

Uncle Sam's Warriors:



American Indians in World War II

By Duane K. Hale

What school book records the name of Henry Nolatubby, an Oklahoma Choctaw Indian and 1939 graduate of Chilocco Indian School, who was the first Indian casualty of World War II when he was killed on December 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor?¹ Who remembers that Brigadier General Clarence L. Tinker, for whom Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City was named, was an enrolled member of the Osage tribe who was elevated early in 1942 to command the Hawaiian Army Air Forces and died during the war?²

Who knows that among the four Mescalero Apaches at Corregidor was Homer Yahnozha, a descendant of Geronimo? Or that LeRoy Hamlin, a Ute, was with the small troop that made the first contact with the Russians across the Elbe? That another Ute, Harvey Narchees, was the first American soldier to ride into the center of Berlin? That Ira Hayes, a Pima marine, helped raise the flag at Iwo Jima? That a Pawnee, Brummett Echohawk, was a renowned expert in hand-to-hand combat and trained military commandos?³

The patriotism of American Indians during the war and in fact during all wars of the twentieth century is admirable and should be remembered. It is perplexing that so many books continue to be written about the so-called "Indian wars" of the nineteenth century and few have recorded the positive contributions of American Indians during wars of the twentieth century.

Of the six books written about American Indian contributions during World War II, only the activities of the Zuni and the Navajo tribes have been documented in any detail.⁴ More puzzling is why Oklahoma history books have not recognized the important role Oklahoma Indians played in winning the war.

During the Second World War, the percentage of American Indian volunteers was greater than for volunteers from all other groups and from their small population of 400,000, American Indians eventually sent 25,000 men to war. According to the *New York Times* of October 23, 1942, Army officials stated that if the entire population enlisted in the same proportion as Indians, there would be no need for selective service.⁵

Even greater numbers grew victory gardens, left their homes to work in war plants, or shared part of their reserve land for the establishment of military bases or Japanese relocation camps. Indians built bombers and tanks, kept the railroad cars moving, and worked in mines. During 1942 alone Indians planted more than 5,100 more victory gardens than the previous year, for a total of 36,200 gardens or roughly one to every second Indian family.⁶

More than 4,000 American Indians were in the army by October 1, 1941, not including officers. Within three months, the Office of Indian Affairs reported that 40 percent more Indians had volunteered than had been drafted.⁷ From the deserts and plains came Cochitis, Apaches, Arapahos, Shawnees, and a contingent of the fiercest fighters in America's history—Cheyennes and Pawnees. From the plains, too, came Potawatomes, Poncas, Otoes, Sioux,

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Kiowas, Kaws. From the Southwest came the peaceful Pueblos, Zunis, and Hopis and the Acomas whose ancestors greeted the Spaniards. Some of the enlistees were the wealthiest soldiers ever to have donned khaki—men from the Osage Nation.⁸

On some reservations, half of the inhabitants volunteered for military duty. Senator D. Worth Clark of Idaho called the record of participation in the war effort by America's Indians "an inspiration to patriotic Americans everywhere." By February, 1942, Indian soldiers were in the front fighting ranks in the Philippines, the Hawaiian Islands, the Far East, and the strategic military posts of Alaska.⁹ By the spring of 1945, there were 21,767 Indians in the army, 1,910 in the navy, 121 in the Coast Guard, and 723 in the marines. Navajo Code Talkers made up the majority of the Marine contingent.¹⁰

For the most part American Indians supported the war effort from the outset. All across the United States Indians flocked to recruiting stations to enlist. Sixty-five Seminole Indians from Florida registered for the draft on October 5, 1940, although the tribe was still formally at war with the United States.⁸ Their lack of total support, however, was evident when it was noted a week later that they were told they would be prosecuted if they did not sign up.¹¹

Twenty-two sons of the mighty Sioux rolled off the plains into the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, recruiting station to apply for enlistment. They were ready to resign their jobs with the Civilian Conservation Corps and other projects on the Crow Creek Reservation, if Uncle Sam would let them fight. Two or three more carloads of Teton and Yankton planned to visit the Sioux Falls recruiting station the following week.¹² Almost in the shadow of Kit Carson's old headquarters, 2,693 Navajos registered for selective service on February 16, 1942.¹³

Henry One-Bull, a ninety-seven-year-old warrior still bearing the scars of a ceremonial preceding the Battle of the Little Big Horn, explained to an interpreter that of the twenty-two Sioux serving in the military from Little Eagle (population 300) all but two had volunteered.¹⁴ A band of seventeen Indian youth from the Turtle Mountain Indian Agency in Belcourt, North Dakota, became candidates for enlistment in the U.S. Naval Reserves.¹⁵ Six North Carolina Cherokees—George Taylor, Freeman Lambert, Jim Bradley, Welch Tesateskie, Russell Locust, and Clarence Rogers—entered the war early and traveled directly to Hawaii.¹⁶



General Clarence L. Tinker, an Oklahoma Osage, achieved military distinction before his death during the early months of World War II (Courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society).

Even before war broke out it was discovered that American Indians had been the first to declare war on the enemy—in 1917. The German press noted in May, 1941, that Tuscarora Indians of New York State were still formally at war with them. The Tuscaroras, “as an independent people,” had not considered themselves included in the formal U.S. declaration of war in 1917 and had issued their own version. Subsequently, they were not included during official peace negotiations and therefore were still at war with Germany.¹⁷

The Jemez Indians declared war on the Japanese in World War II because Lieutenant William Schick, a white friend of their tribe, was killed at Pearl Harbor.¹⁸

That American Indians were concerned and became immersed in the war can be seen in a statement by a member of the Pima tribe:

I have noticed the picture of my Uncle Sam, such a skinny being. . . . In peace time our Uncle Sam was frail because he is gentle and peaceful] and loving of freedom. . . . Now the U.S. Army is strong. So, please draw our Uncle Sam to look mighty.¹⁹

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American Indian support for the war effort came in ways other than registering for selective service and fighting in combat. In the American Southwest the Navajos adopted a resolution on June 5, 1940, "banning all evidences of subversive and un-American activities."²⁰ No one set a better example of support than Henry Chee Dodge, a former chief and present chairman of the Navajo Tribe, who sold all the sheep and cattle he had running on the Navajo range. From the proceeds, he purchased \$30,000 worth of war bonds.²¹

The U.S. Marine Corps organized a special signal unit for combat service and recruited a platoon of thirty Navajos in the spring of 1942. The unit was so successful that by fall the corps recruited an additional sixty-seven Navajos. Eventually about 420 Navajo Code Talkers served.

