

## Northeast Oklahoma Military Loop – Five-Day Itinerary

From Civil War battles to 19th-century army posts to World War II airplane production, northeastern Oklahoma has a long and varied military history. This tour takes travelers to some unique historical sites, fascinating museums and other military attractions around the area. Along the way, they'll see some memorable sights, like a World War II submarine now docked on dry land and one of the world's largest weapons collections.

### Day 1

The tour begins at the **Tulsa Air and Space Museum**. With full-size fighter jets on display and flight simulators to try, there's plenty to do at this museum. You'll learn about the vital role the city played in World War II, serving as a home for pilot training and aircraft manufacturing. You'll also see an exhibit on the Oklahomans who survived the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor. Next, it's on to Tulsa's **Woody Guthrie Center**, which is dedicated to celebrating the life and legacy of legendary folk singer Woody Guthrie. The Oklahoma native's powerful social commentary and protest music remain popular, with his most well-known work, "This Land Is Your Land," even earning a spot in Lady Gaga's 2017 Super Bowl halftime show. At the center, you can listen to Guthrie's songs, view his handwritten lyrics and follow his travels across America in an interactive touchscreen exhibit. Guthrie served in the Merchant Marine and the Army during World War II, and among the center's many treasures is a well-worn fiddle that he carried with him on his military travels. The third stop of the day is the **Tulsa Historical Society & Museum**. This museum focuses on the history of Tulsa and Tulsa County, and the constantly changing exhibits touch on topics like the area's military, transportation and architectural history. The day's final destination is the **Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art**. This stunning building's showpieces are three stained glass windows — including a Tiffany work — that grace the lobby, but there's so much more to see. The museum's Holocaust exhibit is both chilling and fascinating, with artifacts from Jewish refugees and from Oklahoma veterans who took part in liberating the concentration camps. Visitors will see Nazi propaganda and the Stars of David that the Jewish people were made to wear. Also on display is a Torah scroll from Czechoslovakia that was one of many religious objects sent to Prague for safe-keeping when the country was occupied by Nazis.

After dinner at one of Tulsa's many delicious restaurants, you'll head to your hotel for the night.

### Day 2

The first stop of the day will be the **Military History Center** in Broken Arrow. From uniforms and helmets to protective masks and weapons, this 6,000-square-foot building contains a fascinating assortment of military memorabilia, much of it donated by Oklahomans. The center is arranged in chronological order starting with the Revolutionary War and going up through the war in Afghanistan. Then you'll head southeast to Muskogee and the **U.S.S. Batfish & War Memorial Park**. You'll go inside the U.S.S. Batfish, a World War II submarine that now rests on dry land, and walk the park to see cannons, a self-propelled Howitzer and other military paraphernalia. There's also a 3,000-square-foot museum where you can learn more about the U.S.S. Batfish and other parts of military history. Then you'll move on to the **Fort Gibson Historic Site & Interpretive Center**. Established in 1824 to help facilitate relations between the United States and Native Americans, Fort Gibson was the first army post in Indian Territory, and the famed buffalo soldiers later served there. Today, visitors can view historic buildings and learn about the fort at the museum and visitors center. Nearby is the **Fort Gibson National Cemetery**, established as a national cemetery in 1868. Among the cemetery's burials are more than 2,300 unknown graves and at least one known veteran of every war the United States has fought in from the War of 1812 on. Two World War II Medal of Honor winners, Jack C. Montgomery and John Reese, are buried there, along with Seminole chief Billy Bowlegs and Talihina Rogers, wife of legendary Texas politician and soldier Sam Houston. If time allows, you can then head over to Tahlequah to the **Cherokee National Prison Museum** and **Cherokee National Supreme Court Museum**. At these two historic buildings, both built in the 1800s, you can see tribal artifacts and learn about the Cherokee Nation's history and its judicial system.

Then you'll head north to Claremore to eat and check in to your hotel for the night. For dinner, you might want to try **Hammett House Restaurant**, a Claremore institution known for its down-home cooking. Hammett House's massive and delicious pies are the stuff of

legend. Some of the beautifully meringued desserts weigh nearly 10 pounds.

### Day 3

The tour's third day starts off at the **J.M. Davis Arms & Historical Museum** in Claremore. Many military weapons and paraphernalia — including some from the Revolutionary War — are on display at the museum, which bills itself as the largest privately owned arms museum in the world. Make sure to check out the World War I exhibit, which contains a large collection of posters, guns and helmets from the era, and the gallery of guns owned by famous outlaws like Jesse James and Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd. Next up is the nearby **Oklahoma Military Academy Museum**. Located on the grounds of Rogers State University, the museum tells the story of the academy that operated in Claremore from 1919 to 1971 and was known as the West Point of the Southwest. You'll see photos and memorabilia from some of the 10,000-plus men who went through the academy and visit the beautiful granite memorial out front that honors former students killed in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Then you'll head out to Big Cabin to the **Cabin Creek Civil War Battle Site**. This peaceful spot was the site of two Civil War battles, and monuments and signage tell the story of those conflicts. You'll then stop at the **Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery** in Miami. The GAR began as a fraternal organization of Union soldiers who were Civil War veterans, but the still-active cemetery is open to everyone. Among the more than 20,000 buried there since 1892 are Union and Confederate soldiers along with soldiers from many other wars. You can also see the graves of 15 members of the British Royal Air Force killed while training nearby for World War II. Then you'll wrap up the day's adventures at Miami's **Coleman Theatre**, a stunning attraction that opened in 1929 as a vaudeville theater. Its Spanish Mission Revival style exterior and elegant Louis XV interior still wow visitors, as does the 2,000-pound chandelier and original Wurlitzer pipe organ.

