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## Office of Tribal Government Relations Newsletter ~ November/December 2013

Welcome from the VA OTGR Director, Stephanie Birdwell



Greetings, Happy New Year and welcome to the November/December special 'double issue' edition of our VA Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR) National Monthly Newsletter.

It has been eventful fall and we are preparing for a busy, informative and collaborative 2014 focused on working with tribal leaders to serve Indian Country's Veterans. I'll take a few moments here to reflect on the last months of 2013. During November we commemorated Native American Heritage Month and Veterans Day which coincided with the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual White House Tribal Nations Conference. VA Secretary Eric Shinseki addressed tribal leaders during the conference and offered tribal leaders with a briefing of VA's positive efforts serving Veterans during the past year while also sharing examples of VA's emphasis on tribal communities. Secretary Shinseki noted that to date, VA has reimbursed IHS and Tribal Health Programs \$1.8 million for direct care provided to American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans; and in 2014 VA is looking to do much more. If your tribe is interested in initiating discussions about the reimbursement agreement process, email [Tribal.Agreements@va.gov](mailto:Tribal.Agreements@va.gov) and a VA representative will be in contact to schedule a briefing with your tribal leadership and tribal representatives.

Congress recognized American Indian Code Talkers from over 30 tribes for their contributions through service to our country with Congressional Medals during a ceremony held at the Capitol on November 20.

In December, Dr. Robert Petzel, VA's Undersecretary for Health, met with the National Indian Health Board's (NIHB) Board leadership. Dr. Petzel's presentation focused on continuing a positive rapport with tribal officials and tribal health providers on matters pertaining to Veterans who live in tribal communities. We're looking forward to partnering once again with NIHB to sponsor a Veterans Track during the NIHB Annual Consumer Conference in September, which will be held in the Southwest. Over to the west, our Western Region OTGR Specialist Terry Bentley participated in the Veterans Day Parade with her family on Veterans Day, which was held in downtown Roseburg, Oregon. Coming up January 22, 2014, Terry and Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 20 staff will be presenting an update on activities related to the VA-Tribal Health Program Reimbursement Agreements to the Northwest Portland Indian Area Health Board.

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In December, Central Region OTGR Specialist Peter Vicaire traveled to Washington, D.C. to present and participate in a Veterans Treatment Court Conference, described as “The nation’s first conference dedicated to Veterans Treatment Courts and justice-involved veterans.” Peter teamed up with the VAMC Palo Alto’s Veteran Justice Outreach Worker Kristi Woodard (Colville) and HHS Presidential Management Fellow (and developer of the VA Resource Guide for Tribal Justice Systems) Rachel Ryan in presenting “Reaching Out to Indian Country and Veterans Treatment Courts.” Their presentation covered: (1) History and jurisdiction of tribal courts, tribal sentencing limits, tribal jails; (2) Challenges and opportunities in Implementing Veteran Treatment Courts in Tribal Courts; (3) Cultural components of working with justice-involved American Indian Veterans in tribal and non-tribal courts.

We are also pleased to share that the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and the VA signed an MOU to make the Native American Direct Loan (NADL) mortgage product available for Veterans at St. Regis Mohawk. VA’s Director of Loan Guaranty, Mike Frueh and Peter Vicaire traveled to New York to celebrate the signing of the MOU at the American Legion Post 1479 in Akwesasne. Chief Ron LaFrance signed the MOU on behalf of the tribe. If you are a Veteran living in Indian Country who is interested in the NADL product or if you are a tribal leader or service provider who would like to learn more about this product, an informative NADL webcast can be found at [www.va.gov/tribalgovernment](http://www.va.gov/tribalgovernment) located on the home page. If you have additional questions or would like to pursue a more thorough briefing on this and other partnership opportunities with the VA, please email us at [www.tribalconsultation@va.gov](mailto:www.tribalconsultation@va.gov).

Looking ahead to 2014, in the Southern Plains Region, Mary Culley and VBA Loan Guaranty Specialist (Houston Regional Office) Laura Rodriguez will present to the Southern Plains Indian Housing Authority Training Conference on January 15 in Norman, Oklahoma; specifically discussing the NADL program. The Southern Plains Region continues to assist its Veteran population by bringing the VA to the tribal communities in the way of coordinating inter-tribal community Veterans Benefit Enrollment Fairs. The town of Holdenville, Oklahoma will be the next stop in our joint outreach efforts as we work with two tribal nations within the Southern Plains. The Veterans Benefit Enrollment Fair is scheduled for February 21, 2014. Contact Mary Culley for more information about this event.

We are planning to sponsor 5 Veterans Training Summits held at various locations across the U.S. in 2014 (a schedule will be available in our upcoming January newsletter). Right now, a combined Western/Central Region Training Summit will be held April 9-10 in Lewiston, ID at the Clearwater River Casino. The meeting venue is accepting hotel reservations, so book early as spaces will fill up. The event will be hosted by the Nez Perce Tribe and Confederated Tribes of Coeur d’Alene. Please contact Peter and Terry directly for more information.

We hope you find this special double issue newsletter edition informative and as always, we look forward to receiving your feedback via phone call or email.

Warm Regards and Happy Reading – Stephanie





NavyTimes

## Congress Honors American Indian Code Talkers

For the original **Navy Times** article (and 8 pictures) [click here](#).

For decades, the wartime service of 96-year-old Edmond Harjo and other American Indian “code talkers” was something that wasn’t even officially acknowledged, let alone publicly recognized. But on Wednesday [November 20<sup>th</sup>] Harjo sat in the Capitol’s Emancipation Hall soaking in a standing ovation from hundreds of people — after an introduction from House Speaker John Boehner.

Harjo, a member of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, is one of the last surviving members of a group of American Indians who used their native language to outwit the enemy and protect U.S. battlefield communications during World Wars I and II. In a ceremony Wednesday, congressional leaders formally awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to American Indians known as code talkers honoring the service of 33 tribes.

From his seat, Lyle Cook watched the applause for Harjo and a procession of speeches proudly, with a lump in his throat. Cook is a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux in South Dakota. He said all he could think about were members of his tribe who served in World Wars I and II but didn’t live to receive the formal recognition that has been more than 70 years in coming. “It is wonderful, but it is a bittersweet moment,” said Cook, 52, an Army veteran. “I wish they were here.”

Code talkers were represented Wednesday by tribal delegations, many in traditional dress, who packed Emancipation Hall. They represented 33 tribes from states including Arizona, Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Members of American Indian tribes heroically exchanged sensitive military information by speaking to each other in their native tongues on the battlefield, eluding enemies trying to break U.S. military codes and dramatically speeding up the military’s ability to communicate.

Rep. Ron Kind, D-Wis., said the critical World War II battle of Iwo Jima would have been a far longer, and bloodier, engagement had it not been for the composed work of American Indians during the conflict. “Over 800 battle field communications went out with perfect accuracy,” Kind said of Iwo Jima. “It led to a quicker end to that conflict and it saved lives.”