The nineteen Pueblo Indian villages of New Mexico united for the war effort and Taos Indians cooperated 100 percent with all phases of the war.²² Their young men fought for their country and entire villages subscribed to defense bonds and assisted in the Red Cross work.²³

In Arizona a conclave of four tribes signed a proclamation to discontinue using the swastika on their blankets and baskets to show disapproval of the Nazis. They also were quick to point out that the German version was backwards.²⁴

With the advent of the war, the Mission Indian Federation, which had been trying for years to get possession of lands taken from them ninety years earlier, telegraphed President Franklin Roosevelt, temporarily dropping their grievances and giving "a message of loyalty and readiness to serve."²⁵

The Klamath Tribal Council voted to offer \$150,000 of its \$2.5 million on deposit in the U.S. Treasury for establishment of a training school for Klamath Indians along national defense lines.²⁶

Chief Red Cloud of the Cayuga tribe of the Iroquois Confederacy helped collect funds for the British-American Ambulance Corps. A grand sachem of the Eastern Federated Indian League, he had for many years traveled with the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show and served in the First World War with the Canadians.²⁷

In Montana Robert Yellowtail, Superintendent of the Crow Indian Agency, reported that the Crow Tribal Council voted on January 6, 1942, to place the entire tribal resources of the Crow Reservation, including minerals, oil, and coal, in the hands of

President Roosevelt "to use as he sees fit in the prosecution of the war."²⁸

Because the country was at war, the Sioux of North and South Dakota did not demand immediate payment for the \$5 million awarded them by the U.S. Court of Claims and the Sioux Tribal Council of the Cheyenne Indian Reservation unanimously endorsed the purchase of \$15,000 in defense bonds.²⁹

The Aleuts and Eskimos of Alaska served as scouts in the far reaches of the Alaskan frontier during World War II and as members of the Alaskan National Guard, which during the war was a part of the regular army. They met and defeated the Japanese when they attempted to take the Aleutian Islands by invasion in 1942.³⁰

Positive support among Indians for the war effort was not universal. Wilfred Crouse, president of the Seneca Indian National Council, announced that he might bring a case to court to see if Indians could legally be drafted.³¹ A few days later, the Mohawks of the St. Regis Reservation in New York joined the Senecas to disclaim their citizenship and resist the draft.³²

In 1941 two Tuscarora Indians, citing their treaty rights, appealed for exemption from selective service. Three of their chiefs filed statements supporting their claims. However, one of the two men, Arnold K. Hewitt, was arrested and held until he agreed to report to the draft board.³³

Warren Eldreth Green, an Onondaga who was drafted in May of 1941, pressed his claim to the courts. The tribe's attorneys contended that the Onondagas were not citizens of the United States because they had never been conquered. Judge Jerome Frank of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on November 25, 1941, that where domestic statutes conflict with treaties, the domestic courts are bound by the statutes.³⁴

Oklahoma Indians reacted in much the same way as Indians from other parts of the nation; those not joining the several military branches aided the war effort in other ways.

Euchee and Creek Indians of Oklahoma in a special assembly of the Inter-Tribal Council in Okmulgee voted to spend \$400,000 for defense bonds.³⁵ A \$1,000 check, the largest single contribution made to the Navy Relief Society fund in Oklahoma up to June of 1942, was signed with the thumbprint of Mrs. Juana Paukune, a wealthy Kiowa woman from Cement, Oklahoma, who had sixteen oil wells on her land.³⁶

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Sergeant Echohawk, Pawnee, and Sergeant Sleeping Rain, Potawatomie, sight a mortar (Taken from Indians at Work; photo by Parade).

The Kiowas staged a patriotic rally to which Indians of all Oklahoma tribes were invited. There were speeches and a banquet, and the American Legion presented flags to the parents of Indian boys in the service of their country. Mothers of sons in the service received tokens to indicate the gifts they had made to the nation of their boys. The women raised them high with the exultant cry "We'll win." The families of twenty-three boys who were serving in the armed forces were represented.³⁷

In June, 1942, the Comanche, Kiowa, Apache, Caddo, Wichita, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Pawnee, and Ponca tribes danced in tribute to the thousands of Oklahoma Indians in the armed forces.³⁸ The Ponca Indian Tribe officially declared war on Germany, Italy, and Japan at the opening night of a pow wow in August, 1942.³⁹

First Lieutenant Meech Tahsequah, a Comanche from Walters, Oklahoma, was severely wounded in a bomber campaign over Egypt in 1942, while his tribe was addressing Adolph Hitler at a pow wow at Ft. Sill. This major event was attended by nearly 300 Indians of the Kiowa, Comanche, Apache, and Caddo tribes.⁴⁰

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Woodrow Crumbo, a Pottawatomi artist, took time off from his painting to hold down a precision job in the tool and die-making department of a Wichita plane factory.⁴¹

A full blood Oklahoma Comanche, Meyers Wahnee, had the distinction of being the first cadet in the Visalia-Dinuba School of Aeronautics to pass the army tests for graduation.⁴² The first Indian army chaplain was Lt. James Collins Ottipoby, a Comanche.⁴³ Joseph R. Toahty, Kiowa-Pawnee, was the first American Indian to land at Guadalcanal.⁴⁴

