



Native Americans' Service to Army, Nation Recognized in November

By David Vergun

Army News Service

Throughout our Army's 238-year history, American Indians have served valiantly and with distinction in times of peace and war, while also fighting for the right to be an equal part of our nation," said Army leaders last week.

Recognizing the contributions of American Indians to the Army and the nation were Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh, Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Ray Odierno and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III, who tri-signed a "National American Indian Heritage Month" letter for the November observance.

Native Americans served in the Army in every war in America's history, as well as in peacetime. Additionally, 25 Native Americans have received the nation's highest award for valor — the Medal of Honor.

"This legacy continues today with the brave Soldiers who have served and continue to serve in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world. We are proud of their service and honored by their sacrifices," said the Army leaders.

While Native Americans have contributed much to the Army and the nation, America's relationship with them has not always been amicable.

Maj. Gen. Gregg Potter addressed Soldiers and guests at last November's Native American celebrations at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., where he was then commander of the U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence.

"Native American heritage celebrations are very, very important because we learn about other cultures," Potter said. "The Army has not always done so well



with understanding other cultures. Native American Heritage Month is very important because that is a culture that we didn't understand.

"Quite frankly," he continued, "we didn't treat the first inhabitants of our country very well and there are others in our history that we have done the same to. I think the more we can learn from each other, the better off we can be." ■

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Spc. Lori Piestewa, with the 507th Maintenance Company, deployed from Fort Bliss, Texas, was killed in Iraq in 2003. Piestewa Peak, Ariz., near Phoenix is named in her honor.

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