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From Scouts to Soldiers: The Evolution of Indian Roles in the U.S. Military, 1860-1945

James C. Walker

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FROM SCOUTS TO SOLDIERS: THE EVOLUTION OF INDIAN ROLES IN THE U.S.

MILITARY, 1860-1945

by

JAMES C. WALKER

ABSTRACT

The eighty-six years from 1860-1945 was a momentous one in American Indian history. During this period, the United States fully settled the western portion of the continent. As time went on, the United States ceased its wars against Indian tribes and began to deal with them as potential parts of American society. Within the military, this can be seen in the gradual change in Indian roles from mostly ad hoc forces of scouts and home guards to regular soldiers whose recruitment was as much a part of the United States' war plans as that of any other group. The gradual granting of citizenship to Indians, culminating in the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, played a vital role in resolving the issue of whether Indians were even able to volunteer or enlist for regular service. Being primarily concerned with finding ways to win on the battlefield, the military proved more willing to accept aspects of Indian culture that the U.S. did not generally permit in civilian life, provided it did not interfere with the individual Indian's abilities or duties as a soldier. However, the military was nevertheless a product of the same society that held various prejudices toward Indians, even if such prejudices were mollified by the desire to win battles. This thesis tells of the gradual acceptance of Indians into military and American life, a process that is still continuing today.

INDEX WORDS: American Indians, Native Americans, Indian scouts, Code Talkers, Civil War, Indian Wars, World War I, World War II, U.S. West, John Collier, Joe Medicine Crow, Stand

Watie, Ely Parker, Joseph Oklahombi, Frank North, Luther North, General George Crook,
Choctaw, Iroquois, Seneca, Navajo, Comanche, Pawnee, Apache, Cherokee, Hopi, Zuni,
Meskwaki, Goshute, Shoshone, Lakota, Sioux, Pasamaquoddy, Pottawatomie, Omaha, Oneida,
Crow

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FROM SCOUTS TO SOLDIERS: THE EVOLUTION OF INDIAN ROLES IN THE U.S.
MILITARY, 1860-1945

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents George and Sherry Walker, who have always encouraged me to learn new things and put forth my best effort in all things worthwhile.

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I would like to thank the members of my committee: Dr. Downs, who has helped shape and encourage my interest in American Indian history; Dr. Steinberg, from whom I learned how to be a historian; and Dr. Woods, who has been a mentor to me for much of my college career. I cannot thank them enough for the support they have provided me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

It is well-known that the United States of America has waged war against American Indians. Less well-known, though, is the fact that it has made use of native peoples in its military in one capacity or another throughout its history. The Navajo “Wind Talkers” are probably the most famous example of this, and Civil War enthusiasts are sure to recognize the exploits of Generals Stand Watie and Ely Parker. However, the history of American Indian service in the military extends far beyond these few examples, and examining their roles in the military can reveal much about the views larger American society had of them and what place they occupied in that society.

One of the most dominant themes of white Americans’ views of American Indians throughout the history of the United States is their desire to assimilate its indigenous into the larger society. As Frederick Hoxie notes in the preface to his book *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920*:

From the time of the nation’s founding, American politicians, missionaries, and reformers protested to their critics that warfare with the country’s native inhabitants was only the regrettable first step in a process of assimilation. While others gloried in the annihilation of tribal peoples, pious leaders from Thomas Jefferson to William Lloyd Garrison asserted that Indians, once “freed” from their “savage” heritage, would participate fully in the nation’s institutions.¹

One of the best areas to see this drive to assimilate Indians into the larger culture is in the military. Over time, particularly during the period from the Civil War to World War Two, the dominant role of Indians in the military evolved from auxiliary troops or scouts recruited only out of necessity to that of the regular soldier. Of course, while the thoughts of various scholars and major players in the events over the years are worth analyzing, it would be remiss to fail to

¹ Frederick Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), ix.

look at the experiences of Indian veterans and how they saw themselves during their military service. Therefore, wherever possible, the thoughts of native participants will be incorporated into the narrative.

One major reason many American Indians are so drawn to military service is due to the warrior traditions of some tribes. National Public Radio war correspondent Steven Clevenger, a member of the Osage tribe, has spent time covering Indian warriors who served in Iraq and had this to say about why this tradition is so important in an interview:

The warrior culture tradition, it seems to be instilled in the youth. As they grow up, they witness how the warrior, the veteran, is honored by his tribe at dances, powwows, etc. And often times, you'll find that the leaders in the tribes are veterans. They've gone through tough times and the tribe has come to depend upon them for wise decision making.²

Lieutenant Bill Cody Ayon, a member of the Southern Cheyenne tribe and nineteen year military veteran, was also part of this interview. He corroborated Clevenger's story with his own, saying:

In my cultural background, my upbringing, raised in my home, we were raised to appreciate and respect veterans through cultural events and I wanted to emulate these individuals that I was around growing up, and all the stories that they told and all the things that they have done. Mr. Clevenger is exactly right, I saw from a young boy that the leaders in our world, the majority of them, were veterans. And I wanted to walk down that road as I got older, as well, so I followed in the footsteps of my father and uncles and I joined the service.³

As these two testimonies highlight, Indians sought out military service as a way to gain respect, both in their tribes and from the larger American society, and perhaps even gain a position of leadership. This factor becomes a particularly great motivational factor in getting Indians to serve in the United States military from World War One onward.

² "Native American 'Warriors' Mark Military Service," National Public Radio, November 11, 2010, <http://www.npr.org/2010/11/11/131243209/native-americans-have-long-history-of-military-service> (accessed January 8, 2013).

³ Ibid.

Ten years before this interview, Keith Colston (Tuscarora-Lumbee), then-consultant for the Baltimore American Indian Center, visited Fort Detrick in Frederick, Maryland, to give a lecture to the soldiers stationed there. As part of his visit, he described and then demonstrated a dance his tribe does to honor its veterans. According to his account, veterans are usually asked to stand in the center of the dance. Furthermore, he also noted that these movements were not a series of steps randomly cobbled together. Each move has a certain meaning, and the dance is a highly dignified undertaking. He told the soldiers, “We keep our hands up and ready...never turn 360 degrees—that would be turning your back on your enemy—and never dance backward—that is a sign of retreat.”⁴ The Lumbee are not alone in honoring their veterans in such a way. Many tribes, particularly those with a strong warrior tradition have some sort of ceremony that mean something similar.

Clearly, Indian men are more than just warriors, yet the “Indian as warrior” idea has become one of the most enduring stereotypes about American Indians over the years frequently, but not always, overlapping with the stereotype that Indians are savages, whether noble or not. In his study of how the Canadian people saw and imagined Indians during the Second World War, R. Scott Sheffield notes that it was the Indian Wars where the stereotype was revived in modern times, “Clashes between the American army and Plains tribal groups, in particular, rekindled North Americans’ perceptions of the ‘Indian’ as bloodthirsty and savage.”⁵ Furthermore, these clashes with the Plains Indians gave America the classic image of the Indian that prevails today. Sheffield states, “As a result, all ‘real Indians’ invariably appeared tall and physically

⁴ Ann Duple, “Native American warrior debunks stereotypes,” DCMilitary.com, November 16, 2000, http://ww2.dcmilitary.com/dcmilitary_archives/stories/111600/3086-1.shtml (accessed January 8, 2013).

⁵ R. Scott Sheffield, *The Red Man's on the Warpath: The Image of the “Indian” and the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 5.

impressive, with piercing eyes and a hawklike nose, dressed in buckskins and eagle-feather headdresses.”⁶

One of the best descriptions of Indians as they were viewed in the second half of the nineteenth century comes from an essay by Mark Twain called “The Noble Red Man”, published in the magazine *The Galaxy* in 1870. As with any Twain piece like, it is important to note his skill as a satirist of the public opinion of his day. He opens the piece by noting the more positive aspects of the “Indian as warrior” stereotype as they appeared in the contemporary media:

In books he is tall and tawny, muscular, straight and of kingly presence; he has a beaked nose and an eagle eye... and when, rainbowed with his war-paint, he stands at full height, with his crimson blanket wrapped about him, his quiver at his back, his bow and tomahawk projecting upward from his folded arms, and his eagle eye gazing at specks against the far horizon which even the paleface's field-glass could scarcely reach, he is a being to fall down and worship.⁷

Roughly the first third of the essay is devoted to praising this image of Indians. However, after offering these paeans to their nobility, Twain describes the more vulgar image that also exists in the public’s imagination, saying, “All history and honest observation will show that the Red Man is a skulking coward and a windy braggart, who strikes without warning...when the Red Man declares war, the first intimation his friend the white man whom he supped with at twilight has of it, is when the war-whoop rings in his ears and tomahawk sinks into his brain.”⁸ Whether Twain believed this to be the case or not is uncertain, but any quote like this ought to be used with the obvious caveat that he was a master of satire.

In September 2011, the town of Missoula played host to the Montana History Conference. One of the speakers was a Spirit Lake Dakota man named Mike Jetty. He came there for the express purpose of confronting these kinds of stereotypes. As one example of an

⁶ Ibid. 5.

⁷ Mark Twain, “Noble Red Man,” *American Studies* @ The University of Virginia, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/hns/indians/redman.html> (accessed January 9, 2013).

⁸ Ibid.

Indian's humanity and respect on the battlefield, he notes that "[t]o be able to touch an enemy and get away without shedding any blood was considered much braver than it was to actually kill somebody."⁹ Even though their tribes are separated by over a thousand miles, a statement like this meshes very well with what Keith Colston told the people of Fort Detrick about his tribe's dances. To dispute the image of Indians as one-dimensional warmongers, Jetty told his audience, "[T]he warriors were also husbands, they were fathers, they were brothers.... There's that whole family life we don't think about, them being compassionate, caring individuals - just being a total person as compared to this image of always just fighting."¹⁰

It is important to study Native service in the military because, as their skills as soldiers became increasingly recognized, the military ended up becoming one of the few places where Indians were accepted as Indians. To be clear, Indian soldiers continued to face their share of prejudice both in and out of the military, but as the military began to recognize the skills of Indians and the potential usefulness of parts of their culture, they ended up finding out that the military was more willing to tolerate them as Indians than much of the rest of non-native society was at home. What makes this especially notable is that the military was thought by reformers and policymakers in the later-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to be an excellent agent of assimilation. Despite this, Indians found ways to incorporate aspects of their own culture into military life with much less trouble than they face in the civilian world, provided it did not interfere with their duties as soldiers.

As far back as the American Revolution, Native Americans served in the American military in one capacity or another. However, it is interesting to note that the Continental

⁹ Kim Briggeman, "Replace stereotype of Indians as savages, speaker at Missoula conference says," *Missoulian*, September 23, 2011, http://missoulian.com/news/state-and-regional/replace-stereotype-of-indians-as-savages-speaker-at-missoula-conference/article_92105d7c-e656-11e0-b1f5-001cc4c03286.html (accessed January 9, 2013).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Congress initially wanted Indians to avoid getting involved in either side. On July 13, 1775, a speech read into the Journals of the Continental Congress stated, “This is a family quarrel between us and Old England. You Indians are not concerned in it. We don't wish you to take up the hatchet against the king's troops. We desire you to remain at home, and not join on either side, but keep the hatchet buried deep.”¹¹ Nevertheless, this call went unheeded. John Sergeant, a missionary to what is now the Mohican tribe of Stockbridge-Munsee (or the Mohekunnuk, as he called them), told the Continental Congress that his charges “have taken an active part in our favour, inlisting [*sic*] their young men in our Army,” and furthermore, they were sending belts of wampum to other tribes “addressing in such terms as they judged would have the greatest tendency to attach them to the interests of the United States.”¹²

American Indian service in the Continental Army was not limited to just the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohicans. There are numerous other instances of Indians serving. In his book *The American Revolution in Indian Country*, Colin G. Calloway mentions a few. For example, he recounts the story of Joseph Burd Jaquoi, a Mohican who was living in England when the war broke out. Though he had fought for the British in the French and Indian War, was on a lieutenant's half pay, and was offered a captaincy to join the British, he refused, resigned his lieutenantcy, and went off to America to join the colonists. Calloway mentions the following examples:

Other Indians also enlisted in the American cause as individuals. “Lewis Indian” and “James Indian” volunteered for service in New Hampshire companies in the first months of the war. “Peter Indian,” a Dartmouth graduate, enlisted in a New Hampshire company to fight Burgoyne in 1777. Others, with distinct Indian names or with names no different

¹¹ “A Speech to the Six Confederate Nations, Mohawks, Oneidas, Tusscaroras, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senekas, from the Twelve United Colonies, convened in Council at Philadelphia,” *Journals of the Continental Congress 1774-1779*, ed. Worthington C. Ford et al., 2:177-183, The Avalon Project, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/contcong_07-13-75.asp (accessed January 16, 2013).

¹² “Memorial from John Sergeant,” *Journals of the Continental Congress 1774-1779*, ed. Worthington C. Ford et al., 3:868, American Archives, University of Northern Illinois, <http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.27421:1.amarch> (accessed January 16, 2013).

from the colonial comrades, joined up in other colonies; still others may have unlisted with their Indian identity unrecorded.¹³

One example of what Calloway mentions here can be found in a payroll of Delaware Indians from June 15, 1780 through October 31, 1781. There are twelve soldiers listed, including four officers, all captains, and eight enlisted men, all privates.¹⁴ As James P. Collins of the National Archives notes, “The names, except for Capt. John Montour, the company commander, appear to be in the Delaware language. For example, Captain Mawanapano is the second soldier listed after Captain Montour.”¹⁵

Indians also played an important role in the American Revolution’s frontier campaigns. The Oneidas, in particular, stand out as strong allies of the Patriots. One of the most significant battles in which they played a role was the Battle of Oriskany, which took place on August 6, 1777, during the British Army’s siege of Fort Stanwix in Upstate New York. The American General Nicolas Herkimer had under his command a party of Oneida scouts. One of the most notable Oneidas taking part in this battle was War Chief Han Yerry Tewahanagarahken and his wife Tyonajanegen. A Pennsylvania newspaper gave the following account of their actions:

At the late battle between General Herkimer and the enemy at Oneida Creek, there was a friendly Indian, with his wife and son, who distinguished themselves remarkably on that occasion. The Indian killed nine of the enemy, when having received a ball through his wrist that disabled him from using his gun, he fought with his tomahawk. His son killed two, and his wife on horseback, fought by his side, with pistols, during the whole action, which lasted six hours.¹⁶

¹³ Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 28.

¹⁴ “Pay Roll of the Delaware Indians in service of the United States,” The U.S. Archives and Records Administration, <http://www.archives.gov/global-pages/larger-image.html?i=/publications/prologue/2007/winter/images/indians-military-payroll-1.jpg&c=/publications/prologue/2007/winter/images/indians-military-payroll.caption.html> (accessed January 16, 2013).

¹⁵ James P. Collins, “Native Americans in the Antebellum U.S. Military,” *Prologue* 39, no. 4, The U.S. Archives and Records Administration, Winter 2007, <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2007/winter/indians-military.html> (accessed January 16, 2013).

¹⁶ Frank Moore, *Diary of the American Revolution: From Newspapers and Original Documents* Vol. 1 (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=92MFAAAAQAAJ> (accessed June 18, 2013), 486.

Thanks in part to their efforts, the Americans emerged victorious from this battle, although General Herkimer was killed during the action. Oneidas made other contributions during the American Revolution as well, but most of these came during the early years of the war. For example, they sent 150 of their men to assist General Horatio Gates in harassing various British sentry posts and foraging parties. They also sent fifty of their men to winter at Valley Forge with George Washington, and one Oneida woman, Polly Cooper, served as a cook for Washington. These same Oneida fought with the Marquis de Lafayette at the Battle of Barren Hill in May 1778.¹⁷

One final example that merits mentioning is the efforts of Colonel Nathaniel Gist. His father was one of George Washington's close friends, and when the general decided in March of 1777 to enlist some Cherokees to aid the American army, as both rangers and scouts, he turned to Gist. As James H. O'Donnell states, "The commander-in-chief shrewdly observed that in effect such auxiliaries would be hostages against the good behavior of the tribe."¹⁸ In other words, Washington's desire was not merely to add to his own number. He also intended to use these Cherokees as an attempt to force their tribe into an alliance with the colonists. The next year, Washington returned to Gist with a new mission: to recruit three or four hundred more Cherokees for the Continental Army. As O'Donnell notes, the reluctant Gist only recruited seventeen to the cause at first. Neither man was happy with this result, but Washington, in particular, refused to give up: "Confident that a second recruiting experience would be successful, General Washington secured \$5,000 for Gist from the Continental treasury."¹⁹

¹⁷ William Sawyer, "The Oneida Nation in the American Revolution," National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/fost/historyculture/the-oneida-nation-in-the-american-revolution.htm> (accessed June 18, 2013).

¹⁸ James H. O'Donnell, *Southern Indians in the American Revolution* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1973), 55.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 71-72.

However, both men would again be disappointed, as the mission was unsuccessful. As O'Donnell states, "Cherokee could not be persuaded. Of course the tribesmen promised much (as they did to the British at the same time) and did nothing."²⁰ In the end, Gist's efforts had some success, but he was mostly met with failure.