William Karty was director of a CCC camp at Fort Cobb when he came up with the idea of using the Comanche language as a part of the military's code. W.B. McCowen, the superintendent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs at Anadarko, agreed and presented the plan to military officials who authorized an Indian Signal Corps. Eventually Karty trained seventeen Comanche code-talkers. The Indian Signal Corps was stationed at Ft. Benning, Georgia. Three surviving members of Karty's corps—Roderick Redelk, Forrest Kassnavoid, and Charles Chibitty—were honored by delegates from France in 1991 at the State Capitol in Oklahoma City.⁴⁵

Mr. and Mrs. Houston S. Terrell, Choctaws of San Bois, Oklahoma, sent six sons to the army—Jessie, Elie, Preston S., O.D.,



Oklahoma Comanches played a strategic role in World War II as the Indian Signal Corps. Among them were (front row, l to r) Roderick Redelk, Simmons Parker, Larry Sawpitty, Melvin Permansu, Willie Yachoski, Charles Chibitty, Wellington Mikecoby, and (back row, l to r) Morris Sunrise, Perry Noyabad, Ralph Nahnee, Haddon Cofynah, Robert Holder, Edward Nahquaddy, Clifford Otitovo, and Forrest Kassnavoid (Courtesy the Philip Narcomey Collection, Elgin, Oklahoma).



Lieutenant Elsie Hogner, Cherokee, was one of hundreds of Indian nurses in the U.S. Army during WWII (Taken from Indians at Work; photo by U.S. Army Signal Corps).

Edmond, and Lawrence.⁴⁶ A fellow tribesman, Captain Ernest Edward McClish, was on duty with General Douglas MacArthur's forces in the Philippines.⁴⁷

While most Oklahoma Indians returned home after the war, many remained in the military to build lifelong careers. Admiral Joseph J. "Jocko" Clark, a Cherokee from Pryor graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1917 and served in three wars throughout his long and distinguished career. He served on the *U.S.S. North Carolina* in World War I, commanded the *U.S.S. Suwanee* and *U.S.S. Yorktown* during World War II, and in Korea commanded the Seventh Fleet.⁴⁸

Pascal Cleatus Poolaw, Sr., a Kiowa, began a twenty-five year military career in World War II. Before retirement in 1967, he had been awarded four Silver Stars, four Bronze Stars, and three Purple Hearts.⁴⁹

Robert S. Youngdeer, an Eastern Cherokee who later served as principal chief of the Eastern Band of Cherokees, served in the military for twenty years, a career he began in 1940.⁵⁰

Jeff W. Muskrat, a member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma who later became superintendent of the

Cherokee Agency in North Carolina, served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.⁵¹

Like their counterparts in society at large, Indian women also responded to the national crises and offered their services. In Pontiac, Michigan, forty Chippewa women formed a rifle brigade to combat any parachute troops who might descend in the region.⁵² The *Indian School Journal* of Chilocco, Oklahoma, reported that Grace Thorpe, the daughter of famed Sac and Fox athlete Jim Thorpe, was with the Womens' Army Auxiliary Corps in England.⁵³

Lieutenant Pearl Pickens was in nurse's training in a general hospital with an APO New York address.⁵⁴ Ruth Ann Morgan served with the WAC Department in England.⁵⁵ Laughing Eyes, a Creek woman, was the first of more than 250 women who stormed army recruiting offices in New York to apply for enlistment in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. Although no official tabulation of the number of Indian women who served during the war has been located, an article in the *New York Times* on February 6, 1943, noted that "Some 12,000 Indian women are working in war industries; a lesser number are serving as Army nurses and as members of auxiliary services in the Armed Forces."⁵⁶

Use of Indian Lands for War Purposes

Indians who lived in isolated areas of the United States found themselves immediately involved in the war programs. The range lands of the West were suitable for use as airports, bombing ranges, and aerial gunnery ranges because of the relatively poor quality of the land, its remoteness from centers of population, and the prevalence of clear days and good flying weather during much of the year. Altogether more than 876,000 acres of Indian land were used for war purposes. Land purchased from Indians by war agencies totaled 252,000 acres; 557,000 acres were under lease; and 66,000 acres were occupied under various forms of permits.⁵⁷ Most of the lands were urgently needed by the Indians, but they relinquished them with the expectation that they would again become available for Indian use after the war.

In 1942 the War Department acquired 233,000 acres of individual trust land by condemnation on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Another 6,445 acres of submarginal land was acquired by revocable permits and 95,000 acres of tribal land was leased. When the land was acquired by the War Department, 125 Indian families were abruptly forced to give up their homes. They were paid for the land, improvements, and whatever crops were growing at the time of appraisal, but were not compensated for losses caused by the sudden change in their way of life. Many were obliged to dispose of their livestock at a sacrifice and use the small amounts they received for their land and chattel for living expenses while in search of new homes or means of livelihood. Less than 10 percent of these families were able to acquire other lands and reestablish themselves in the livestock industry.⁵⁸

The Tulalip Ammunition Terminal was established in the state of Washington, when 2,203 acres of cut-over timber lands belong-

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ing to individual Indians was purchased for military purposes at a cost of \$47,538. Most of the area was potential farm land.⁵⁹

The Navy Department leased 800 acres of land for an airport for which the Palm Springs Reservation in California received \$330 a year for a quarter-section. Another eighty acres was leased for a rifle range at a fee of \$160 per year. On Carson Indian Agency in Nevada, the Navy Department leased thirty acres of lakeshore land on the Pyramid Lake Reservation for military purposes at an annual rental fee of \$10.00. These tribal lands were to be returned when they were no longer needed by the navy.⁶⁰

Even the Indian tribes in Alaska were drastically affected by the war. Army camps were established which greatly affected the economy and the lives of the Aleuts, Eskimos, and the Athapascan Indians of the Yukon-Tanana region. As thousands of army personnel and civilian workers moved into the region, many of the natives gave up hunting, trapping, and reindeer herding to work in the construction camps as wage workers.