Their distinctive work during both world wars went unrecognized for decades in part because the military, which wanted to maintain its advantage, only declassified the program in 1968. Since then, formal recognition of the program’s importance has come slowly. Congress awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to Navajo code talkers in 2000, then recognized others in 2008. But lawmakers from



NavyTimes

South Dakota, Oklahoma and other states have long pressed for more tribes to be formally recognized for their wartime contributions.

Speaking Wednesday, Sen. Tim Johnson, D-S.D., said he'd spent more than 10 years pursuing more acknowledgment and was grateful to finally bring attention to groups that have studiously avoided publicity. "These men did not seek the limelight," Johnson said. "And there is no question that their contributions were unparalleled."

One by one on Wednesday, members of Congress came to the stage to praise the bravery of the code talkers, some as young as 15 years old, who volunteered to serve on battlefields in Europe and Asia. They credited them with saving thousands of lives, and praised their abiding sense of patriotism. Rep. Tom Cole, R-Wis., said the code talkers served bravely, behind enemy lines, even though they were "often barred from full participation in American life." "They saved lives and they won battles," said Cole, himself a member of the Chickasaw Nation.

Boehner told the story of two American Indians, serving in the European theater, who did not know each other. They began to speak a tribal language to each other and their commanding officer overheard them. "He immediately put them to work on opposite ends of a radio," Boehner said. As speakers finished their remarks, Boehner called representatives of the 33 tribes to the stage to receive their medals. The crowd delivered a thunderous standing ovation. For Cook, of the Cheyenne River Sioux, it was a moment to savor. "This is our land," Cook said. "We would always serve to protect our country."



Edmund Harjo, one of the last surviving code talkers of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, holds his Congressional Gold Medal during a ceremony on Capitol Hill honoring 25 Native American tribes who received the medal in recognition of the dedication and valor of the code talkers and their service to the U.S. armed forces during WWI and WWII. "Code talkers" refers to those Native Americans who used their tribal languages as a means of secret communication during the war.



## U.S. Military Changes Role of Women in Combat: Native American Women Warriors in History

Here's an interesting article from Roy Price, a member of the American Indian Veterans Association (AIVA) in southern California.

Leon Panetta, the U.S. Secretary for Defense, January 2013, announced that the ban on women undertaking combat roles in the U.S. military, specifically the infantry and armor regiments, will be lifted. This isn't a 'shoot from the hip' decision with no considered thought; it is a debate that has been circling for decades. There is now, more than ever, sufficient evidence to indicate that certain women have the right qualifications, as well as the physical and psychological attributes, to operate with the same effectiveness as their male counterparts in combat roles. The question should not reside upon gender, but the ability to get the job done. We all have strengths and weaknesses.



**Native American Women Warriors**

<https://www.facebook.com/NativeAmericanWomenWarriors>

### **Patriotic Native American Warriors**

American Indians have participated with distinction in United States military actions for more than 200 years. Sadly, very little is known about the contributions of Native American women to the United States military. Historians have only recently rediscovered and verified the actions of an Oneida woman, Tyonajanegen, who fought on the side of the United States at the Battle of Oriskany, in New York, in 1777. In a bloody, six hour enemy engagement, she fought by her husband's side on horseback. When her husband became wounded in the wrist she continued to reload his gun so he might continue to fight. Tyonajanegen, also armed with a pistol, used her weapon against the enemy.

The story of Sacajawea, the Shoshone woman who kept the Lewis and Clark expedition of November 1804 is well known. She helped save the expedition



several times from starvation, disaster and misdirection thanks to her negotiating skills, knowledge in medicinal herbs and knowledge of the terrain. Much of what is common knowledge is romantic history, however. Sacajawea is best remembered as a guide across the Northern Plains. Her people, the Lemhi Shoshone, or Snake People, spent much of the year traveling in small groups. From about 1700, the Shoshone had horses, probably pintos and Appaloosas acquired from the Nez Perce. In the fall of 1800, when Sacagawea was around 10 years old, her group was camped near the three forks of the Missouri River. Suddenly, a band of Hidatsa (also called Minataree) attacked. The Shoshone bows and arrows were useless against the Hidatsa's rifles. Sacagawea and others were captured and taken back to the Hidatsa villages near present-day Stanton, North Dakota. In historical reality, she served as an interpreter for members of the intelligence gathering expedition. In command but they were unfamiliar with any Indian languages. "Bird Woman's" service is described in the journals kept by Army Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark during the Military expedition in preparation for the future 'manifest destiny' invasion.

In her book, Life among the Paiutes, Sarah Winnemucca, describes how the women of her tribe took part in war, giving, as an example, her sister-in-law. "One splendid woman that my brother Lee married after his first wife died, went out into the battle-field after her uncle was killed, and went into the front ranks and cheered the men on. Her uncle's horse was dressed in a splendid robe made of eagles' feathers and she snatched it off and swung it in the face of the enemy, "... and she said she took her uncle's place, as brave as any of the men."

Minnie Hollow Wood, Sioux and is said to be at one time the only woman of her tribe so entitled to wear a Eagle feather bonnet. This came from taking part in combat against the U.S. Calvary at the Little Big Horn battle.



**Minnie Hollow Wood and husband Hollow Wood**  
(1927 image)



### **Arizona Oodham Military Service:**

From earliest European contact the Oodham have always been described as generous people. They sheltered the Pee Posh (or Maricopa Indians) who fled attack by hostile tribes, and who also became part of the Gila River community. Anyone who followed west along the Gila River, the main southern route to the Pacific, encountered these peaceful and productive traders who gave hospitality to travelers for hundreds of years. "Bread is to eat, not to sell. Take what you want," they told Kit Carson in 1846.

One of the first accurate accounts of an Indian and American military alliance is recounted in the Pima calendar sticks which relate that the Pima and Maricopa joined with white soldiers in a campaign against the Apaches under White Hat, in 1856 or 1857. As long as whites were just passing through, the protection (Pima and Maricopa) provided for their supply trains was sufficient. Pima and Maricopa fulfilled this need with regular punitive raids against the Apaches several times a year, keeping them away from Pima lands but stopping short of attacking their enemies' mountain rancherías (village-camps). The Oodham warriors were there to defend the people when the US military left Arizona in 1861 to fight in the US civil war. The Oodham (Pima) were the only armed force to defend the peaceful settlements from the Apache raids in the Arizona territory.

In 1865 and 1866, Pima and Maricopa and Hispanic soldiers served in the first USA Arizona Volunteer Infantry. Arizona Governor Goodwin appointed Thomas Ewing, a teamster from the Pima Villages, to recruit Maricopa Indians, and former sergeant John D. Walker to recruit the Pima.

### **Apache Women Warriors:**

The most gifted and least known Indian woman warrior was Lozen, Warm Springs Apache, who fought with her famous brother Victorio. Lozen chose the path of a warrior – a choice respected by her people. Lozen had the gift of discerning the location of the enemy and, it has been said, that if she had been with Victorio when his band was ambushed by the Mexican army he would not have been killed. One story that demonstrates her bravery tells of her crawling into a line of fire to get a bag of bullets desperately needed by the poorly armed Apaches. Lozen later joined Geronimo, who would eventually choose her as a messenger to arrange the meeting with the American military when he finally surrendered. Lozen was the other war woman who eventually rode with Geronimo and, with Dahteste, convinced him to surrender to the white military in 1886. She was also taken to the prison in Florida, and later was transported to Mount Vernon Barracks in Alabama. Lozen died there, presumably of tuberculosis, at the approximate age of 50.

