



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

OCT 31 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: 2022 National American Indian Heritage Month Observance

The Department recognizes November 1 to November 30, 2022 as National American Indian Heritage Month. During this time, we honor the contributions and sacrifices of American Indians and Alaska Natives serving in the United States military.

This year's theme is "**Celebrating Respect, Culture, and Education.**" American Indians and Alaska Natives include a diverse population of 574 federally recognized Tribal Nations and villages residing in the United States. These communities are not homogenous and have distinctive traditions they celebrate within their tribal cultures. For generations, despite the dire consequences brought to their tribes through European enslavement and civil conflict over land American Indians and Alaska Natives continued to serve, and defend our Nation today.

Although American Indian and Native Alaska Service members comprise one percent of the active duty military population, they serve in the Armed Forces at five times the national average. From serving as scouts and soldiers in the American Revolution to the code talkers of World War I and World War II to the present day, their contribution is invaluable. Brigadier General Douglas S. Lowrey, Commanding General of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, is the only Native American general officer currently serving on active duty in the Army, but represents a long tradition of honorable service by Native American Service members, including 39 Medal of Honor recipients.

As DoD diversifies its talent pools, our defense capabilities are strengthened to meet future operational challenges. Our respect for all cultures and commitment to equitable educational and career opportunities expand the Department's potential resources and broaden our scope across the defense enterprise. I encourage all DoD personnel to recognize and learn more about the American Indian and Alaska Native service to our country and contributions to our success. For resources and help with leading and organizing observances, visit: <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Human-Relations-Toolkit/Special-Observances/#national-american-indian-heritage-month>.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.", is located below the text.

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.