

Captain Truman

Background:

Since Harry could not afford to go to college, he tried to enlist in the United States Military Academy at West Point. However, West Point rejected him because of his poor eyesight. In 1905, Harry successfully enlisted in the Missouri National Guard by secretly memorizing the eye chart. In July 1918, the Army promoted him to the rank of Captain and assigned him to lead Battery D of the 129th Field Artillery, 35th Division. Battery D was an artillery unit responsible for transporting, aiming, and firing field cannons. The soldiers of Battery D were very rowdy and did not like to listen to their superiors. Despite this, Harry earned their trust and successfully led his men through several battles in France. None of the soldiers under Harry's command died in combat.

Standard:

5.TS.7.A.b Evaluate and use artifacts to share information on social studies' topics. (e.g. building structures and materials, works of art representative of cultures, fossils, pottery, tools, clothing, and musical instruments)

Materials Needed:

Example Photographs of Truman's trunk and contents
Your Army Trunk Worksheet
Pencil

Vocabulary:

Artillery- big, heavy guns placed behind the front line to shoot long distances
Field cannon- smaller, movable artillery pieces used closer to the front lines of combat, rather than near the back
World War I- a global war that started in Europe in July 1914 and lasted until November 1918

Procedure:

1. Discuss background information with the class
2. Define *field cannon* and *World War I*
3. Observe/discuss Harry's army trunk and its contents
4. Brainstorm the kinds of things they would bring with them if they joined the army
5. Students list/draw contents of their own army trunk

Assessment: Students will be able to use the information they learned from the artifacts and the time period to complete their own charts with a soldier's needs.

Captain Truman's Army Trunk

When the Army sent Harry to France to fight in World War I in 1918, Harry could only bring a few things with him. Most of his belongings had to fit in his personal trunk shown below. Some examples of things Harry brought with him are also shown below.



Personal Items

Harry's girlfriend and future wife, Bess Wallace, gave him this picture when he left for France. He always carried it with him.

Entertainment



These cards were found in Harry's trunk. Like many other soldiers, Harry used cards to play games like poker to help pass the time.

Hygiene and Personal Care



Due to Harry's poor eyesight, Harry started wearing glasses when he was very young. When the Army sent him to France, he brought many extra pairs with him.

Job Related



Part of Harry's job was to plan and coordinate artillery strikes. The tools in this drafting set allowed him to plan firing locations on a map.



Harry used these field glasses to spot enemy movements. He then used that information to help plan his next move.

Your Army Trunk

The organizer below is your army trunk. Either draw or list the things *you* would bring to France if you were in the Army like Harry. Remember, the year is 1918!

Personal Items	Entertainment	Hygiene and Personal Care	Job Related