

# WHY DOES THE SMITHSONIAN IGNORE NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS?



The Smithsonian is planning a secret, not-open-to-the-public, groundbreaking for a memorial to Native American Veterans. Why is it leaving out two groups of Native American veterans?

- Why is the Smithsonian refusing to acknowledge those who became veterans by serving in the US Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration?
- Federal law recognizes the men and women who served in the USPHS and NOAA as veterans, as does the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- USPHS officers provide clinical care for members of the Coast Guard and mental health services for the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.
- Since World War I, USPHS and NOAA officers have served alongside their military colleagues in every war our country has fought.
- USPHS service members provide clinical care for the chronically-underserved Indian Health Service.
- Native Americans often get their annual physicals, dental treatment, routine healthcare, and lifesaving surgeries from men and women in USPHS uniforms.
- Information on the track of hurricanes that threaten the US comes from NOAA missions into the eye of the storm.
- National veterans groups urge that the USPHS and NOAA veterans be included in the Smithsonian's memorial. They include Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, Air Force Association, Air Force Sergeants Association, Association of the US Navy, Military Order of the Purple Heart, National Guard Association, Non-Commissioned Officers Association, The Retired Enlisted Association, Fleet Reserve Association, Marine Corps League, AMVETS, Army Aviation Association of America, Jewish War Veterans, Gold Star Wives of America, Army Warrant Officers Association, Coast Guard Warrant Officers Association, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, Service Women's Action Network, and US Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association. All of these organizations have said publicly that they believe the memorial design should be changed to include USPHS and NOAA veterans.

**We call on Congress** to ask the Smithsonian why it is discriminating against these Native American men and women who have served their country honorably and well.

**We call on Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III** to cease the Smithsonian's discrimination against USPHS and NOAA veterans and to embrace all Native American veterans in the design of the National Native American Veterans Memorial.

**There is time to change the memorial design before it is constructed.** That change should be made now.