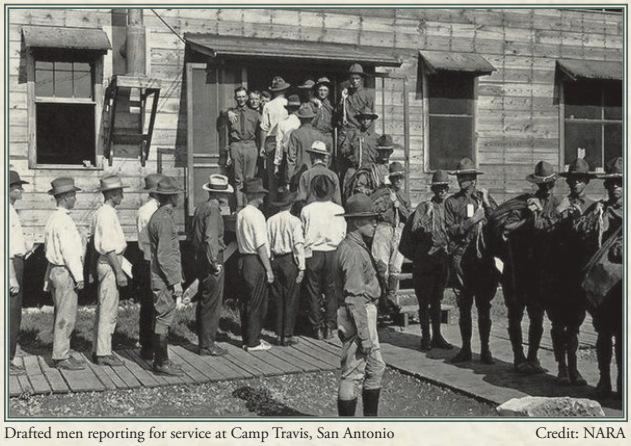
TEXAS MOBILIZES

Credit: Library of Congress

In many ways, Texas mobilized for the war long before U.S. entry in April 1917. In spring 1916, the Texas National Guard was called up in response to instability within Mexico and along the U.S.-Mexico border, which culminated in Pancho Villa's raid on Columbus, New Mexico. The resulting Punitive Expedition into Mexico, led by Gen. John J. Pershing, seemed to justify the views of Americans who supported the preparedness movement.

Gen. John J. Pershing
Credit: Library of Congress

Once committed to the Allied cause, U.S. leaders soon realized the key to success was rapid mobilization—no easy task. The U.S. military ranked 17th in the world in terms of size, and its inadequately organized regular army, even with reserve troops, consisted of fewer than 200,000 men. Within 19 months that number swelled to over 4 million, at least 2 million of whom began pouring into European ports in the spring and summer of 1918. Incredibly, one in five American men of military age put on a uniform during the war.

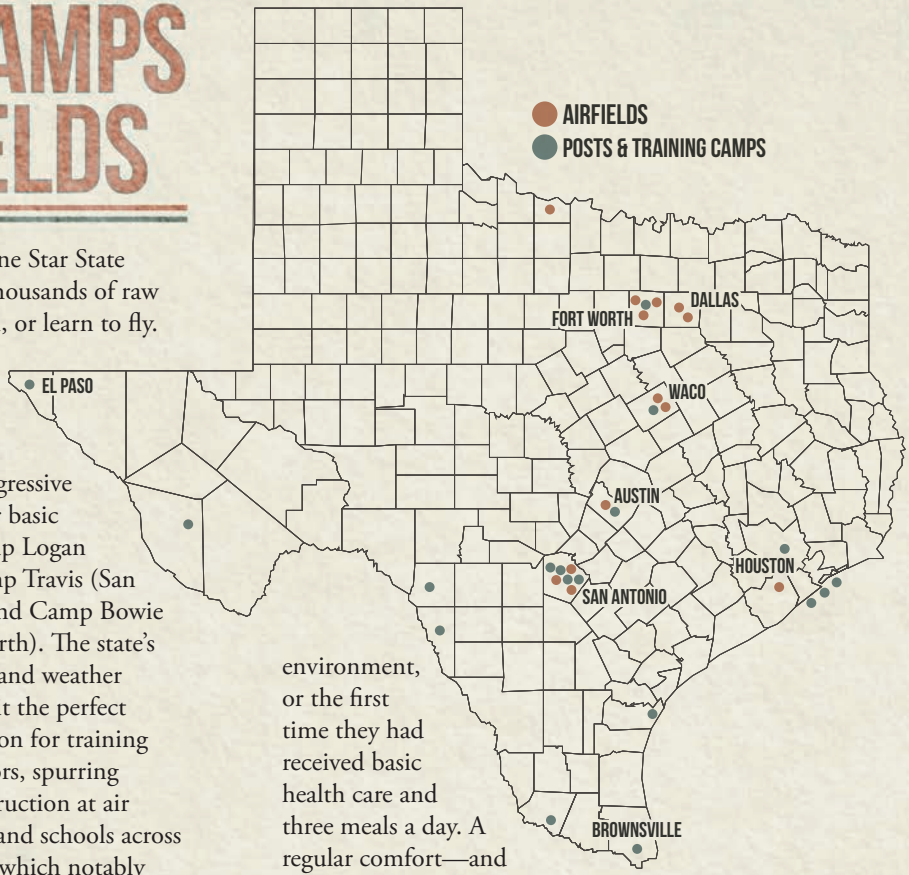


Drafted men reporting for service at Camp Travis, San Antonio Credit: NARA

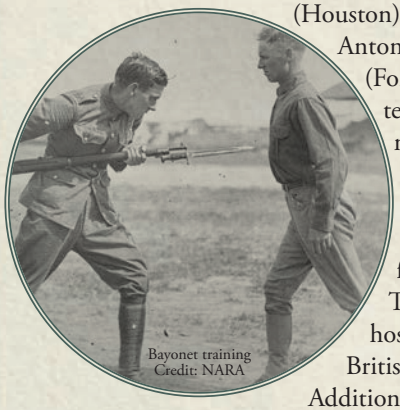
These freshly mobilized "citizen soldiers" made up the bulk of the newest fighting force destined for the Western Front: the American Expeditionary Forces, led by Gen. Pershing. Most were drawn from activated state national guards and, to a much greater extent, conscription, made possible through the Selective Service Act of May 18, 1917. All male U.S. citizens between the ages of 18 and 30 (later extended to 45) were required by law to register for the draft. By the end of the war, 24 million Americans, including almost 1 million Texans, had registered.

In total, Texas put nearly 200,000 men and over 400 women into military service. Due to restricted opportunities and systemic discrimination, most (but not all) African American Texans who served were drafted, with many serving in the all-black 92nd or 93rd Infantry Divisions under white commissioned officers. Most white and Hispanic Texans who served were a mixture of draftees and enlistees, and a significant number found themselves in one of the "Texas divisions:" the 36th and 90th Infantry Divisions.

TRAINING CAMPS AND AIRFIELDS



As well as contributing native sons, the Lone Star State proved to be a crucial training center for thousands of raw recruits who came to drill, take instruction, or learn to fly. The frontier wars of the 19th century had left Texas with active forts such as Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio and Fort Bliss in El Paso, both of which played important roles in the war. In addition, aggressive lobbying had also secured cantonments for basic training—Camp MacArthur (Waco), Camp Logan (Houston), Camp Travis (San Antonio), and Camp Bowie (Fort Worth). The state's terrain and weather made it the perfect location for training aviators, spurring construction at air fields and schools across Texas (which notably hosted American as well as British and Canadian pilots). Additionally, the first officers' school was created at Leon Springs and produced nearly 2,000 "90-day wonders."


Bayonet training
Credit: NARA

Camp life for most was busy, exciting, sometimes boring, noisy, and occasionally lonely. Men spent months being trained on artillery, trench warfare, and other skills while learning military protocols. For many it was the first time they had been so far from home, and in such a regimented environment, or the first time they had received basic health care and three meals a day. A regular comfort—and enticing distraction—were the surrounding communities that were generally welcoming. However, the sudden influx of men often aggravated racial tensions, as well as sharpened anxieties about alcohol consumption and moral standards in the community.

Trench warfare training
Credit: NARA

Texas pilots at Love Field
Credit: Library of Congress

COLLEGES
REPORTING FOR DUTY

As the U.S. military struggled with a lack of quality officers and specialized expertise within its burgeoning ranks, one obvious solution presented itself: institutions of higher learning. From the beginning, Texas colleges and universities sought to be, and were, integral to the war effort.