On November 8, 1800, the United States' War Office was devastated by a fire. This resulted, among other things in the loss of the department's papers from 1784 through that date. In recent years, historians have begun attempts to restore what they can of the papers, and the project is now being overseen by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. Thanks to their efforts, it is now possible to peek into a window of history that had heretofore been essentially closed. One document that comes to light is a muster roll for Captain Will Shorey's Corps of Cherokee. According to the roll, this corps was in service from May 12, 1800, to September 12 of that year. There are seven men listed on the roll, including Shorey. Two of the Cherokees listed beneath Shorey used Indian names, Tuskugatee and Sweet Water; three of them used English first and last names; and one merely signed the name "Broom".²¹ While the corps was formed to punish offenses committed by members of the Cherokee Nation, as Collins notes, "The unit's Records of Events cards do not specify the offenses."²² William Shorey was probably the same person who signed the Cherokee treaties of October 25, 1805, and January 7, 1806, under his Cherokee name Eskaculiskee.

The majority of Native Americans that fought in the War of 1812 fought against the Americans. The Indians hoped that a British victory would restrain the Americans from migrating further out into the frontiers. The British, meanwhile, saw the Indians as an important

²⁰ Ibid., 72.

²¹ "Muster rolls of the Cherokee," Papers of the War Department, Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, George Mason University, <http://wardepartmentpapers.org/document.php?id=40834> (access January 17, 2013).

²² James P. Collins, "Native Americans in the Antebellum U.S. Military," (accessed January 17, 2013).

ally and source of manpower in critical areas that could become involved in the war, and the decision by Shawnee leader Tecumseh to ally his Pan-Indian confederation only added to this calculation. As American General William Hull notes of the British efforts in his memoirs, “Messages were therefore sent to the different tribes, informing them of the warlike preparations which were making by the United States, of the events which probably would soon take place, and inviting them to join standard in such a result.”²³ As one example of native contributions to the British war effort, the U.S. Army Center of Military History notes in its book *American Military History*, “Perhaps 3,500 Indians were serving in the Canadian forces during the Thames River campaign in the fall of 1813, probably the largest number that took the field at any one time during the war.”²⁴

Not all Indians served on the side of the British. Perhaps, the best short study of Indian contributions to the War of 1812 is Canadian Ernest Cruikshank’s 1896 study “The Employment of Indians in the War of 1812”. Though the bulk of his study deals with the British side, he does not neglect American efforts to recruit Indians to their side. For example, the author notes a July 26, 1812, letter from Hull at Fort Findlay, Ohio, to Secretary of War William Eustis: “I have with me a considerable number of chiefs and headmen of the different nations....The friendly Indians are now making canoes, and will carry a part of the baggage of the army from this to the foot of the rapids.”²⁵

Cruikshank’s report gives some more insight into the American’s efforts to recruit Native Americans to their side. At some point during July, 1812, Erastus Granger, America’s Indian

²³ William Hull, *Memoirs of the Campaign of the North Western Army of the United States, A.D. 1812, in a Series of Letters Addressed to the Citizens of the United States*, (Google Book) <http://books.google.com/books?id=9h0KAAAIAAJ> (January 21, 2013), 15.

²⁴ United States Army, “The War of 1812,” in *American Military History*, Center of Military History, <http://www.history.army.mil/books/AMH-V1/PDF/Chapter06.pdf> (accessed January 21, 2013).

²⁵ Ernest Cruikshank, “The Employment of Indians in the War of 1812,” *Annual report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1895*, American Historical Association (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896), 328.

agent for western New York, convened a council with the Senecas at Buffalo. There, he proposed that they muster 200 men for the American Army. While they declined to do this, they did agree “to send a deputation to the Grand River to dissuade those of the Six Nations residing there from joining the British forces.”²⁶ Cruikshank also notes that on July 27, Secretary of War Eustis wrote to General Henry Dearborn with a letter enclosed authorizing Granger to organize the Six Nations as a military force. A few days later, Eustis wrote the following to Dearborn:

By letters received from Erastus Granger it appears that the young men of the Six Nations can no longer be restrained, and that in case of refusal on the part of the United States to accept their services they would join the Indians under the British standard. Mr. Granger has therefore been authorized, after every attempt to secure their neutrality has failed, to employ them.²⁷

However, at a council held at Onondaga on September 29 of that year, the spokesman of the confederacy gave a reply to a formal invitation to join the Americans. They noted that they had been told repeatedly by U.S. agents to remain neutral in the war. As such, they were surprised when they were invited at the Buffalo Creek council to join the American cause. Then, they state their own sentiments on the matter: “We are not unfriendly to the United States, but are few in number and can do but little, but are willing to do what we can, and if you say so we will go with your people to battle.”²⁸ Cruikshank also notes the *Buffalo Gazette*, the city’s first newspaper, records that 140 Seneca arrived there during the last week of September.²⁹ Cruikshank also mentions a letter from General Isaac Brock of the British to Canada’s Governor-General George Prevost where he states, “Between 200 and 300 Indians have joined, and augmented the force on the other side.”³⁰ While his quotation is correct, Cruikshank dates this letter to October 9.

However, *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, K.B.*, published in

²⁶ Ibid., 332.

²⁷ Ibid., 332.

²⁸ Ibid., 332.

²⁹ Ibid., 333.

³⁰ Ibid., 333.

1847 and edited by Frederick Brock Tupper, a nephew of the general, dates the letter to September 9, 1812.³¹ There are other instances of Indian service in the military in the War of 1812. James Collins notes that Captain Wade Pilesey had a “Company of Mounted Shawano Indians” and Captain Abner W. Hendrick led a detachment of Stockbridge Indians. Collins also makes mention of Major Uriah Blue, who led a detachment of Chickasaw Indians, who will be discussed later.³²

The career of Andrew Jackson during the War of 1812—and the Creek War of 1813-1814 that was a part of it—also gives some insight into how American Indians were used by the American military during the era. One of the best examples of the future President utilizing Indian troops came at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814 in what is now central Alabama. The fighting force of the opposing Red Stick Creeks numbered about 1000, and it was led by Chief Menawa and Menahee the Prophet. Jackson had at his disposal roughly 2000 infantry men, 700 cavalry, and 600 Indians, including 500 Cherokees and Choctaws and 100 Lower Creeks. Jackson ordered General John Coffee in charge of these Indian allies, along with the 700 cavalry men, to cross the Tallapoosa River at a ford three miles south of the Bend. From there, he was, as James W. Holland puts it, “to turn upstream and surround the 100-acre peninsula for the purpose of cutting off the possibility of retreat across the river.”³³ However, Coffee did not stop there. He also went about secretly dispatching his Indian force along with Captain William Russell’s spy company to the river’s left bank in order to prevent any crossing.³⁴ The goal of these actions was to also forestall an attack from the Oakfuskee villages about eight miles below the bend. All of

³¹ Isaac Brock, *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, K.B.*, ed. Ferdinand Brock Tupper (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=FrZEAAAIAAJ> (accessed January 22, 2013), 302.

³² James P. Collins, “Native Americans in the Antebellum U.S. Military,” (accessed January 25, 2013).

³³ James W. Holland, *Andrew Jackson and the Creek War: Victory at Horseshoe Bend* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1968). 23.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

this was for naught, though, as “unknown to Coffee, the Oakfuskee warriors the day before had joined the others in Horseshoe Bend.”³⁵ Despite this, the Indian allies and spies made significant contributions to the battle. They were among the first to cross the river, and their most significant single action might have been the burning of the Indian village. After this, they continued to harass the Red Sticks for the rest of the battle.³⁶ The result was a rout. Menahee was killed, and Menawa was severely wounded. About 800 of the Red Stick warriors were killed in all, and many of them died because they refused to surrender. Jackson’s men, meanwhile, only lost forty-seven men and had 159 wounded, and the friendly Indians lost twenty-three and had forty-seven wounded.

On August 9, 1814, the Creek people signed the treaty of Fort Jackson, ending hostilities between the United States and the Creeks and ceding some 23,000,000 acres of land in Alabama and southwest Georgia to the United States. General Jackson, however, was not finished. From there, he headed into Florida, and on more than one occasion, he enlisted the service of Indians. He did not remain there for long, as New Orleans soon demanded his attention, but he did stay long enough to recapture Pensacola on November 7. As there was still more that needed to be done, Jackson entrusted Major Uriah Blue to finish the campaign. During the siege of Pensacola, Blue commanded over 700 friendly Choctaws in the effort. Once the city had been taken and Jackson had left, Blue took command of troops from multiple sources to finish the expedition. As historian Robert Quimby describes it:

[Major William] Russell had dismounted his men at the cut-off and hurried after Jackson on the Pensacola expedition. He had reached there the evening the return march had begun. These troops, with some additional men from Coffee’s brigade and as many Choctaws as could be induced to forego the usual Indian practice of returning home after a campaign to celebrate their victory, were placed under Major Blue. The total amounted to 1,000 mounted men, plus 53 Choctaws under [Chief] Pushmataha. Blue was ordered to

³⁵ Ibid., 25.

³⁶ Ibid., 29-30.

search the Escambia country and beyond, to search out and destroy all hostile Indians— Creeks and Seminoles. He was to kill or capture all warriors, capture all women and children, burn villages, and destroy all crops.³⁷

Quimby's description might not give all the details of just who was under Blue's command. In his study of the expedition, Brian Rucker mentions that there were also Chickasaws and friendly Creeks in Blue's forces as well. Rucker also mentions that "General Jackson also requested that loyal Creek Indians recruited by Benjamin Hawkins—the noted and admired American agent for the Creeks—and troops under Major General John Macintosh be sent from Georgia to join Blue's forces...."³⁸ The Chickasaws that Rucker mentions might have been the detachment Collins refers to. A muster roll for the detachment under Blue states that the Chickasaw are to be "in the service of the United States under the command of Major Uriah Blue from the 3 day of Nov 1814 until the 28th of February following both days inclusive."³⁹ The dates provided coincide with the expedition, which finished in January.

No discussion of the War of 1812, the career of Andrew Jackson, or the service of Indians in that war would be complete without addressing the Battle of New Orleans, the most famous American military success of the young nation. The ad hoc combination of U.S. regular soldiers, state militiamen, pirates, free blacks, freed slaves, and members of the New Orleans militia that Jackson led to victory over a vastly superior British force has become a national legend, and the kind of diversity seen in his forces was not seen again on such a scale until perhaps the Spanish-American War or World War I.

³⁷ Robert S. Quimby, *The U.S. Army in the War of 1812: An Operational and Command Study* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997). 800.

³⁸ Brian R. Rucker. "In the Shadow of Jackson: Uriah Blue's Expedition into West Florida," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 73, no 3 (January 1995), <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/30150453> (accessed January 25, 2013), 328.

³⁹ "Compiled Military Service Records of Maj. Uriah Blue's Detachment of Chickasaw Indians in the War of 1812," National Archives and Records Administration Microfilm Publications, Microfilm, <http://ia600405.us.archive.org/29/items/compiledmilitary1829unit/compiledmilitary1829unit.pdf> (accessed January 25, 2013).

Arsène Lacarrière Latour, who was a major at the time of the Battle of New Orleans but later made it to the rank of brigadier general, was the chief engineer for Andrew Jackson and the army's seventh military district. Shortly after the war concluded, he wrote his *Historical Memoir of the War in West Florida and Louisiana in 1814-15, with an Atlas*. This is one of the most valuable firsthand accounts available. Stanley Clisby Arthur, writing for the Louisiana Historical Society in 1915, heaped praise upon it, saying, among other things, that "what he has written has been accepted as the textbook of that campaign by the British authorities as well as our own."⁴⁰

In addition to the valuable narrative Latour's memoirs tell, there is an appendix attached to the end with a voluminous amount of correspondence, general orders, and other relevant documents. Among them is a letter dated September 5, 1814, from then-Secretary of War James Monroe to General Jackson telling him that "All the friendly Indians should be organized, and prepared to cooperate with your other forces."⁴¹ In particular, Monroe singles out the Choctaws, "There appears to be some dissatisfaction among the Choctaws. Their friendship and services should be secured without delay."⁴² This explains why the Choctaws played such a prominent role in his and Major Blue's actions in Florida. Finally, Monroe tells Jackson, "It is desirable that you should repair to New Orleans as soon as your arrangements can be accomplished in other parts of the [military] district, unless circumstances should render another point more eligible."⁴³ When Jackson finally arrived in New Orleans in mid-December, 1814, he ordered Captain Pierre Jugeat to "levy and form into companies all the Chactaw [*sic*] Indians he could collect."⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Stanley Clisby Arthur, *The Story of the Battle of New Orleans* (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=PdI2AAAAMAAJ> (accessed January 23, 2013), 105.

⁴¹ Arsène Lacarrière Latour and Gene A. Smith, *Historical Memoir of the War in West Florida and Louisiana in 1814-15 with an atlas* (New Orleans: Historic New Orleans Collection, 1999), 209.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 209-210.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

Captain Jugeat was one of Jackson's most trusted aides and scouts during the war.

Perhaps the best, or at least most succinct, source of information on him comes from a footnote in Augustus C. Buell's *History of Andrew Jackson*. He says:

Jugeat was the son of a Creole French trader by a half-breed Choctaw woman, whose white blood was also French. He lived among the Indians, though in youth he had received a good education at a Catholic academy in New Orleans. He was a man of unusual intelligence, fine personal appearance and a thorough gentleman in deportment. Living among the Indians, speaking all their dialects and well acquainted with their leading men, he was invaluable to Jackson as a scout during the Creek War.⁴⁵

He was of great help to Jackson during the Battle of New Orleans, and the general placed him in charge of the Choctaw Indians who served with the rest of the ad hoc forces. "Jackson," Buell notes, "was very fond of him and looked out for his interests as long as he lived."⁴⁶

On December 23 of that year, the first major action happened. It was not the well-known Battle of New Orleans, but it was that event's precursor. That morning, British Major-General John Keane moved 1800 British soldiers to the east bank of the Mississippi River. Once night fell, Jackson decided to attack. On Jackson's right line, Latour notes that there were, among the other troops, "eighteen Chactaw [*sic*] Indians, commanded by captains Jugeant [*sic*] and Allard, forming the extremity of the right wing towards the woods."⁴⁷ Though the British were able to maintain their position, the results on the whole were mixed. "The British certainly did win a tactical victory," says Quimby, but he continues, "The 'Night Battle' was, however, a moral victory for the Americans. It is not too much to say that it saved New Orleans. The British were disabused of their expectation of an easy conquest."⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Augustus Buell, *History of Andrew Jackson: Pioneer, Patriot, Soldier, Politician, and President*, Vol. 1 (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=GJonAQAAIAAJ> (accessed January 23, 2013), 245.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁴⁷ Arsène Lacarrière Latour and Gene A. Smith, *Historical Memoir of the War in West Florida and Louisiana in 1814-15*, 70.

⁴⁸ Robert S. Quimby, *The U.S. Army in the War of 1812: An Operational and Command Study*, 852-853.

This was not all the Choctaws did during their days in New Orleans. Latour notes that on December 26, “about thirty Choctaw Indians” were stationed with the 4th regiment of the Louisiana militia under the command of Colonel G.W. Morgan at a post on Chef Menteur Road, and they remained there “until the 6th of January, when it returned to the camp of the main plantation.”⁴⁹ Latour does not mention the Choctaws after this, but that is not all there is to say about them. Quimby notes that, during the later days of December, “The British outposts enjoyed no repose during the nights. Riflemen and Choctaws (whose number increased to about 60) stole out at night to ambush sentries and harass pickets.”⁵⁰ During probing attacks by the British against the Americans’ earthworks on December 28, Jugeat’s Choctaws helped man the left flank of the American attack and stalled an attack by the British right flank led by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Rennie. Evidently the Indians were fairly successful, as Quimby notes, “Rennie wished to advance farther but was temporarily stalled by the Choctaws. He sent to [British Major General Samuel] Gibbs for reinforcements...Instead...he received an order to retreat from the equally disgusted Gibbs.”⁵¹

Quimby’s history of the war does not mention any specific actions by Jugeat’s Choctaws during the battle on January 8, 1815, which is what is commonly known as the Battle of New Orleans, except for noting that they were there and “stationed in the woods beyond the left of the position.”⁵² However, Harry Coles makes a mention of them in his history. Once the British commander Lord Pakenham was killed and his fellow General John Keane wounded, the right column of the British attack was left leaderless. Coles notes, though, that “[t]o add to the misery of the now leaderless right column, the Choctaw Indians and some of Coffee’s troops began to

⁴⁹ Arsène Lacarrière Latour and Gene A. Smith, *Historical Memoir of the War in West Florida and Louisiana in 1814-15*, 86.

⁵⁰ Robert S. Quimby, *The U.S. Army in the War of 1812: An Operational and Command Study*, 867.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 869.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 891.

move against them, firing from behind the trees of the swamp.”⁵³ This appears to be the extent of their actions on that day, at least according to the available sources. The best assessment of the Choctaws involved in the Battle of New Orleans is that, while they were hardly the deciding factor in the American victory, they nevertheless provided a valuable contribution to that effort.

