

**National American Indian Heritage Month 2011**

**Facts of the Day**

Dawn Smith

Directorate of Research



DEFENSE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE  
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH

Directed by Dr. Daniel P. McDonald, Director of Research

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## **Preface**

Ms. Dawn Smith is a research editor in the Technology Development & Clearinghouse Management directorate (J-93) at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI). She was responsible for compiling the information contained in this report. Her main research interests involve communication within a culture and the family. Ms. Smith received her Bachelor Degree in Interpersonal/Organizational Communications from the University of Central Florida.

**National American Indian Heritage Month 2011**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Fact</b>	<b>Source</b>
1	Although the first "American Indian Day" was celebrated in May 1916 in New York, the month-long recognition of Native Americans did not happen until 1990 when President George H.W. Bush signed a joint congressional resolution designating November as National American Indian Heritage Month. Since then, the title has expanded to celebrate the heritage, history, art, and traditions of American Indians and Alaska Natives.	<a href="http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/american-indian-heritage.html#ixzz1YmfsGslg">http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/american-indian-heritage.html#ixzz1YmfsGslg</a>
2	The term "Native Americans" refers to any member of the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere.	<a href="#">U.S. Army</a>
3	Currently, there are 565 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and more than 100 state recognized tribes across the United States.	<a href="http://www.bia.gov/FAQs/index.htm">http://www.bia.gov/FAQs/index.htm</a>
4	November is an appropriate month for the observance since it is a time when many American Indians hold fall harvest and world-renewal ceremonies, powwows, dances, and various feasts. The holiday recognizes hundreds of different tribes and approximately 250 languages, and celebrates the history, tradition, and values of American Indians.	<a href="http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/crc/special-emphasis-programs.htm">http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/crc/special-emphasis-programs.htm</a>
5	In World War I, 12,000 American Indians joined the ranks of the armed forces—even though it wasn't until 1924 that Congress granted American Indians U.S. citizenship. Their unique combat abilities and survival skills, which had frustrated opponents for generations, became invaluable to the nation's combat collective.	<a href="http://hnn.us/articles/132893.html">http://hnn.us/articles/132893.html</a>
6	President Barack Obama said, "Since the birth of America, American Indians and Alaska Natives have contributed immeasurably to our country and our heritage, distinguishing themselves as scholars, artists, entrepreneurs, and leaders in all aspects of our society. Native Americans have also served in the United States Armed Forces with honor and distinction, defending the security of our Nation with their lives."	<a href="http://www.army.mil/americanindians/">http://www.army.mil/americanindians/</a>
7	1.9 million American Indians and Alaska Natives live on reservations or other trust lands. Also, 60 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives live in metropolitan areas, the lowest metropolitan percentage of any racial group.	<a href="http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&amp;lvlID=52">http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&amp;lvlID=52</a>

8	The population data from the 2010 United States Census showed significant percentage growth of Native Americans/Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians. The number of Americans identifying themselves as exclusively Native American or Alaska Native increased 18.4 percent in the past 10 years, and the number identifying themselves as exclusively Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander increased 35.4 percent.	<a href="http://www.nativelegalupdate.com/2011/05/articles/census-2010-native-americanalaskan-and-native-hawaiian-populations-show-growth/">http://www.nativelegalupdate.com/2011/05/articles/census-2010-native-americanalaskan-and-native-hawaiian-populations-show-growth/</a>
9	The 2010 Census reports the total population of the United States as just under 309 million. Native Americans/Alaska Natives comprise 0.9 percent of the total, or roughly 2.78 million people.	<a href="http://www.nativelegalupdate.com/2011/05/articles/census-2010-native-americanalaskan-and-native-hawaiian-populations-show-growth/">http://www.nativelegalupdate.com/2011/05/articles/census-2010-native-americanalaskan-and-native-hawaiian-populations-show-growth/</a>
10	The military enlisted Navajo recruits as "code talkers" during World War II because Navajo is an unwritten language of extreme complexity. Thus, they were able to create an undecipherable code. Navajo code talkers were honored for their defense contributions on September 17, 1992 at the Pentagon.	<a href="#">U.S. Navy</a>
11	In November 2010, the Pentagon estimated that nearly 24,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives active duty personnel currently serve across the armed forces.	<a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau</a>
12	President Barack Obama signed the Native American Apology Resolution into law on December 19, 2009. The Apology Resolution states that the United States, "apologizes on behalf of the people of the United States to all Native Peoples for the many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples by citizens of the United States."	<a href="http://nativevotewa.wordpress.com/2009/12/31/president-obama-signs-native-american-apology-resolution/">http://nativevotewa.wordpress.com/2009/12/31/president-obama-signs-native-american-apology-resolution/</a>
13	The National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. is the first national museum dedicated to the preservation, study, and exhibition of the life, languages, literature, history, and arts of Native Americans. Established by an act of Congress in 1989, the museum works in collaboration with the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere to protect and foster their cultures by reaffirming traditions and beliefs, encouraging contemporary artistic expression, and empowering the Indian voice.	<a href="http://www.nmai.si.edu/subpage.cfm?subpage=about">http://www.nmai.si.edu/subpage.cfm?subpage=about</a>
14	On June 2, 1924, Congress enacted the Indian Citizenship Act (also known as the Snyder Act of 1924), which granted citizenship to all Native Americans born in the United States.	<a href="#">Library of Congress</a>