The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas (later Texas A&M University) in College Station was the first in the nation to offer its campus to the federal government. By the end of the war it had trained nearly 4,000 men in essential war tasks, including signal corps and radio, auto mechanics, and surveying. More than 2,000 students also answered the call of duty, 55 of whom were killed.

Like its College Station counterpart, the University of Texas in Austin was eager to do its part. It was one of six U.S. universities to host a School of Military Aeronautics, which eventually became known as the "West Point of the Air." Schools for radio operators and automobile mechanics were also established. After the war, two of the campus' most iconic structures—Memorial Stadium and Littlefield Fountain—were created as memorials.

One long-lasting effect of the war on campuses was the Student Army Training Corps (SATC), a forerunner of today's Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). Although it was established too late in the war to be truly effective, this attempt to create "student soldiers" normalized the idea that public and private institutions of higher learning, and not just elite military academies, have a role to play in preparing military leaders and specialists.

Historically black institutions that participated—such as Wiley and Bishop colleges in Marshall and Prairie View Normal and Industrial College (later Prairie View A&M University) near Houston—would go on to play pivotal roles in the civil rights movement within Texas.

Radio instruction at Texas A&M
Credit: NARA

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE WAR

The diversity of the African American Texan experience in the Great War remains largely unrecognized today. Although they served in segregated units under white commanders, men from the Lone Star State did so in a variety of roles. Disproportionately, these were in labor and support roles—but not all. More than 300 Texans fought in the famous 369th Infantry Regiment, or "Harlem Hellfighters," and other combat units. Many more served in the 20th Engineers, or Forestry Regiment, drawing on experience learned in the logging camps of East Texas. At least two dozen African American Texans were officers, the highest ranking being Capt. Aaron Day, Jr. from Dayton, Texas.

On the home front, there were many challenges. The irony of President Wilson's appeal to make the "world safe for democracy" was not lost on the millions of African Americans who continued to be afforded little or no democracy at home, especially those in the Jim Crow South. Many found it difficult to "close ranks," as W.E.B. DuBois urged in a famous essay, in the face of systemic oppression and targeted violence. More than 100,000 African Americans left Texas for northern cities as part of the Great Migration, and those who remained dealt with suspicion and sometimes violence. Nevertheless, most took part in Liberty Bond drives, Red Cross initiatives, wartime labor, and other efforts to support American troops.

A low point in race relations was reached in August 1917, when men from the all-black 24th Infantry Regiment mutinied at Camp Logan after a month of abuse from white Houstonians and violence at the hands of its police department. The Houston Riot, as it came to be known, resulted in 17 deaths, several wounded, and the largest court martial in U.S. history. As a result, the 24th and other black Regular Army infantry and cavalry units would not be sent to France—instead, African American national guardsmen (mostly from northern states) and draftees would go in their place in the newly created 92nd and 93rd Infantry Divisions of the American Expeditionary Forces. A substantial number spent the war stateside.

At war's end, the demobilization of African American soldiers to civilian life led to an outburst of violence known as the "Red Summer" of 1919. Resentment toward black servicemen, as well as white insistence on enforcing racial social codes, resulted in bloodshed in dozens of towns across the U.S., including Longview, Texas. This tragic period energized the civil rights movement and played a crucial role in the growth of organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Court martial of 64 members of the 24th Infantry Regiment on trial for mutiny and murder of 17 people in Houston
Credit: NARA

HISPANICS IN THE WAR

No exact figure exists, but thousands of Hispanics are believed to have served in the U.S. military during the First World War. They did so under difficult circumstances. Like German Americans, Hispanics often found themselves under suspicion for their perceived "foreignness" and assumed lack of loyalty to the U.S. Also, like African Americans, they endured racial prejudices about their intelligence and abilities. Some, like Medal of Honor recipient David Bennes Cantú Barkley, felt compelled to hide or downplay their Hispanic heritage to be accepted.

"LET US DEMONSTRATE ONCE AND FOR ALL THAT WE ARE WORTHY OF FIGHTING FOR RIGHTS, SO THAT IN THE FUTURE WE MAY BE ACCORDED THOSE SAME RIGHTS."

JOSÉ DE LA LUZ SÁENZ

Despite these challenges, most responded to the outbreak of war with support and enthusiasm. Hispanic communities in Dallas, Corpus Christi, Laredo, and elsewhere turned out in droves for patriotic parades. Spanish-language publications promoted food conservation efforts, while Mexican Americans throughout Central and South Texas rallied around war bond drives. Perhaps one of the greatest, if underappreciated, contributions of Mexicans and Mexican Americans to the war effort was their work on the home front in agriculture, construction, and mining, which proved vital to Allied victory.

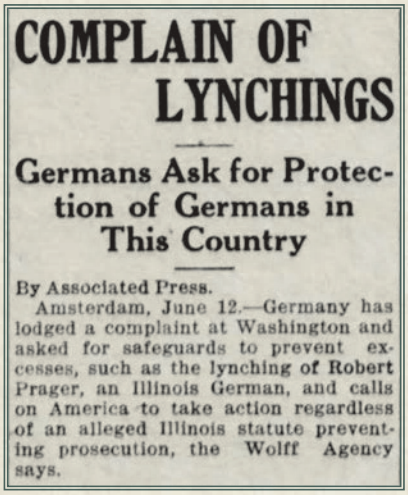
Marcelino Serna
Credit: Marcelino Serna family

One of the most dramatic acts of heroism in the war occurred on September 12, 1918, during the bloody Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Pvt. Marcelino Serna, a Mexican national in the U.S. Army, single-handedly killed two dozen Germans and captured two dozen more. This bravery was followed by an act of moral courage: he prevented U.S. soldiers from executing his prisoners. Ironically, the Spanish-speaking private who would settle in El Paso after the war had been offered a discharge once his true nationality was realized. He chose instead to remain and fight. In doing so, he became the most decorated Texas veteran of the war, with multiple medals received from the French, Italian, and U.S. governments, including the Distinguished Service Cross.

Like other marginalized groups, participation in the war intensified the ongoing demand for the more equitable treatment of Mexican Americans. Most notably, veteran José de la Luz Sáenz co-founded the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) after the war and fought tirelessly to end the segregation of Hispanic youths in Texas schools. He summed up the feelings of many veterans when he wrote, "Let us demonstrate once and for all that we are worthy of fighting for rights, so that in the future we may be accorded those same rights."

TREATMENT OF GERMAN AMERICANS

During the First World War, German Americans made up the largest ethnic group in the U.S. Most were descendants of Germans who had emigrated to the U.S. in the 19th century. Texas was an especially attractive destination to these early immigrants, many of whom formed close-knit communities in the Hill Country area of Central Texas. By the early 20th century, an additional 45,000 foreign-born Germans were also living in the Lone Star State, creating one of the most vibrant and dynamic cultural regions in the state. These immigrant and descendant communities celebrated Germany's customs, especially its music, language, and food. They also provided bilingual education for their children, read German-language newspapers, and enthusiastically created beer halls, social clubs, and societies. One of these, the National German American Alliance, claimed more than 2 million members and chapters in 44 states.



COMPLAIN OF LYNCHINGS

Germans Ask for Protection of Germans in This Country

By Associated Press.

Amsterdam, June 12.—Germany has lodged a complaint at Washington and asked for safeguards to prevent excesses, such as the lynching of Robert Prager, an Illinois German, and calls on America to take action regardless of an alleged Illinois statute preventing prosecution, the Wolff Agency says.

Credit: Corsicana Daily Sun, June 12, 1918

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 complicated German American lives considerably. Many favored Germany but found it increasingly difficult to do so publicly when Britain controlled the news that reached U.S. shores. Consequently, a growing number of Americans had started to see the conflict as one of Western "civilization" defending itself against a militaristic aggressor claiming cultural superiority, a view dismissed as propaganda by most German Americans.