You'll then head west to Bartlesville, where you'll dine at one of the city's great local restaurants and then check into a hotel for the night. For dinner, you might want to try **Dink's Pit Bar-B-Que**. For more than 30 years, locals have been heading to Dink's for delicious, hickory-smoked brisket and a plate of perfectly crispy onion strings.

### Day 4

Day 4 begins with a trip to Bartlesville's **Phillips Petroleum Company Museum**. An early producer of aviation fuels, Phillips Petroleum Company played a significant role in World War II by developing a fuel that allowed bombers to fly higher and farther. At the museum, you can watch a nine-minute video on the company's history and view vintage photos and artifacts. Then it's on to the **Woolaroc Museum & Wildlife Preserve**. This attraction southwest of Bartlesville features one of the world's finest displays of Colt firearms, including pistols used during the Civil War. It is also home to a wide-ranging collection of Western and Native American art along with 3,700 acres of roaming animals, including bison, elk, llama and water buffalo. The next stop is Pawhuska, where you'll explore the **Osage Nation Museum**, the oldest tribally owned museum in the United States. There, you'll view the museum's large collection of photos, artifacts and artwork. A display dedicated to Osage warfare features many fascinating items, including a replica of the U.S.S. Osage. The day's final stop is **War Memorial Park** in Ponca City to see the city's POW/MIA memorial. This beautiful circular structure was designed to mimic the design of the POW bracelets created during the Vietnam War era to ensure that prisoners of war would not be forgotten.

You'll then return to Ponca City for dinner and a night at one of the city's hotels. For dinner, you might want to try **Rusty Barrell Supper Club**, a delicious steakhouse where the meat is cooked on an open grill in the middle of the dining room.

### Day 5

The tour's final day starts off with a stop at **Ponca Military Academy Memorial Park**, where you'll learn about the Ponca Military Academy. Established in 1940, the school educated young men for 34 years. Today, the site has the school's original flagpole, a replica of the campus building and "Serving Pride," a commissioned sculpture that depicts a cadet helping a younger cadet with his tie. Then, it's on to **Standing Bear Park, Museum & Education Center**, where you'll see a 22-foot statue of Standing Bear, the Ponca chief whose lawsuit after an 1879 arrest was an early milestone in the battle for American Indian rights. Inside the museum, you can learn more about the history of six area tribes and see tribal artifacts and art. Next you'll tour the **Marland Mansion & Estate**, the opulent 1920s-era home of oilman and Oklahoma governor E.W.

Marland. If time allows, you can also make a stop at the **Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History**. The Sheerar Museum focuses on the history of the city of Stillwater. Among the displays are the military uniform and sword of Robert Lowery, one of the town's founders, and photos and information on Veterans Village, a student housing complex built by Oklahoma State University (then known as Oklahoma A&M) to attract World War II veterans choosing to attend college because of the GI

Bill. If time allows, you can head out to the **Chandler Route 66 Interpretive Center**. The center is housed in the historic Chandler Armory, a New Deal project that long served as home to the Oklahoma National Guard. Its exhibits take travelers on a nostalgic trip down the Mother Road, highlighting the economic and social life that Route 66 breathed into communities across America.

**Military Loop - Northeast**

**Day 1**

10:00am Tulsa Air and Space Museum – Tulsa  
 12:00pm Woody Guthrie Center – Tulsa  
 2:15pm Tulsa Historical Society – Tulsa  
 4:00pm Sherwin Miller Museum – Tulsa  
 Overnight Tulsa

**Day 2**

10:00am Military History Center – Broken Arrow  
 12:00pm USS Batfish – Muskogee  
 1:30pm Fort Gibson – Ft Gibson  
 Fort Gibson National Cemetery  
 Cherokee National Prison Museum – Tahlequah  
 4:15pm Cherokee National Supreme Court Museum – Tahlequah  
 (Must make arrangements with Prison and Supreme Court after hours)  
 Overnight Claremore

**Day 3**

9:00am JM Davis Arms and Historical Museum – Claremore  
 (Group can make arrangements to visit before 10:00am open)  
 10:30am Oklahoma Military Academy Museum – Claremore  
  
 1:00pm Cabin Creek Battlefield – Big Cabin  
 2:15pm Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery – Miami  
 4:00pm Coleman Theater – Miami  
 Overnight in Bartlesville

**Day 4**

10:00am Phillips Petroleum Museum – Bartlesville  
 11:45am Woolaroc – Bartlesville  
 2:45pm Osage national Museum – Pawhuska  
 5:00pm War Memorial Park – Ponca City  
 Overnight in Ponca City

**Day 5**

9:00am Ponca Military Academy – Ponca City  
 10:00am Standing Bear Park, Museum and Education Center – Ponca City  
 11:30am Marland Mansion (Lunch) – Ponca City  
 Optional Sheerar Museum – Stillwater (Optional)  
 Optional Route 66 Interpretive Center – Chandler (Optional)