

## WHY WE SERVE: NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES

[ Music ]

[ Native language ]

**Speaker 1:** Welcome to this sacred place.

**Speaker 2:** I remember everything happening so quickly. I left for boot camp. I was in training.

**Speaker 1:** Uncle Sam thought I was having too much fun on the beach, and so I was drafted in 1966. I volunteered to go into combat. Within a month I was on my way to Vietnam.

**Speaker 2:** I was shown to my barracks, and I looked around the room and thought, "This is it. This is my life now."

[ Chants ]

**Speaker 3:** We have a long history of Native veterans. More than any other people.

**Speaker 4:** My brother was in the Air Force.

**Speaker 5:** Four generations in the United States Marine Corps.

**Speaker 4:** And my son was in the Navy after me.

**Speaker 6:** My grandfather was a Coast Guard officer.

**Speaker 7:** I am the first veteran in my family.

**Speaker 2:** I think it's really important to challenge the stereotype of what a Native veteran is.

**Speaker 8:** It was either serve or be a drug dealer.

**Speaker 9:** I wanted to go to college but didn't have the money.

**Speaker 10:** Not everyone had that choice.

**Speaker 2:** Sometimes it feels really romanticized when the cost of war is really high.

**Speaker 1:** I always thought that I could transfer some of my luck to my son. The day my son was killed, he was carrying this flag in combat. That was hard to accept.

**Speaker 11:** We are the first nation, and we will defend our land, no matter what.

**Speaker 2:** I feel like I'm doing what's right or what needs to be done. Or maybe what I feel I'm called to do.

**Speaker 1:** The skills of being a good soldier is something you learn, but to be a good warrior it's something deeper than that. It's about your inner spirit—what things are important to you to the point that you will fight for them.

**Speaker 2:** It's something that I feel pumping through my veins, and it's what I breathe and live every day.