### **American Military Indian Scouts:**

Scouting the enemy was recognized as a particular skill of the Native American



soldier. In 1866, the U.S. Army established its Indian Scouts to exploit this aptitude. The Apache Scouts were active in the American West in the late 1800s and early 1900s, accompanying Gen. John J. Pershing's expedition to Mexico in pursuit of Pancho Villa in 1916. They were deactivated in 1947 when their last member retired from the Army in ceremonies at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona.

Native Americans from Indian Territory were also recruited by Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders and saw action in Cuba in the Spanish-American War in 1898. As the military entered the 20th century, American Indians had already made a substantial contribution through military service and were on the brink of playing an even larger role. During the Spanish American War, Miss Delia Randall, a young Carlisle school graduate, Indian woman from the Fort Hall Reservation, offered in 1898 to "go to the seat of war and care for the sick and wounded." A somewhat dramatic statement but certainly, as a trained nurse, service was her calling.

Four Native American Catholic Sisters from Fort Berthold, South Dakota worked as nurses for the War Department during the Spanish American War (1898). Originally assigned to the military hospital at Jacksonville, Florida, the nurses were soon transferred to Havana, Cuba. One of the nurses, Sister Anthony died of disease in Cuba and was buried with military honors.

It is estimated that more than 12,000 American Indians served in the United States military in World War I. Approximately 600 Oklahoma Indians, mostly Choctaw and Cherokee, were assigned to the 142nd Infantry of the 36th Texas-Oklahoma National Guard Division. The 142nd saw action in France and its soldiers were widely recognized for their contributions in battle. Four men from this unit were awarded the *Croix de Guerre*, while others received the Church War Cross for gallantry.

Fourteen Native American women served as members of the Army Nurse Corps during World War I, two of them overseas. Mrs. Cora E. Sinnard, a member of the Oneida Tribe and a graduate of the Episcopalian School of Nursing in Philadelphia, served eighteen months in France with a hospital unit provided by the Episcopal Church.

Charlotte Edith (Anderson) Monture of the Iroquois Nation also served as an Army nurse in France. Charlotte was born in 1890 in Ohsweken, Ontario, Canada. In 1917, she left her job as an elementary school nurse to join the Army Nurse Corps. She later referred to her service in France at a military hospital as "the adventure of a lifetime." Charlotte passed away in 1996, at the age of 106.

The outbreak of World War II brought American Indians warriors back to the battlefield in defense of their homeland. Although now eligible for the draft by



virtue of the Snyder Act, which gave citizenship to American Indians in 1924, conscription alone does not account for the disproportionate number of Indians who joined the armed services. More than 44,000 American Indians, out of a total Native American population of less than 350,000, served with distinction between 1941 and 1945 in both European and Pacific theaters of war. Native American men and women on the home front also showed an intense desire to serve their country, and were an integral part of the war effort. More than 40,000 Indian people left their reservations to work in ordnance depots, factories, and other war industries. American Indians also invested more than \$50 million in war bonds, and contributed generously to the Red Cross and the Army and Navy Relief societies.

In part, the warrior tradition, male and female, is a willingness to engage the enemy in battle. This characteristic has been clearly demonstrated by the courageous deeds of Native Americans in combat.

## Burial Benefits For VA/Tribal Health/IHS



Some time ago, the question was asked whether VA burial benefits are payable for veteran deaths at a non-VA facility where the deceased veteran was, at the time of death, receiving hospital care pursuant to a “sharing of health-care resources” agreement. The short answer is yes. The long, lengthy, legal answer is below.



38 U.S.C. § 2303(a) provides burial benefits for a veteran who dies in “a facility of the Department . . . to which the [veteran] was properly admitted for hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary care” or in “an institution at which the deceased veteran was, at the time of death,” receiving hospital care in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 1703, nursing home care under 38 U.S.C. § 1720, or nursing home care involving payments made under 38 U.S.C. § 1741. 38 U.S.C. § 2303 (a)(2). Section 1703 authorizes VA to contract with non-Department facilities to furnish hospital care or medical services of various types for veterans and certain other individuals. 38 U.S.C. § 1703(a). Hospital care of veterans at certain facilities is obtained through contracts or agreements under 38 U.S.C. § 8153, rather than section 1703. The express references in section 2303(a)(2)(B) to sections 1703, 1720, and 1741 are not interpreted as dispositive of whether burial benefits under section 2303(a) are payable for veteran deaths in facilities with which VA enters contracts or agreements under section 8153.



Section 8153 authorizes VA to secure health-care resources, including hospital care and medical services, which otherwise might not be feasibly available using arrangements, by contract or other form of agreement, between VA and “any health-care provider, or other entity or individual” to secure otherwise

unavailable health-care resources or effectively utilize health-care resources. 38 U.S.C. § 8153(a). Section 8153(c) specifically provides: Eligibility for hospital care and medical services furnished any veteran pursuant to this section shall be subject to the same terms as though provided in a Department health care facility, and *provisions of this title applicable to persons receiving hospital care or medical services in a Department health care facility shall apply to veterans treated under this section.* 38 U.S.C. § 8153(c) (emphasis added).

Section 2303(a) is a provision of title 38, United States Code, applicable to veterans receiving hospital care or medical services in a Department health-care facility. Therefore, pursuant to section 8153(c), section 2303(a) applies to a veteran who dies while receiving hospital care or medical services in a facility under a contract or agreement authorized by section 8153.

No legislative history was identified which demonstrates congressional intent inconsistent with the above interpretation. The general congressional intent of the authority under section 8153 was to expand and improve VA health-care services for veterans. To penalize veterans who were furnished hospital care or medical services through contracts or agreements under section 8153 rather than in non-VA facilities specifically referenced in section 2303(a) would be inconsistent with the intent behind section 8153, which was generally to provide enhanced medical services for veterans.

## Native American Veterans' Memorial Amendments Act of 2013 ~ American Indian Veteran Memorial Initiative



Rep. Markwayne  
Mullin (R-2<sup>nd</sup>/OK)

On December 11<sup>th</sup>, the Native American Veterans' Memorial Amendments Act of 2013 bill passed in the House (398-0) and goes to the Senate next for consideration. It was introduced on June 11, 2013 by Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R-2<sup>nd</sup>/OK) and amends the Native American Veterans' Memorial Establishment Act of 1994 to authorize the construction of the National Native American Veterans' Memorial on the property of the National Museum of the American Indian. Currently, its location is restricted to the interior structure of the Museum. The Act also authorizes the Museum to participate in the selection of the Memorial's design, on more than a consultative basis, with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and also makes the Museum and NCAI responsible for accepting contributions for, and paying the expenses of, establishing the Memorial. Currently, NCAI is solely responsible for those duties.

