

FROM THE CO-CHAIRS



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 among the first 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