The War of 1812 was the last truly major war the United States fought in before the Civil War, but it was not the last time it went to battle in the Antebellum period. During the First Seminole War between 1817 and 1818, 1400 Lower Creek warriors accompanied Andrew Jackson on his campaign. As John and Mary Lou Missall note of Jackson’s force, which also included about 500 regulars, 1000 Tennessee volunteers, and some Georgia militiamen, “There was no force in Florida, Seminole or Spanish, capable of stopping such an army.”⁵⁴ In the Second Seminole War from 1835 to 1842, Captain Stephen Richards led a “Company of Friendly Indians”. The muster roll for this company notes that they were in service from October 15, 1837, to April 23, 1838, and that they were enrolled at Walker’s Town, Florida.⁵⁵

Indian allies also played important roles in other Indian Wars. In the Winnebago War of 1827, several tribes joined the side of the United States. Muster rolls show, for example, that Captain William Dickinson led a company of Stockbridge and Oneida volunteers. Forty one names, all of which were in English, show up on the roll, and Dickinson and his company were active from August 20, 1827, until September 18, 1827.⁵⁶ Another muster roll from that war shows that Captain Henry Smith led a group of Menominee (or “Menamenie”, as the document calls them) Indians. There are 124 names on the roll, and most of them are Menominee. Among

⁵³ Harry L. Coles, *The War of 1812* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 229.

⁵⁴ John and Mary Lou Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America’s Longest Indian Conflict* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida), 39-40.

⁵⁵ “Florida Militia Muster Rolls, Seminole Indian Wars,” Florida Department of Military Affairs, <http://ia700301.us.archive.org/20/items/floridamilitiamu09morr/floridamilitiamu09morr.pdf> (accessed January 28, 2013), 19.

⁵⁶ “Wisconsin Muster Rolls from the Winnebago War, 1827,” Wisconsin Historical Society, <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/tp/id/57907> (accessed February 1, 2013), 4-5.

all of these names there is a Chief “O Skosh” listed on the list. The city of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, is named for him. The roll states that his name means “The Finger Nail”, although elsewhere, it is given as “The Claw”.⁵⁷

Friendly Indian tribes also aided the United States in the Black Hawk War of 1832. John W. Hall states that although their numbers were militarily negligible the actions by Indian allies of the United States “represented a turning point in the history of the Old Northwest and, indeed, of the United States.”⁵⁸ Brigadier General Henry Atkinson recruited soldiers from friendly tribes, mainly the Menominee and Dakota, to fight for the Americans in the campaign against Black Hawk and his followers. Ho Chunks and Potawatomis also aided the Americans, but their help was more nuanced. As Hall notes, “The Ho Chunks and Potawatomis had no desire to abet the Americans in the British Band’s demise, but they needed to make a convincing—albeit insincere—display of fidelity to their Great Father to avert their own destruction.”⁵⁹ In his campaign, Atkinson treated his native allies fairly well. He even went as far as to promise both pay and provide provisions for the Dakota warriors who were “operating under American aegis.”⁶⁰

Although not technically part of the United States at the time, the Republic of Texas also enlisted American Indians in some capacity into the Texas Rangers. Section eight of a law titled “For the better protection of the northern frontier”, which was passed on June 12, 1837, states:

Be it further enacted, That if practicable, there shall be attached to each division one company of spies, composed of Shawnees, Cherokees, Delawares, or of other friendly

⁵⁷ Ibid., 6-8.

⁵⁸ John W. Hall, *Uncommon Defense: Indian Allies in the Black Hawk War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 3.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 146.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 147-8.

Indians, who shall be supplied with provisions, and shall receive such pay as may be agreed upon between them and the president, which shall be paid in goods.⁶¹

As the act notes, it was not just the three tribes named in that section that aided the Texas Rangers. Several others helped them as well. According to Christina Claridy, research librarian for the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame, “Tribes like the Tonkawas, Lipan Apaches, and the Wacos, all provided much needed service to the state of Texas.”⁶² Both those tribes and the Republic of Texas had a common enemy: the Comanches.

The Tonkawas were among the most motivated to help the rangers. S.C. Gwynne notes in his history of the rise and fall of the Comanche that the Tonkawas were “spoiling as always for revenge”.⁶³ In 1858, under John Salmon Ford, they participated in the Battle of Antelope Hills against the Comanche. Gwynne’s history gives some of the details of their actions. For example, he says that “[o]n May 12, Ford’s Tonkawa’s attacked and quickly destroyed the [Comanche] camp” on the Canadian River “killing several Indians and taking others prisoner.”⁶⁴

While there is little scholarship on them, Indians did serve in the Mexican-American War, which took place between 1846 and 1848. It is known, for example, that the Delaware scout and chief Black Beaver led a company bearing his name, Black Beaver’s Spy Company. As Collins notes, they were mustered in San Antonio in June 1848 for six months, and “[t]he names of private Na-noon-ska-ska, Long Tail, and George Williams, show the mix of the Indian language, English translation of the Indian name, and an English name.”⁶⁵

⁶¹ Hans Peter Mareus Neilsen Gammel, “An Act for the better protection of the northern frontier,” *The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897* Vol. 1, Austin, Texas, The Portal to Texas History.

<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph5872/m1/1342/sizes/m/> (accessed January 28, 2013).

⁶² Christina Claridy, “Indians and Rangers in 19th Century Texas,” The Official Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, http://www.texasranger.org/ReCenter/Indian_Rangers_Smith.html (accessed January 29, 2013).

⁶³ S.C. Gwynne, *Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History* (New York City: Scribner, 2010), 97-98.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁶⁵ James P. Collins, “Native Americans in the Antebellum U.S. Military,” (accessed June 18, 2013).

Even in its early wars, the United States recognized the value of American Indians serving in the military in some capacity. However, what service they did provide was usually as auxiliary troops or scouts. They were not regulars on the same level as their white comrades. Regardless, they still distinguished themselves in battle and served vital functions in some campaigns. In the coming decades, though, Indians came to be increasingly incorporated into American war efforts.

Chapter 2: The Civil War

The Civil War presented a problem for American Indians. Namely, with whom should they ally? It was a question that divided Indian country. The majority of Indian tribes officially allied themselves with the United States, but some chose to cast their lots with the Confederacy. In some tribes, there was considerable internal disagreement over the best course of action. Ultimately, over 20,000 American Indians fought for one side or the other during the war.

It is somewhat ironic that American Indians took such an interest in this war, going as far as allying themselves with either side of a split nation that had only a few decades prior removed several tribes from their ancestral homelands to lands west of the Mississippi. The reason many of them had for taking this kind of interest are, in retrospect, likewise ironic. As Laurence Hauptman notes, “[M]any fought because they believed it was their last best hope to halt a genocide that had begun in the East in the early seventeenth century, one that continued throughout the Trail of Tears westward in the 1830s, and exploded again after the California Gold Rush of 1849.”⁶⁶ For many tribes, the goal was self-preservation, yet in the end, these efforts were in vain. As Hauptman further notes, “[T]he Civil War, rather than the last best hope, proved to be a final nail in the coffin in Indian efforts to stop the tide of American expansion.”⁶⁷

For some tribes, the decision for an alliance was not particularly problematic. The Delaware are one such example. They were a staunchly pro-Union tribe. Though they were very small in number, they nevertheless volunteered for service in large numbers. As the *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* for 1862 notes, “Of two hundred and one Delawares, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, one hundred and seventy have

⁶⁶ Laurence M. Hauptman, *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War* (New York City: Free Press, 1995), ix-x.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, x.

volunteered, and are now in the military service of the United States. It is doubtful if any community can show a larger proportion of volunteers than this.”⁶⁸ The enthusiastic support of the Delawares was not just mere patriotic zeal, though. As Hauptman notes, “To a small, weak, and often removed Indian nation, the strategy of currying favor with the “Great Father” in Washington was the only survival option open to them.”⁶⁹

Of what are today called the Five Civilized Tribes in Oklahoma—the Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, Seminoles, and Cherokee—the first four had no issue aligning themselves with the Confederacy from its earliest days. Only the Cherokee remained loyal to the Union initially. While it might seem surprising given that the most notable Cherokee during the war was Confederate General Stand Watie, the complexity of the situation the Cherokee faced had its roots in issues the Cherokee had been confronting since the Removal. As historian Clarissa Confer notes:

Traditional members of each tribe, often described by witnesses as full-bloods, appeared opposed to breaking U.S. treaty obligations and entering a war; only in the Cherokee nation did this group have access to power, however....Cherokee Chief [John] Ross had always respected the will of the majority. By the 1860s, he had established a long history of defending majority rights against a vocal minority, now led by Stand Watie and loosely defined as the Treaty Party. An intense rivalry between these factions, stretching back over many years, clearly continued at the beginning of the Civil War.⁷⁰

In other words, the Civil War presented yet another front for the divided politics of the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma, with factions dating back to before the Removal days, to manifest themselves. While the majority of the Cherokee nation was committed to the Union side initially, a sizable and vocal minority nevertheless aligned itself with the Confederacy.

⁶⁸ United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, By William P. Dole, 1862, Digital Collections, University of Wisconsin, <http://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep62/reference/history.annrep62.i0003.pdf> (accessed February 8, 2013), 23.

⁶⁹ Laurence M. Hauptman, *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War*, 23.

⁷⁰ Clarissa W. Confer, *The Cherokee Nation in the Civil War* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 47.

Things did not remain this way for long, though. The Cherokee nation itself was having an internal civil war over the issue. Furthermore, the Confederacy continued to engage diplomatically with the tribe, with its efforts led by General Albert Pike. The pro-Confederate faction within the tribe was growing, and by August 1861, John Ross, whose overarching concern was maintaining the unity of his tribe, had to reconsider his decision. On August 21, the nation declared its support for the Confederacy via its General Council, with Ross's approval. Historian Annie Heloise Abel, whose works on Indians in the Civil War can still be considered definitive despite being almost a century old, described how he explained his decision: "John Ross justified, upon grounds of good faith and expediency, his own previous policy of neutrality but declared that the time had now come for the Cherokees to take sides and that, as they were a slaveholding people, the more natural alliance would be with the South."⁷¹

Perhaps no tribe was more adamantly supportive of the Confederacy than the Chickasaw. Like the Cherokees and the other members of the Five Civilized Tribes, they were slaveholders and had little love for the Union or its new president, Abraham Lincoln. On May 25, 1861, the Chickasaw legislature convened and approved its own resolution of secession, which the nation's governor, Cyrus Harris, approved. This statement contains rhetoric reminiscent of what many Southern whites were using at the time. For example, it states:

[I]f we can judge from the declarations of the political partisans of the Lincoln Government, will surpass the French revolution in scenes of blood and that of San Domingo in atrocious horrors; and whereas it is impossible that the Chickasaw, deprived of their money and destitute of all means of separate self-protection can, maintain neutrality or escape the storm which is about to burst upon the South, but, on the contrary, would be suspected, oppressed, and plundered alternately by armed bands from the North, South, East, and West...and whereas as a Southern people we consider their cause our own.⁷²

⁷¹ Annie Heloise Abel, "The Indians in the Civil War," *The American Historical Review* 15, no. 2 (January 1910), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1838335> (accessed December 13, 2012), 288.

⁷² United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Vol. 3 (Harrisburg, PA: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1985), 585.

The radical rhetoric does not end there. The Legislature noted how important it is to protect Indian Territory from the “Lincoln hordes and Kansas robbers.”⁷³

In the West, many Indians saw service as home guards. In fact, this was their preference. As Abel notes of the Confederate-aligned Indians, “The Indians themselves were averse to anything but home-guard duty and, in all their treaties with Pike, solemnly stipulated that under no circumstances should Indian soldiers be taken beyond the limits of the Indian Territory.”⁷⁴ However, as she notes in her book on the same topic, “If by chance it should happen that, in performing their function as a home guard, they should have to cross their own boundary in order to expel or to punish an intruder, well and good....”⁷⁵ This sort of sentiment was hardly unique to them, as Union-aligned Indians in the West felt the same way.

The Confederates were the first to make a serious attempt at raising American Indian troops. Of all the Indians who joined the Confederate army in the West, none are as notable as Stand Watie, one of only two Indians to achieve the rank of general during the war. In July 1861, three months before the Western Cherokee officially aligned themselves with the Confederacy, Watie was commissioned a colonel, and General Ben McCulloch authorized him to raise a force to defend Indian Territory against a federal invasion, especially from the Kansas jayhawkers. Watie quickly gathered three hundred men for the task, and these men became the First Regiment of Cherokee Mounted Volunteers. McCulloch evidently trusted him far more than either Ross or Colonel John Drew, Ross’s nephew by marriage, the latter of whom had also been

⁷³ Ibid., 585.

⁷⁴ Annie Heloise Abel, “The Indians in the Civil War,” 288.

⁷⁵ Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, Vol. 2 of *The Slaveholding Indians*, (Project Gutenberg E-Book 2004), <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12541/12541-h/12541-h.htm> (accessed February 11, 2013), 24.

tasked with raising a force of Cherokee for the Confederacy.⁷⁶ In a September 2, 1861, letter to Confederate Secretary of War LeRoy Pope Walker, McCulloch stated:

I hope our Government will continue this gallant man and true friend of our country in service, and attach him and his men (some 300) to my command. It might be well to give him a battalion separate from the Cherokee regiment under Colonel Drew. Colonel Drew's regiment will be mostly composed of full-bloods, whilst those with Col. Stand Watie will be halfbreeds, who are educated men, and good soldiers anywhere, in or out of the Nation.⁷⁷

While there was good reason to suspect the loyalty of a relative and ally of such a reluctant Confederate as John Ross, McCulloch's criticism of Drew seems to be largely centered on the fact that his supporters appeared to the former to be mostly full-blooded Cherokee while Stand Watie appeared to have the support of those who were of mixed ancestry. The irony is that John Ross was only-eighth Cherokee, and Stand Watie was three-quarters Cherokee.

As with the negotiations of the treaties between the Confederates and the Five Civilized tribes, Brigadier General Albert Pike was again trusted to lead these efforts. On November 27th, 1861, he wrote the following description of the situation he inherited to the Confederate Secretary of War Judah Philip Benjamin: "It will be unwise to refuse to receive into our service any of the Indians who may offer to enter it. We have now in the service four regiments, numbering in all some 3,500 men, besides the Seminole troops and other detached companies, increasing the number to over 4,000."⁷⁸ These four regiments consisted of the First Regiment of Choctaw and Chickasaw Mounted Rifles, the First Creek Regiment, the First Cherokee Mounted Rifles under Colonel Drew, and Watie's First Regiment of Cherokee Mounted Volunteers.⁷⁹ Pike further noted to Benjamin that "[a]n additional regiment has been offered by the Choctaws and

⁷⁶ Laurence M. Hauptman, *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War*, 47.

⁷⁷ United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Vol. 3 (Harrisburg, PA: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1985), 692.

⁷⁸ United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Vol. 8 (Harrisburg, PA: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1985), 697.

⁷⁹ Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, (accessed February 12, 2013), 25.

another can be raised among the Creeks. If I have the authority I can enlist even the malcontents among that people. I can place in the field (arms being supplied) 7,500 Indian troops....”⁸⁰

Despite Pike’s efforts, Major General Earl Van Dorn, Pike’s superior, evidently did not have much use for these troops. As Abel notes in her book, “Van Dorn had, at the moment [around February 6, 1862], no other plan in view for Indian troops than to use them to advantage as a means of defence and as a corps of observation.”⁸¹

Albert Pike’s Indian forces, including those led by Stand Watie, took part in the Battle of Pea Ridge on March 6-8, also known as the Battle of Elkhorn Tavern. This was the first major battle to involve Indian troops in the West. Van Dorn, who led the Confederates in the battle, placed Pike and his men under the immediate command of Brigadier General Ben McCulloch on the right wing of the Confederate attack. According to Abel, “There is a tradition that in this battle Indians fought on both sides and after their old-time custom—war-paint, feathers, arrows, and tomahawks. The tomahawks were certainly in evidence and did some gruesome work among the dead and wounded.”⁸² Henry Curtis, son of General Samuel Curtis and an assistant on the latter’s staff, was revolted by this. He wrote in a letter to the headquarters of the Army of the Southwest, “If any presumption has been raised in their favor on the score of civilisation, it has certainly been demolished by the use of the tomahawk, war-club and scalping-knife at Pea Ridge.”⁸³

The Confederates did not win the battle. In fact, Pike was the only general on the Confederate right wing to survive the battle, with both McCulloch and another brigadier general,

⁸⁰ United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Vol. 8, 697.

⁸¹ Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, 25.

⁸² Annie Heloise Abel, “The Indians in the Civil War,” 289.

⁸³ Henry Curtis “Reply,” in *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, with Documents, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, etc.*, vol. 4, ed. Frank Moore (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=DUZLAAAAYAAJ> (accessed June 16, 2013), 264.