Adding to the insult of the loss of Indian land and livelihood, civilian workers and servicemen sold or gave liquor to the villagers and contributed to the delinquency of young women; property was stolen or destroyed; animals were slaughtered for sport.⁶¹

Indian Agricultural Contributions

From the standpoint of agricultural resources and manpower, Indians of the United States made a remarkable contribution to the war. Notwithstanding the great drain of the best manpower away from the reservations, Indians increased the production of food and other essential agricultural products for the market, thus adding directly to the nation's war supply. A few examples illustrate the magnitude of this contribution.

American Indians, who constituted about one-quarter of one percent of the nation's population, sold enough beef, pork, mutton, and poultry in 1944 to supply rations for 233,365 soldiers for one year; enough cereal for 353,204 soldiers; enough potatoes for 45,418; enough eggs for 65,938; enough fresh fruit for 27,938; and enough butterfat for 34,890 people. Indians marketed enough wool in 1944 to supply all the clothing requirements for 21,615 soldiers. In addition to their own reservation needs in 1944, Indians canned 3,309,442 quarts and dried 765,121 pounds of fruit and vegetables, and stored 9,177,466 pounds of food.⁶²



Many Oklahoma Indians, such as John Juby (center) seen here at Fort Sill in 1940, trained with the Oklahoma National Guard and the Forty-fifth Infantry Division (Courtesy Forty-fifth Infantry Division Museum, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma).

Use of Indian Forests and Sawmills

Lumber was a critical material throughout the war and during the later stages it was designated by the War Production Board as one of a half-dozen critical materials. The contribution of Indian forest and range resources to the winning of the war was invaluable.

In 1939 the volume of marketable timber on Indian lands was estimated at nearly forty billion board feet. During the period from July 1, 1928, to December 31, 1944, the total cut from these forests was nearly seven billion board feet, an average of 425 million board feet annually or slightly more than one percent of the 1939 marketable volume. These figures indicate that the allowable cut in converting virgin timber to a managed forest was being maintained, but that any unrestrained increase in cut during the war emergency might have jeopardized the future welfare of these forests.⁶³

Three sawmills operated by Indians produced lumber for war use. The largest of these was on the Menominee Reservation and had been in operation for many years. In spite of manpower and equipment shortages, it maintained its normal production of about

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twenty million feet annually. An Indian-operated mill on the Red Lake Reservation produced six to eight million board feet annually during the war.⁶⁴

Use of Indian Range Lands

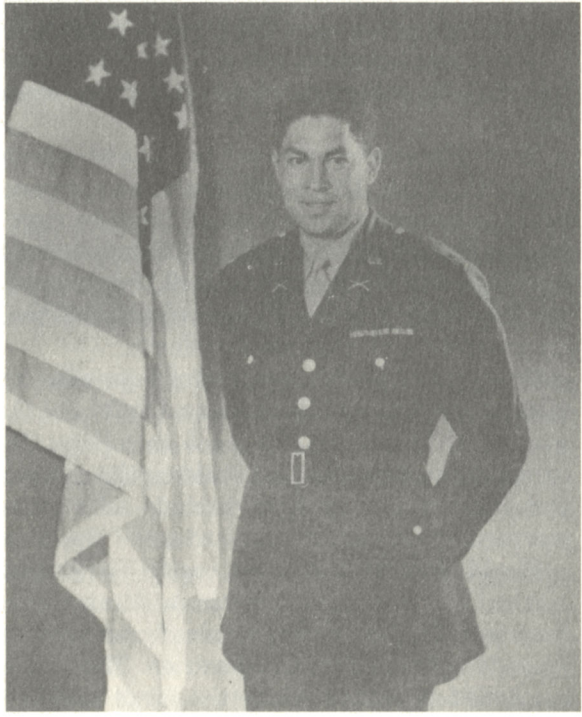
Before the war a high percentage of the forty million acres of Indian range land was being used for grazing. During the national emergency every reasonable effort was made to increase its use and to obtain full utilization consistent with proper range management. In order to increase the production of meat, Indians increased their own herds and made available for non-Indian use the range that was temporarily in excess of their own needs. The importance of these Indian range lands can be measured by the number of cattle they supported, either throughout the year or during the seasons when they were suitable for grazing. For example, the number of cattle grazed in fiscal year 1941 was 775,000 and in calendar year 1944 the number increased to 890,000.

As a result of wartime emergency measures, however, there was a serious deterioration of existing Indian-owned forests and range as there was neither the manpower nor the money to provide the minimum maintenance necessary to keep these improvements in usable condition.⁶⁵

Mobilization of Mineral Resources

Oversight of the mineral resources on Indian lands was the responsibility of the Indian Service, which leased and sold minerals on Indian lands during the war. They issued permits and leases under which vast areas were explored for needed minerals. They also authorized grants and rights-of-way which were required by other government agencies and war plants in connection with the discovery, development, and transportation of materials derived from both Indian and non-Indian lands.⁶⁶

The principal essential war minerals produced from Indian lands were lead, zinc, oil, gas, and to a lesser extent, copper, vanadium, asbestos, gypsum and coal. After Pearl Harbor, the Indian Service issued more than 3,500 oil and gas leases and numerous prospecting permits, including several in Oklahoma, for new reserves of lead and zinc ores. An ore-commingling plan was approved to increase production of low-grade ores and isolate high-cost ores in the lead and zinc mines on Indian lands of the Tri-State District. Tribal coal deposits were sold to the Defense Plant Corporation for use in coking coal in Texas steel plants. A Navajo



Lieutenant Ernest Childers, a Creek, was one of two Oklahoma Indian recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor (Taken from Indians at Work; photo by U.S. Army).

oil and gas lease was assigned to the United States when a deep test well revealed the presence of helium gas. Uranium mining was begun on the Navajo Reservation near Lukachukai.⁶⁷

Conclusion

American Indians served in all theatres of World War II and the conflict took a great toll. More that 480 Indians were killed and more than 671 were wounded. More than ninety-three of those killed were from Oklahoma; at least 119 Oklahoma Indians were wounded in the conflict.⁶⁸ Many Indians were prisoners of war, some in the Philippines after the fall of Bataan and Corregidor and others on Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

The Office of Indian Affairs recorded among American Indians seventy-one Air Medal awards, fifty-one Silver Stars, forty-seven Bronze Star Medals, thirty-four Distinguished Flying Crosses, and two Congressional Medals of Honor.⁶⁹

When American Indians came home after the war they found little public pride in their accomplishments and few employment

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opportunities. The situation worsened among the Navajo and Hopi, for example, in 1947 when a great blizzard hit the area. To alleviate the situation, the government started moving the Navajo and Hopi to major cities where it was hoped they would obtain jobs.