However, Jay Pfeiffer, a Board Member of the American Indian Veteran Memorial Initiative (AIVMI), an organization which does not want the memorial in the





Stephen Bowers  
(Florida Seminole)  
AIVMI

National Museum of the American Indian, but rather at the National Mall, wrote the following (truncated) opinion piece: “I enjoy the National Museum and find it to be well-presented and informative. However, having a museum doesn’t mean that “all things Native American” are necessarily put – or more appropriately – “stuck” – in there. Doing that tends to suggest a notion that things that they have done – their history, their contributions, and their service – were not done as a part of or in the context of the rest of the country, but that they were isolated events, somehow segregated from all that occurred.

In spite of all of the untoward (I am trying not to use words like “obscene” and “genocidal”) parts of American History regarding the treatment of original Americans, when this country needed help- since its very beginnings, it was unselfishly and completely given. It is forever unique and amazing. The ‘unique and amazing part’ is the story. It is what needs to be represented in the broader context of the mall memorials – including the Vietnam Wall. It is what needs to be memorialized and appreciated and not tucked away where the “Indian stuff” is. The nature of the service was different, and in all respects, on a higher level. That is not to say, by the way, that the stories should not be told at the Museum too...”

Further, Stephen Bowers of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and member of AIVMI, also opined that: “All of us American Indian, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian fought side by side with the White, Black and Hispanic Soldiers in all the wars. Putting a statue at the Museum is like telling us ‘thanks for your service now go back to the reservation’. Our service was not good enough to be recognized at the National Mall. You are Indians so we will recognize you only at the Indian Museum. That is what they are telling us.”

For more information on the American Indian Veteran Memorial Initiative, visit their website at [www.aivmi.org](http://www.aivmi.org) or call Stephen Bowers at 954-966-6300 – ext. 11480 or email him at [sbowers@semtribe.com](mailto:sbowers@semtribe.com). Here’s a 2011 [Youtube video](#) (10:09) which explains the efforts of the AIVMI.

You can track the progress of The Native American Veterans' Memorial Amendments Act of 2013 at:

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr2319#overview> and submit comments about the bill directly on that website.



## St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Enters Agreement For Veterans VA Home Loans

To read the full story from North Country Now, [click HERE](#).

“AKWESASNE -- Veterans here are now eligible to get low-interest loans from the U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs direct home loans program now the that tribe has signed a memorandum of understanding with the DAV. “It’s an opportunity for those who have served this country with honor, dignity, and pride,” Chief Ron LaFrance told a crowd of about 50, later adding “It’s just a very historic day – our veterans have been forgotten everywhere else but here in Akwesasne.”



Chief Ron LaFrance, left, signs a memorandum of understanding with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) allowing Akwesasne’s Servicemen and Servicewomen women to get direct home loans from the government. At his side is Mike Frueh, Director of VA’s Loan Guaranty Office.

The program was instituted in 1944 during World War II so returning vets can borrow to buy or improve a home at low, fixed interest and with no down payment. It was denied to veterans living on Indian reservations until 1992. That year, legislation opened the program [NADL – Native American Direct Home Loan] to Indian country, but a tribe’s members can only get in on it if their government signs a deal with the U.S.”

Immediately below is the keynote address from Chief Judge Herne of the St. Regis Mohawk – delivered during the recent Native American Direct Home Loan signing ceremony, on December 7<sup>th</sup>.



## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

*Delivered December 7th 2013, at  
Andrew W. Cook American Legion Post 1479*

### *“And Still They Serve”*

“These Mohawks have penetrated the far corners of the globe:  
Kenneth Herne crossed the Ganges River in India with the Army Engineers.  
Charlie Cook weathered storms on bleak Iceland.  
Johnny Cook saw all of Europe through a B-24’s nose gunner’s blister;  
Barney Rourke rode into Tientsin with the 1st Marines,  
Skeezix and Art Lazore walked across Europe,  
Bob Cook was right behind the men who raised the colors on Mt. Suribachi;  
Alex Terrance walked ashore with the Marines the hard way at Cape Gloucester;  
Ta-ho-re-non-ton froze his posterior in the Aleutians; and  
Tehakie did duty on the Devil’s stove lid, called Peloliu.

These are only 2 percent of the Mohawks who went on the warpath with them.”

It was with these words in 1949 that William Cook, Marine Corps Captain and pilot, ushered into existence the “Andrew W. Cook, American Legion Post 1479” on the St. Regis Mohawk Indian Reservation. Andrew and William were brothers, Andrew was Killed In Action in February of 1944 and William would later perish in a jet training exercise outside of Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point NC in 1952.

It is former NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw who has befittingly described their generation, the WWII generation, as the “Greatest Generation”. Therefore it is just as fitting that we gather on today’s date (December 7th) to commemorate what will hopefully be a new chapter in a continuing history. For today though, let us borrow from another social commentator who was popular with that generation, and look at: ‘The rest of the story’.

In what economists will call the ‘Macro level’, a clear majority of the ‘Greatest Generation’ returned home and became active participants in the post-war economy. Manufacturing plants were converted, power projects were constructed, highways were run, and a college education became a possibility for many of them. The ‘Rest of the story’ also lies at the individual level, in what economists call the ‘Micro level’. For it is there that tax policy aligned with economic policy, and both aligned with banking practice. It was at this level that a VA home loan guarantee germinated and blossomed for the Greatest Generation. The individual Veteran now had the ‘where for all’ to acquire a home backed by the guarantee of the federal government.



This put into motion an economic boom. Lumber was needed, concrete was poured, plumbing installed, power hooked up, a move in date, and the work to fill up that new home with little faces was begun in earnest. Water lines, sewer lines, and power lines followed, and American suburbia appeared out of the farmlands, and the American economy hummed along in a housing 'boom'.

Tax Policy helped foster this movement. There soon appeared a tax deduction for this process, and in particular, a direct dollar for dollar deduction for interest paid on mortgages. Including a VA backed home mortgage. Something accountants call an 'above the line' deduction. Therefore, the federal government supported, backed, and helped subsidize home ownership.

Economically the 'Greatest Generation' Vets could also 're-borrow' the mortgage based upon the equity of those Veteran's homes. Those little faces, which became the 'Baby Boom' generation, needed to go to college after all. Equity came in handy here, and the tax deduction certainly did not hurt either.

What of Akwesasne's 'Greatest Generation' though? What is the 'rest of the story' for Vets from the St. Regis Indian Reservation. Regretfully, and all too common, there would be work to convert the manufacturing plant but no work inside it, same would hold true for those power projects. The highway system projects provided structural steel work, but then it became simply a means to get from 'job to job' as many flocked to the only occupation that remained open and viable, the structural steel worker.

Perhaps the 'cruellest cut' for the St. Regis Vet would be the inability to acquire a VA loan to get a home. As such there would be no interest rate tax deduction, there would be no equity. This meant that there would be no housing boom in Akwesasne, materials and labor would not be needed, and suburbia would miss Akwesasne irrespective of how many served.