James McIntosh, being struck down during the action. Both Cherokee regiments made some notable actions during the fight. As Kenny Franks notes in his biography of the Stand Watie, the Cherokees attempted to occupy a position at the foot of a wooded ridge guarding some seized Union artillery. It proved, however, to be indefensible, and they had to fall back. During the Confederate retreat at the end of the battle, Watie and his men were asked to scout the Union forces to insure they did not endanger the Confederate withdrawal.⁸⁴

The Confederate failure at Pea Ridge has been attributed to poor cooperation among the generals. Abel's conclusion from surveying the documents is that "General Pike with the main body of the Indians rendered only a very second-rate service."⁸⁵ However, she does offer the following in a limited defense of Pike: "In partial repudiation of this charge, however, Pike declared that Van Dorn had treated him and his Indians with great contempt and had given them no opportunity to do their best."⁸⁶ In his 1922 account *The Union Brigade in the Civil War*, Wiley Britton supplies some information that does not appear to surface in either of Abel's accounts:

In the last hour of the battle the report got out among the Confederate troops and spread rapidly that Generals Van Dorn and Price had been captured, which increased the consternation and confusion, and General Pike, commanding the contingent of Indian troops, became separated from them, and, with an aid and three or four men, wandered two or three days in the woods and on by-roads in the rough, hilly region between Elkhorn and Bentonville, and finally received information from stragglers, who had fled from the battlefield on the Bentonville Road, that a part of his command was marching to Cincinnati on the Cherokee line, and he joined them at that place and they moved into the Cherokee Nation and then south and crossed the Arkansas River, many of the Indians having thrown down their arms and returned home.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Kenny A. Franks, *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation* (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1979), 125.

⁸⁵ Annie Heloise Abel, "The Indians in the Civil War," 290.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁸⁷ Wiley Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War* (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=VhdCAAAIAAJ> (accessed February 11, 2013), 55.

The best either of Abel's accounts offer of this particular series of events is to note in her article that, "The volunteers, for the most part, went eastward, while the regulars stationed themselves in western Arkansas and the Cherokee country."⁸⁸ While the Confederacy itself was severely weakened in the West by this loss, Stand Watie and his men continued to fight the Union and its sympathizers in the Cherokee tribe.

The recruitment of Indians in the West for the Union army had its beginnings in Senator and United States General James Henry Lane's Kansas Brigade. By late July 1861, Lane's Brigade mustered six regiments, numbering from the Third through Eighth Kansas Volunteer Infantry Regiments. He noted in a letter to Captain Prince, the commander of Fort Leavenworth that "[t]here are now at Fort Scott [in Kansas] about 1,200 men, say 600 cavalry, and about the same number of infantry, including the little artillery."⁸⁹ He led these men into an unsuccessful battle against Confederate General Sterling Price at Dry Wood Creek in Missouri on September 2, 1861. He also skirmished in several small towns in the state, including the sacking and burning of Osceola on September 23. The brigade's actions caused the Union forces much consternation, and there was some concern that it would cause Missouri to turn away from the United States. Eventually, his brigade was sent back into Kansas to guard the border with Missouri. He arrived at Fort Scott on November 14, 1861. Lane left the brigade and returned to Washington later that month.

Even in the days when he was marshaling and leading this brigade, Lane expressed interest in enlisting Indians. In her book *The Slaveholding Indians*, Annie Abel supplies in her footnotes a letter from August 25, 1861, from Augustus Wattles, who was touring the tribes of Kansas for the War Department to Major Hiram Farnsworth, the Indian Agent for the Sac and

⁸⁸ Annie Heloise Abel, "The Indians in the Civil War," 290.

⁸⁹ United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Vol. 3, (Harrisburg, PA: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1985), 455.

Fox Agency in Kansas. Wattles noted that “Gen. Lane intends to establish a strong Indian camp near the neutral lands as a guard to prevent forage into Kansas.”⁹⁰ Lane planned for a conference with various Indian tribes of the region at his headquarters at Fort Lincoln. As Abel notes, “Soon, however, a stay of execution was ordered until the matter could be discussed, in its larger aspects, with Commissioner Dole, to whom courtesy, at least, would have demanded that the whole affair should have been first submitted.”⁹¹

Around the same time Lane was leading his brigade, General John Fremont also expressed interest in Indian enlistment. He took a particular interest in the Delaware Indians, and he wished to enlist the aid of the Delaware warrior Falleaf (or Fall Leaf). As Hauptman notes, Falleaf was “[a] longtime associate of the famous explorer...who frequently hired the Delaware for his major topographical surveys of the American West....”⁹² Fremont asked the warrior to recruit a company of his tribesmen and proceed to Springfield, Missouri, on a special mission. Falleaf was able to recruit fifty-four Delawares, and he was able to guide them from Sedalia to Springfield without the Confederates spotting him.⁹³ Abel adds some more information to this story. She notes that the chiefs of the Delaware tribe refused their assent, but Falleaf and fifty-three of his fellow Delawares joined nonetheless. Fremont employed these Delawares as scouts and guides.⁹⁴

Once Lane left Kansas for Washington, General David Hunter, who assumed command of the military Department of Kansas, similarly took an interest in the Indians of the area. In her book *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, Abel notes the following:

⁹⁰ Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist*, Vol. 1 of *The Slaveholding Indians*. (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=6FghAAAAMAAJ> (accessed February 12, 2013), 229.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁹² Laurence M. Hauptman, *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War*, 31.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁹⁴ Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist*, 232.

Three things bear witness to this fact, Hunter's plans for an inter-tribal council at Fort Leavenworth, his own headquarters; his advocacy of Indian enlistment, especially from among the southern Indians; and his intention, early avowed, of bringing Brigadier-general James W. Denver into military prominence and of entrusting to him the supervisory command in Kansas.⁹⁵

Denver had experience in dealing with the Indians of Kansas in the past, as he was both a former Commissioner of Indian Affairs and Kansas territorial governor, both under President James Buchanan. Both of these men had experience in dealing with Jim Lane, which was important for anyone in a position of power in Kansas in that time.

Hunter appointed Lane brigadier general on December 18, 1861. Upon receiving his command, Lane began planning for an expedition out of Fort Leavenworth that would meander through Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas. Some relatively early evidence of this can be seen in a letter from Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas to General Hunter dated January 24, 1862. After noting that Lane's plans seem to be in agreement with Hunter's, Thomas writes:

The following force, with supplies therefor, has been ordered to Kansas to operate under General Lane: Seven regiments cavalry, three batteries artillery, four regiments infantry, and he has been authorized also to raise about 8,000 to 10,000 Kansas troops and to organize 4,000 Indians.⁹⁶

This undertaking came to be something of an object of ridicule, with terms like "the Indian Expedition" and "the jayhawking Expedition" being applied to it.⁹⁷ Lincoln even took note of the affair, writing to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton on January 31 that he wished the expedition "be as much as has been promised...and not any more," with the President going as far as to italicize the latter part.⁹⁸ That the expedition exasperated the patience of the Army command can be seen in a letter from General Henry Halleck, commander of the Department of

⁹⁵ Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, 70.

⁹⁶ United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Vol. 8, 525.

⁹⁷ Annie Heloise Abel, "The Indians in the Civil War," 290.

⁹⁸ United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Vol. 8, 538.

Missouri, to General Hunter dated February 13, 1862. Halleck called the affair a “great jayhawking expedition” and noted “I protested to Washington against any of his jayhawkers coming into this department, and saying positively that I would arrest and disarm every one I could catch.”⁹⁹ In a letter to Secretary of War Stanton dated March 25, 1862, Halleck goes even further in laying out his grievances:

The Kansas jayhawkers, or robbers, who were organized under the auspices of Senator Lane. They wear the uniform of and it is believed receive pay from the United States. Their principal occupation for the last six months seems to have been the stealing of negroes, the robbing of houses, and the burning of barns, grain, and forage. The evidence of their crimes is unquestionable. They have not heretofore been under my orders. I will now keep them out of Missouri or have them shot.¹⁰⁰

In July 1862, Halleck was summoned by President Lincoln to take over the armies in the Eastern theater, but by this time, the Indian expedition had finished.

In any case, Jim Lane’s “Indian Expedition” provides another opportunity to see how Indians were used in the Civil War. In a March 19, 1862, letter to General Halleck, Adjutant General Thomas informed him that the mission’s goal was “to open the way for the friendly Indians who are now refugees in Southern Kansas to return to their homes and to protect them there.”¹⁰¹ General Blunt stated something similar in his account of his service in the Civil War:

My purpose in sending this force into the Indian country was to operate against small forces of the enemy that were concentrating there, restore the loyal Indians to their homes, and, in that advanced position, to cover Kansas and southwest Missouri, until I could obtain additional troops, when I designed to take the field and operate against Hindman in western Arkansas.¹⁰²

This letter also makes specific mention of Indians being in service of the military as well, as Thomas tells Halleck that, “Five thousand friendly Indians will also be armed to aid in their own

⁹⁹ Ibid., 554.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 642.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 624.

¹⁰² James G. Blunt, “General Blunt's Account of His Civil War Experiences,” Ed. Tod Roberts, *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 1, no 3 (May, 1932) <http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly-general-blunt-s-account-of-his-civil-war-experiences/12543> (accessed February 13, 2013).

protection, and you will please furnish them with necessary subsistence.”¹⁰³ The Indians apparently were ardent supporters. “When a rumor came that he was to be displaced,” Abel says, “Opothleyohola personally interceded for him and assured Lincoln that the Indians could have confidence in no one else.”¹⁰⁴ The Indian forces in this expedition were not given the best treatment. As Abel notes, “The outfit for the Indians of the Home Guard was decidedly inferior. Opoeth-le-yo-ho-la wanted batteries, ‘wagons that shoot.’ His braves, many of them, were given guns that were worthless, that would not shoot at all.”¹⁰⁵

It was some time before the expedition actually began, as there was significant infighting between Generals Lane and Hunter, both of whom wished to lead the mission. These issues held up its start until June of 1862. The command of it was finally placed in the charge of a Colonel William Weer. The expedition’s progress southward was no doubt aided by the general disarray the Confederate forces found themselves in after their loss at Pea Ridge in April. Historian Francis Paul Prucha notes in his two volume history *The Great Father* that the defeat, particularly the fact that General McCulloch was killed “had a dispiriting effect, and quarrels between Pike and General T.C. Hindman (who had taken over McCulloch’s troops) further hindered operations.”¹⁰⁶ The Southern forces the expedition did encounter were generally routed. The disorganized and dispirited state of the Confederate army, supplemented by these defeats, led many Indians to desert to the Union. Only the forces under general Stand Watie were able to hold together fairly well.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Vol. 8, 624.

¹⁰⁴ Annie Heloise Abel, “The Indians in the Civil War,” 291.

¹⁰⁵ Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War* (accessed June 16, 2013), 117.

¹⁰⁶ Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), vol. 1, 426

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 426

The expedition was not as smooth as Prucha's account implies. For one, Weer was habitually drunk. Furthermore, the brigade's supplies were wearing thin, and Weer had displayed a tendency to meander off the expected course of the mission. As Abel writes:

Weer had been cautioned again and again not to cut himself off from easy communication with Fort Scott. He had shown a disposition to wander widely from the straight road to Fort Gibson; but Blunt had insisted that he refrain altogether from making excursions into adjoining states. He had himself realized the shortness of his provisions and had made a desperate effort to get to the Grand Saline so as to replenish his supply of salt at the place where the Confederates had been manufacturing that article for many months. He had known also that for some things, such as ordnance stores, he would have to look even as far as Fort Leavenworth.¹⁰⁸

All of these issues had a greatly detrimental effect on the morale of Weer's men. Indeed, things were getting to such a state that the men were even growing mutinous. On July 18, 1862, Colonel Frederick Salomon arrested Weer and assumed command. Once General Blunt received word of this, he acted immediately:

I despatched [sic] a messenger directing him to halt the command wherever the order reached him, to send certain troops to reinforce or support the Indian regiments that had not yet abandoned the Indian country, and with the remainder of the command await further orders, assuring him at the same time, that there was no enemy threatening him on his flank....¹⁰⁹

Salomon, a few sympathetic subordinate commanders, and the white troops later departed and headed to the north, leaving the Indian home guard regiments behind. Blunt reported that they headed back to Fort Scott, but other sources do not specify where their destination was.¹¹⁰ Regardless, Colonel Furnas assumed command of the Indian regiments that remained.

At this point, the Indian Expedition was largely finished. The men under Furnas did manage to fight and win a battle with Stand Watie's Cherokee soldiers at Bayou Menard, but the original goal of the expedition was never fully realized. However, a component of another

¹⁰⁸ Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, (accessed February 13, 2013), 138-139.

¹⁰⁹ James G. Blunt, "General Blunt's Account of His Civil War Experiences."

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

expeditionary force led by Colonel William F. Cloud did manage to take the Cherokee capital of Tahlequah and arrest John Ross. Cloud and his men then took John Ross, the Cherokee archives, and the tribal treasury then proceeded back to Kansas, where they spent the rest of the war. Though the original expedition had its successes and failures, it did demonstrate that Indians could be enlisted, trained, and equipped to serve in the military as more than just scouts. Thus ended Jim Lane's Indian Expedition.

Stand Watie and his men continued to fight even after the losses at Pea Ridge and against Lane and Weer's forces. In August 1862, after the Northern sympathizers among the Cherokee had largely fled for Union territory, the remaining Cherokee elected him the principal chief of the tribe, and they reaffirmed their treaty with the South.¹¹¹ His most notable successes during the war, however, came in 1864. In May of that year, he was promoted to brigadier general, and he was given the command of the First Indian Brigade of the Confederate Army of the Trans-Mississippi.

Over the next few months in 1864, Watie had his biggest successes as military commander. On June 10, 1864, he received word that the waters of the Arkansas River were rising rapidly, and as a result, this would enable the Union to resupply Fort Gibson by boat. Immediately, Watie gathered together a force that included three pieces of artillery to prevent this from happening. The North, meanwhile, was attempting to take advantage of the situation and had the steamboat *J.R. Williams* depart from Fort Smith to Fort Gibson loaded with supplies. Realizing that the rising water would allow the ship to cross the stream near Webbers Falls, a seven foot falls in the Arkansas River, he planned to ambush the Union steamboat at from

¹¹¹ Kenny A. Franks, *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation*, 131.

Pleasant Bluff, which is five miles below the mouth of the Canadian River, the Arkansas River's largest tributary.¹¹²

For its part, the *J.R. Williams* was only manned by a small crew of twenty-six. It also lacked a cavalry force to scout out the area ahead. Stand Watie placed his artillery behind some clusters of bushes along a bluff overlooking the river. On June 15, the Union ship finally passed by where he had placed his center cannon, so the Confederates opened fire. Taking the Union soldiers completely by surprise, Watie and his men were able to damage the ship to such a degree that it was no longer operative. As it was drifting helplessly in the river and realizing it to be a lost cost, the small Union force onboard withdrew back to Fort Smith and left the steamship to the Confederates. A few days later, a Union force of 700 attempted to retake the boat, but after a short skirmish with Watie's men, they declined to pursue them any further, not knowing the full size of the Confederate forces in the area.¹¹³

The second major success Stand Watie had in 1864 came on September 19 at the Second Battle of Cabin Creek, near modern day Pensacola, Oklahoma. The South's forces were under the command of Watie and his fellow brigadier general Richard Gano. On the morning of September 18, the Confederate forces learned of the Union position at Cabin Creek, so Gano took 400 men and two pieces of artillery to investigate. Around three o'clock in the afternoon, Gano reported to Watie that the Union supply wagon train was indeed at Cabin Creek and thus requested that Watie bring the rest of the Confederate force he had as soon as possible. Watie met Gano just after midnight September 19, and the two decided to attack the enemy forces at once.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Ibid., 161-2.

¹¹³ Ibid., 162-3.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 171.

The Union supply train was commanded by Major Henry Hopkins. As he learned of the advance of a large Confederate force, he began preparing his defense. Using the home of Joseph Martin as a base, they began fortifying their position with heavy timbers set upright in the ground. To the right of the house, he had his men place long ricks of hay running parallel to each other and the nearby creek. For their part, the Confederate line of attack had Gano on the right and Watie on the left. Initial fire was exchanged at about three o'clock in the morning. As the Confederate forces advanced, Watie's men drove the Union soldiers from their position and managed to capture a portion of the supply train. The Confederate attack was a complete success, and not long after daylight, the Northern forces were in full retreat. As Franks notes, "This engagement at Cabin Creek was an unqualified Southern victory, and Watie immediately gathered the booty, consisting of 740 mules and 130 wagons loaded with supplies."¹¹⁵ A federal force which attempted to regain the lost train was unsuccessful.

As 1864 was coming to a close, Watie found himself in a complex situation. While he ardently supported the Southern cause, the Confederacy's prospects were growing dimmer by the day, and to make matters more difficult, his family was facing a difficult situation. His wife Sarah's health was getting better, but life as refugees presented a great deal of hardships for her and their children.¹¹⁶ On February 14, 1865, Watie was given command of the Confederacy's entire Indian Division in Indian Territory, but the war was by then all but lost for the Confederacy. Even so, Watie and his men fought hard to the very end. He finally surrendered at Doaksville, in the Choctaw Nation, on June 23, 1865. He was the last Confederate general to lay down his arms.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 172.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 175.