This policy of "relocation" came to be standard policy by the late 1940s and early 1950s. Indians were given a one-way bus or train ticket to major cities. Relocated families were offered assistance in getting settled and finding jobs. Some succeeded, but for many the free ride merely meant a shift from one pocket of poverty to another. Some like Ira Hayes, who scaled the heights of Iwo Jima, plummeted to alcoholism and death.

Congress passed a number of laws after the war that provided certain benefits for all veterans. Under the G.I. Bill, veterans were entitled to one year of school or college. But since the average school grade for an Indian child on the reservation was grade eight and there were no high schools on reservations, most Indian veterans could not take advantage of the benefit.

World War II was very costly for Indian people, but it also marked the beginning of nationwide awareness of the plight of the American Indian. Great strides have been made in the last forty years to upgrade Indian education. That these efforts have greatly succeeded is evidenced by the large number of Indian educators and professionals who are contributing to all aspects of American society in 1991 and 1992.

Although non-Indians have either forgotten or were never aware of the great sacrifices and outstanding contributions of American Indians during World War II, Indians themselves have not forgotten. Veterans are always honored at Indian pow wows. Special songs to honor veterans and to show patriotism have become an integral part of modern Indian celebrations. Indian veterans, who traditionally do not call attention to themselves or their feats, are buried in full-scale military ceremonies along with their medals, of which both friends and family were often unaware.

Where are the books that herald the names of these American Indian heroes of World War II? Who remembers their great contributions in keeping the world safe for democracy? Where are the names of Oklahoma Indians preserved in bronze for all school children to know how valiantly and unselfishly they served their country?

Oklahoma Indians in World War II

Two Oklahoma Indians, Lt. Jack C. Montgomery, a Cherokee, and Lt. Ernest Childers, a Creek, were awarded the **Congressional Medal of Honor**. Both men were members of the Forty-fifth Infantry Division.⁷⁰

Oklahoma Indians awarded the **Silver Star** were Lt. William Sixkiller, Jr., Cherokee; Lt. James Sulphur, Creek; Lt. Richard Griffin, Cherokee; Capt. Joseph Woody Cochran, Cherokee; Sgt. Edmond Hoyt Massey, Choctaw; Pfc. Theodore S. Brunt, Osage; Pfc. Timothy Tallchief, Osage; Lt. G.V. Labadie, Jr., Osage; Sgt. Jesse R. Coffey, Comanche-Delaware; and Lt. Jack C. Montgomery, Cherokee.⁷¹

Oklahoma Indians receiving the **Distinguished Flying Cross** were Lt. Richard Balenti, Cheyenne-Haida; Lt. Alfred Houser, Apache; S/Sgt. Albert Lopez, Delaware; T/Sgt. Harold E. Rogers, Seneca; S/Sgt. William Comfort, Cherokee; S/Sgt. Lewis Lacher, Chickasaw; Capt. Meech Tahsequah, Comanche; T/Sgt. Joseph E. Cheshewalla, Osage; Capt. Woody Cochran, Cherokee; Capt. Leaford Bearskin, Wyandotte; S/Sgt. Jesse R. Coffey, Comanche-Delaware; and T/Sgt. Delray Echohawk, Pawnee.⁷²

Oklahoma Indians awarded the **Air Medal** were S/Sgt. Cornelius L. Wakolee, Potawatomi; Lt. John Cook, Creek; Sgt. Cloyd I. Gooday, Apache; T/Sgt. Kent C. Ware, Kiowa; Lt. Meyers Wahnee, Comanche; S/Sgt. John Lee Redeagle, Quapaw; S/Sgt. Albert Lopez, Delaware; Lt. John C. Dirickson, Osage; T/Sgt. Harold E. Rogers, Seneca; S/Sgt. William Comfort, Cherokee; S/Sgt. Lewis Lacher, Chickasaw; S/Sgt. Kenneth King, Wyandotte; Lt. Edward E. Tinker, Osage; T/Sgt. Joseph E. Cheshewalla, Osage; T/Sgt. Wheeler Gayton, Ponca; Lt. Earl Bradley, Cherokee; Capt. Meech Tahsequah, Comanche; Capt. Leaford Bearskin, Wyandotte; Capt. Joseph Woody Cochran, Cherokee; S/Sgt. Jesse R. Coffey, Comanche-Delaware; and Lt. Charles E. Harris, Pawnee.⁷³

Lt. Gilmore C. Daniel, an Osage from Oklahoma, was awarded both the **Distinguished Flying Cross** (British) and the **Distinguished Service Order** (British).

Oklahoma Indians awarded the **Bronze Medal** were Pfc. Danny B. Marshall, Creek; T/5 Calvin Dailey, Otoe; Pfc. John W. Kionut, Caddo; Lt. James M. Ware, Osage; Pvt. Houston Stevens, Kickapoo; and Cpl. Lundreth Palmer, Kiowa.