In its place family homesteads would be converted, mobile homes would be 'cut and pasted', and everything had to be done paycheck to paycheck, and week to week. 'Boom' simply came to mean 'booming out' which meant going to the next iron working job. Thus, the St. Regis Vet transitioned from the military 'Hurry up and wait' mentality to 'When you have the time you do not have the money, and when you have the money, you do not have the time.' In such a setting necessity is truly the mother of invention.

It was in such a context that American Legion Post 1479 was borne. After Marine Corps Captain Cook spoke those words included here, the 'Blue House' would finally be completed by 1964. From its earliest days forward, American Legion Post 1479 quickly became the place where custom and tradition melded together to foster a community ethos very unique to Akwesasne. The 'Blue House' became



the place where the St. Regis veteran, their families, and others from their community could: Host a 'Buck and Doe' dance to raise money for the young couple, then hosted the wedding reception of that young couple! It was and is where fundraisers for the local sports team occur, and where fundraisers were held to help those facing a health issue.

Yet, in cruelty that only irony can provide. When wood stoves in those converted homesteads could only create so much warmth, or when those furnaces in patched mobile homes had enough, fire would strike. It would then be another fundraiser at American Legion Post 1479. For there was no insurance to build into a mortgage payment that did not exist, there was no way to show credit worthiness, and there was no equity to point to. One did what many farmers in Akwesasne learned: 'You do with what you got', and what Marines, including those from Akwesasne come to know, 'You Adapt. You Improve. You Overcome'.

In addition to these functions, it is also when those members of Akwesasne's Greatest Generation had completed 'Fighting the good fight', after the flag had been folded 13 times, and after the words 'On behalf of a grateful Nation' have been spoken, that we return here to American Legion Post 1479 and have 'the family meal'. A meal prepared so many times by so many caring hands that they joined together and created an Auxiliary for Post 1479.

How often has this occurred? Should we be surprised by the failure to find anyone in Akwesasne who has not done these things. Or one could simply take a look through an Akwesasne family photo album to see its proofs.

So it is fitting that we recall these things on today's date, yet there is something more, something just as interesting for the 'Rest of the story'. For that part, let us look upon the sons, daughters, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and cousins of Akwesasne's 'Greatest Generation'. Should it be surprising to discover that many of them have followed Akwesasne's 'Greatest Generation' by also serving in the Armed Forces. It is as Captain William Cook once said: "Our boys visited every major town in the United States and touched every main port, base, battlefield in the world. There are more than a score of these Mohawks whose blood spilled in contact with the enemy."

What has been included in those visits? How about the Akwesasne service members who were part of the 'Frozen Chosin' in Korea, or Norman Tarbell who was on the USS Brewster when the first radar 'pinged' indicating a Russian sub headed to Cuba. Then Clifford Tarbell (USA) did not return from NAM, the same place where Bruce Jackson (USMC) got his Purple Hearts, and where dozens of others from Akwesasne served. Then there is the dozens upon dozens of Akwesasne's 'Cold Warriors' who reminded everyone that indeed 'someone has got to be on that wall'. To today, when we must note Ash Cook and his 2 tours in



Iraq with the Army, and that LCpl Kwekon Mitchell is currently with the Marines at 29 Palms.

If we could amend any of Captain Cook's comment, let it be to recognize the young women from Akwesasne who also served, and are serving. Like Army Captain Erin Cook who was just reactivated and may be headed to the Mid-East, or PFC Patricia Martin who just left Parris Island after being meritoriously promoted at graduation.

Yet, for many of these Akwesasne Vets their history would come to resemble that of Akwesasne's 'Greatest Generation': The struggle for work, the difficulties in trying to build a home, and the un-availability of a VA home loan program. So like the 'Greatest Generation' there would be no tax deduction or equity to borrow for them either. And for these Akwesasne Vets, American Legion Post 1479 has come to serve many of the same functions it has for Akwesasne's Greatest Generation.

We could struggle to find words to describe such a social phenomenon, let us simply borrow what Senator John McCain said when talking of all Native American Veterans: "And still they serve". It is therefore appropriate that on today's date (December 7th), at this place (American Legion Post 1479) that a new chapter has been afforded the opportunity to be written. For it is on this date and place that we get to commemorate that the United States Veteran Administration has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe. And for the very first time, the VA is going to offer direct loans for Veterans from the St. Regis Mohawk Indian Reservation to acquire a home.

What will the 'rest of the story' involve? We cannot predict such things, but what can be said with certainty is that in the future a young man or woman from Akwesasne is going to be sitting down with an Armed Forces Recruiter. As they review the benefits of enlisting, let us hope that the VA/ St. Regis MOU will be noted. And should that young person from Akwesasne ask 'What is this for?' Let us hope someone can tell them:

"Because, Kenneth Herne crossed the Ganges River in India with the Army Engineers; Because Charlie Cook weathered storms on bleak Iceland; Because Johnny Cook saw all of Europe through a B-24's nose gunner's blister; Because Barney Rourke rode into Tientsin with the 1st Marines, Because of them, and the hundreds of them before you, You have the opportunity to receive assistance from the VA in acquiring a home on the St. Regis Mohawk Indian Reservation."

**Thank you for attending today's commemoration event.**



Here is a listing of what tribes **already have** Native American Direct Home Loan MOUs in place and how many loans have been made to American Indian Veterans.

Tribe	Date of NADL MOU	# of Loans
Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin	12/19/94	15
Rosebud Sioux Tribe	1/25/94	15
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Nation	4/19/99	8
Omaha Tribe of Nebraska	10/22/93	8
Colville Tribe	3/21/97	6
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	3/1/95	6
Lummi Nation	5/25/95	5
Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska	3/18/94	5
Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe	10/19/93	5
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	6/18/04	4
Chippewa Cree Tribe (Rocky Boy Reservation)	10/2/95	4
Oglala Sioux	8/15/95	4
Navajo Nation	1/10/95	4
Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians	12/17/93	4
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe	10/29/93	4
Crow Creek Sioux	4/22/03	3
Assiniboine-Sioux (Fort Peck)	3/21/96	3
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes	4/4/00	2
Tulalip Tribes	6/12/98	2
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians	4/10/97	2
Passamaquoddy Indian Township	6/11/03	2
San Carlos Apache Tribe	5/16/94	2
Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation	1/3/94	2
Muscogee (Creek) Nation	2/22/06	1
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation	4/21/03	1
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community	11/1/02	1
Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians	12/17/93	1



Yankton Sioux Tribe	3/21/96	1
Nooksak Indian Tribe	10/2/95	1
Laguna Pueblo	8/10/95	1
Blackfeet Nation	6/5/95	1
White Earth Band of Chippewa Indians	4/13/95	1
San Juan Tewa Indian Nation	1/4/95	1
Ft. Mojave Indian Tribe	11/14/94	1
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe	12/7/2013	0
Hoopa Valley Tribe	2/12/09	0
Swinomish Tribal Community	02/2009	0
Jemez Pueblo	7/1/08	0
Apsaalooke (Crow) Nation	6/1/07	0
Pojoaque Pueblo	2/22/06	0
Sandia Pueblo	8/1/05	0
Jicarilla Apache	8/1/05	0
San Felipe Pueblo	8/1/05	0
Smith River Rancheria	5/9/03	0
Catawba Indian Nation	3/27/03	0
Keweenaw Bay Indian Community	10/9/02	0
Bad River Lake Superior Chippewa	9/5/02	0
Sokaogan Chippewa Community	9/20/01	0
Cochiti Pueblo	12/11/01	0
Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians	9/7/93	0
Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon	5/25/00	0
Santo Domingo Pueblo	9/29/99	0
Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma	9/27/99	0
Spokane Tribe	9/23/98	0
Yakama Indian Nation	9/30/97	0



