NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS MEMORIAL

First Here, First to Serve, Always Remembered

A CASE FOR SUPPORT

Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian
In June, the National Native American Veterans Memorial jury unanimously selected a design by award-winning artist and Marine Corps veteran Harvey Pratt (Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma).

“It’s in our culture to be warriors. I was raised to be a warrior. Native people have fought for this land from the first time the first Europeans landed on it. Even before they were citizens, they were fighting. When they made us citizens in 1924, we continued to fight for this country and for this flag. Our blood is all over this earth.”

—Memorial Designer Harvey Pratt

An elevated stainless steel circle resting on an intricately carved stone drum, the design is simple and powerful, timeless and inclusive. The design incorporates water for sacred ceremonies, benches for gathering and reflection, and four lances where veterans, family members, tribal leaders, and others can tie cloths for prayers and healing.

Pratt’s design for the National Native American Veterans Memorial will welcome and honor Native American veterans, soldiers, and their families. It will help educate the public about their extraordinary patriotism and service.
The nation’s capital is known for its grand monuments and solemn memorials, including many honoring our nation’s veterans. Yet no national landmark in Washington, DC, focuses on the exceptional contributions of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians who have served in the military since colonial times.

Native veterans deserve to be honored. Each service member has a tale of valor, like Private Carl Gorman who, despite being punished in school for speaking his Navajo language as a child, served as a Code Talker in World War II; or Master Sergeant Woodrow Wilson Keeble, Korean War veteran and the first Sioux man to receive the Medal of Honor; or First Lieutenant Nainoa K. Hoe, a Native Hawaiian who lost his life serving in Iraq; and Colonel Wayne Don, who currently commands 1,200 Alaska National Guard soldiers. These are only a few of the tens of thousands of Native American men and women who have served this country but have yet to be recognized with a memorial of their own.

THAT IS ABOUT TO CHANGE.

You are invited to participate in the creation of the National Native American Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. With this memorial, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian undertakes its most ambitious project since opening in 2004. Located on the museum grounds near the U.S. Capitol, the new memorial will honor the extraordinary service and spirit of Native warriors.

WHY NOW?

Recognition of Native Americans’ service is long overdue. Accounts of their bravery in the armed forces are not widely known, represented in textbooks, or discussed in classrooms. If we don’t keep these stories alive, they will fade away.

You can ensure that the story of Native Americans’ patriotism, service, and sacrifice to this country is honored forever in the nation’s capital.

As veterans of the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, this is personal for us. Can we count on you to join us in building the country’s first national memorial devoted to Native veterans?

Native Americans were the first here. They are the first to serve. Now together we can ensure that they are always remembered.

Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell  
Northern Cheyenne, Colorado  
Advisory Committee Co-chair

Lt. Governor Jefferson Keel  
Chickasaw Nation, Oklahoma  
Advisory Committee Co-chair
“Why are we willing to sacrifice our lives for this country? Because our great-great-grandparents’ bones are in this land.”

—Rod Grove (Southern Ute)
THE CASE FOR SUPPORT
Honoring Our Veterans: Past, Present, and Future

American Indians have served in every major military conflict since the Revolutionary War. For instance:

• During World War II, more than 44,000 Native Americans served in the U.S. military.
• Code Talkers used their Native languages to transmit coded messages during both World Wars.
• More than 42,000 Native Americans served during the Vietnam War.
• Numerous Native American men and women have received the Purple Heart, Silver Star, Bronze Star, and Medal of Honor.
• Young people recruited from Indian boarding schools were among those who served.
• Alaska Natives served in the Alaska Territorial Guard in World War II, though they were not paid for their service.
• Today, more than 31,000 Native American men and women are on active duty and more than 140,000 veterans identify as American Indian or Alaska Native.

Native Americans serve in the U.S. Armed Forces at a higher rate in proportion to their population than any other ethnic group.*

A MONUMENTAL VISION
The memorial will:

• honor ALL Native American veterans: American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian men and women, from all eras and all branches of service;
• recognize the great sacrifices made and support given by the families of those who serve;
• reflect Native spirituality, including a space for meditation and cleansing; and
• be a place of healing for veterans and their families and for service members returning home today.

*According to Department of Defense statistics.
WHY INVEST IN THE MEMORIAL?

A FAMILY’S STORY

Chuck Boers (Lipan Apache Band, California) comes from a long line of warriors starting with his great-great-great grandfather, Juan Guerrero, an Apache scout and Texas Ranger. The commitment to serve extends to both sides of Boers’s family, including numerous uncles and cousins. “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree,” says Boers, adding that when he joined the army, his mother was his recruiter. This proud family tradition continues today with Boers’s nephew, who is serving in the Air Force.