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Capt. Emery Ward, Choctaw, won the **Distinguished Service Cross**; Sgt. Delray Echohawk, Pawnee, was awarded the **Soldier's Medal**.⁷⁴

The **Purple Heart** was awarded to the following: Rudolph Allen, Tonkawa; Oland Kemble, Ponca; Levi Horsechief, Pawnee; Marcellus Choteau, Kaw; Gale New Moon, Ponca; Lawrence Good Fox, Jr., Pawnee; James Armstrong, Jr., Caddo-Cheyenne; Francis Bates, Arapaho; Harold S. Beard, Cheyenne-Arapaho; Rubin Bent, Quapaw-Cheyenne; Oliver Black, Cheyenne; Richard Boynton, Jr., Cheyenne-Arapaho; Roy Bullcoming, Cheyenne; Richard Curtis, Jr., Cheyenne; William M. Fletcher, Cheyenne; Paul Goodbear, Cheyenne; John Greaney, Jr., Cheyenne; Charles F. Gurrier, Sioux-Cheyenne; William L. Hawk, Cheyenne; James Holland, Jr., Arapaho; Darwin Lone Elk, Cheyenne; Henry Mann, Cheyenne; Edward B. Mule, Cheyenne; Roy Night Walking, Cheyenne; Lee Old Camp, Jr., Cheyenne-Arapaho; Willie Orange, Cheyenne; Elmer C. Surveyor, Cheyenne; George Swallow, Cheyenne; Everett Sweezy, Arapaho-Oneida; William Tallbird, Jr., Cheyenne; Harvey West, Cheyenne; Solus B. Lewis, Creek; Isaac McCurtain, Choctaw; and Luther King, Choctaw.

Also Richmond J. Larney, Seminole; Houston Palmer, Creek; Jacob Fish, Five Civilized Tribes; Chester Underwood, Five Civilized Tribes; Henry N. Greenwood, Chickasaw; Tom Fixico, Creek; Joe Fixico, Creek; John P. Lowe, Creek; Jack Bruner, Creek; Danny Marshall, Creek; Munzie Barnett, Creek; Sampson Harjo, Creek; Martin Mitchell, Creek; William M. Beaver, Creek; Sam McCann, Choctaw; Daniel Phillips, Jr., Creek; Franklin Gritts, Cherokee; Cornelius L. Wakolee, Potawatomi; Jack Montgomery, Cherokee; Calvin Daily, Otoe; Robert Hoag, Caddo-Delaware; Robert L. Templeton, Pawnee; Jesse B. Thompson, Choctaw; James R. Hattensty, Choctaw; Solomon Roberts, Choctaw; Ersa H. Wallace, Choctaw; J.D. Walker, Seminole; Miller Yahola, Seminole; Johnson Davis, Seminole; and Amos Davis, Seminole.

Also Harding Big Bow, Kiowa; Edward Mr. Rodgers, Quapaw; Rudolph Akoneto, Jr., Kiowa; Kenneth Aunuquoe, Kiowa; Hubert Dennis Beaver, Delaware-Shawnee; Samuel W. Chaat, Comanche; Clifford Chebahtah, Comanche; Edward Clark, Comanche; Leonard Cozad, Kiowa; Hugh Doyebi, Kiowa; Noah Horsechief, Wichita; Laomont Howry, Comanche; Rickey Kaulaity, Kiowa; Samuel Kalulay, Kiowa; William Kaulay, Kiowa; Robert Komesataddle, Kiowa; Wayne L. Miller, Wichita; Wilson B. Palmer,

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Kiowa; Wilbur Parker, Comanche; Frederick E. Parton, Caddo; Pascal C. Poolaw, Kiowa; Melvin G. Queton, Kiowa; Virgil Queton, Kiowa; Winston Rose, Wichita; Don Shemayme, Caddo; Claude Shirley, Caddo; Chester Silverhorn, Kiowa; Reuben Topaum, Kiowa; Kent C. Ware, Kiowa; Pressley Ware, Kiowa; Robert Yeah-pau, Kiowa; Raymond Woodard, Apache; Thomas Chapman, Jr., Pawnee; Samuel Batties, Choctaw; Samuel Marshall, Creek; Robert H. Colbert, Jr., Creek; Andrew Roberts, Pawnee; Jacob Moses, Pawnee; Jesse Howell, Pawnee; James G. Cleghorn, Otoe; Edison DeRoin, Otoe; and Calvin Arkeketa, Otoe.⁷⁵

Others who received the **Purple Heart** were Jimmy Black, Otoe; Ernest Black, Otoe; Jonas Hartico, Otoe; Rufus Jeans, Otoe; Bill Pipestem, Otoe; Pershing White, Otoe; Theodore Buffalo, Otoe; Renest J. Kekahbah, Kaw; William A. Harris, Jr., Pawnee; Joseph E. Cheshewalla, Osage; Edmond Hoyt Massey, Choctaw; William T. Snake, Shawnee; Kern W. Jones, Choctaw; Robert Billings, Creek; Freeland Douglas, Creek; Noah Falling, Cherokee; Wilson Grimes, Choctaw; Jim Hair, Cherokee; Henry McEwin, Shawnee; Rex Riddle, Choctaw; Lloyd Yellowhorse, Pawnee; Mose Harjo, Creek; Bill Hummingbird, Cherokee; Ben Parris, Cherokee; Bennie Quinton, Cherokee; Bonnie Impson, Choctaw; Sgt. Harry Mithlo, Apache; and S/Sgt. Jesse R. Coffey, Comanche-Delaware.

