



**T H E M I L I T A R Y C O A L I T I O N**

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Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
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19 September 2018

The Hon. Richard C. Shelby, Chair  
Committee on Rules and Administration  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Amy Klobuchar, Ranking  
Committee on Rules and Administration  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Gregg Harper, Chair  
Committee on House Administration  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Robert A. Brady, Ranking  
Committee on House Administration  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Klobuchar and  
Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady:

The Military Coalition (TMC), which represents more than 5.5 million current and former uniformed service members, veterans, and their families and survivors, is writing to ask that you direct the Smithsonian Institution to include the logo of the U.S. Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the design of its to-be-constructed National Native American Veterans Memorial.

In late June 2018 the Smithsonian announced that it had approved the design for a National Native American Veterans Memorial, to be constructed on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian. The design includes the logos of the five armed services, omitting both the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), both of whose members are veterans under federal law.

The Smithsonian has indicated that its opposition to including the USPHS and NOAA logos in the memorial design is occasioned by the language in the memorial's authorizing legislation (PL 103-384) that refers to the "service of Native Americans in the Armed Forces of the United States." On its website, however, the Smithsonian refers to this as a memorial to "Native Americans in the military," and focuses on the term "military," rather than the term "armed forces." Indeed, then-Rep. Craig Thomas (R-WY), principal sponsor of HR 2135 in the House, closed his introductory remarks on the bill with "the hope that all our colleagues will join us in honoring our Native American veterans." We believe the language in the law is flexible enough to allow the logos of the USPHS and NOAA to be placed on the memorial.

It is clear from the historical record that officers in both the US Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have consistently been part of the military forces on our country. President Woodrow Wilson's Executive Order on 3 April 1917 made the USPHS a part of the military forces of the United States during World War I, and USPHS officers were detailed to the Army, Navy, and Coast Guard.

Beginning on 23 December 1941—less than three weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor—officers of the USPHS serving on Coast Guard ships and with other Coast Guard units were incorporated into the Naval forces of the United States. During World War II, 663 USPHS officers served as part of the Coast Guard, including serving on four cutters that were lost to enemy action. USPHS doctors were assigned to each of the Army's Service Commands. Fifteen USPHS officers were assigned to the China-Burma-India theater of war. Others supported the Normandy landings on D-Day in 1944; still others were directly involved in the amphibious landings on Japanese-defended islands in the Pacific theater of war, including Iwo Jima, Saipan, and the Philippines.

A USPHS officer served on the G-5 staff at Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, in Europe with the rank of major general. A PHS officer served on General MacArthur's staff as an aide-de-camp, while another PHS officer served on the personal staff of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz.

Five USPHS medical officers serving in the Philippines were taken prisoner by the Japanese, and two of them died in captivity. A total of fourteen USPHS officers died on active duty during WW II, including six who were killed in enemy action. Three USPHS officers were awarded Distinguished Service Medals for their wartime service; seven received Purple Heart Medals; ten received Legions of Merit; and nine were awarded Bronze Star Medals.

On 21 June 1945, President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9575, which declared the "Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service to be a military service and branch of the land and naval forces of the United States during the period of the present war."

At least 171 USPHS officers served in Vietnam on surgical teams and in groups controlling malaria and infectious diseases.

Almost 900 USPHS officers have served with U.S. Military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

USPHS officers have provided medical care to the Coast Guard for more than 200 years, wearing Coast Guard uniforms and serving on Coast Guard cutters and at shore stations. A USPHS officer serves as Surgeon General of the Coast Guard.

USPHS officers are veterans under federal law (42 U.S. Code 213d), entitled to all rights and privileges thereof, including the right to burial in a Veterans Affairs cemetery. They participate fully in the Memorial Day and Veterans Day events at Arlington National Cemetery and regularly march in veterans' parades.

Some 800 Native Americans currently serve on active duty in the USPHS, making up over twelve percent of the force--the highest percentage of Native Americans of any of the seven

federal uniformed services. More than few Native American USPHS officers have achieved flag rank, and they serve with distinction throughout our government.

The NOAA Corps was established in 1970, though its origins date back to 1917 when the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey (C&GS) Corps was established. The C&GS Corps became the United States Environmental Science Services Administration (ESSA) Commissioned Officer Corps in 1965 when the C&GS was transferred to the newly established ESSA and finally became the NOAA Corps when ESSA was reorganized to become the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in 1970.

The C&GS Corps was established on May 22, 1917, giving C&GS Corps officers a commissioned status. Before World War I ended in November 1918, over half of all C&GS Corps officers had served in the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, or U.S. Marine Corps, performing duty as mine laying officers, artillery orienteering officers, navigators aboard troop transports, intelligence officers, and as officers on the staff of the American Expeditionary Force.

When the United States entered World War II, the C&GS Corps again suspended its peacetime activities to support the war. Three C&GS ships were transferred to the U.S. Navy, all compiling illustrious records from the Aleutian Islands to Guadalcanal. Over half of all C&GS Corps officers were transferred to the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, or U.S. Army Air Forces, seeing duty in Europe, North Africa, the Pacific, and North America as artillery surveyors, hydrographers, amphibious engineers, beachmasters, and in a wide variety of technical positions. They also served as reconnaissance surveyors for a worldwide aeronautical charting effort, and a C&GS Corps officer was the first commanding officer of the Army Air Forces Aeronautical Chart Plant at St. Louis, Missouri.

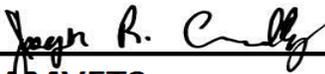
The National Native American Veterans Memorial is a worthy effort to honor all Native Americans who have served our country in uniform and who proudly carry the status of “veteran” under federal law. We, the undersigned members of The Military Coalition, believe that such a memorial is a one-time opportunity to honor all of these veterans and that it will not properly do so unless the logos of both the US Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are part of the design of the memorial.

Respectfully,

The Military Coalitions  
(signatures enclosed)

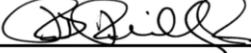
  
Air Force Association

  
Air Force Sergeants Association

  
AMVETS

  
Army Aviation Association of America

  
AMSUS, the Society of Federal Health Professionals

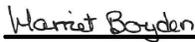
  
Association of the United States Navy

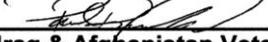
  
Commissioned Officers Assn. of the US Public Health Service, Inc

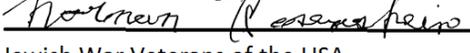
  
CWOA, US Coast Guard

  
Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the US

  
Fleet Reserve Association

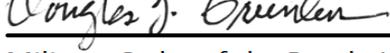
  
Gold Star Wives of America

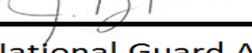
  
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America

  
Jewish War Veterans of the USA

  
Marine Corps League

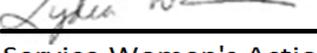
  
Military Officers Association of America

  
Military Order of the Purple Heart

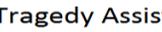
  
National Guard Assn. of the US

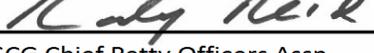
  
National Military Family Association

  
Non Commissioned Officers Assn. of the United States of America

  
Service Women's Action Network

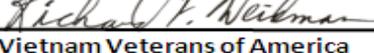
  
The Retired Enlisted Association

  
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors

  
USCG Chief Petty Officers Assn.

  
US Army Warrant Officers Assn.

  
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the US

  
Vietnam Veterans of America

