



## TEXAS AND TEXANS IN WORLD WAR I

The last veteran of World War I is dead. No first-hand memories remain to tell the story. All that is left is history to be examined and explained by historians. All will agree Texas played a large part in America's role in World War I. Almost one million Texans registered for the draft and nearly two hundred thousand served in the military. Of these, more than five thousand died in service. 450 Texas women served as nurses. Several Texas cities doubled or even tripled their populations during the war.

San Antonio and Fort Worth cemented their status as nationally important centers for aviation. Prior to entering the war, there were a handful of officers, men, and aircraft mostly unfit for combat. Congress appropriated a mind boggling \$640 million for aviation (\$1.1 billion in today's dollars). By 1918, the Air Service had constructed twenty-eight fields with almost half in Texas because of the vast space, amenable climate, and welcoming municipalities, such as Fort Worth.

In addition to those army bases already in the state, thousands of army troops trained at newly-constructed mobilization camps at Waco (Camp MacArthur), Houston (Camp Logan), San Antonio (Camp Travis), and Fort Worth (Camp Bowie).

The Fort Worth Stockyards set activity records during the war years that stood for decades. It became the largest horse and mule market in the world as buyers from foreign countries bought animals here. Oil discoveries in the state were tapped during the war, but as the war came to a close the industry exploded with activity. Following the War, many soldiers and airmen who trained in Texas relocated their families to the Lone Star State.

World War I had an enduring impact on the state that can be seen today. At the time, the population increases, numerous new air fields and military bases all foretold of a much more complex economy than the agricultural-based life seen before the war. The war brought an end to kings, kaisers, and czars and increased our belief in technology. The war indeed turned many cowboys into doughboys and opened their eyes to the world around them.

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