Also Capt. Joseph Woody Cochran, Cherokee; Sgt. Delray Echohawk, Pawnee; Sgt. Brummett Echohawk, Pawnee; Everett Thompson, Cheyenne-Arapaho; Pvt. Paul Red Bird Bitchenen, Cheyenne-Arapaho; Philip Brokey, Osage; Cpl. George A. Noble, Jr., Osage; Sgt. Theodore S. Brunt, Osage; Lt. Adelburt W. Bruce, Jr., Osage; Pfc. Timothy Tallchief, Osage; Lt. George V. Labadie, Jr., Osage; Harry Guy, Kiowa; Matthew Hawzipta, Kiowa; Jonathan Hoag, Caddo-Delaware; Gilbert Montoboy, Kiowa; Earl Palmer, Kiowa; Vincent Schaffer, Kiowa; Arthur Silverhorn, Kiowa; Neil Blue Back, Ponca; George Little Sun, Pawnee; Floyd Rice, Pawnee; Leonard Leading Fox, Pawnee; Chauncey Matlock, Pawnee; Philip Gover, Pawnee; Grant Gover, Pawnee; Sam Carson, Otoe; Frank Carson, Otoe; Drew Little Warrior, Ponca; Willie Snake, Ponca; Louis Bowker, Kaw; David Woods, Pawnee; Gilbert Curtis, Cheyenne-Arapaho; and Jack Hickman, Choctaw.⁷⁶

Oklahoma Indian **prisoners of war** were Charles Howling Crane, Cheyenne; Bruce Klinekole, Apache; William Glenn Martin, Osage; John C. Dirickson, Osage; Meyers Wahnee, Comanche; Lawrence Snake, Delaware-Shawnee; Cornelius Gregory, Creek;

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Joseph Blackman, Cheyenne-Arapaho; George Antelope, Cheyenne-Arapaho; Ben Grayson, Creek; Chauncy Calvin, Choctaw; Silas C. Wolf, Chickasaw; William Sarty, Creek; Osborne L. Blanche, Jr., Choctaw; James Hornett, Cherokee; Lewis West, Cherokee; Gilmore C. Daniels, Osage; Ishmal Quinton, Osage; Alec Mathews, Pawnee; James Allen, Seneca; Merrill Bevenue, Creek; Edwin Mathison, Cherokee; Raymond Reeve, Delaware; Stanley Reuben, Sac and Fox; Robert Thompson, Chickasaw; Soldier Sanders, Cherokee; and Charles Captain, Shawnee.⁷⁷

Oklahoma Indians **killed in action** in World War II were Harold E. Rogers, Seneca; Grant Gover, Pawnee; Dennis W. Bluejacket, Shawnee-Cherokee; George Choate, Jr., Cheyenne-Arapaho; Charles Edward Harris, Pawnee; Reuben Mashunkashey, Osage; Mosed Red Eagle, Osage; Mathson Whiteshield, Cheyenne-Arapaho; Jim N. Chuculate, Five Civilized Tribes; Charles E. Sam, Five Civilized Tribes; Zack L. Smith, Ponca; George D. Coons, Pawnee; Cornelius Hardman, Jr., Ponca; James L. Douglas, Creek; David Cross, Jr., Caddo-Cheyenne; Wesley Osage, Cheyenne; Cyrus Parker, Cheyenne; Kingsley Allrunner, Cheyenne; Wayne Beartrack, Cheyenne; Nelson Bearbow, Cheyenne; Levi Hosetosavit, Comanche; Rayson Billy, Choctaw; Davis Pickens, Choctaw; Dan Roebuck, Choctaw; Lewis L. Wade, Choctaw; and John Floyd Wall, Choctaw.

Also Edmond Perry, Choctaw; John Carney, Choctaw; Johnson Harjo, Seminole; Charles W. Imotichey, Chickasaw; Hershel L. Malone, Chickasaw; Orus Baxter, Jr., Creek; James Sulphur, Creek; Willie Scott, Creek; Charles G. Keighley, Osage; Owen Mombi, Choctaw; Whitney Holata, Seminole; Sam Fixico, Seminole; Johnnie Buckneer, Creek; James Paul Fireshaker, Ponca; John Wallace, Choctaw; Andrew Brokeshoulder, Choctaw; T.P. Hattensty, Choctaw; Billy Jack, Choctaw; Paul B. Blanche, Choctaw; Osborne L. Blanche, Choctaw; Ray Bohanon, Choctaw; Aaron Cusher, Choctaw; Hanson H. Jones, Choctaw; Walter D. McClure, Choctaw; Aaron Watkins, Choctaw; LeRoy McNoel, Choctaw; Marion Ruling Harris, Sac and Fox; Andrew Warrior, Shawnee; and Lee Edward Ahchekeo, Sac and Fox.

Also Thomas P. Carter, Sac and Fox; Paul K. Stevens, Kickapoo; Donald Beaver, Caddo; Raymond Brown, Wichita; Thomas Chockpoyah, Comanche; Matthew Hawzipta, Kiowa; Lyndreth Palmer, Kiowa; Melvin Myers, Comanche; Louis Rivas, Comanche; Ben Trevino, Jr., Comanche; Gilbert Vidana, Comanche; Joe Guoladdle,

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Kiowa; Nathaniel Bitseedy, Kiowa-Apache; Dan Madrano, Jr., Caddo; Forrest Tabbyyetchy, Comanche; Mont Bruce Williams, Caddo; John Stevens, Choctaw; Lewis Mitchell, Creek; Joseph J. King, Ottawa; Johnnie F. Gokey, Sac and Fox; Joseph G. Bratton, Osage; Bennett H. Griffin, Osage; Clabe C. Mackey, Osage; Joseph L. LaSarge, Osage; Harold L. McKinley, Osage; Rudolph McKinley, Osage; Frank Riddle, Jr., Osage; Milton Otis Ririe, Osage; Harold B. Smalley, Osage; Eugene E. Slaughter, Osage; Clarence Tinker, Jr., Osage; Robert E. Warrior, Osage; Elmer C. Weinrich, Osage; William Silas Coons, Pawnee; Charles Red Bird, Cheyenne; William Sixkiller, Jr., Cherokee; Henry W. Conowoop, Comanche; and Floyd Primeaux, Ponca.⁷⁸