After U.S. entry into the war, public (or even private) expressions of support for Germany became impossible. Displaying a German flag or speaking German became dangerous acts that invited harassment, arrest, or violence. German breweries—and by extension the act of drinking beer—was attacked by prohibitionists on patriotic grounds and laid the groundwork for the successful passage of state and national prohibition. Not even names were immune. For the duration of the war, San Antonio's King William Street, named after the first German emperor, was known as Pershing Avenue. An untold number of German Americans anglicized their surnames to downplay their ethnic identity.

Despite these conditions, many German Americans—and German Texans—displayed great loyalty and heroism during the war. The first U.S. officer of German descent to die in battle was 1st Lt. Louis J. Jordan of Fredericksburg. Fellow Fredericksburg native Chester W. Nimitz trained in anti-submarine techniques as an officer in the U.S. Navy (and would later command the Pacific Fleet in World War II). The bravery and sacrifice of these and many other German Americans provided a counterpoint to anti-German sentiment.

"Camouflage," by James Montgomery Flagg, 1918, depicts a German American publicly supporting the U.S. and privately saying, "Praise the Kaiser."

WOMEN AT WAR

Like men, women helped the war effort by enlisting in the armed forces as well as contributing on the home front. Though they were not allowed to take up arms, more than 400 Texan women served with distinction in the U.S. military in a variety of roles. Most served in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in stateside and overseas military camps. Women were also in uniform as telephone operators, drivers, mechanics, and in administrative and clerical capacities. For the first time, the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marines admitted women into their regular ranks, primarily in administrative roles in order to "free men to fight." Two African American Texans, Maud Williams and Fannie Foote, served in the Navy as female yeomen, while additional Texans served as women Marines.

Many civilian organizations provided additional opportunities for women to be directly involved. One of the most significant of these, the American Red Cross, enabled women to contribute as nurses, relief volunteers, fundraisers, and more. Katherine Stinson, the fourth woman in the U.S. to receive her pilot license, taught flying at her parents' aviation school in San Antonio and raised money for the Red Cross before eventually serving as an ambulance driver in France. Women also participated in many other initiatives such as creating bandages for troops, organizing social events at camps, and overseeing Liberty and Victory Bond drives to raise funds for the war effort.

Katherine Stinson and her plane
Credit: Library of Congress

Credit: Library of Congress

Going to war had a profound impact on women's lives. In the domestic sphere, women "did their part" by conserving food in their households—"Meatless Mondays" and "Wheatless Wednesdays" were popular endeavors. Across Texas, women often helped with seasonal agricultural work and fulfilled traditionally male roles in the labor force. More affluent and socially conscious Texans such as Minnie Fisher Cunningham and Jane McCallum combined their fundraising efforts with advocacy for progressive causes like women's suffrage and alcohol prohibition, eventually finding success with the passing of the 18th and 19th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. But perhaps the most poignant way women's lives were changed was through the loss of beloved family members who were killed in action. In 1928, American Gold Star Mothers was created to help women process the loss of sons in military service, with more than 100 Texans taking part in Gold Star pilgrimages to France between 1930 and 1933.

SUSPICION & OPPOSITION

Most marginalized groups saw support of the war as a means to social acceptance and, therefore, participated with enthusiasm. However, for those with complicated—or even hostile—feelings about America's involvement in the war, day-to-day life could be difficult. In June 1917, the Espionage Act—and later the Sedition Act—criminalized opposition to the war and gave the federal government wide powers to harass, intimidate, and jail its critics. Federal agencies like the Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Postal Service actively spied on American citizens, while the Texas State Council of Defense encouraged residents to police community members' patriotism and report those deemed to be "slackers."

This burden of suspicion fell disproportionately on political dissidents, pacifists, and labor activists. Those associated with the anti-war Industrial Workers of the World were jailed. In Abilene, a federal court sentenced three leaders of the anti-draft Farmers and Laborers Protective Association to six years' imprisonment. Even striking during wartime could bring accusations of disloyalty. When thousands of oil workers in Texas and Louisiana went on strike, the Department of Labor ensured that a quarter lost their jobs. Authorities swiftly shut down a similar strike by shipyard workers in Orange in early 1918, attacking their patriotism in the process.

Immigrant communities fared even worse. While one third of the U.S. population was made up of immigrants and their children, anxieties over their language, social class, religion, and perceived loyalties fueled nativist distrust. German Americans in particular bore the brunt of this collective fear, facing attacks on their culture, language, liberties, and sometimes personal safety. Officials at Camp Bowie temporarily jailed and abruptly discharged Army nurse Ella Behrens, an American daughter of German immigrants, after accusing her of introducing influenza germs into the camp.

"THERE ARE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES BORN UNDER OTHER FLAGS WHO HAVE POURED THE POISON OF DISLOYALTY INTO THE VERY ARTERIES OF NATIONAL LIFE. SUCH CREATURES OF PASSION, DISLOYALTY, AND ANARCHY MUST BE CRUSHED OUT. THEY ARE INFINITELY MALIGNANT AND THE HAND OF OUR POWER SHOULD CLOSE OVER THEM AT ONCE."

President Wilson to Congress in 1915

Mugshot of Maurice Wand, convicted in Houston of violating the Espionage Act. Credit: NARA

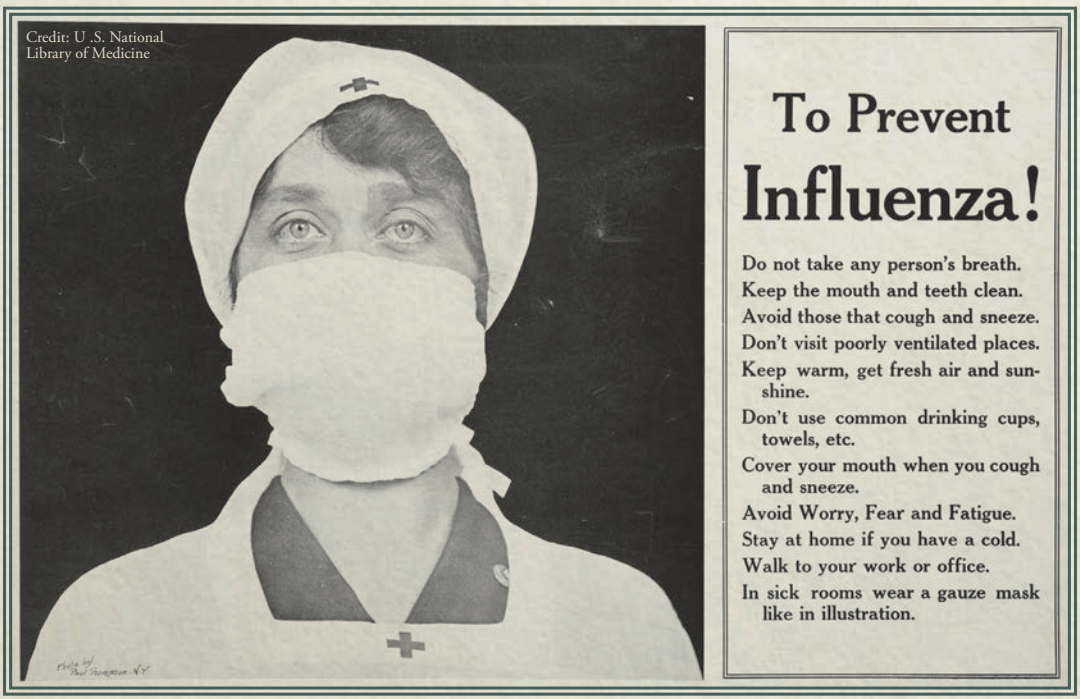
A NEW KILLER EMERGES

One opponent in 1918 proved even deadlier than the horrific killing fields of the Great War: the H1N1 influenza virus. Its spread across the globe, and the aggressive form of pneumonia that often accompanied it, would prove to be one of the deadliest pandemics in history, killing tens of millions by summer 1919. It struck in three waves: a milder version that ended in August 1918, followed immediately by a much more virulent strain in the fall, and a third outbreak in spring 1919. Of the three, the second strain wreaked the most havoc. It disproportionately spared the very young and old, but killed the healthiest members of society—men and women between the ages of 15 and 45.