In the eastern theater, Indians became involved in the war effort as well, with Indian tribes allying with both the Union and the Confederate sides. The Eastern band of Cherokee, who had remained in the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina, were one of the most active tribes in the war effort on either side. Given that they were surrounded by the Confederacy, it should come as little surprise that they declared their support for the South.

It is impossible to discuss the Eastern Cherokee in the Civil War without mentioning the contributions of Colonel William Holland Thomas. He was not only their chief, but he holds the distinction of being the only white man to ever be a Cherokee chief. He was born into a white family, his father Richard Thomas being a Revolutionary War veteran of Welsh descent. His father drowned just before he was born in 1805, so his mother, Temperance Calvert Strother of Newcastle, England, was left to raise him alone. When he was twelve, he was adopted by the Cherokee chief Yonaguska and was given the name Wil-Udsi, or “Little Will”.¹¹⁷ By the time Yonaguska died in 1839, Thomas had established himself as a one of the Cherokee’s major legal advocates in negotiations with both the North Carolina and Federal governments, and it was because of this, in addition to his ties to Yonaguska, that he was chosen to succeed the late chief.¹¹⁸

By the time of the Civil War, Thomas had become the quintessential man in Eastern Cherokee politics, both internal and external. He had even been a state senator in Raleigh from 1848 to 1860. In their book *Confederate Colonel and Cherokee Chief*, Stanly Godbold and Mattie Russell state that “Thomas was not an avowed secessionist, but he believed in the constitutional right of states to leave the Union without fear of military reprisal.”¹¹⁹ However, as

¹¹⁷ Laurence M. Hauptman, *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War*, 103-104.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹¹⁹ E. Stanly Godbold and Mattie U. Russell, *Confederate Colonel and Cherokee Chief: The Life of William Holland Thomas*, (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 90.

time wore on after the November 1860 election, he became increasingly radicalized. On January 29, 1861, the legislature authorized a referendum to determine if the state should have a secession convention. While the people voted the idea down, “Thomas took his first public stand in favor of secession...He told his constituents that North Carolina must decide whether to serve the South or the abolitionists.”¹²⁰ However, North Carolina finally had a convention, and on May 20, they voted to secede. As Godbold and Russell note, Thomas was one of only four legislators chosen to attend the convention. He chaired several committees, in addition to serving on two committees tasked with writing a new state constitution.¹²¹

Despite his lack of military experience and being fifty-six years old at the start of the war, Thomas began mustering troops from his homeland in western North Carolina. By May 1862, roughly one month after the bombardment of Fort Sumter, he was able to recruit 200 Cherokees into service as home guards. After being denied a seat in the Confederate Congress in autumn 1861, “Thomas prepared an alternate career move, becoming a commissioned officer and commander of a contingent of Indian and white mountaineer troops, which he designated as highland rangers.”¹²² It is because of this that he is known as Colonel William Holland Thomas, and his legion came to be known as Thomas’ Legion of Cherokee Indians and Highlanders. Major William Stringfield, who served in the legion, noted in his regimental history that, by September 27, 1862 (which is when they were officially organized in Knoxville, Tennessee), Thomas had 1125 men serving under him.¹²³

¹²⁰ Ibid., 92.

¹²¹ Ibid., 92.

¹²² Laurence M. Hauptman, *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War*, 108.

¹²³ W.W. Stringfield, “Sixty-Ninth Regiment,” in *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina, in the Great War 1861-'65*, Ed. Walter Clark (Digital Collections, East Carolina University), <http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/16955.426> (accessed February 27, 2013), 731.

From the fall of 1862 until the spring of 1865, Thomas' Legion fought for the Confederacy, mostly in their homelands around the mountains in eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina. In late 1862, a large portion of this legion was sent to the Powell River Valley in eastern Tennessee. At Baptist Gap, one company of Cherokees was ambushed by Union forces. During the skirmish, the Indians' leader Lieutenant Astooga Stoga, "a splendid specimen of Indian manhood and warrior" according to Stringfield, was killed.¹²⁴ Enraged by the death of their leader, the Cherokees retaliated. "His fellow Cherokee," says Hauptman, "reacting to their leader's death, scalped several of the fallen Union troops in retaliation."¹²⁵ The company was able to drive the Federal forces back, but the scalping had left an impact. Reports of these actions were used by the North for propaganda. Furthermore, he notes that the Cherokees under Thomas might have scalped Union troops on other occasions. As for the commander of the legion, he says, "Thomas could not or did not want to control this practice."¹²⁶

Thomas's Legion continued to operate out of Knoxville, Tennessee, until September 1, 1863, when General Ambrose Burnside captured the city. Up until that point, the legion had spent most of its time in an attempt to pacify Eastern Tennessee, which was a hotbed of pro-Unionist sentiment.¹²⁷ After Burnside took Knoxville, Thomas and his men moved into western North Carolina near the Smoky Mountains. By this time, Thomas and his Legion had established a name for themselves among the Union forces, so Burnside ordered his men to pursue them. Despite being flushed out of their home city, Thomas and his men continued making guerilla-style attacks against Union forces and their sympathizers in the area. With the exception of a

¹²⁴ Ibid. (accessed March 1, 2013), 736.

¹²⁵ Laurence M. Hauptman, *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War*, 113.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 113

¹²⁷ Ibid., 114.

battle near Gatlinburg where Union forces emerged victorious, this is how it remained for the Thomas Legion for the rest of 1863 and the early part of 1864.¹²⁸

It was not long into 1864 before Colonel Thomas and his Legion became fully involved in the main war effort. The reputation the legion had among the members of Union army was in no way diminished by the battle at Gatlinburg. Brigadier General Samuel Sturgis, under the command of the Department of the Ohio stated:

While in Tuckaleechee Cove I received information that the force of Indians and whites commanded by the rebel Thomas (formerly U. S. Indian agent for the Cherokee Nation) was near the forks of Little Tennessee and Tuckaseegee Rivers in North Carolina, who had become a terror to the Union people of East Tennessee and the borders of North Carolina from the atrocities they were daily perpetrating. I ordered Major [Francis] Davidson with his regiment (the Fourteenth Illinois Cavalry) to pursue this force and to destroy it.¹²⁹

On February 2, a Union force led by the major launched a surprise attack on the legion at Deep Creek, which was a few miles west of Thomas' home of Quallatown. The Union and Confederate forces disputed the results of the battle. In a report he submitted to the headquarters of the Department of the Ohio, Brigadier General Samuel D. Sturgis, Davidson's superior, stated that his men fought a force of 250 Confederates, with 22 Indians and 32 whites being captured, 200 Indians being killed, and less than fifty escaping. "[T]his nest of Indians may be considered as entirely destroyed," Sturgis concludes.¹³⁰ Sturgis' math here does not add up, and Hauptman calls the report "greatly exaggerated."¹³¹ The Confederates, meanwhile, gave a sharply different estimate of their losses. According to Thomas, the Union captured between 20 and 30 combined

¹²⁸ Ibid., 115.

¹²⁹ United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Vol. 32, Part 1, (Harrisburg, PA: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1985), 137.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 137.

¹³¹ Laurence M. Hauptman, *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War*, 116.

for Indians and whites, and only two Indians were killed. Sometime later, Thomas made the claim that his men had killed eight Union soldiers and taken one prisoner.¹³²

Later that year, the Thomas Legion was sent to Virginia's Shenandoah Valley to serve under General Jubal Early in the Valley Campaigns. This was the legion's only time operating outside of the area surrounding Knoxville and the Smoky Mountains. They were able to march through the valley into Maryland, but Union General Philip Sheridan checked their efforts and regained the Shenandoah for the Union, even though it was in ruins by now.¹³³ Thomas, meanwhile, was unable to accompany his legion, having been charged with disloyalty by General Alfred Jackson. As Godbold and Russell note, it was true that the war placed great pressures on Thomas that almost pushed him to the breaking point. They state, "He was old and tired, his life often threatened, his friends suffering, his home and family in danger, his finances in disarray—and the Confederacy was certain to fail. He was sometimes physically uncomfortable and sick. He could not take orders from his superiors."¹³⁴ However, he was not by nature a disloyal man, just one suffering from terrible stress. He also faced the problem of the declining fortunes of both the region and the Confederacy as a whole, leading to large scale desertions by Confederate troops, including some of his own men. The desertion issue was behind the main charge levied against him: that he was guilty of receiving twenty-one deserters from the Sixty-Fifth North Carolina Regiment from September 1863 through April of 1864, and that he had made an improper statement about his authority to receive them.¹³⁵ Jackson was not

¹³² Ibid., 115.

¹³³ E. Stanly Godbold and Mattie U. Russell, *Confederate Colonel and Cherokee Chief: The Life of William Holland Thomas*, 123.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 121.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 122.

thought to be in the best of mental health either, and he was removed from his position and sent to the Army of Tennessee. He was a staff officer by the time the war finished.¹³⁶

Thomas's court-martial, which finally took place in October of 1864, was similar to many other ones in the last months of the Confederacy, and it evidently did not attract much attention. Godbold and Russell conclude based on the available evidence that he plead not guilty, "perhaps arguing that he had done nothing other than what was logical and necessary to survive and win the war in an area where disloyalty to the Confederacy was often worn in public as a badge of honor."¹³⁷ In the end, Thomas was found guilty of the charges against him, which also included one for incompetence in addition to the above, but he was not willing to give up. He wanted to clear his name. He got his exoneration by appealing to President Jefferson Davis.¹³⁸

The last engagement of any real significance that Thomas' Legion was involved in was the Battle of Cedar Creek, near Strasburg, Virginia, on October 19, 1864, while the legion was still under General Early's command. It does not appear to be mentioned in either Hauptman or Godbold and Russell's accounts. Stringfield, however, devotes a section to it in his memoirs, though. The campaigns the legion participated in had by this time taken their toll on the soldiers. Stringfield estimates that there were only 150 men in the legion by this point. General Sheridan was in the area, and when he spied the Confederates, "[h]e did what 500 officers of his army could have done, simply ordered a charge upon those 'Confederate picnickers' and gained a victory out of the defeat of the forenoon."¹³⁹

In the remaining months of the Civil War, Thomas's Legion was a shell of its original self, and it only participated in small battles, including one at Soco Creek in western North

¹³⁶ Ibid., 122.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 123-124.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 124.

¹³⁹ W.W. Stringfield, "Sixty-Ninth Regiment," (accessed March 1, 2013), 755.

Carolina. On April 9, 1865, Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia. News travelled slowly, and Thomas did not surrender until almost a month later on May 7. In the meantime, Thomas had roughly 300 Cherokees with him, an apparent increase from the 150 Stringfield mentions, and the only real advantage he had at this point was the Union's fear that he had many more than this.¹⁴⁰ William Thomas's Legion holds the distinction firing the last shots in the Civil War east of the Mississippi River.

Indian participation in the Civil War was not confined merely to the South or Indian Territory. Many Northern tribes made contributions to the war effort as well. The Iroquois of New York are one example. In fact, their confederation is perhaps the best place to study how Indians who were not at the geographic margins of the United States were treated as potential soldiers during the Civil War. Unlike the Delaware or the Five Civilized Tribes, they were not in a sparsely settled frontier region, where the strength of political organization by the United States was relatively weak and the threat of attack by Confederate forces was strong. Unlike the Eastern Band of Cherokee in western North Carolina, the Iroquois were not in a hard to breach mountainous region that faced attacks not only from external Union forces but also from Unionist sympathizers from within. The Iroquois Confederation was located safely within Upstate New York, over 150 miles from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the farthest north the Confederacy ever penetrated into Union lands. There was no need for a home guard here, so any service rendered by the Indians would be in the regular army.

The Iroquois had trouble enlisting in the regular Union army. Hauptman points out that by 1862, many Iroquois "had been repeatedly rejected for service by New York recruiters because of overt racism and because there the legality of Indian service was in question since

¹⁴⁰ E Stanly Godbold and Mattie U. Russell, *Confederate Colonel and Cherokee Chief: The Life of William Holland Thomas*, 127.

almost no Indians at that time were United States citizens.”¹⁴¹ As noted earlier, New York had no great need for a home guard like the situation with the Delaware in Kansas and Missouri, since the state was not under any real threat of Confederate invasion. As Hauptman notes, the Seneca in other parts of the North had little problem registering for service, but they were continually rejected in New York state. The decision to allow Indians came more out of the necessity of having more bodies to fill the army’s ranks than any sudden enlightenment on the recruiters’ part. “Finally, heavy Union battlefield losses at First Manassas and Shiloh and the persistent lobbying by Iroquois Indians and their non-Indian allies forced local New York recruiting officers to accept the enlistment of Iroquois Indians in the spring of 1862.”¹⁴²

The most notable Iroquois to enlist in the Union army during the Civil War was Ely S. Parker, or Hasanoanda, a Seneca, who was born in 1828. In the years prior to the Civil War, he had already had a relatively eventful life, yet nevertheless he still faced problems due to his Indian heritage. As his grand-nephew Arthur Parker notes in his biography of the man, by the late 1840s, Ely had begun reading law for the firm of Angel and Rice in Ellicottville, New York, a town near the Alleghany River Reservation at the western end of the state. Once he had done this for the customary three years, he decided to apply for admission to the state bar. As Parker recorded, “Competent though he was and able to meet every requirement, he could not be admitted to the bar. A Supreme Court decision had ruled otherwise, making it possible only for a male white man and a citizen to enter.”¹⁴³

Disappointed, but not defeated in his quest to help his fellow Iroquois, Parker made the decision to become an engineer. He was admitted to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy,

¹⁴¹ Laurence M. Hauptman, *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War*, 165.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁴³ Arthur C. Parker, *The Life of General Ely S. Parker, Last Grand Sachem of the Iroquois and General Grant’s Military Secretary* (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=Do8MAAAAYAAJ> (accessed March 6, 2013), 79.

New York, and decided to become a civil engineer. Arthur Parker's biography does not give the date that Ely left Rensselaer, but Hauptman's book does mention that by 1853, he was employed in the New York State Militia as the captain of engineers in the Rochester area.¹⁴⁴ He was there for a couple of years, but in 1855, Arthur's biography notes that Ely was appointed the chief engineer of a project to build the Chesapeake and Albemarle Canal. After drafting plans and choosing the spot for the canal, he was appointed to the Lighthouse District which covered Lakes Michigan, Huron, and Superior.¹⁴⁵ A couple years later in 1857, he was assigned to build a customs house in Galena, Illinois. It was here that he became friends with Ulysses S. Grant, who was working as a harness shop clerk at the time.¹⁴⁶

By the time the Civil War started, Parker was still working in Illinois. He was nevertheless interested in the war because, as Arthur states, "His country was in trouble and his natural instinct was to fight for it."¹⁴⁷ After a few months, he resigned his post and headed back to New York, where he sought his father's permission to join the Union war effort, which he was granted. His desires met a roadblock, though, when the state governor Edwin Morgan turned him down.¹⁴⁸ Despite this rebuff, Parker was determined to serve in the war, and he contacted Secretary of State William Seward to offer his services. Arthur Parker gives the following quote from Ely describing the secretary's reply:

"Mr. Seward in a short time said to me that the struggle in which I wished to assist, was an affair between white men and one in which the Indian was not called to act. 'The fight must be settled by the white men alone,' he said. 'Go home, cultivate your farm and we will settle our own troubles without any Indian aid.'"¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Laurence M. Hauptman, *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War*, 176.

¹⁴⁵ Arthur C. Parker, *The Life of General Ely S. Parker*, 93-4.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 99-100.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 102-103.

He heeded Seward's words reluctantly and return home. After all, farmers could contribute to the war effort. "The farmers had to grow the food that soldiers ate; and so with his native philosophy ever ready, Parker simply plowed as an expression of his patriotism and duty."¹⁵⁰

He finally received his commission in the spring of 1863. He was assigned the rank of captain, which he formally accepted on June 4 of that year. His tribesmen rejoiced upon the news: "A great feast was made in his honor and Do-ne-ho-ga-wa [another name Parker had received] was commended to the care of the Great Spirit."¹⁵¹ He was placed under the command of General John Eugene Smith and was assigned to be the chief engineer of the 7th Army Division. Smith commended Parker's service during the Vicksburg Campaign, saying, "[H]e was a good engineer."¹⁵² He later was placed under Grant's staff as assistant adjutant general when the latter assumed command of the Military Division of Mississippi.

Parker finished out the war on Grant's staff. His first real taste of battle was on the Chattanooga Campaign in late 1863, which culminated in the battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. The successful Union campaign effectively ended Confederate control of Tennessee, and it was one of the main reasons Grant was chosen to lead all of the Union Armies in March of 1864. Arthur Parker gives this description of some of the tasks Ely was asked to do:

Parker was often called upon to lay out a line of entrenchments and often made the surveys directly under fire. He was known everywhere in the Army of the Potomac as "the Indian" and as he rode upon his great black horse he was a conspicuous figure. In the operations about Richmond he was constantly engaged in the engineering.¹⁵³

Another role Arthur mentions that Ely took on was transcribing Grant's correspondence. He attributes this to two facts: Ely an impressive command of the English language, and he had

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 106.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 106.

