



RIVERSIDE NATIONAL CEMETERY

AMERICAN INDIAN & ALASKA NATIVE VETERANS MONUMENT

HONORING THE HIGHEST REPRESENTATION PER CAPITA OF MILITARY SERVICE

Fact Sheet

1. American Indians have the highest record of military service per capita of any ethnic group.
2. One in every four American Indian males is a military veteran.
3. Nearly half of all Tribal leaders (47%) are military veterans.
4. During the War of 1812, many Tribes were involved and Indians fought for both sides as auxiliary troops in the Civil War. Native Americans were among those who saw action in Cuba with Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders during the Spanish-American War in 1898.
5. American Indians served on both sides of the Civil War: Stand Watie, a Cherokee, was the last Confederate Brigadier General to surrender to the Union troops. Conversely, Eli Parker, a Seneca from New York was a Brevet Brigadier General in the Union Army under General Ulysses Grant. He was at Appomattox when Robert E. Lee surrendered.
6. Code talking – secret communications built on a native language – was pioneered by Choctaw Indians serving in the U.S. Army during WWI. Soldiers from the Cherokee and Meskwaki Tribes were also used as code talkers. The most famous are the Navajo Code Talkers who communicated vital intelligence for the Marine Corps during WWII using their native language to confuse enemy code breakers. In fact, their code was never deciphered.
7. During WWII, more than one-third of all able-bodied American Indian men between the ages of 18 and 50 served. Out of a population of about 350,000 American Indians nationwide, more than 44,000 American Indians served in the military.
8. An estimated 40,000 American Indians relocated from reservations to work in war industries.
9. In Vietnam, nearly 42,000 American Indians served with ninety percent being volunteers.
10. American Indians have served with honor in Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq.
11. Five American Indian warriors gave their lives in Iraq including Army Private First Class Lori Peistewa, a young Hopi mother and the first Native American woman soldier ever killed in combat; a young Army Private First Class from the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation; and Sheldon Hawk Eagle, a descendant of Crazy Horse and a member of the famous Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne Division.
12. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, in 2006 more than 36,000 female veterans were AIAN, representing almost 10 percent of all AIAN veterans, nearly twice the national average of 6% of women in the overall population of veterans.
13. Thirty-one American Indian men have received the Congressional Medal of Honor (AIVA statistics, 2008).
14. AIAN values complement the values of the military – honor, respect, strength, courage and sacrifice.

Why a Monument at the Riverside National Cemetery?

The Riverside National Cemetery is home to several existing national memorials including the Medal of Honor Memorial, the Veterans Memorial, and the POW/MIA Memorial. It encompasses nearly 1,000 acres, the third largest in terms of total land designated for use in the nation. It is the most active by numbers of interments than any other national cemetery.

The proposed American Indian Veterans Memorial will be the first national memorial to specifically honor the unprecedented service of American Indian and Alaska Native veterans at any of our nation's cemeteries.

Riverside National Cemetery is the only national cemetery in the National Cemetery System that has an established Memorial and Monuments Committee which works directly with the community and veterans organizations.