Contemporaries called it the "Spanish Flu," but the disease first appeared in March 1918 at Camp Funston in Kansas. War mobilization enabled it to spread quickly to other U.S. military installations. A month later, it appeared in Brest, France, and shortly thereafter surfaced in all combatant nations and beyond. The concentration of men in close quarters made military personnel especially vulnerable. By the end of the year, as much as 40 percent of the U.S. Navy was thought to have become infected. More than 4,000 U.S. soldiers died while crossing the Atlantic. A staggering quarter of the American Expeditionary Forces, or 1 million men, eventually fell ill. In all, 25 million Americans became infected, and at least 600,000 died.

On the home front, very few communities escaped the flu's rapid onslaught unscathed. It arrived in Texas on September 27, and in one month, more than 10,000 cases had been reported in the state. Military towns like El Paso and San Antonio were hit especially hard. In response to the outbreak, governments at all levels did what they could to stop the spread and treat the affected. Schools, theaters, businesses, and other public gathering places closed their doors, and strict quarantine procedures were put in place. Gauze masks became a common sight on some city streets. Not even the rich and powerful were spared: President Wilson nearly died from the disease during the Paris peace talks of April 1919.

Throughout those horrible months in 1918 and 1919, it seemed there would be no end to the terrifying sickness that had stricken humanity. But suddenly, a year and a half later, the flu was gone just as quickly as it had appeared. Reported cases plummeted, people gathered in large numbers again, and life slowly returned to some semblance of normalcy. The effects, however, would be felt for years.



NOTABLE TEXANS IN THE GREAT WAR

FAMOUS TEXANS

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

Born in Denison, the future Supreme Allied Commander in World War II and 34th U.S. president remained stateside during the Great War. However, he achieved the temporary rank of Lieutenant Colonel and gained valuable experience overseeing tank training and motor convoy logistics.

CHESTER W. NIMITZ

In the First World War, the Fredericksburg native and U.S. Naval Academy graduate served first as an aide and then chief of staff in the submarine force of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet. He would go on to become commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet in the Second World War.

WILLIAM J. DURHAM

A young "Willie" Durham from Sulphur Springs served in France in the 20th Engineers. After the war, he became a civil rights lawyer and prominent leader within the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). His work on the *Sweatt v. Painter* case led to the desegregation of the University of Texas law school.

JOHN W. THOMASON, JR.

A prolific author and illustrator, the Huntsville native and U.S. Marine fought in numerous battles during the First World War. His military career took him all over the world and earned him numerous recognitions, including the Silver Star, Navy Cross, Air Medal, and a navy destroyer named in his honor.

SIGNIFICANT TEXANS IN NATIONAL POLITICS

EDWARD M. "COLONEL" HOUSE

A political power broker, diplomat, and close advisor to President Wilson, Houston native House used his influence with the president to get cabinet positions for fellow Texans and represented the administration in delicate negotiations with foreign leaders.

EMMETT J. SCOTT

Special assistant to the Secretary of War (1917–19), Scott, a Houston native and former aid to Booker T. Washington, was the highest-ranking African American in Wilson's administration and served as special advisor on black veteran affairs.

THOMAS WATT GREGORY

As Attorney General (1914–19), one of the most powerful positions in the Wilson administration, Gregory oversaw the use of the Department of Justice and the Bureau of Investigation to prosecute, and in some cases harass, those deemed to be in violation of the Espionage and Sedition Acts. The controversial University of Texas alum returned to the Lone Star State after the war.

ALBERT S. BURLESON

Born in San Marcos, Burleson helped establish air mail service and improve rural delivery within the U.S. as Postmaster General (1913–1921). He is more controversially known for introducing discriminatory practices that disadvantaged African American employees in the U.S. Postal Service and for using his agency to censor, suppress, and spy on individuals and organizations using the U.S. mail system.

MORRIS SHEPPARD

A U.S. Senator and former U.S. Representative of Texas, East Texas native Sheppard is considered the "father" of the 18th Amendment and the national ban on alcohol. He was also an early supporter of aviation and its domestic and military uses. Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls was later named in his honor.

TEXAN CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

PVT. DAVID BENNES CANTÚ BARKLEY

The Laredo native served in the U.S. Army, Company A, 356th Infantry, 89th Division. He died while swimming back across the Meuse River after having volunteered to perform reconnaissance of enemy locations.

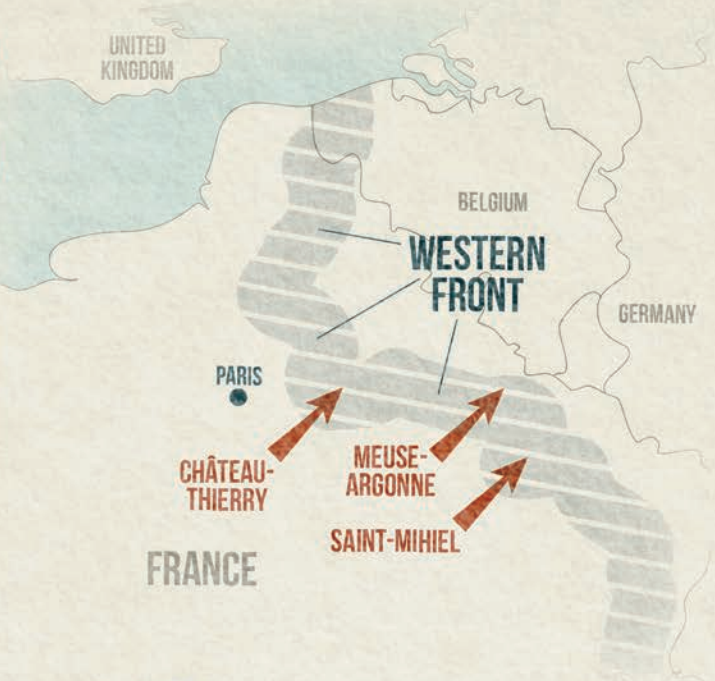
PFC DANIEL EDWARDS

While serving in the U.S. Army, Company C, 3rd Machine Gun Battalion, 1st Division, Mooreville native Edwards was severely wounded in action while killing four enemy soldiers and taking four prisoners.

HOSPITAL APPRENTICE FIRST CLASS DAVID HAYDEN

Born in Florence, Texas, Hayden served in the U.S. Navy and was with the 2nd Battalion, 6th Regiment, U.S. Marines while they were under intense machine gun fire. He attended to and then carried to safety a fellow soldier.

TEXANS ON THE WESTERN FRONT



36TH INFANTRY DIVISION

The 36th Infantry Division, or "Arrowhead Division," trained at Camp Bowie in Fort Worth and drew heavily from the Texas and Oklahoma National Guard Units. It saw intense fighting in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the largest and final American campaign of the war. Nearly 3,000 were killed or wounded, with two men receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor.

