



**NATIONAL
AMERICAN
INDIAN
HERITAGE MONTH**

Celebrating
Respect, Culture, and Education

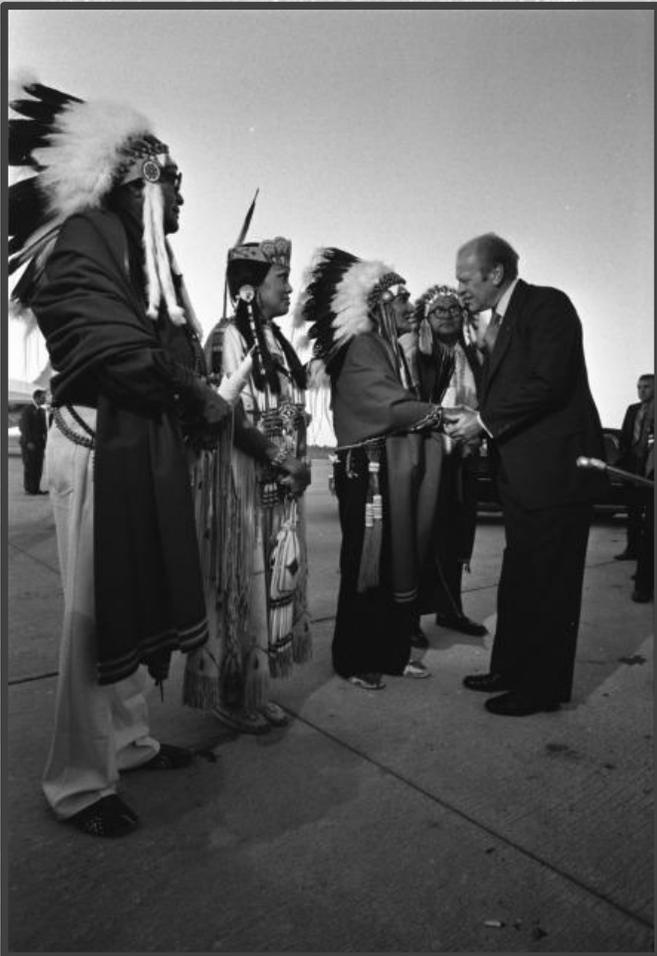


National American Indian Heritage Month



November is National American Indian Heritage Month. The Department of Defense (DoD) joins the Nation in recognizing the rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories of American Indians and Alaskan Natives.

Origin of National American Indian Heritage Month



A Cherokee American Indian, J. C. Elliott-High Eagle, authored the legislation establishing American Indian Awareness Week. It was signed in 1976, making October 10-16 the first official week of national recognition for the American Indian since the Nation's founding.

This set a precedent which was followed by later public laws that expanded the observance to what we now know as National American Indian Heritage Month.

Theme/Presentation

This year's theme is, *Celebrating Respect, Culture, and Education*.

This presentation describes national sovereignty, federally recognized tribes, and highlights—Joe Medicine Crow, Colonel Nicole Aunapu Mann, and Mary Peltola.

Sovereignty/Recognized Tribes

Sovereignty is the right of a nation or group of people to be self-governing. It is the most fundamental concept that defines the relationship between the United States government and the American Indian/Alaskan Native tribal governments.

American Indians and Native Alaskans are U.S. citizens first; they have the additional option of becoming citizens of their tribe or village as enrolled tribal members.

Today, there are 574 federally recognized tribes.

To view the list, go to: <https://www.bia.gov/service/tribal-leaders-directory/federally-recognized-tribes>

Joe Medicine Crow (1 of 3)



Joe Medicine Crow was born in 1913 on the Crow Indian reservation in Montana. Raised by his elders in the tribe's warrior tradition, he learned to master his fears, ride bareback, track game, and withstand extreme cold. He also studied those who had previously distinguished themselves in battle.

He became the first member of his tribe to earn a master's degree, and he left his PhD program to volunteer for service in World War II.

Joe Medicine Crow (2 of 3)

Medicine Crow joined the U.S. Army and became a scout in the 103rd Infantry Division. He credits his grandfathers for giving him the strength to be a warrior. Before each battle, he would paint red stripes on his arms and carry a sacred eagle feather from a Sun Dance medicine man to shield him from harm.

During his European wartime service, he completed each essential task required to designate him a Crow War Chief, thus becoming the last Crow Indian to earn the title. In 1948, he earned the Bronze Star and the prestigious French Legion of Honor for his services.

Joe Medicine Crow (3 of 3)

He served as the Crow tribal historian for more than 50 years. He wrote extensively about Indian history and culture as well as gathered numerous oral histories from older generations. His efforts preserved a large section of Crow history and stories that otherwise would have been lost.

In 2009, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor.



Colonel Nicole Aunapu Mann (1 of 2)

U.S. Marine Corps pilot Nicole Aunapu Mann has become the first American Indian woman to go to space as part of NASA's new crew to the International Space Station.

She is a Wailacki tribal member from the Round Valley Indian Tribes in Northern California.

"I feel very proud," she said. "It's important that we celebrate our diversity and really communicate that specifically to the younger generation."



Colonel Nicole Aunapu Mann (2 of 2)



Mann holds a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and a Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

She is a Marine Corps colonel and has served as a test pilot in the F/A-18 Hornet and Super Hornet.

She deployed twice aboard aircraft carriers in support of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mary Peltola (1 of 2)

Mary Peltola, who is from the Yup'ik tribe, made history as Alaska's first female and Indigenous representative in U.S. Congress.

During her inaugural speech, she said, *"It is the honor of my life to represent Alaska, a place my ancestors and elders have called home for thousands of years, where to this day many people in my community carry forward our traditions of hunting and fishing."*



Photo courtesy of Marc Lester/Anchorage Daily News

Mary Peltola (2 of 2)



Peltola grew up on the Kuskokwim River near Bethel. She was raised by a Nebraskan father and a Yup'ik mother, whose people have fished the area for centuries.

At 6 years old, she began catching salmon commercially with her father. In her mid-20s, after working for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, she won a seat in the state house in Juneau.

In 10 years in the state house, she focused on the Kuskokwim River area, helping to manage a nearby gold-mining project, and advocating for imperiled salmon runs, which are the region's economic arteries.

CONCLUSION

This month we celebrate American Indian and Alaska Natives who serve with great honor, dedication and distinction.

They have built a legacy of courage, professionalism, and selfless service that will inspire future generations.



Prepared by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, Patrick Space Force Base, Florida November 2022

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