Picuris Pueblo	6/17/97	0
Nez Perce Nation	2/5/97	0
Bay Mills Chippewa	5/23/97	0
Pascua Yaqui Tribe	7/10/96	0
Shoshone-Paiute Tribe of the Duck Valley Reservation	7/9/96	0
Zuni Pueblo	4/11/96	0
Hopi Nation	3/19/96	0
Bois Forte Band of Chippewa Indians	4/2/96	0
Upper Sioux Community Pejuhutazizi Oyate	3/28/96	0
Isleta Pueblo	8/15/95	0
Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin (Ho-Chunk)	1/4/95	0
Pleasant Point Passamaquoddy Tribe	12/15/94	0
White Mountain Apache Tribe	8/24/94	0
Lower Brule Sioux Tribe	7/20/94	0
Yavapai-Apache Tribe	7/20/94	0
Gila River Indian Community	7/20/94	0
Colorado River Tribe	5/16/94	0
Seminole Tribe of Florida	5/16/94	0
Hualapai Indian Nation	5/5/94	0
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe	12/1/93	0
Southern Ute Tribe	11/15/93	0

**If you are a Veteran, or know a Veteran, living on tribal lands who might be interested in this product for the purchase or construction of a home, or making major renovations to a pre-existing home, then please contact VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations at:**  
[tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov](mailto:tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov).

**A very informative webcast video (45:53) specifically about the Native American Direct Home Loan (NADL) program can be [found here](#).**



## Benefits of NADL to Veteran

- No down Payment
- No private mortgage insurance
- \$417,000 loan limit in most areas
- Counties designated as high cost have greater loan limits
- Minimal closing costs
- Low, fixed-rate mortgage (current rate 3.5%); 30 year term
- Veterans receiving compensation may elect automatic deduction
- Reusable benefit

7

## Wounded Spirits, Ailing Hearts: PTSD in Native American War Veterans



Defining  
**EXCELLENCE**  
in the 21st Century

Here is a link to an older VA resource (2000) specifically for PTSD in Native American war veterans. The 63 minute video “contains interviews with Native Veterans and family members, providing powerful personal examples of military experience and readjustment to civilian life. Also describes experiences and perceptions about problems that occur when seeking or obtaining assistance from the VA, the Indian Health Service (IHS), community, and tribal resources.” Here is [\(63:00\) the video](#), here is the [\(pdf\) transcript](#) and here is the [accompanying manual](#).



## Support For Veterans Health and Benefits Needed

Here's a recent press release from the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) which came out on Wednesday, December 18, 2013

The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee recently voted in favor of S.944, The Veterans Health and Benefits Improvement Act of 2013, and started the process to pass this legislation by unanimous consent. S. 944 includes many provisions pertaining directly and indirectly to tribes which can provide much needed assistance to American Indian and Alaska Native veterans. There is a hold on the legislation that is keeping it from Senate passage. With only a few calendar days before the session ends the NCAI requests that you contact your senators and urge them to support passage of the legislation by unanimous consent or when it comes up for a vote. S.944:

- Allows VA to recognize representatives of Indian tribes as individuals eligible to represent veterans in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits;
- Requires VA to carry out a two-year program to assess the feasibility and advisability of entering into memoranda of understanding with at least ten local or state governments and two tribal organizations to improve the quality of disability compensation claims and to provide claims submittal assistance to veterans who may be eligible for disability compensation or pension;
- Extends counseling and treatment to service members who suffered sexual trauma while serving on inactive duty training (applicable to reservists and National guard);
- Requires medical examinations in the case of a claim for disability compensation based on a mental health condition related to military sexual trauma, if the evidence of record before the Secretary does not contain a diagnosis and opinion by a mental health professional that may assist in corroborating the occurrence of a military sexual trauma stressor; and
- Requires states receiving Jobs for Veterans State Grants to recognize military experience when issuing licenses and credentials to veterans in order to improve their employment prospects.

To contact your senator's office, phone the United States Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121. A switchboard operator will connect you directly with the Senate office you request.

**NCAI Contact Information:** Robert Holden, Deputy Director - (202) 466-7767 or [rholden@ncai.org](mailto:rholden@ncai.org)



## Grant Opportunity For Tribal Communities

The Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program provides funding for eligible applicants for projects that address local environmental and public health issues within an affected community. The CPS Program is designed to help communities understand and address exposure to multiple environmental harms and risks. The CPS Program requires selected applicants, or recipients, to use the [EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Model \(PDF\)](#) (44 pp, 1.5MB) as part of their projects. The model aims to address local environmental and/or public health issues in a collaborative manner with various stakeholders such as communities, industry, academic institutions, and others. Click [HERE](#) for more info.



## Native American Healing Traditions for War Veterans ~ “Healing the Warrior’s Heart”

This article is from a November 19<sup>th</sup> online article in Native American Times and can be accessed in its entirety [HERE](#).

Salt Lake City, Utah— The Western Folklife Center is in production of a public television documentary that examines the emotional trauma of war through the prism of Native American tradition and ceremony. Healing the Warrior’s Heart reveals the central role that military service plays in Native life and explores the spiritual traditions that help returning American Indian soldiers reintegrate into society. The Folklife Center’s Media Producer, Taki Telonidis, is producing the documentary in collaboration with Gary Robinson of Tribal Eye Productions, and KUED Channel 7, Salt Lake City’s PBS affiliate.

For centuries, tribal cultures have used healing songs and ceremonies to cleanse their warriors of war, and despite the loss of language and culture among many tribes, these traditions remain vital on several reservations in the West, and they hold lessons for our nation as it struggles to bring comfort to the latest generation of warriors suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Despite great efforts by medical and military professionals to treat PTSD, many veterans continue to suffer from it, and there is a small but growing community of psychologists, counselors and clergy who are looking toward Native American traditions to bring healing to our suffering soldiers.

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Much of the documentary focuses on members of the Blackfeet tribe in northern Montana. The Blackfeet Nation is a place where warrior identity is very much alive in our time, even though many current soldiers have lost the connection with the healing traditions that were practiced by their ancestors. Yet there are others for whom those traditions remain relevant, both during their deployment as well as in their re-entry to society. The documentary will include interviews and scenes with spiritual leaders, veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as elder veterans, family members and tribal leaders.