“I am proud of my service in Vietnam, but I am even prouder of the service of the sons and daughters who have sacrificed their lives for our freedom.”

—Gold Star Father Allen K. Hoe (Native Hawaiian)
A HERO’S STORY

Master Sergeant Woodrow Wilson Keeble (Eastern Sioux, South Dakota) served in World War II and the Korean War. In October 1951, after all the officers of his company were killed or wounded, Sergeant Keeble took charge of the company’s three platoons—even though he had suffered eighty shrapnel wounds the day before. According to eyewitness accounts, Sergeant Keeble risked his life to conduct multiple single-handed assaults, thereby saving the lives of his fellow soldiers. Twenty-six years after his death, Sergeant Keeble received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

“Given that the government overran our homelands, suppressed our cultures, and confined us to reservations, some might say we have many reasons not to participate in the armed forces. Yet, in addition to serving ourselves, every one of us has a grandfather, an uncle, or sibling who has served.”

—Kurt V. BlueDog (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, Minnesota)

A COMMUNITY’S STORY

A plaque hanging in the office of Kevin P. Brown (Mohegan, Connecticut) reminds him where he comes from. It commemorates Mohegan participation in every domestic conflict from the first contact with the European settlers and beyond the country’s founding to today. Samuel Ashbow, a member of the Mohegan Tribe who fought at the Battle of Bunker Hill in 1775, was the first Native American to die in defense of this country. “The threads of history run deep,” says Brown, a veteran of Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom, and chairman of the Mohegan Tribe.

The National Native American Veterans Memorial will preserve the stories of heroes, families, and communities who have devoted their lives to serving this country.

WILL YOU MAKE A DONATION IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO SERVE?
A SHARED VISION

The U.S. Congress has charged the National Museum of the American Indian with building the National Native American Veterans Memorial. As with all monuments and memorials, no federal funds may be used to pay for the project. The museum depends on broad and deep community support to realize our vision for the memorial. With your support, we will unveil the memorial by Veterans Day 2020.

The effort to honor Native American service will extend beyond the physical memorial. For instance, the project also includes the following:

• A traveling exhibition, *Patriot Nations: Native Americans in Our Nation’s Armed Forces*, that tells the stories of Native military service.
• An oral history project that will record veterans’ stories—a partnership with the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress.
• An interactive website for those who want to explore the legacy of Native veterans but are unable to visit the memorial.

CAN WE COUNT ON YOU?
Northrop Grumman has a long history of supporting the Native American community and those who have so bravely defended our nation. This memorial is a perfect way to honor both.

—Sandra Evers-Manly, Northrop Grumman Corporation Vice President of Global Corporate Responsibility and President of the Northrop Grumman Foundation
OUR GOAL: $15 MILLION

With your support, the National Native American Veterans Memorial will not only honor our veterans and those on active duty, it will also preserve the Native American warrior legacy for future generations.

PROJECT BUDGET
The estimated budget for the memorial, its long-term maintenance, and associated educational programs is $15 million:

- $8 million Construction
- $4 million Programming and Outreach
- $3 million Endowment

HOW YOU CAN HELP
Many of you attended the thirty-five regional and community consultations we organized around the country, while others have served on the memorial’s advisory committee or have indicated your early support of the project. To you, we offer our heartfelt thanks.

Commitments of support from Native American communities and organizations, tribal leaders, corporations, foundations, and individuals will allow us to begin construction in the coming year. Your contributions are critical to our success.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
Sponsorships with attractive benefits are available at several levels. Those who make a contribution of $100,000 or more will be recognized at the memorial site. Leadership opportunities include:

- PLATINUM $1,000,000
- GOLD $500,000
- SILVER $250,000
- BRONZE $100,000

Please consider making a multi-year commitment today.
In 2004, an outpouring of private support made the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian possible. That same generous spirit is needed to create the National Native American Veterans Memorial and complete the story of how Native Americans have shaped and defended this great country.

The Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian is uniquely positioned to lead this effort. No organization has a better understanding of the exceptional service performed by American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native veterans. No other organization has the track record for raising funds for a project of this magnitude and importance.

“This is a historic moment for our country—for our veterans, and for the Native American communities whose loyalty and passion have helped make America what it is today.”

—Kevin Gover (Pawnee), Director, National Museum of the American Indian