¹⁵² Ibid., 107.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 110.

intimate knowledge of what was happening on the campaigns.¹⁵⁴ On August 30, 1864, he was officially promoted to lieutenant colonel. An order coming from the War Department stated: “Capt. Ely S. Parker, assistant adjutant-general, U.S. volunteers, is announced as private secretary on the staff of Lieutenant-General Grant, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel....”¹⁵⁵ His friendship with Grant had clearly paid off.

The most famous thing Ely Parker did during the Civil War came right at the very end. When Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, it was Parker who was tasked with transcribing the surrender terms. Indeed, for all of the ink that has been devoted to describing how close Parker and Grant were, it is this event that gives the former his only mention in Grant’s memoirs. After holding a rather long conversation with General Lee where the two men reminisced about their history together prior to the Civil War, Grant noted in his memoirs, “General Lee again interrupted the course of the conversation by suggesting the terms I proposed to give his army ought to be written out. I called to General Parker, secretary on my staff, for writing materials...” and then the general commenced writing the terms of surrender.¹⁵⁶ Grant refers to Parker as a general because the latter was brevetted to that rank on the same day the surrender happened. This meant that he was one of only two Indians to hold that rank during the Civil War. The other was the Confederate Stand Watie.

After the Civil War, Parker became the first Indian to hold the office of Commissioner of Indian Affairs. He held the office from 1869 to 1871, during Grant’s presidency. He was accused of corruption, something which was characteristic of the Grant Presidency. Although a House Committee acquitted him, the specter still hung over him. Hauptman notes that “[a]lthough

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. (accessed March 6, 2013), 115.

¹⁵⁵ United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Vol. 42 (Harrisburg, PA: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1985), 592.

¹⁵⁶ Ulysses S. Grant, *Memoirs and Selected Letters: Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant; Selected Letters, 1839-1865* (New York City: Literary Classics of the United States, 1990), 736.

Parker acknowledged mistakes of judgment, he vehemently denied official wrongdoings and fraud.”¹⁵⁷ His life after leaving this office was one of great misfortune. He lost most of his wealth in the Panic of 1873, and he spent most of the rest of his life in poverty, surviving off of favors from his friends, particularly those from Grant’s staff.

The preceding examples are just some of the most prominent and illustrative instances of Indians serving in the military on either side during the Civil War. Along the frontier, which was sparsely settled and communities were under threat of attack, Indians were frequently used as home guards, a sort of local militia, to protect their lands from intrusion by the opposing sides’ forces, which in the case of Kansas was the Confederates. The same general idea held true for the Confederacy in the hardscrabble regions of the Appalachians, where residents had little use for slaves or the Confederacy. Home guards there became a way of defending the Confederacy from the Unionist sentiments that were lurking in the communities in the area. In both instances, these Indians were not regular soldiers, but their usefulness was recognized.

The case of the Iroquois demonstrates the difficulties American Indians faced in trying to enlist for regular military service in the United States army. As Hauptman notes, “[A]dmitting Indians into Union service varied from locale to locale.”¹⁵⁸ While recruiters in a state like Pennsylvania might be fairly open-minded about admitting Indians into the United States army, those in New York were evidently not. It was only with the heavy Union losses incurred by the Battle of First Manassas that things began changing.¹⁵⁹ Even in the case of someone as eminently qualified for military service as Ely Parker, who had several successful military engineering projects to his name, a friendship with General Ulysses S. Grant, and a respectable political presence from his days of advocacy on behalf of his Seneca tribe, found great difficulty in

¹⁵⁷ Laurence M. Hauptman, *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War*, 183

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 166.

convincing the powers-that-be in New York to allow him into the military. When he finally was commissioned, he served as well and as admirably as any white soldier would likely have done in his place, and he even had the distinct honor of being tasked to transcribe the surrender terms offered to General Lee at Appomattox. Nevertheless, examples like that of Parker were the exception rather than the rule. For the next several decades, Indian roles in the military were still mainly limited to militia-style home guards or scouts aiding the regular soldiers.

Chapter 3: From the Indian Wars to the Spanish-American War

With the Civil War drawing to a close after Appomattox, the United States no longer had the need for a large army. Nevertheless, even without such a major conflict, there was still a need for the military. Since the earliest days of the colonies, the nation had been looking to expand westward, and in the years during and following James Polk's presidency in the mid-1840s and the concept of a "Manifest destiny", the drive to settle in territories west of the Mississippi River had only increased. In the years after the Civil War, this drive was still present. However, American settlements out west had to contend with several obstacles. Some of these were, of course, natural ones, but one of the biggest issues settlers in the western United States had to confront was the presence of American Indians who had lived on that land long before they did. Some of these tribes were hostile, and some were friendly. Indians are not a monolithic group, and in the fight against the former group, the United States and its military were frequently assisted by the latter. Sometimes, as with the Apaches, the friendly and hostile Indians might even be from the same basic tribe. For some Indians, it was because of pre-existing enmity between two or more tribes, for some, it was because of the allure of money to a group of Indians who lived in poverty, and for some, it was a chance to gain glory, respect, and social status in their tribes. Some even had reasons beyond this.

During the postbellum Indian Wars, indigenous scouts played vital roles to the United States military in their campaigns. Since the terrain was largely unfamiliar to most Americans, someone had to be enlisted to guide them through the area, and warriors from friendly Indian tribes were usually picked to fill that role as a scout. However, they were not just used for their knowledge of the territory, as they typically had a better idea than any white soldier as to how

the hostile tribe or tribes fought. As George Bird Grinnell notes in his 1928 book *Two Great Scouts and Their Pawnee Battalion*, “[P]eople were needed who were acquainted with the new country and with the ways of the enemy—those who could guide the fighting men and help them to get in close touch with their foes.”¹⁶⁰

The history of Indian scouts in the postbellum American West technically has its roots in the waning days of the Civil War. In December of 1864, General Samuel Curtis went to the Pawnee to see if he could recruit some of them for an expedition against the hostile Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Indians. The Pawnee had already had a long history of fighting these tribes, so the United States military assumed they were likely interested in an alliance. His chosen man for this task was Major Frank North, who had also worked as a clerk and interpreter for a trading post for the Pawnee Agency in Genoa, Nebraska. The Pawnee appear to have trusted North, or at the very least, they were eager to fight their old enemies. As Grinnell notes, when North went to their reservation to recruit one hundred scouts, “In less than one hour he had enrolled one hundred capable Pawnee warriors, all of whom were anxious to go on the warpath against their old enemies the Sioux.”¹⁶¹ With help from his brother Luther, Frank North was able to enlist another 120 Pawnees by mid-January 1865. However, thirty five of these recruits deserted upon being told, falsely, that they would be fighting African Americans, but the North brothers were eventually able to make up for this deficiency “by hard work and perseverance.”¹⁶²

The scouts mustered by Frank North saw action in a couple of relatively small Indian conflicts that took place immediately after the Civil War. One of these was an expedition that has come to be known as the Powder River War. Lasting from August 1, 1865, until September 24 of

¹⁶⁰ George Bird Grinnell, *Two Pawnee Scouts and Their Pawnee Battalion: The Experiences of Frank J. North and Luther H. North, Pioneers in the Great West, 1856-1882, and Their Defence of the Building of the Union Pacific Railroad* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), 17.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 79.

that year, they aided General Patrick Connor's forces against the hostile Cheyenne and Sioux tribes along that river and Yellowstone country. The first major action they took part in came on August 22, when they reported that they had discovered an Indian camp, which greatly excited them. As Grinnell notes, "The whole company of Pawnee scouts was ordered out and started off in hope of a big fight, having stripped off all their clothing, as was their custom when a battle was looked for."¹⁶³ Two days later, they attacked the camp of hostile Cheyennes. Grinnell states that Pawnee scouts killed twenty-six men and one woman, while the scouts only lost four horses.¹⁶⁴

These scouts also served bravely in the Battle of Tongue River on August 29. In the days leading up to the battle, smoke was discovered along the horizon, and Frank North and some of his scouts were sent out to find the village that was presumably the source of it. What they found was a large Arapahoe village on the Tongue River. When the day of the battle arrived, Connor's forces were able to take the village fairly easily. While the general had ordered his men to spare the women and children, a number of them were still killed by the Pawnee scouts and other friendly Indians accompanying the force. As Grinnell puts it, "The Indian scouts did this work at times when they were not observed by soldiers."¹⁶⁵ A footnote in Grinnell's book notes that estimates of the hostile Indians killed during this battle vary "from sixty or seventy up to one hundred and sixty-three," and Grinnell favors the high end of these estimates.¹⁶⁶ John McDermott, author of the biggest recent work on the Indian wars of 1865, *Circle of Fire*, states that sixty-three Arapahoe were killed. He also notes that the troops captured 500 ponies and

¹⁶³ Ibid., 90.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 91.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 108.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 108.

burned 250 lodges.¹⁶⁷ The scouts were involved in a rather interesting post-battle incident as well. Connor had ordered all his men to bring everything they had plundered from the village and place it in a pile. The Pawnees placed about sixty scalps in the pile, thinking that the general planned “as on a previous occasion, to have everything distributed among the victors...”¹⁶⁸ Unfortunately for them, they were very wrong. Connor was horrified at the sight of the scalps, and he was further dismayed at the thought of his soldiers, even the scouts, leaving the fight to plunder the village. “To punish you for this unsoldierlike conduct, I propose to destroy everything that you have taken,” he told them.¹⁶⁹

Perhaps the most notable things that can be taken away from the actions of the Pawnee scouts during this expedition is that, while they were indeed mustered into action by the United State military, they were far from a regular force. The way they approached life on the expedition was still subject to their cultural norms. They were, for example, still very willing to collect the scalps of their enemies, even though it horrified their commander as well as the white troops of the battalion. While the act of scalping has been historically not limited to Native Americans, it nevertheless was one of the most common things associated with tribal warfare in that day. The days of large masses of Indians serving as regular soldiers were still many years off.

Though originally formed on something of an ad hoc basis, the actions of the Pawnee scouts over the course of the Powder River Campaign nevertheless proved that Indian scouts could be useful on the battlefield. They received legal sanctioning in the Military Reorganization Act of 1866. Section 6 of this law stated the following:

¹⁶⁷ John D. McDermott, *Circle of Fire: The Indian War of 1865* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003), 116.

¹⁶⁸ George Bird Grinnell, *Two Pawnee Scouts and Their Pawnee Battalion*, 110.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 110.

[T]he President is hereby authorized to enlist and employ in the Territories and Indian country a force of Indians, not to exceed one thousand, to act as scouts, who shall receive the pay and allowances of Indian scouts, cavalry soldiers, and be discharged whenever the necessity for their further employment is abated, or at the discretion of the department commander.¹⁷⁰

In addition to validating the experiment undertaken by Generals Curtis and Connor and the North brothers, this provision also harkens back to Jim Lane and his Indian Expedition during the Civil War. Thomas Dunlay draws a parallel between this and the gradual acceptance of black soldiers during this time period: “As with the enlistment of blacks during the [Civil War], westerners and other ‘amateurs’ established a policy that federal officials and the regular hierarchy finally had to accept...the provision for Indian scouts, in a more modest way, made another emergency expedient permanent.”¹⁷¹ In other words, the federal government was finally catching up to what had become established practice in the field.

The response of the army as a whole’s response to this was less than enthusiastic. As one example, Dunlay mentions an instance involving Warm Springs scouts in Oregon in small wars against the Paiutes. Oregon’s governor, George Woods, seeking to fix his state’s problems with these Indians once and for all, asked General Frederick Steele, the commander of the military’s Department of the Columbia, to organize into two companies the 100 Indian scouts allotted to the department under the 1866 act, with both companies being placed under the governor’s command. Steele refused this request, but as Dunlay notes, it was “probably as much because of the proposed freedom from regular control as from any objection to Indian scouts as such.”¹⁷²

Undaunted, Woods appealed to General Henry Halleck, Steele’s superior and the commander of

¹⁷⁰ United States Congress, *Statutes at large, treaties and proclamations of the United States of America*, Vol. 14 (Google Book) <http://books.google.com/books?id=DKhDAAAACAAJ> (accessed March 11, 2013), 333.

¹⁷¹ Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers: Indian Scouts and Auxiliaries with the United States Army, 1860-90* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 45.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 45.

the Military Division of the Pacific, who also refused the request. It was only upon an appeal to the Secretary of War Edwin Stanton that the request was finally granted.¹⁷³

In the years after the Civil War, General George Crook became the strongest advocate for using Indian soldiers, and it was in Oregon that he began making a name for himself as such while still a lieutenant colonel. The governor's two companies operated in close conjunction with the regular forces, and for much of the 1866-67 campaign, he was the one in charge of them. To add to this, Crook managed to raise a band of friendly Paiutes, led by the mixed-blood scout Archie McIntosh. This was one of the first of many times George Crook employed this kind of strategy: utilizing scouts who were closely related both culturally and linguistically to the people he was pursuing.¹⁷⁴ This was a very wise choice to make for Crook, and it paid great dividends. As Crook noted in his memoirs describing his men's progress through a snowstorm in the region: "This blinding storm obscured all landmarks, but fortunately our guide's (Archie McIntosh) instincts were more reliable, more so than the knowledge of any other guide I have ever seen, and his course did not deviate from this point a foot in the whole distance."¹⁷⁵

The ultimate success of this campaign against the Paiutes brought great fame to General Crook, and as a result, the military also began seriously considering the use of Indian scouts on a larger scale. It is notable that both Halleck and Steele, who had earlier opposed Governor Woods' requests, praised these scouts in their reports on the campaign.¹⁷⁶ General Steele, was particularly effusive in his praise. In an 1867 report, he wrote:

The Indian scouts have done most valuable service. Being armed, mounted, and supplied, and backed by troops, they cheerfully lead the way into the middle of their enemies. In the late expeditions, they have done most of the fighting and killing. They have also

¹⁷³ Ibid., 45-46.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 46.

¹⁷⁵ George Crook and Martin Ferdinand Schmitt, *General George Crook, His Autobiography* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), 147.

¹⁷⁶ Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers*, 46

proved themselves very efficient when acting alone; they are very useful as guides and spies and in destroying the spies of the enemy. It is my opinion that one hundred, in addition to those now employed, would exterminate the hostile bands before next spring, with troops enough in the settlements to prevent their getting supplies from that source.¹⁷⁷

Perhaps the most notable statement Steele makes here is that he wanted American Indians to be employed as an even bigger part of the Army's forces in the region. It is likely that Steele was influenced by Crook's own recommendations in this respect, as the latter's success in the field provided solid evidence of Indians' usefulness to the military.¹⁷⁸

Crook's success in this expedition led to him being asked to fight in other Indian Wars. The next action he saw came in the Tonto Basin of the Arizona Territory where he was tasked with forcing the Yavapai and Apache people of the area onto reservations. Interestingly, he wrote in his memoirs before he was assigned this task that he told the Department of Arizona commander General George Thomas that he "was tired of the Indian work" and "that it only entailed hard work without any corresponding benefit."¹⁷⁹ In spite of this, and probably because of his reputation, that President Ulysses S. Grant appointed him to lead this campaign.

Like any good military man, Crook obeyed the orders he was given. At the start of his expedition, he hired fifty local Mexicans from Tucson to work as scouts, having been told by the governor of the territory "that they knew the country, the habits and mode of Indian warfare...[and] that they could go inside an Apache and turn him wrong side out in no time at all."¹⁸⁰ As helpful as they might have been, General Crook still wished to recruit friendly Indians to his cause. He found these allies in the White Mountains Apache, and he was able to form a

¹⁷⁷ United States War Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=wpsdAQAAIAAJ> (accessed April 10, 2013), 79.

¹⁷⁸ Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers*, 47.

¹⁷⁹ George Crook and Martin Ferdinand Schmitt, *General George Crook, His Autobiography*, 160.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 163.

company from the men he convinced.¹⁸¹ The scouts he mustered turn up only once more in his narrative of this campaign. When General Oliver Howard signed a peace treaty with the Apache chief Cochise and his band of hostile Indians, Crook ceased his actions against him, but the Indians under his command took it as a sign he was afraid of Cochise “because I left him unmolested.”¹⁸² In the end, General Crook was successful in his campaign in the Arizona territory, and he notes this by saying “The Indians were placed on the reservation under the most solemn promise to remain there and behave themselves.”¹⁸³

Some better information on their usefulness comes from elsewhere. John Bourke, one of General Crook’s aides, wrote in his memoir *On the Border with Crook*: “The longer we knew the Apache scouts, the better we liked them. They were wilder and more suspicious than the Pimas and Maricopas, but far more reliable, and endowed with a greater amount of courage and daring.”¹⁸⁴ While the tenacity—and the guns—of the American troops is specifically mentioned by the hostile Apache as one reason why they chose to surrender, they also mention the skills of the scouts. Bourke sums up the words of one Apache chief in his book by saying of the Americans, “[T]here were too many soldiers; [the hostile Apaches] had retreated to the mountain tops, thinking to hide in the snow until the soldiers went home, but the scouts found them out and the soldiers followed them. They wanted to make peace, and to be at terms of good-will with the whites.”¹⁸⁵

Having secured the hostile Apaches’ surrender, the next task at hand was maintaining the peace. In his work *General Crook and the Western Frontier*, probably the best recent scholarship

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 165-6.