90TH INFANTRY DIVISION

Nicknamed the "Tough 'Ombres," the 90th Infantry Division consisted mostly of drafted men from Texas and Oklahoma. After completing basic training at Camp Travis in San Antonio, the men of the 90th sailed for Europe in summer 1918. The division took part in the St. Mihiel Offensive, the first large-scale operation carried out by Americans, as well as the bloody Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

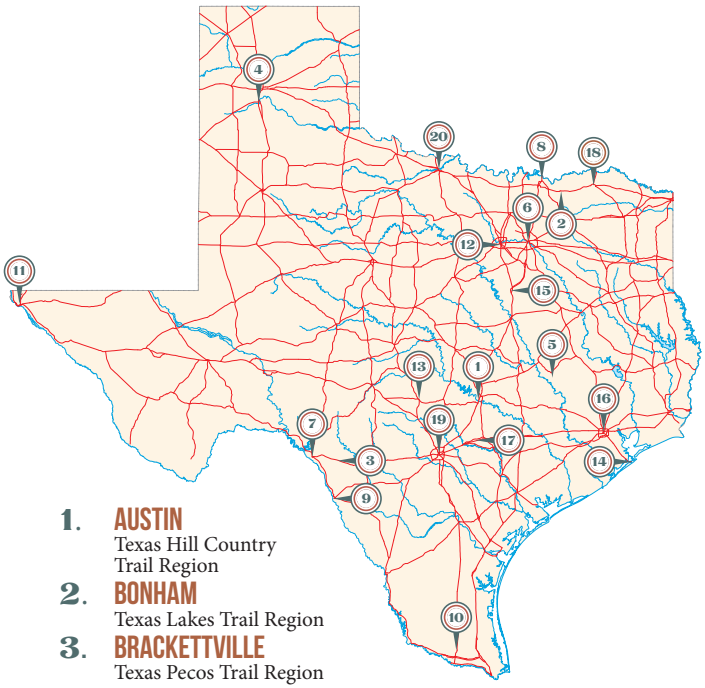
92ND AND 93RD INFANTRY DIVISIONS

Two all-black units in the National Army were created for the American Expeditionary Forces: the 92nd and 93rd Infantry Divisions. Hundreds of Texans served in these divisions on the front lines, some of them under French command, and were awarded foreign medals of valor such as the Croix de Guerre. More than 300 Texans fought in the 93rd's 369th Infantry Regiment, aka the "Harlem Hellfighters."

U.S. NAVY AND MARINES

Almost 19,000 Texans served in the U.S. Navy, which consisted of more than 350 ships. This included the notable *USS Texas*, which helped protect troop and cargo transports from enemy submarines. At least 2,000 Texans served in the U.S. Marines and took part in some of the bloodiest fighting of the war, like at the Battle of Belleau Wood in Château-Thierry. A few Texan women served in the U.S. Navy as female yeomen and in the U.S. Marines as women Marines.

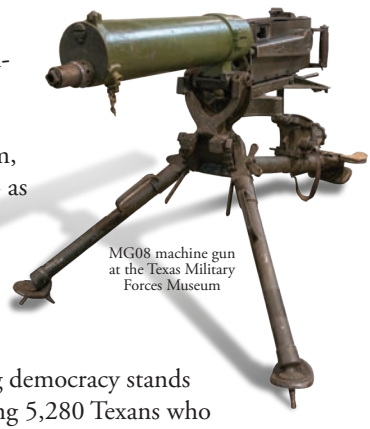
TRAVEL DESTINATIONS



1. **AUSTIN** Texas Hill Country Trail Region
2. **BONHAM** Texas Lakes Trail Region
3. **BRACKETTVILLE** Texas Pecos Trail Region
4. **CANYON**-Texas Plains Trail Region
5. **COLLEGE STATION**-Texas Brazos Trail Region
6. **DALLAS**-Texas Lakes Trail Region
7. **DEL RIO**-Texas Pecos Trail Region
8. **DENISON**-Texas Lakes Trail Region
9. **EAGLE PASS**-Texas Pecos Trail Region
10. **EDINBURG**-Texas Tropical Trail Region
11. **EL PASO**-Texas Mountain Trail Region
12. **FORT WORTH**-Texas Lakes Trail Region
13. **FREDERICKSBURG**-Texas Hill Country Trail Region
14. **GALVESTON**-Texas Independence Trail Region
15. **HILLSBORO**-Texas Lakes Trail Region
16. **HOUSTON**-Texas Independence Trail Region
17. **KINGSBURY**-Texas Independence Trail Region
18. **PARIS**-Texas Lakes Trail Region
19. **SAN ANTONIO**-Texas Independence and Hill Country Trail Regions
20. **WICHITA FALLS**-Texas Lakes Trail Region

1 AUSTIN
TEXAS HILL COUNTRY TRAIL REGION

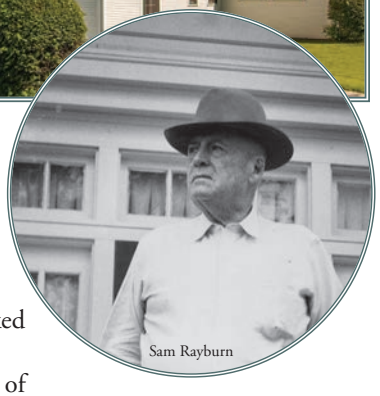
As the home of state government, Austin played a large role in the events leading up to World War I and during the mobilization. In 1915, all military supplies stored at the State Capitol were moved to the new arsenal building at Camp Mabry. After the U.S. declaration of war, the 1892 camp expanded rapidly—barracks were built, and the Army used it as a training site. Today, the active installation houses the **Texas Military Forces Museum**, which covers the Lone Star State's military history from 1823 to the present, including World War I materials such as the service cards for every Texan who served in the Great War. The **Texas State Cemetery** is the final resting place for statesmen and Texas legends. It holds the remains of 27 men who served in World War I, including Henry Hutchings, who organized the 71st Infantry Brigade, a part of the 36th Infantry Division known as the "Texas Division." Another place that commemorates World War I servicemen is **Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium**. Best known as home to the Texas Longhorns football team, the stadium was built in 1924 as a memorial to Texan veterans of the Great War. Bronze plaques around the stadium list students who died in World War I, while a statue on the north side representing democracy stands in front of bronze tablets listing 5,280 Texans who died in the war.



MG08 machine gun at the Texas Military Forces Museum

2 BONHAM
TEXAS LAKES TRAIL REGION

Sam Rayburn State Historic Site in Bonham


Sam Rayburn

One of Texas' most well-known statesmen, Sam Rayburn served in the U.S. House of Representatives for 48 years, including 17 as speaker. "Mr. Sam" worked with eight presidential administrations, the first of which was Woodrow Wilson. After Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war against Germany on April 2, 1917, Rayburn voted in the affirmative four days later. Visit the **Sam Rayburn House State Historic Site**, a Texas Historical Commission property, which preserves his homestead, stories, original furnishings, and personal belongings.

3 BRACKETTVILLE
TEXAS PECOS TRAIL REGION

Fort Clark was established in 1852 at Las Moras Springs, a watering hole long utilized by Spanish explorers and American Indians. After the Indian Wars, it was almost closed, but became necessary because of Mexican Revolution border skirmishes. The industrialization of war during World War I caused death on a previously unimaginable scale and prompted the U.S. Army to strengthen its Medical Corps. Four hospital and ambulance companies served at Fort Clark. Today, you can dive into the history of the fort at the **Old Guardhouse Museum at Fort Clark Springs**.

4 CANYON
TEXAS PLAINS TRAIL REGION

One of the largest history museums in Texas, the **Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum** is housed in an impressive 1930s Art Deco building that is designated a State Antiquities Landmark. Inside, an expansive collection of artifacts on natural and cultural heritage includes several related to World War I. A display on Lt. William Younger, a local who fought in the war with the 129th Field Artillery Regiment alongside future president Harry Truman, features his cavalry boots, spurs, canteen, and cartridge belt. After the war, Lt. Younger returned home and became superintendent of schools in nearby Tulia, where the high school football field is named in his honor.