In September, Taki Telonidis was honored for a radio program that grew out of his research on the film. “Veteran’s Find Healing in Native American Tradition,” aired on National Public Radio’s All Things Considered on Memorial Day in 2012, and documents how veterans at the Salt Lake City VA Hospital were benefitting from traditional healing ceremonies conducted in a sweat lodge on the hospital grounds. The Religion Newswriters Association (RNA) awarded Taki first place in the category for Radio or Podcast Religion Report of the Year for the show. RNA is a charitable, literary and educational organization whose purpose is to promote excellence in media coverage and in public discourse about religion.

Healing the Warrior’s Heart is supported by the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, the Interculture Foundation, the Kalliopeia Foundation, the R. Harold Burton Foundation, the Palladium Foundation, the Utah Humanities Council, and by Western Folklife Center stakeholders.



## **VA to Expand Benefits for Traumatic Brain ~ Adds Illnesses Related to Service-Connected TBI**

WASHINGTON (Dec. 16, 2013) – Some Veterans with traumatic brain injury (TBI) who are diagnosed with any of five other ailments will have an easier path to receive additional disability pay under new regulations developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The new regulation, which takes effect 30 days from today, impacts some Veterans living with TBI who also have Parkinson’s disease, certain types of dementia, depression, unprovoked seizures or certain diseases of the hypothalamus and pituitary glands.

“We decide Veterans’ disability claims based on the best science available,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “As scientific knowledge advances, VA will expand its programs to ensure Veterans receive the care and benefits they’ve earned and deserve.” This regulation stems from a report of the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine (IOM)

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regarding the association between TBI and the five diagnosable illnesses. The IOM report, *Gulf War and Health, Volume 7: Long-Term Consequences of Traumatic Brain Injury*, found “sufficient evidence” to link moderate or severe levels of TBI with the five ailments.

The new regulations, printed in the Federal Register, say that if certain Veterans with service-connected TBI also have one of the five illnesses, then the second illness will also be considered as service connected for the calculation of VA disability compensation. Eligibility for expanded benefits will depend upon the severity of the TBI and the time between the injury causing the TBI and the onset of the second illness. However, Veterans can still file a claim to establish direct service-connection for these ailments even if they do not meet the time and severity standards in the new regulation. Veterans who have questions or who wish to file new disability claims may use the eBenefits website, available at [www.eBenefits.va.gov/ebenefits](http://www.eBenefits.va.gov/ebenefits). Servicemembers who are within 180 days of discharge may also file a pre-discharge claim for TBI online through the VA-DoD eBenefits portal at [www.eBenefits.va.gov/ebenefits](http://www.eBenefits.va.gov/ebenefits).

## Social Security Administration Makes Important Changes



As of February 2014, the Social Security Administration will no longer offer Social Security number (SSN) printouts and benefit verification information in our field offices. However, to ensure a smooth transition, we will continue providing these services if requested until April 2014. We are making these changes to meet the increasing demands for our services at the same time that our agency budget has been significantly cut by over \$1B in each of the last three years. During this same time period we have invested in technology that offers more convenient, cost-effective, and secure options for our customers to obtain certain services without visiting a local office.

Because the SSN printout is not an official document with security features, and is easily duplicated, misused, shared illegally, or counterfeited, eliminating it helps prevent fraud. Employers, departments of motor vehicles, and other entities requiring SSN verification can obtain this information in real time or overnight using online government services such as E-Verify and Social Security's Business Services Online. Beneficiaries and recipients needing a benefit verification letter can obtain one immediately by registering for a my Social Security account at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount), or through the mail within 5–7 days by calling our national toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213. For future updates and news visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/thirdparty](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/thirdparty). For any questions, please feel free to call our national toll-free number at 1-800-772-1213.

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## Southern Plains Region



First Annual Dance for Recovery and Prevention - January 4th, 2014  
Clinton Community Hall - Gourd Dancing@ 3pm w/ Supper@ 6pm

Head Staff: MC: Damon Dunbar; Head Singer: Rick Anquoe; Head Man Dancer: Wilbur BullComing; Head Lady Dancer: Thomascina Leader; Head Teen Boy Dancer: Kyle Lime; Head Little Boy Dancer: AJ Diaz (8yrs); Head Teen Girl Dancer: Macey Rivers; Head Little Girl Dancer: Mia Ramos (4yrs); **Honored Veteran: Moses Starr**; Honored Elder: Gus Wilson; AD's: George Hawkins Memorial; Treatment Center; Co Hosts: Geary 12 Step OverComers. This Committee was created with no intentions of generating profit; however, food, raffle items, monetary, and other donations will be accepted and greatly appreciated. For info or donations contact: Ruth Bearshield 580-821-1667 Or e-mail: [NativesInRecovery13@yahoo.com](mailto:NativesInRecovery13@yahoo.com)

## Western Region

### **Women Warrior Wellness Conference - February 20, 2014**



CSU Stanislaus is part of California State University, the nation's largest university system. CSU Stanislaus serves more than 7000 undergraduate students and 800 graduate students. Located in the heart of California's Central Valley, CSU Stanislaus is the only 4-year public institution serving 1.25 million people in the region.

**Mission:** The mission of the Women Warrior Wellness Program is to expand existing wellness services to include veteran students and community members. The campus has joined with Swords to Plowshares to improve health indicators for women veterans in California by expanding its capacity and support of women veterans as they pursue their educational goals. The University has committed to providing integrated support mechanisms for all veterans within the Central Valley, including and especially women veterans. CSU Stanislaus is engaged in strengthening ties to community organizations to increase women veteran access to the resources they need, both on campus and in their home-school lives.

Please join us by accepting this invitation to participate in our First Annual Women Warrior Wellness Conference on February 20th, 2014 from 9:30 am to



8:00 pm. The Conference consists of 2 segments:

- A day program (10-4) at our Faculty Development Center with panel presentations highlighting the university's commitment to veterans, as well as, a training by the Department of Labor Women's Bureau on Trauma-Informed care (3.5 hours). Our partners will be exhibiting their resources at tables at our university Event Center.
- An evening program (4:30-8) highlighting Native American and LGBT Veterans that will take place at our Faculty Development Center. We are honored to host 2 keynote speakers for that program:

- Maria Zoe Dunning is a retired U. S. Naval Commander and gay rights activist. She is the first and only openly gay person allowed to remain on active duty in the military prior to the end of the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy.

- Eli Painted Crow is a retired Iraq War Veteran who served in Iraq and Kuwait. She is member of the Yaqui Nation in Tucson, Arizona and leads the Turtle Women Rising drum circle for women veterans.