Additional Oklahoma Indian deaths in World War II were Philip Coon, Creek; Henry Nolatubby, Choctaw; Quanah Fields, Cherokee; James Willis Bench, Cherokee; Billy McWhirt, Osage; Joe Tuggle, Osage; Henry Ben Caudill, Jr., Osage; Sequoyah Downing, Cherokee; Wirtner Ward, Cherokee; Luke Vaught, Osage; Timothy Tallchief, Osage; Leo S. Brunt, Osage; Jack LeFlore Brown, Cherokee-Choctaw; Paul Bitchenen, Cheyenne-Arapaho; James Kingfisher, Cherokee; James Grady Roberts, Choctaw; Earl Bradley, Cherokee; Anthony C. Morris, Osage; Harry Mithlo, Apache; Eastman Spencer, Caddo-Seminole; Charlie Edwards, Caddo; Jack Hickman, Choctaw; Robert Leroy Millhallin, Shawnee; Howard Battise, Alabama; Joseph Millhallin, Shawnee; Ben Clemons, Chickasaw; Kenneth Harrison, Delaware-Cherokee; Paul Buffalo, Quapaw; Wilson Odom, Creek; Hiawatha Tuggle, Cherokee; Jesse Woolworth, Arapaho; Woodrow Cook, Creek; Walter Moore, Otoe; Eugene Peters, Pawnee-Otoe; Gareth (Bill) Shaw, Pawnee; Thomas Cornell, Creek; William Hanks, Jr., Cherokee; Luther B. Kemble, Ponca; and Charles Dushane, Jr., Quapaw.⁷⁹

ENDNOTES

* Dr. Duane K. Hale taught at Navajo Community College and the University of Minnesota before returning to Oklahoma in 1981. In the last ten years he has worked with a large number of tribes both locally and nationally, as a consultant and as an instructor of a series of workshops sponsored by the University of Oklahoma's American Indian Institute, entitled "Researching and Writing Tribal Histories."

¹ *Indians at Work*, February, 1942, 14.

² *Indians at Work*, January, 1942, 13.

³ U.S., Department of the Interior, *Indians in the War* (Chicago: Haskell Printing Co., 1945), 1; "The World of the American Indian," in *National Geographic*, 1979, 368.

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⁴ Doris Atkinson Paul, *The Navajo Code Talkers* (Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1973); *They Talked Navajo* (Window Rock, Arizona: Navajo Tribal Museum, 1971); Syble Lagerquist and Philip Johnston, *The Navajo Code Talkers* (Billings, Montana: Council for Indian Education, 1975, 1983); Broderick H. Johnson, *Navajos and World War II* (Tsaile, Arizona: Navajo Community College Press, 1977); Kawano, *Kenji Warriors* (Flagstaff, Arizona: Northland Publishing, 1990); Alison R. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

- ⁵ *New York Times*, October 23, 1942.
⁶ *Indians at Work*, October-November-December, 1942, 10.
⁷ *New York Times*, December 28, 1941.
⁸ *Indians at Work*, July-August-September, 1942.
⁹ *Ibid.*, February, 1942, 8.
¹⁰ *Indians in the War*, 1.
¹¹ *New York Times*, October 6, 1940, October 16, 1940.
¹² *Indians at Work*, February, 1942, 11.
¹³ *Indians at Work*, March, 1942, 17.
¹⁴ *Ibid.*, July-August-September, 1942, 18.
¹⁵ *Ibid.*, March, 1942, 21.
¹⁶ *Ibid.*, February, 1942, 29.
¹⁷ *New York Times*, May 12, 1941.
¹⁸ *Indians at Work*, March, 1942, 21.
¹⁹ *Ibid.*, February, 1942, 26.
²⁰ *New York Times*, June 6, 1940.
²¹ *Indians at Work*, October-November-December, 1942, 20.
²² *Ibid.*, February, 1942.
²³ *Ibid.*, February, 1942, 25.
²⁴ *New York Times*, March 10, 1941.
²⁵ *Ibid.*, December 30, 1941.
²⁶ *Ibid.*, February 28, 1941.
²⁷ *Ibid.*, December 27, 1941.
²⁸ *Indians at Work*, February, 1942.
²⁹ *The Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City), February 8, 1942.
³⁰ Laurence C. Glass, "A Short History of the Indians in the U.S. Military," March 1, 1982, 9.
³¹ *New York Times*, October 17, 1940.
³² *Ibid.*, October 14, 1940.
³³ *Ibid.*, August 5, 1941.
³⁴ *Ibid.*, May 15, 1941, November 25, 1941.
³⁵ *Indians at Work*, February, 1942, 26.
³⁶ *Ibid.*, May-June, 1942, 27.
³⁷ *The Daily Oklahoman*, February 8, 1942.
³⁸ *Indians at Work*, July-August-September, 1942, 21.
³⁹ *The Daily Oklahoman*, August 30, 1942.
⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, December 12, 1942.
⁴¹ *Tulsa (Oklahoma) World*, May 1, 1942.
⁴² *Indians at Work*, February, 1942, 25.
⁴³ *Washington Star*, June 1, 1943.
⁴⁴ (Oklahoma City) *Oklahoman and Times*, July 12, 1943.
⁴⁵ Telephone interview with William Karty, February 20, 1992.

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- ⁴⁷ *Indians at Work*, March, 1942, 17.
- ⁴⁸ *Native Americans and the Military: Today and Yesterday* (Ft. McPherson, Georgia), March, 1984, 18.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 35.
- ⁵² *New York Times*, December 18, 1941.
- ⁵³ *The Indian School Journal* (Chilocco, Oklahoma), October 7–12, 1944.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, December 30, 1944–January 6, 1945, 1.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, January 12–20, 1945, 6.
- ⁵⁶ *New York Times*, February 6, 1943.
- ⁵⁷ “Departmental War Histories,” unpublished manuscript, 1945, National Archives, Washington, D.C., Box 7, 12E3:22/20/C, 31.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 39.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, 43.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, 60.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.
- ⁶⁸ *Indians in the War*, 16-24, 30-41.
- ⁶⁹ Glass, “A Short History of the Indians,” 9.
- ⁷⁰ *Indians at Work*, November, 1945, 9.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, November-December, 1944.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, May-June, 1944, September-October, 1944.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, November, 1945, 10.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, November-December, 1944, May-June, 1944, August-September, 1944.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, November, 1945, 16.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, July-August, 1944, September, 1944, November-December, 1944.