Texas State Cemetery in Austin

CEMETERIES

Across the Lone Star State there are cemeteries where heritage tourists, history buffs, and descendants can pay respect to veterans of World War I. In Austin, amongst the statesmen and legendary Texans buried at the Texas State Cemetery, are the graves of 27 men who served in the Great War. One was Henry Hutchings, an English immigrant who joined the Texas National Guard at age 20 in 1885. When the U.S. entered the war in 1917, he was serving as adjutant general of Texas. He resigned and organized the 71st Infantry Brigade, part of the 36th Infantry Division, known as the "Texas Division," which he led overseas during the war. His son, Maj. Edwin G. Hutchings, was also part of the 36th Division and was killed in action during the war.

Austin's Oakwood Cemetery contains the graves of two significant Texans in national politics during World War I (pg. 37): Thomas Watt Gregory and Albert S. Burleson. Gregory was U.S. attorney general in the Wilson administration from 1914–19, while Burleson was postmaster general from 1913–1921.

Another Oakwood Cemetery, this one in Huntsville, is best known as the final resting place of Sam Houston, the revolutionary general and first president of the Republic of Texas. But it is also the burial place of many other fascinating Texans, including John William Thomason, Jr. Born in Huntsville in 1893, Thomason was writing for the *Houston Chronicle* when the U.S. entered the First World War. He volunteered for the First Texas Battalion of the Marines, and ended up serving in all five major campaigns in Europe and receiving a Navy Cross for valor. After the war, he published the popular *Fix Bayonets!*, a firsthand account from the front lines that remains on the Marine Corps Commandants' Reading List.

The most decorated World War I Texas veteran is buried at Fort Bliss National Cemetery in El Paso. Born in a mining camp near Chihuahua City, Mexico, in 1896, Marcelino Serna moved to the U.S. in search of work in 1916. Despite being exempt due to his nationality, Serna chose to serve overseas in the U.S. Army. During the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, he volunteered to scout ahead of his unit and ended up tricking a German unit into thinking it was under attack by a much larger force. He singlehandedly killed 26 German soldiers and captured 24. Serna was one of few Hispanics awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, and he was also presented two French Croix de Guerre with palms and many other medals.

The Lone Star State is also the burial ground of foreign soldiers who died during World War I. In Fort Worth's Greenwood Memorial Park, there is a 20- by 34-foot plot acquired by the British government in 1924. Known as the Royal Flying Corps Cemetery, it contains the graves of 11 British and Canadian pilots who died during the Great War while training at the three airfields in Fort Worth, as well as one American veteran who died in 1975 but wanted to be buried with his former colleagues. They were among the thousands of British and Canadian pilots who helped train U.S. cadets at Texas airfields.

5 COLLEGE STATION
TEXAS BRAZOS TRAIL REGION

No college or university in the country contributed more to the war effort than the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, now known as Texas A&M. The faculty voted unanimously in 1917 to support the Army in any way possible, even offering the use of the entire campus as a military camp. It became a hub of teaching and training for a new kind of war—one based on technology, engineering, and machinery. The **Sam Houston Sanders Corps of Cadets Center** is a museum on campus that tells the story of A&M's famed Corps of Cadets. Also on campus, the **Cushing Library**'s archives provide significant insight into Texas A&M history and heritage, including photographs of troops training on campus during World War I. Southeast of town, the **Museum of the American G.I.** houses an impressive collection of restored military vehicles from World War I and other wars, including the only running 1918 French Renault FT-17 tank in North America.

Curtiss JN-4 at the Frontiers of Flight Museum at Love Field

6 DALLAS
TEXAS LAKES TRAIL REGION

During the Great War, North Texas became a center of military aviation and training. The Army built Love Field as a base for flight training. After it opened in October 1917, one of the most common planes pilots used to train was the Curtiss JN-4, nicknamed the "Jenny." Today, the **Frontiers of Flight Museum at Love Field** features a beautifully restored Curtiss Jenny that was used at the field in 1918. The museum features an extensive collection of aviation history, with an emphasis on the important role of the Dallas-Fort Worth area. At the **Hilton Anatole** hotel, an unusual artifact is on display in the sculpture garden: a giant propeller from the doomed passenger ship *Lusitania*. Her infamous sinking by a German submarine killed nearly 1,200 passengers and crew, and was a factor in the U.S. entry into the war. In nearby Irving, the **National Scouting Museum** has a permanent exhibit dedicated to Boy Scouts in World War I. Founded in 1910, the Boy Scouts contributed to the war effort, primarily by selling Liberty Bonds that helped the U.S. government finance the war.

Renault FT-17 tank at the Museum of the American G.I.

Randall County Courthouse lawn in Canyon

MEMORIALS

For many years after the Great War, communities across the nation sought to memorialize those who sacrificed so much. Countless monuments, statues, memorial parks, and plaques appeared in public spaces throughout the state, often featuring the names of local fallen soldiers.

One notable example is at the Foard County Courthouse in the North Texas town of Crowell. The memorial, created by renowned sculptor E.M. Viquesney, features two life-sized statues of U.S. servicemen on pedestals flanking a German artillery piece. At least 140 copies of of one of the statues, "Spirit of the American Doughboy," still exist in the country, including in these Texas cities: Canyon, Fort Worth, Groesbeck, Lufkin, New Braunfels, Sinton, Vernon, and Wichita Falls. The other statue in Crowell is the lesser-known "Spirit of the American Navy." Only seven of these sculptures are known to exist, and this is the lone example in Texas and the only one carved from stone.

Another well-known sculpture of an American doughboy is "Over the Top" by John Paulding. Often mistaken for "Spirit of the American Doughboy," both statues depict a U.S. solider with a raised right arm carrying a rifle in his left hand. Dozens of the Paulding cast statues exist across the country, including one at the restored Llano County Courthouse in Llano. Another Paulding statue of a doughboy entitled "Ready" can be seen in Ellwood Park in Amarillo.

While most memorials were placed in the 1920s and 1930s, the World War I monument at the State Capitol was erected in 1961. It honors veterans of the Great War, including the 198,000 Texans who served in the armed forces. Also in Austin, two University of Texas landmarks were constructed as memorials. The stadium now known as Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium was built in 1924 to commemorate Texas veterans of the war. Around the stadium, bronze plaques list the names of UT students who died in the war. A memorial on the north side of the stadium has the names of 5,280 Texans who died in the war, along with a statue representing democracy. The Littlefield Fountain was also built to commemorate UT students killed in service.

Some memorials honor specific individuals, such as the Vernon Castle monument in Benbrook. Castle was a British superstar of the early 20th century, a Broadway dancer who, along with his wife Irene, helped popularize the foxtrot and tango. At war's outbreak, Vernon returned to England to train with the Royal Flying Corps. The A-list celebrity flew more than 300 combat missions, shot down two German aircraft, and received the French Croix de Guerre for heroism. In 1918, he died in a plane crash during a routine training flight at Benbrook Field, where the U.S. Army and Royal Flying Corps engaged in joint training.

Everyone in Houston knows Memorial Park, the roughly 1,465-acre green space at the heart of the sprawling metro. But not everyone knows about Camp Logan, built in 1917 to accommodate 45,000 troops. Less than two years later, the facility closed and was converted into a park in 1924 to honor the soldiers who died during the war. It is commemorated today with an Official State of Texas Historical Marker, one of many World War I-themed Texas Historical Commission markers across the state.

TO SEE A MAP OF RELATED MARKERS IN TEXAS, VISIT THC.TEXAS.GOV/WW1MARKERS.