DATE: February 20, 2014

PLACE: CSU Stanislaus Faculty Development Center

Lunch Provided At: CSU Stanislaus Event Center

ADDRESS: One University Circle, Turlock, CA 95382

\* Off of Geer & Monte Vista \*

TIME: 9:30 AM – 4:30 PM: Panel Presentations/ Exhibitor Booths

5:00 PM – 8:00 PM: Native American/ 2 Spirit Tribute

LIVE PERFORMANCES BY:

Turtle Women Rising Drum Circle

CSU Warrior Alumni Musical Guest

Please return to Jennifer Grigoriou by:

Email: [jgrigoriou@csustan.edu](mailto:jgrigoriou@csustan.edu), or

Fax: (209) 667-3385

We commend your support and commitment to our nation's heroines. If you would like more information regarding services or women veteran's programs, please contact: Jennifer A. Grigoriou, Psy.D. - [jgrigoriou@csustan.edu](mailto:jgrigoriou@csustan.edu) or (209) 667-3381

Alyssa Cardinal - [acardinal@csustan.edu](mailto:acardinal@csustan.edu) - (209) 985-1185



## Gil Calac, Paiute: Getting Veterans Their Due

Recently, (12/3/2013) five Native American visionaries were recognized in an online article in [Indian Country Today](#). Among them was Veteran Gil Calac).



(Photo courtesy Valerie Calac)

A Vietnam War veteran living on the Yakama Reservation, Calac's tireless campaign is winning official recognition of, and starting the healing process for, his fellow Vietnam veterans. When U.S. military personnel came home from Vietnam, many with injuries and memories that still haunt them decades later, there was no welcome.

"They were not treated like heroes as those who returned from Korea and World War II," said Washington State Rep. Norm Johnson, R-Toppenish. "Instead, they were portrayed as baby killers, warmongers and other things.... That had a traumatic effect on these soldiers that is still painful to these days as many of them refuse to talk about their experiences."

Calac's efforts this year led to the adoption of State House Bill 1319, which establishes March 30 of every year as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" in Washington state. The bill, introduced by Johnson and co-sponsored by 38 state House members, was unanimously approved by the House and Senate. Thanks to Calac, all public buildings and schools are required to fly the POW/MIA flag every March 30. The veteran's compelling testimony moved legislators to act quickly on the bill. At a hearing before the Senate Committee on Governmental Operations, Calac said that Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day would help veterans "put away our guilt, the shame, the grief and despair," and heal from the animosity veterans faced when they returned home. Calac hopes to see Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day established nationwide.



## Northwest Justice Project – Veterans Project - Free Legal Services For Veterans

If you are a low-income veteran, you may qualify for free legal assistance with the following legal issues: child support; vacating criminal convictions/records; driver's license suspension; housing issues; discharge upgrades; consumer law; veterans benefits; veterans benefits of justice-involved, incarcerated & recently released veterans. Call 1-855- NJP-VETS (**1-855-657-8387**) or check out their website at <http://nwjustice.org/veterans>. If your issue is not listed above, you may still call NJP and they might be able to refer you to other service providers that could help.



## Veterans' Day Weekend in the San Diego North County

By Roy Cook - We were in the mist of courage and among many American Patriots of the hills and the valleys. Pauma reservation re-dedicated their Veterans memorial tribute in the Tribal cemetery 11/9/13 at 11am.





Many of these men I grew up with on the Santa Ysabel Reservation all served in the military during the Vietnam era. Some of the older boys then, men now, saw service in the Korean era. Every so often one or two of the WW II veterans will come around. What is most remarkable is how many volunteered to serve from a relatively small population on the 21 bands of tribal Americans in San Diego County.





Pauma family members checked carefully for their family members names in the black granite donated by the Pyramid Company. It was stated that the granite would be replaced with a brass plate in the future and everyone was asked to inform the committee for better accuracy on the future brass version. The AIVA color Guard brought in the colors and firing squad for a rifle salute. They also led the Pledge of Allegiance and the priest provides the prayer and blessed the monument.



Lunch in the Pauma Tribal Hall followed the dedication. I was a fine meal of prime rib, mixed vegetable mashed potatoes and gravy and a fresh bun. Soft drinks, water or coffee were in abundance and many variations of fruit and berry pies satisfied everyone's sweet tooth. Well pleased with the activity and full from the excellent lunch many attending continued on to the Sleeping Warrior Veterans Pow wow that afternoon and the next day at the youth campground on the Pala Reservation. Finally, Santa Ysabel Reservation will host veteran Day activities at the San Felipe cemetery at 10 am and Santa Ysabel cemetery an hour later.



# VETERANS TRAINING SUMMIT

## SAVE THE DATE

**APRIL 9-10, 2014**

CLEARWATER RIVER CASINO  
LEWISTON, IDAHO



## Southwest Region



# 69th Anniversary Iwo Jima Flag Raising

**Military Parade and  
Flyover to begin at 8:30 AM.  
Ceremonies to follow at the  
Mathew B. Juan, Ira H. Hayes  
Veterans Memorial Park in  
Sacaton, AZ.**

*All Public and Veterans Groups are welcome.*

## Feb. 22 2014

Luncheon hosted by American Legion Auxiliary Unit No. 84 with St. Peters Church and School. Event sponsored by American Legion Ira H. Hayes Post No. 84 and Auxiliary Unit No. 84. Mailing Address: P.O. Box 186, Sacaton, AZ, 85147 / Phone: 520.562.6484 / Fax: 520.562.3297 / Email: ihpost84@gilanet.net  
Web: [www.iraheyesp84.org](http://www.iraheyesp84.org)



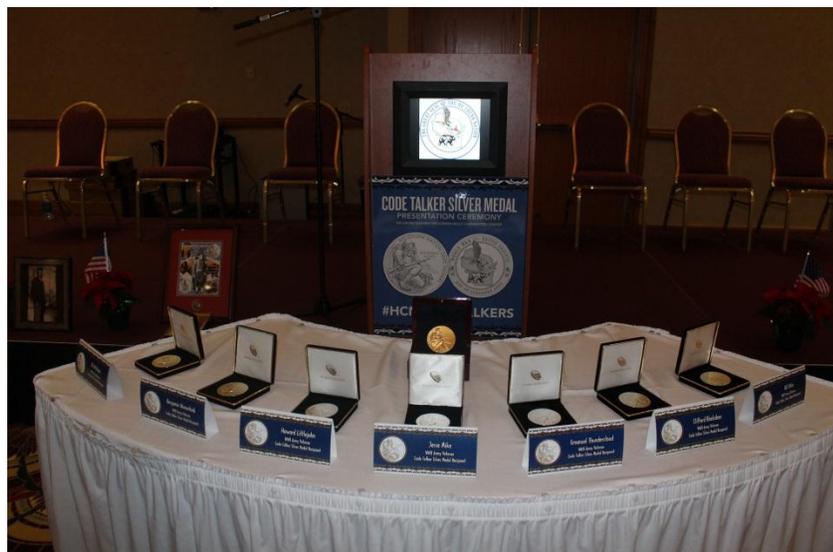
## Central Region

# Ho-Chunk Nation Honors Their Code Talkers

Following the ceremony held by Congress on November 20<sup>th</sup> in Washington D.C., the Ho-Chunk Nation held their own honoring ceremony specifically for those Code Talkers from the Ho-Chunk Nation. Below are some picture from that event, which was held last week (December. 13) in Black River Falls, WI.



Next of kin to the WWII Code Talkers receive their silver medals.



Gold and silver medals on display



Singers unveil the song created in honor of the Code Talkers



Wisconsin DVA Secretary John Scocos, Ho-Chunk President Jon Greendeer and State Senator Jennifer Schilling