¹⁸² Ibid., 177.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 180.

¹⁸⁴ John G. Bourke, *On the Border with Crook* (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=HGcOAAAAIAAJ> (accessed April 10, 2013), 203.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 213.

on the man's career, Charles Robinson notes that the general's treatment of the conquered Indians was rather humane. In exchange for ending hostilities against whites, staying on their reservations, and complying with whatever government regulations are issued through their agents, their rights were protected. Furthermore, Crook encouraged them to farm, in order "[t]o divert the Indians from thoughts of war...."¹⁸⁶ Even so, it is important to note the paternalistic tone Crook took in his dealings with Indians. A general order given by him to clarify the earlier order states that, while some measure of clemency should be displayed for minor offenses, "care should also be taken that they do not succeed in deceiving their agents and the officers, in matters of great import, being careful to treat them as children in ignorance, not in innocence."¹⁸⁷ Regardless of this fact, Crook was the best high ranking military friend the Indians had at this point.

These actions in Arizona were far from the last time George Crook campaigned against hostile Indians. His next major action was in what is now called the Great Sioux War of 1876. By the mid-1870s, gold had been discovered in the Black Hills, something that had attracted many potential miners seeking to strike it rich. Unfortunately for them, the gold happened to be on a Sioux reservation. General Crook was ordered out into this area to eject these prospectors, as Washington was eager to avoid this violation of the treaty terms.¹⁸⁸ By the time he arrived in the Black Hills country in 1875, he found it had already become fairly well-populated with whites looking for gold. While he did issue a proclamation instructing them to leave the area, a few managed to elude the troops and stay behind.¹⁸⁹ Even so, Crook seemed aware of the

¹⁸⁶ Charles M. Robinson, *General Crook and the Western Frontier* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 136-7.

¹⁸⁷ United States Congress, *Report of the Secretary of War; Being Part of the Message and Documents Communicated to the Two Houses of Congress in Four Volumes*, Vol. 1 (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=9ltHAQAIAAJ> (accessed April 10, 2013), 171.

¹⁸⁸ George Crook and Martin Ferdinand Schmitt, *General George Crook, His Autobiography*, 188.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 188-9.

direction the state of affairs in this region was heading. In that same proclamation, he “advised to them to agree amongst themselves to respect each other’s claims when it became lawful for them to go into this country.”¹⁹⁰ This is a somewhat indirect way of saying that it was admissible for them to return once the government had abandoned its treaty obligations and managed to expel the Indians. This section leads Robinson to call the proclamation, quite accurately, “an empty gesture.”¹⁹¹ After all, had Crook been genuinely interested in protecting the Indians’ claims to the land, he would have avoided telling the prospectors to wait until such a time as they could return to the land. Ultimately, the best that can be said about this proclamation is that it forestalled the inevitable large scale white settlement of the region for a little while longer.

The government issued an ultimatum requiring all Lakota to return to their reservation by January 31, 1876. All those who disobeyed the order, were to “be regarded as hostile.”¹⁹² In his memoirs, Crook mentions this order, but he is more direct, stating that all Indians were to return to their reservations “or else the troops would attack them whenever found.”¹⁹³ Crook does not detail General Sheridan’s plan of attack in his memoir, but it was intended to be a three-pronged offensive, with the Indians ideally caught between converging columns of troops. General Alfred Terry led his troops of western Montana and in Dakota, with, as Sheridan envisioned, a column moving east out of Montana and a column moving west out of Dakota, which would have been led by George Armstrong Custer. Crook, meanwhile, would move north out of Wyoming. “The flaw was climate,” Robinson notes, “Sheridan’s own experience was in the southern plains, and he had no grasp of the severity of the winter in Montana. So while Crook was almost ready to move, Terry’s troops were snowbound and would be idle until well into March.” Despite the

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 189.

¹⁹¹ Charles M. Robinson, *General Crook and the Western Frontier*, 162.

¹⁹² Ibid., 163.

¹⁹³ George Crook and Martin Ferdinand Schmitt, *General George Crook, His Autobiography*, 189.

delays facing Terry, General Crook arrived in Cheyenne from Omaha on February 17 and left there for Fort Laramie on the twenty-first.¹⁹⁴

The major initial source of Indian scouts for this war was not from the Lakota. Indeed, Crook found, for example, that “many reservation Lakotas were sympathetic to those the government had declared hostile and decided to remain neutral, at least for the time being...” and thus had to settle for white civilians from the region.¹⁹⁵ Instead, it was the Pawnees who again aided the army in its campaigns, and at General Philip Sheridan’s request, they were commanded by familiar faces: the North brothers. Curiously, they do not appear to show up in Robinson’s account, and the Pawnees merit only two mentions, of which only one is a reference, and a rather indirect one at that, to them as scouts. General Crook, meanwhile, died before he could get much further into his discussion of the Great Sioux War than has been seen here, so he is silent on both. Fortunately, there are other sources that do cover them, particularly Bourke’s and Grinnell’s books as well as the far more recent Martin van de Logt’s *War Party in Blue*.

The official battalion of Pawnee scouts was originally disbanded in 1870, as the need for a large, organized group of them had died down. In the intervening years, the Pawnees had settled on a reservation in Oklahoma. Life there was not easy, and many of the Indians lived in great poverty. Thus, when the United States Army came calling anew for their services, they jumped at the opportunity. Van de Logt notes that, while Major Frank North had initially set up his recruiting office inside the Pawnee’s Council House, he was forced to move outside “when hundreds of young men tried to get in and sign up for the new battalion all at once...within an hour [North] had penned the names of one hundred men.”¹⁹⁶ Of course, the desire to join the

¹⁹⁴ Charles M. Robinson, *General Crook and the Western Frontier*, 164.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 164-165.

¹⁹⁶ Mark van de Logt, *War Party in Blue: Pawnee Scouts in the U.S. Army* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 190.

battalion was not merely motivated by the terrible economic conditions. Like many tribes, the Pawnees held their warriors in high esteem. Van de Logt writes, "Poverty and government policies were slowly eroding the old social structures, which emphasized rank, hierarchy, and social position. Military service allowed men to gain social recognition on the field of battle."¹⁹⁷ With little to do on a poverty stricken reservation and a government that was beginning to push the assimilation policies that dominated the next four decades, joining the military in its campaign against the Sioux and Cheyenne was one of the only ways left to bring honor to themselves and even their tribes.

The Pawnees saw action primarily against the Lakota Chiefs Red Cloud and Red Leaf and against the Cheyennes in the Big Horn Mountains. Both efforts were not led by Crook himself but by General Ranald McKenzie. On October 22, 1876, Frank North and his scouts arrived at Camp Robinson in the far-northwest corner of Nebraska, and on the twenty-third they advanced on Red Cloud's camp. They were able to take the camp with neither a shot nor a casualty, and they were able to capture the chief himself and many horses. "The Indians had been taken by complete surprise and surrendered without firing a shot," Van de Logt notes, "They were quickly disarmed."¹⁹⁸ Meanwhile, Major George Gordon, who McKenzie charged with leading the effort against Red Leaf, saw similar success that same day with a group of Pawnee scouts led by Luther North against their target. In this case, Red Leaf's Lakota seemed unwilling to fight back. Even though Gordon's men and the Pawnees were in the camp, not a single one of the men came out of their lodges, so the scouts moved to round up the horses. As Grinnell notes,

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 191.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 198.

“Not a single Indian showed his face outside the lodges until after the Pawnees had passed through the camp and were gathering the loose horses that were feeding on the hill.”¹⁹⁹

The defeated Indians from both camps were marched to Camp Robinson, and the Pawnee scouts drove the captured horses, all 722 of them from both camps, there. MacKenzie, Gordon, and the other soldiers met up with General Crook there. After this, Frank North was ordered on October 24 to take some of his scouts and drive the horses up to Fort Laramie, as Crook feared captured Indians might try to reclaim their horses.²⁰⁰ While there is no disagreement that this happened, Grinnell and Van de Logt provide somewhat different accounts of the particulars. Grinnell states that North took twenty scouts with him to Fort Laramie, and he also notes that his men had been on their horses for most of the last thirty-four hours. His account also makes it seem as if North took the initiative to drive the herd to Fort Laramie on their own, which might be unusual for such a relatively significant operation in a military setting.²⁰¹ Van de Logt, meanwhile, states that North had been ordered by Crook to take the horses up to Fort Laramie; that his men had “been in the saddle for nearly three days, with little or no sleep since the twenty-second”; and that North took “forty or fifty” scouts with him.²⁰²

Regardless of which might be true, they arrived at the fort on October 25, and the remaining scouts under Luther North and Lieutenant Sylvanus Cushing arrived a few days later on the twenty-eighth. There, they were told of their next mission: to hunt down Crazy Horse in the Powder River and Bighorn Mountain region.²⁰³ The Pawnees were not the only scouts

¹⁹⁹ George Bird Grinnell, *Two Pawnee Scouts and Their Pawnee Battalion*, 255.

²⁰⁰ Mark van de Logt, *War Party in Blue: Pawnee Scouts in the U.S. Army*, 199.

²⁰¹ George Bird Grinnell, *Two Pawnee Scouts and Their Pawnee Battalion*, 255-6.

²⁰² Mark van de Logt, *War Party in Blue: Pawnee Scouts in the U.S. Army*, 199.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 200.

involved on this expedition, as Crook had finally been able to enlist men from other tribes as scouts. He was able to recruit from the Arapaho and friendly Lakota and Cheyenne tribes.²⁰⁴

Unsurprisingly, the presence of the latter two on that list caused some concern for the Pawnees, given their acrimonious history between them. According to Grinnell's account, General Crook told Frank North that his Pawnees were "too distant and cool" from the other tribes.²⁰⁵ However, it is what he says after this that is the most interesting: "[The Lakota and Cheyenne] say that as they are soldiers now, they would like to be friends with the Pawnees."²⁰⁶ If Crook is to be believed here, then the friendly Lakota and Cheyenne clearly saw themselves as part of a unified group, rather than disparate tribes, pursuing a unified goal: to hunt down Crazy Horse. Their newly gained status and identities as soldiers in the United States Army was enough for them to overlook past grievances, evidently. It was only after Crook intervened through a series of intertribal councils, with the last one happening on November 19, a few days after they had left Fort Laramie, that he was able to convince all of the scouts to work together.

On November 21, a party of Sioux-Arapaho scouts brought a Cheyenne prisoner named either Beaver Dam or Many Beaver Dams to Crook's camp at Cantonment Reno. He revealed to them the location of a few hostile camps. Dull Knife's (Northern Cheyenne), camp was located a few days south marching from their location, and Crazy Horse's camp was in the Bighorn Mountains on the Rosebud River. Crook immediately ordered his men to prepare to pursue Crazy Horse, and he told Mackenzie to go after Dull Knife with his column, which had around eleven hundred troops, of which roughly one-third were Indian scouts.²⁰⁷ On November 25, Mackenzie found the camp and began planning his attack. The Indian scouts would spearhead it,

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 201.

²⁰⁵ George Bird Grinnell, *Two Pawnee Scouts and Their Pawnee Battalion*, 261.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 261.

²⁰⁷ Mark van de Logt, *War Party in Blue: Pawnee Scouts in the U.S. Army*, 201.

and Major North and his Pawnees would charge the village from the left-hand side of the creek that ran through the valley with the Shoshones right behind them. The soldiers, meanwhile, would approach from the right-hand side of the creek.²⁰⁸

Initially, this attack went similarly to the earlier village attacks. The Cheyennes in the village were in no state to fight. Grinnell notes that “[t]he Indians had been dancing all night and many of them were now sleeping.”²⁰⁹ When the Cheyennes heard the shouts of the scouts, who were by this time issuing loud war-whoops and making other noises; the shots from the soldiers’ rifles; and the sound of horse hoofs, they immediately fled the village with the troops in hot pursuit. The Pawnees managed to kill either five or six Cheyennes as they rushed through the village, but most of them scattered into the mountains with their women and children.²¹⁰

Once the Cheyenne had retreated as far as they could, they began to fight. Grinnell notes that the mountainside they had backed into was “almost perpendicular”, and there they built their breastworks and began to fight back.²¹¹ The main American casualty was Lieutenant John A. McKinney of the Fourth Cavalry, but a few of his men were also killed.²¹² The battle became a dogfight that lasted throughout the day, and the Indian scouts played a large part in the melee. Van de Logt mentions that there were incidents of scalping on both sides. The Cheyennes, for example, scalped American Private John Sullivan of McKinney’s Fourth Cavalry, and the soldiers encountered several Cheyennes who had been scalped by the Pawnees, including at least one older woman. Many coups were also counted that day. One account Van de Logt relates is

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 210-11.

²⁰⁹ George Bird Grinnell, *Two Pawnee Scouts and Their Pawnee Battalion*, 270

²¹⁰ Ibid., 270

²¹¹ Ibid., 270

²¹² Ibid., 270

that of First Sergeant James S. McLellan, who had at one point shot a Cheyenne warrior. “As he was taking the fallen warrior’s gun and carbine, a Pawnee came by and took the coup.”²¹³

By two o’clock in the afternoon, MacKenzie had ordered Major North to have his Pawnees burn the village. As the scouts pulled down the tepees and used the lodging for firewood, the Cheyennes could only watch helplessly from the hills.²¹⁴ When the day was over, the Americans and their Indian scouts had emerged victorious. The surviving Cheyennes had no recourse but to escape on foot. It must have been a sad sight to behold, with women and children alike left to suffer in subfreezing temperatures. Both Frank and Luther North expressed some degree of sorrow over their plight, but neither were able to help them. They found no respite with their fellow Indians, either. Crazy Horse and his camp turned them down because they, too, were low on supplies. Dull Knife eventually surrendered at Camp Robinson several weeks after the battle.²¹⁵

The preceding battle was the last time the Pawnee scouts saw service in the Great Sioux War. Sitting Bull and his band surrendered in the spring of 1877, bringing the conflict mostly to a close. With no more need for their services, the Pawnee scouts were mustered out of service. It is especially important to note Crook’s expression of gratitude for their services in the April 19, 1877, order commanding this:

I think it only just and appropriate to thank you for your excellent behavior during the time of your stay in the military service, under my command, and to say that the soldier-like conduct and discipline of the Pawnee scouts is the most eloquent testimony that could be adduced to prove your fitness for the position you have held as their commanding officer.²¹⁶

The scouts were officially mustered out on May 1 of that year, and this time, it was permanent.

²¹³ Mark van de Logt, *War Party in Blue: Pawnee Scouts in the U.S. Army*, 200-201

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 201

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 214.

²¹⁶ George Bird Grinnell, *Two Pawnee Scouts and Their Pawnee Battalion*, 280

While there were some smaller Indian wars in the late-1870s after the Great Sioux War, which were mainly against the Nez Perce, the next major action General Crook saw came once he was reassigned to the Department of Arizona in 1882, and his time there was highlighted by the campaign against the Chiricahua Apache chief Geronimo, who had been causing problems for the United States government and territorial governments for years. One of his first moves upon being reappointed to the department was to restore friendly relations with the Apache bands who were not hostile to the United States, a relationship that had soured in recent years. As Dunlay notes, “The chiefs expressed distrust of the officers now in Arizona, whom they feared might attack them for no good reason....”²¹⁷

By the time he began his campaign against Geronimo in earnest in the Spring of 1885, Crook was able to enlist scouts from both the Cibicu and Chiricahua bands of the Apache. Even though Geronimo himself was of the latter band, they were apparently willing to help Crook after meeting with him. It was here that he utilized scouts to their fullest extent. He made them the striking force of his command, and they carried out offensive operations along the Sierra Madre, even when it meant crossing the Mexican border. The regular troops were increasingly relegated to defensive roles. Crook had been persuaded by then “that the regular cavalry was more of a hindrance than a help, and that only Apaches could catch Apaches in the dry, barren, and rugged sierra.”²¹⁸ These scouts played vital roles in the pursuit of Geronimo. Scouts under Captains Emmet Crawford and Wirt Davis hassled the Apache chief in Mexico and eventually forced his retreat back into the United States, with the scouts in hot pursuit. However, little progress was made towards capturing Geronimo or his small band of followers, and throughout the Fall of

²¹⁷ Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers*, 173

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 177-8.

1885, the captains and their scouts chased them back and forth between Mexico and the Southwestern United States.