7 DEL RIO
TEXAS PECOS TRAIL REGION

Whitehead Memorial Museum

Camp Del Rio (aka Camp San Felipe) was first established in 1857 along San Felipe Creek as an outpost of Fort Clark in Brackettville, located about 35 miles to the east. Abandoned in the 1890s, it was re-established in the 1910s as Camp Michie to secure the border during the Mexican Revolution. Troops guarded railroad bridges in the area during World War I, an important task due to the movement of soldiers and equipment between the Pacific Coast and the Gulf of Mexico. At the **Whitehead Memorial Museum**, a historical complex that focuses on Val Verde County history, the War Room features artifacts and memorabilia from World War I.

8 DENISON
TEXAS LAKES TRAIL REGION

Shortly after the U.S. declaration of war against Germany, future president Dwight "Ike" Eisenhower was promoted to captain in May 1917. Much to his disappointment, he never saw combat in Europe. Rather, in places such as Leon Springs, he trained soldiers who would go on to lead overseas. But 25 years later, he would be the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe during World War II. A Texas Historical Commission property, **Eisenhower Birthplace State Historic Site** preserves the humble home where he was born in 1890. The two-story frame house is furnished with period antiques that depict the working class life of the Eisenhower family, while the visitors center contains exhibits that detail his many achievements.

Eisenhower Birthplace State Historic Site in Denison

9 EAGLE PASS
TEXAS PECOS TRAIL REGION

Fort Duncan was established in 1849 in the wake of the U.S.-Mexico War in order to reinforce a temporary post, Camp Eagle Pass, and protect U.S. settlers living along the border. In 1911, it became the setting for a world record that would usher in a new era in military aviation. Lt. Benjamin Foulois, a pilot who had flown a few times with Orville Wright, was sent to Texas—where he could fly year-round—and tasked with finding a use for planes in the Army. He and civilian pilot Phil Parmalee ended up flying more than 100 miles along the Rio Grande from Laredo to Fort Duncan—a two-hour flight that was the farthest anyone had ever flown at the time. It was during the Mexican Revolution, and the pilots monitored troop movements, making it the first time the U.S. Army used a plane for reconnaissance and proving a military use for planes. Today, the Fort Duncan headquarters houses the **Fort Duncan Museum**, which interprets the history of the fort and its relationship with Eagle Pass.

10 EDINBURG
TEXAS TROPICAL TRAIL REGION

The **Museum of South Texas History** offers a broad account of regional history, including exhibits on World War I militarization along the border and the Zimmermann Telegram. A display also features the war helmet of José de la Luz Sáenz, who wrote the only known memoir of a Mexican American soldier in the Great War. It remains a vivid account of the wartime contributions of Mexican American servicemen, as well as the prejudice they endured.

11 EL PASO
TEXAS MOUNTAIN TRAIL REGION

During the year leading up to the U.S. entry into World War I, Fort Bliss served as headquarters for the Punitive Expedition to capture Pancho Villa (pg. 14). The post and excursion were led by Gen. John J. Pershing, who would go on to serve as commander of the American Expeditionary Forces in Europe during World War I. The **First Armored Division and Fort Bliss Museum** features an exhibit on the Punitive Expedition. Prior to visiting the museum, contact one of the post's visitors centers for access. The **El Paso Museum of History** also has information on the Punitive Expedition, as well as World War I-era photographs on the museum's digital wall and occasional rotating World War I artifacts from its collection.

12 FORT WORTH
TEXAS LAKES TRAIL REGION

Pilot uniforms at the Fort Worth Aviation Museum

During World War I, Fort Worth was at the forefront of the military aviation evolution. Newly built airfields such as Barron Field were used to train large numbers of U.S. pilots, allowing the U.S. to quickly catch up to the air power of European countries. A deal was struck by the U.S. with its British and Canadian allies: they could use the excellent training airfields in Texas, and in return, they would train American pilots for combat. The **Fort Worth Aviation Museum** provides a thrilling and immersive experience for visitors with robust exhibits on the history of North Texas aviation and a substantial collection of operational aircraft. Located within **Greenwood Memorial Park**, the Royal Flying Corps Cemetery is a small plot acquired by the British government in 1924 for the reinterment of Britons and Canadians who had died during training and been buried at three airfields in Fort Worth.

Cowtown is perhaps best known for the **Fort Worth Stockyards**, one of the largest livestock markets in the country. Activity increased during the Great War, when horses and mules were needed in great supply by European armies. During the war, Fort Worth became the largest equine market in the world.

13 FREDERICKSBURG
TEXAS HILL COUNTRY TRAIL REGION

Nimitz statue at the National Museum of the Pacific War

Fredericksburg's most famous son—Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander of the Pacific War Fleet in World War II—came from humble beginnings. His grandfather, Charles Nimitz, immigrated to the U.S. from Germany in 1844 and was a founder of Fredericksburg. When anti-German prejudice flared up during World War I, Chester provided a counterpoint—he served in the Navy Submarine Force and was a rising star in the U.S. military. Today, Chester Nimitz' remarkable career is recounted at the **National Museum of the Pacific War**, a Texas Historical Commission state historic site.

14 GALVESTON
TEXAS INDEPENDENCE TRAIL REGION

USS Selma

The discovery of oil in Texas shortly before World War I made the Gulf Coast and the port of Houston a strategic area in need of a strong defense. Fort Crockett was the headquarters of the Coast Defenses of Galveston, which also included the nearby Fort San Jacinto and Fort Travis. Their artillery and battery-mounted guns guarded cargo ships leaving and entering Galveston Bay and the Houston Ship Channel during the war. Among other maritime topics, the **Texas Seaport Museum** shares the history of seaborne commerce and offers harbor sightseeing tours that can take you up close to the remains of the World War I-era tanker, the *SS Selma*. Caused by wartime demands for arms production, steel shortages led to the production of experimental concrete cargo tankers such as the *SS Selma*. Though she never saw battle, the *SS Selma* filled an important role in cargo transport. After an accident in Mexico, she was intentionally sunk at her current location in Galveston Bay in 1922. Her remains are also visible at the end of the pier at **Seawolf Park**, where interpretive panels within the park's museum recount her story.

15 HILLSBORO
TEXAS LAKES TRAIL REGION

Hill College's **Texas Heritage Museum** focuses on wartime history, with a remarkable collection that includes personal stories of native Texans at war and how those experiences have influenced the way we live today. The Weapons Gallery features a riveting collection of large armaments, including many from World War I.

16 HOUSTON
TEXAS INDEPENDENCE TRAIL REGION

USS Texas

Right in the heart of Houston is the roughly 1,465-acre **Memorial Park**, featuring more than 30 miles of hiking and biking trails, an 18-hole public golf course, sports and fitness facilities, and more. During World War I, this land was occupied by Camp Logan, which trained 45,000 troops. The park was created in 1924 in honor of the soldiers who died in the Great War. The **Buffalo Soldiers National Museum** is dedicated to telling the incredible, and often difficult, story of African Americans in the U.S. Armed Forces. More than 370,000 African Americans served in the U.S. Army during the Great War. In southeast Houston, Ellington Field remains one of the very few World War I air training bases that is still operational, with current use by military, commercial, and NASA aircraft. Just outside its gates, the **Lone Star Flight Museum** presents an extensive collection of fully operational military aircraft, the Texas Aviation Hall of Fame, and a gallery that includes interpretation about World War I. With a focus on the nautical history and marine industry of Houston and the Texas Gulf Coast, the Houston Ship Channel is a main feature of the **Houston Maritime Museum**. Opened in 1914 at the onset of World War I, the ship channel quickly became a valuable military asset because it enabled the easy transport of Texas oil to European armies. Located along the ship channel in nearby La Porte, **Battleship Texas** is the world's oldest surviving "dreadnought," a powerful battleship class of the World War I era. After more than 34 years of service, including action during both world wars, the *USS Texas* became the nation's first memorial battleship in 1948. It was later designated a National Historic Landmark.