15	In the United States, the federal government recognizes Indian tribes as independent and sovereign powers. Sovereignty is the right of a nation or group of people to be self-governing. Indians are United States citizens and also citizens of their tribes. Like other Americans, Indians are subject to federal laws, but they are not always subject to state laws because Indian reservations are held in trust by the federal government. A government-to-government relationship exists between each sovereign tribe and the U.S. government.	<a href="#">Wisconsin Historical Society</a>
16	Scouting the enemy was recognized as a particular skill of the Native American soldier. Therefore in 1866, the U.S. Army established the Indian Scouts.	<a href="#">Department of Defense</a>
17	More than 42,000 American Indians, 90 percent of them volunteers, fought in Vietnam.	<a href="#">Department of Defense</a>
18	The projected population of American Indians and Alaska Natives, including those of more than one race, on July 1, 2050 will be 8.6 million.	<a href="http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb10ff22.html">http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb10ff22.html</a>
19	The term Alaska Native refers to Alaska's original inhabitants including Aleut, Eskimo, and Indian groups.	<a href="http://www.50states.com/facts/alaska.htm">http://www.50states.com/facts/alaska.htm</a>
20	With a population of less than 350,000 more than 44,000 American Indians served with distinction in both the European and Pacific wars between 1941 and 1945.	<a href="#">Department of Defense</a>
21	During World War II, American Indians invested more than \$50 million in war bonds, and contributed generously to the Red Cross and the Army and Navy Relief societies.	<a href="#">Department of Defense</a>
22	What is a reservation? Indian reservations are areas of land reserved by the federal government as permanent tribal homelands. The United States established its reservation policy for American Indians in 1787. Today, there are 314 reservations.	<a href="http://www.leg.state.or.us/cis/100_question.pdf">http://www.leg.state.or.us/cis/100_question.pdf</a>
23	The term <i>reservation</i> originates from the federal government's act of reserving land for federal purposes. In the United States, there are two kinds of reserved land that are well known—military and Indian.	<a href="http://www.leg.state.or.us/cis/100_question.pdf">http://www.leg.state.or.us/cis/100_question.pdf</a>
24	American Indians have participated with distinction in United States military actions for more than 200 years. Their courage, determination, and fighting spirit were recognized by American military leaders as early as the 18th century.	<a href="http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-1.htm">http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-1.htm</a>

25	When Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr. arrived at Wounded Knee on July 11, 2011 to lay a wreath there, he was the highest ranking official of the United States government to ever visit and memorialize a place of great historic significance to American Indians everywhere.	<a href="http://www.nativenewsnetwork.com/attorney-general-visit-to-wounded-knee.html">http://www.nativenewsnetwork.com/attorney-general-visit-to-wounded-knee.html</a>
26	What is tribal sovereignty? Just like states, tribes have attributes of sovereignty to govern their own territory and internal affairs. The status of tribes as self-governing nations is affirmed and upheld by treaties, case law, and the Constitution. Legal scholars explain that tribes are inherently sovereign, meaning they do not trace their existence to the United States.	<a href="http://www.leg.state.or.us/cis/100_question.pdf">http://www.leg.state.or.us/cis/100_question.pdf</a>
27	Red Fox James, a Blackfeet Indian, rode on horseback from state to state, gathering endorsements from 24 state governments to have a day to honor American Indians. The first American Indian Day was celebrated in May 1916 in New York.	<a href="http://diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/american-indian-heritage-month-facts-figures/">http://diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/american-indian-heritage-month-facts-figures/</a>
28	On May 27, 2011 following President Obama's Memorial Day speech at Arlington National Cemetery, President of the National Congress of American Indians Jefferson Keel and Don Loudner, National Commander of the National American Indian Veterans, placed a multi-colored tribal wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.	<a href="http://www.nativenewsnetwork.com/ncai-president-keel-to-american-indian-wreath-at-the-tomb-of-unknown-soldier.html">http://www.nativenewsnetwork.com/ncai-president-keel-to-american-indian-wreath-at-the-tomb-of-unknown-soldier.html</a>
29	It is well recognized that, historically, Native Americans have the highest record of service per capita when compared to other ethnic groups. The reasons behind this disproportionate contribution are complex and deeply rooted in traditional American Indian culture. In many respects, Native Americans are no different from others who volunteer for military service. They do, however, have distinctive cultural values which drive them to serve their country.	<a href="http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-1.htm">http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-1.htm</a>
30	The Alamo Scouts were a top secret reconnaissance unit that operated in the Pacific during World War II. They performed 108 missions without losing a single man, including two prisoner of war camp raids. They are recognized by the Army as a forerunner of the modern Special Forces. One quarter of the graduates from the first Alamo Scouts training class were American Indian.	<a href="#">United Native America</a>