17 KINGSBURY
TEXAS INDEPENDENCE TRAIL REGION

Indian military motorcycle at the Pioneer Flight Museum

Located between Luling and Seguin, the **Pioneer Flight Museum** is home to a remarkable collection of historic aircraft and motorized vehicles, many of which date back to the Great War. As a living history museum, many of the airplanes and vehicles have been restored or reconstructed and are kept in working order. In 2017, a World War I-era hangar from San Antonio's Fort Sam Houston was being reconstructed on site to serve as the main museum building.

18 PARIS
TEXAS LAKES TRAIL REGION

Sam Bell Maxey House State Historic Site is a Texas Historical Commission property that was the home of legendary Texan Sam Bell Maxey. Less well-known are the contributions of his great-nephew, Sam Bell Maxey Long, who also lived in the house. Too old to fight when World War I broke out, Sam Long passionately supported American troops by raising money for the local division of the American Red Cross, of which he became chairman. He implored citizens to do their part, telling them to "give to the limit of your giving."

19 SAN ANTONIO

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE AND HILL COUNTRY TRAIL REGIONS

One of many active military facilities in San Antonio, Fort Sam Houston was established in 1845 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1975. The post features two museums: the **Fort Sam Houston Museum** focuses on the history of the post—which was a training facility during World War I—while the **U.S. Army Medical Department Museum** tells the story of the Army Medical Corps. Both feature interpretation and artifacts related to the Great War. Also on post is the National Register-listed **Pershing House**, which was constructed in 1881 to house the Commanding General of the post. It was renamed to honor Gen. John J. Pershing, the highest-ranking occupant of the house and leader of the American Expeditionary Forces during the First World War. Another notable structure on post is the **Gift Chapel**, the site of the World War I court martial following the Houston Riot of 1917 (pg. 25). Access to the post is limited; contact one of the museums in advance about visitation. Another National Historic Landmark is the massive **Hangar 9** at Brooks City-Base, believed to be the only surviving wooden airplane hangar from World War I in its original location.

Gift Chapel

Hangar 9

It was hastily constructed in January 1918 to house the fleet of Curtiss JN-4s ("Jennys"), and Brooks Field was officially established a month later. At Lackland Air Force Base, another active military installation, the **USAF Airman Heritage Museum** has a gallery on U.S. military aviation during World War I that includes an original Curtiss "Jenny." The museum also tells the story of Kelly Field No. 1, Kelly Field No. 2 (World War I airfields that eventually became part of Lackland) and Kelly Field No. 5 (now Brooks City-Base). Visit the museum by presenting a driver license and proof of vehicle insurance at a base visitors center. The **Texas Air Museum at Stinson Field** maintains a significant collection of aircraft that illustrate changes in aviation technology, as well as displays on World War I and field namesake Katherine Stinson. Nicknamed the "Flying Schoolgirl," Stinson was one of the great pioneers in aviation history. The fourth woman to ever earn a pilot license, she flew in stunt planes across the world. During World War I, she volunteered as a pilot, but her application was rejected because she was a woman. Stinson then served as an ambulance driver in France until the war's end.

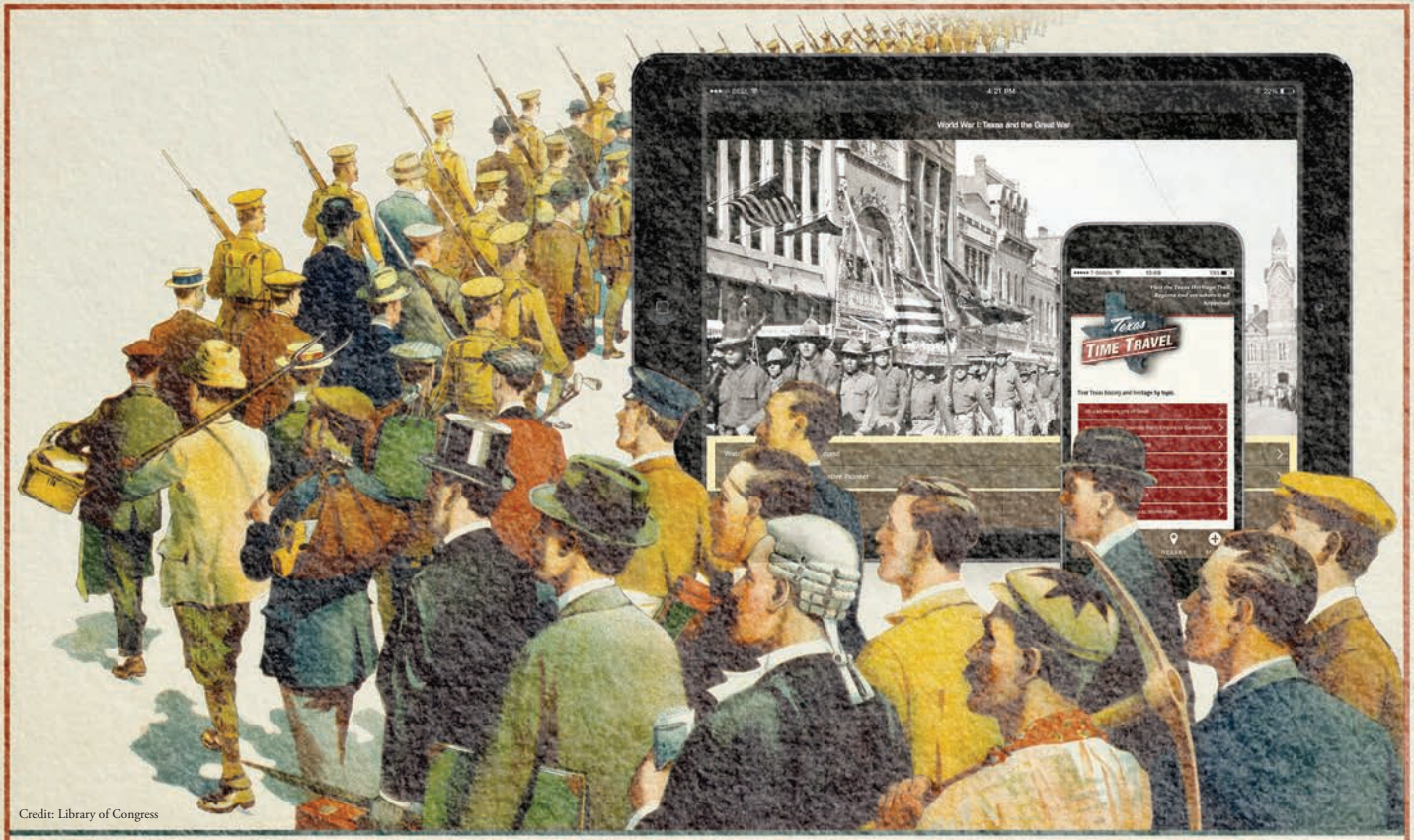
Katherine Stinson
Credit: Library of Congress

20 WICHITA FALLS

TEXAS LAKES TRAIL REGION

Museum of North Texas History

More than 500 U.S. Army pilots received their wings at Call Field during the Great War. Today, little remains of that airfield, which is now the site of Wichita Falls Regional Airport. But its story lives on at the **Museum of North Texas History**, which operates the Jenny to Jet Exhibit at the airport. That exhibit includes a Curtiss JN4-D ("Jenny"), motorized vehicles, World War I uniforms, and interpretation about the history of Call Field. At the museum's second location downtown, regional history is the focus, including a military collection with artifacts and memorabilia from World War I.



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