Finally, things appeared to draw to a close in late March 1886. On March 25, Crook attended a council with the Chiricahuas at Canon de los Embudos. Crook was able to force the surrender of most of the hostiles, but Geronimo still held out. On March 27, 1886, Crook was finally able to persuade Geronimo to surrender. However, he and a few followers fled after being told by a mescal bootlegger named Bob Tribollet, who was “angry that his clientele was returning to military control on the agency”, of the horrible conditions at the San Carlos Reservation, which is where they were being sent.²¹⁹

This essentially brought General Crook’s time in Arizona to a close. Sheridan, who had never particularly been a big supporter of Indian scouts, was fed up with the general’s unconventional ways. In particular, he told Crook via telegram, “It seems strange that Geronimo and party could have escaped without the knowledge of the scouts.”²²⁰ Sheridan had in the past “suggested that the reservation Chiricahuas be moved out of Arizona, to deprive the hostiles of potential help in recruits,” even though this band had provided Crook with some of his most useful scouts.²²¹ Robinson says it best, though:

Sheridan was running out of patience. He had spent much of the last fifteen years protecting this maverick who seemed to feel that he alone was capable of resolving the complicated question of the Indian-white relations that had plagued the Americas for almost four centuries. His thirty-five-year-old friendship with Crook, so often strained in the past, was now near the breaking point.²²²

By this point, Crook saw the writing on the wall. On April 1, Crook telegrammed Sheridan requesting to be relieved from the command of the Department of Arizona. “I believe that the

²¹⁹ Charles M. Robinson, *General Crook and the Western Frontier*, 281-2.

²²⁰ George Crook, *Resumé of Operations Against Apache Indians, 1882 to 1886* (Archive.org), <http://archive.org/stream/resumofoperation00croo#page/n1/mode/2up> (accessed April 24, 2013), 12.

²²¹ Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers*, 178

²²² Charles M. Robinson, *General Crook and the Western Frontier*, 282.

plan upon which I have conducted operations is the one most likely to prove successful in the end,” he said, “It may be however that I am too much wedded to my own views in the matter...I respectfully request that I may now be relieved from [this department’s] command.”²²³

General Nelson A. Miles was appointed to succeed Crook as head of the department, and he was officially handed control of it by Crook on April 11. Like the man he succeeded, Miles had experience fighting Indians in the past, and he also had experience using scouts. What made him more appealing to Sheridan, though, was his more nuanced view. “He was too experienced, however, to assume that all Indians would be the same, and he knew of Sheridan’s disapproval of the Chiricahuas and of Crook’s reliance on scouts.”²²⁴ Thus, he discharged the scouts immediately.²²⁵

As if to vindicate Crook’s strategy, the following weeks were not good ones for Miles. He tasked Captain Henry Lawton and a group of white soldiers with finding Geronimo, but the pursuit was fruitless. “Crook’s partisans noted with pleasure that Lawton’s command kept on the trail until virtually every man was exhausted,” Dunlay notes, “but never came in contact with or killed a hostile.”²²⁶ It was until Miles had two of Crook’s Chiricahua scouts and one of his soldiers track down Geronimo that they were at last able to force his final surrender on September 4, 1886.²²⁷

The many campaigns of the Indian Wars, including those only alluded to here, demonstrate that Indians could be good scouts, and furthermore, Indians distinguished themselves in many instances as superb fighters. This naturally led to interest by some in enlisting them as regular soldiers, even long before the Indian Wars finally drew largely to a

²²³ George Crook, *Resumé of Operations Against Apache Indians, 1882 to 1886*, 16.

²²⁴ Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers*, 180.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 181.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 181.

close in the mid-1880s. Richard Pratt, the promoter of Indian school and for his time running Carlisle Indian Industrial School, was among these advocates. As early as 1876, he told General of the Army William Tecumseh Sherman about how useful they might be. In an October 31, 1876, letter, he advised the general to have the Army re-organization Board look into the matter. He cited, as one example, his time at Fort Arbuckle from 1867-1868, where Indians had been enlisted to provide information about hostile Indians and for use as scouts. He writes:

In these and in various other independent positions of trust, such as pursuit of deserter and of wild Indians who had stolen stock or committed other depredations, they were found reliable. On one occasion they pursued and attacked a party of wild Comanches, who had stolen stock near the post, killing one of the Comanches and wounding another, losing one of their own number in the engagement.²²⁸

Later in his letter, he stated that, as he had seen, Indians were more loyal and committed in their duties than even some white soldiers. While he had been Fort Sill and Fort Supply in the Oklahoma territory from 1869-1873, he noted that, while several white soldiers had committed breaches of discipline, which required a court-martial, “The Indians have performed the same duties so well that I have been unable to detect a single breach of discipline or instructions.”²²⁹ Thus, because of the loyalty and skill they had displayed in the service of the United States Army as scouts and informants, Richard Pratt believed they would be a great fit for regular soldiers. Pratt is not the only advocate, but he is one of the best examples.

The desire to see American Indians recruited into the army as regular soldiers finally received official sanction on March 9, 1891. On that day, Brigadier General John C. Kelton, the Adjutant General of the United States at the time, issued Army General Order No. 28. This order, among other things required that “The following named companies...namely, Troop L of each of the cavalry regiments...and Company I of each of the infantry regiments...will be recruited by

²²⁸ Richard H. Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964), 176.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 177.

the enlistment of Indians to the number of fifty-five for each troop and company.”²³⁰ There were a few exceptions to this, which the order specifies as the 9th and 10th cavalry regiments and the Sixth, Eleventh, Fifteenth, Nineteenth, Twenty-Fourth, and Twenty-Fifth.²³¹ The reason these particular companies were exempted was because they were intended to be all black companies.²³² This order also contains some other important provisions. Notably, “[e]nlistments of Indians under the provisions of this order will be separately reported on tri-monthly reports and other returns of the recruiting service, and will be carefully distinguished from enlistments of Indian scouts.”²³³ Also this order requires that all non-commissioned officers in these companies be Indians. Finally, the order reduces the number of scouts the army can recruit to 150.²³⁴ While the order does not mention it, these units were not integrated. “[A]n irony considering that assimilation was a primary purpose of the experiment.”²³⁵

The advent of the Spanish-American War gave American Indians another chance to serve in the military in a time of war. While the war itself was rather short and hardly on the scale of the Civil War, Indians still were able to aid in the war effort. Given the military’s past experiences with Indians in its ranks and their well-established reputation as warriors, the United States tried to recruit actively them into the ranks. Perhaps the most interesting story of this recruitment comes from the Spokane Indians. As Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown note in their history of the tribe, after a call went out from the Indian agents, “Eight Spokanes showed up, dressed as if going to a masquerade ball, agreeing to go if they could fight on their own terms

²³⁰ United States War Department, *General Orders and Circulars, Adjutant General’s Office. 1891.*, (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=hCotAAAAIAAJ> (accessed March 14, 2013), 167.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 167.

²³² Thomas A. Britten, *American Indians in World War I: At Home and at War* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 18.

²³³ United States War Department, *General Orders and Circulars, Adjutant General’s Office. 1891.*, 167.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 167-8

²³⁵ Thomas A. Britten, *American Indians in World War I: At Home and at War*, 18

and in their traditional way and without uniforms. Their offer was unacceptable.”²³⁶ Although those particular Spokane Indians were turned down, many other Indians from across the country still were able to serve.

Theodore Roosevelt’s Rough Riders, or the 1st United States Volunteer Cavalry, were undoubtedly the single most famous unit to serve in the Spanish-American War. Their charge up Kettle Hill, usually confused with San Juan Hill, in Cuba has become a part of national legend and lore. The men of this regiment were all recruited from Indian Territory, which later became the state of Oklahoma, and other places in the western United States. As such, it should not be surprising that among its ranks were several Indians. Theodore Roosevelt makes specific mention of them in his history of the regiment, noting that “[f]rom Indian Territory there came a number of Indians--Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks.”²³⁷ As Roosevelt also notes, though, not all of the Indians in the Rough Riders were from Indian Territory. One of the Indians he specifically singles out a man named William Pollock, who was a full-blooded Pawnee. Roosevelt evidently had a high opinion of the man, praising him as “[o]ne of the gamest fighters and best soldiers in the regiment...”²³⁸ Roosevelt also makes note of the fact that Pollock had fine penmanship and ended up serving as a regimental clerk once the Rough Riders reached Santiago.²³⁹ Pollock also played a role in the Battle of San Juan Hill, where Roosevelt writes, “Among the men whom I noticed as leading in the” charges and always being nearest the enemy, were the Pawnee, Pollock, Simpson of Texas, and Dudley Dean. Jenkins was made

²³⁶ Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown, *The Spokane Indians: Children of the Sun* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 220.

²³⁷ Theodore Roosevelt, *The Rough Riders*, Vol. of *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt* (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=8BaoaIcliMC> (accessed March 13, 2013), 23.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

major, Woodbury Kane, Day, and Frantz, captains, and Greenway and Goodrich first lieutenants.”²⁴⁰

Roosevelt mentions other Indians in his history as well. One of them was a Texan named Colbert. The future president writes:

I was familiar with the history of the Cherokees and Chickasaws during the eighteenth century, when they lived east of the Mississippi. Early in that century various traders, chiefly Scotchmen, settled among them, and the halfbreed descendants of one named Colbert became the most noted chiefs of the Chickasaws. I summoned [Colbert] before me, and found that he was an excellent man, and, as I had supposed, a descendant of the old Chickasaw chiefs.²⁴¹

While he is only identified as “Colbert” in the actual history, the muster roll of troopers in the back mentions a recruit named Benjamin H. Colbert from San Antonio.²⁴² Roosevelt also mentions a few Cherokee. One, who had the name Holderman, told Roosevelt, “He explained to me once why he had come to the war; that it was because his people always had fought when there was a war, and he could not feel happy to stay at home when the flag was going into battle.”²⁴³ Two other Cherokees were freshly graduated from an Indian school. Roosevelt identifies one as a football player and the other as a glee club member. The football player was killed in the action at San Juan, and the glee club member barely survived a fever. Nevertheless, “Both were fine young fellows,” Roosevelt says.²⁴⁴

By all accounts, American Indians served the United States of America as well as any non-native soldier in the Spanish-American War. What should make this all the more amazing is that the United States had engaged in Indian wars just a few years prior to this. However, it should also be noted that the Indians who seem to get the most attention in the available

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 150-151.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 24.

²⁴² Ibid., 255.

²⁴³ Ibid., 26.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 26.

accounts, with Theodore Roosevelt's being just the most famous, are all from various tribes that were friendly to the United States during the Indian Wars of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the annual report by Richard Henry Pratt to the Secretary of the Interior September 28, 1898, offers the best overall summation of the general attitude of Indians toward the war. He stated:

Early in the year, when the first rumors of war electrified our country, our young men were eager to prove their loyalty to the Government, and expressed their wish to enlist should there be a call for volunteer troops. The military government and drill used at the school especially qualified them for such service...[T]he interest they show by asking to take an active part in the grave operations, even to laying down their lives if need be, suggests that if in time of war such a oneness of interest is aroused, then in time of peace universal enlistment can be made in an intelligent and industrious service for the welfare of the nation by adding their energies to its growth of culture and industry.²⁴⁵

Though the words paint a rosy depiction that might have been useful to some extent for propagandistic purposes, there is still much truth to them. Indeed, these words seem to foreshadow the kind of valor and gallantry American Indians displayed in future wars fighting for the United States.

If nothing else, this period between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of World War I represents a transitional period. The skills and contributions of the largely ad hoc forces of scouts and Indian soldiers that had been used in past wars and similar actions had proven that Indians were as trustworthy and capable as officially enlisted men. While this enlistment was largely limited to service as scouts for much of the significant military actions of this period, they nevertheless distinguished themselves in combat enough to prove to the military and the federal government that they could be used as regular soldiers as well. Most significantly, the push to have them enlisted as regular soldiers began during this period, but the lack of a truly major war that required the attention of United States, in addition to long held prejudices against

²⁴⁵ United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1898, (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=d1dGAQAIAAJ> (accessed March 13, 2013), 392(3/13/2013)

the abilities of non-whites to competently and faithfully serve, meant that opportunities for service as regular soldiers were limited. That changed with the onset of the First World War, where Indians finally had the chance to prove themselves, even if their deeds are largely forgotten

Chapter 4: World War I

The deeds of American Indians in World War II are well recognized. The Navajo code talkers whose language proved to be an unbreakable code for the Japanese and the American Indian who helped raise the U.S. flag on Mount Suribachi at Iwo Jima are etched into the national memory. The efforts of American Indians in World War I are less well known. Indeed, when the word “Indian” is used in the context of the war, the British usage of Indian soldiers from their colony of India is probably more likely to spring to mind. Even though their actions are not often discussed, American Indians fought bravely in the war like their fellow Americans, and they made their own unique contributions to the war effort.

Before diving into a discussion of American Indians as soldiers in World War I, it is useful to look at a few small events of importance in the years immediately prior to the entry of United States into the conflict. Between 1898 and 1918, the United States military attempted, sometimes successfully, to utilize Indians as soldiers. In the Filipino Insurrection of 1899-1902 and the Boxer Rebellion of 1899-1900, Indians served in the contingents of American troops sent to suppress both. Indians, however, never drew much attention or fanfare in either. As Michael Tate notes, “Their numbers...were too small to draw much attention, and for the most part these men were fully assimilated members of the dominant white society.”²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ Michael L. Tate, “From Scout to Doughboy: The National Debate over Integrating American Indians into the Military, 1891-1918.” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 17, no. 4 (October 1986), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/969017> (accessed April 30, 2013), 420.

Even after those rebellions died down, the Army continued to enlist Indians as soldiers.

As Bureau of Indian Affairs Commissioner Francis Leupp noted in his book *The Indian and His Problem*:

One often hears an expression of wonder why members of a race as warlike as the Indians do not enlist in the armed service of the United States. The number who do would surprise the inquirers. Doubtless what has misled them is the absence of Indian regiments like those composed exclusively of Negroes or Filipinos. The Indian, when he enters the army, enters it on the same footing as any other citizen of the United States. He takes his place between two white soldiers, is amalgamated at once with the organization he has joined, and, barring the fact that he is usually the most popular man in the ranks, becomes indistinguishable from the rest of the soldiers.²⁴⁷

Leupp also makes a quick note of Indian scouts and how they were utilized extensively in the West, but his main focus is on how they have been used as regular soldiers.²⁴⁸ Other than the fact that the United States was not engaged in fighting any wars at the time, one major reason why little attention is given to these Indian soldiers is because the military did its best to ensure that these Indians were integrated into the rest of the army. As Leupp explains it, “It is in keeping with the more modern policy of obliterating everything which marks the Indian as different from other Americans, and then holding him, as we hold other Americans, to account for the use he makes of his privileges.”²⁴⁹ Leupp demonstrates, if nothing else, how the perception of the capabilities of Indians and their usefulness on the battlefield and campaign had changed in the twenty or so years since the original experiment had begun in 1891. The assimilation of the American Indian into white American society was well underway by the time Francis Leupp had written his book, and the military was playing an important role in this campaign.

By March 1916, the United States was facing another foe: Francisco “Pancho” Villa, the leader of the Mexican Revolution who had turned against the United States after the latter had

²⁴⁷ Francis E. Leupp, *The Indian and His Problem* (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=o8ciAAAAMAAJ> (accessed May 1, 2013), 167.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 168.

sided with Venustiano Carranza's national government in 1915. Officially, though, the expedition started as a response to Villa's attack on the town of Columbus, New Mexico, March 9, 1916. General John J. Pershing received his orders to launch the expedition President Woodrow Wilson on March 15, 1916, and headed into Mexico with about 4,800 men.

While the establishment of American Indian units for the purpose of guarding the border with Mexico had been something of a controversial topic, Pershing nevertheless was able to recruit some Indian scouts to aid him in his expedition. An article in the March 29 *New York Times* recorded that Captain Hazard had been authorized by General Frederick Funston, who was serving with Pershing on the expedition to select twenty Apache Indians to serve as scouts. The article notes, "General Funston sent to him tonight instructions to choose them from those willing to volunteer and to prepare them for immediate dispatch to General Pershing's headquarters," the article notes.²⁵⁰ An April 6 article from the same paper goes into more detail. "20 Redskin Scouts Ready to get Villa", the headline blares, and "Fourteen of these Indians were scouts in the long chase after Geronimo... [who] was chased through the very country in which Pancho Villa has taken refuge."²⁵¹

Though there is no reason to doubt that the Apaches appear to have served honorably in their capacity, it does not appear that they did anything that was truly notable during the expedition. Even so, they still performed valuable services for the American expeditionary force. An article from the June 4, 1916, *New York Times* for

²⁵⁰ "20 Apaches to be Scouts," *New York Times*, March 29, 1916, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=FB0B10F6345C13738DDDA00A94DB405B868DF1D3> (accessed May 2, 2013).

²⁵¹ "20 Redskin Scouts ready to get Villa," *New York Times*, April 7, 1916, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F60A15FF3D5F13738DDDAE0894DC405B868DF1D3> (accessed May 2, 2013).

example, notes that a Lieutenant James Shannon and eleven Apache scouts engaged a band of Villistas in a skirmish near Las Varas pass, resulting in one Villista dead and one wounded and no American casualties.²⁵² While the *Times*' archives have several references to scouts in general throughout the expedition, which probably indicate something the white scouts in the force did without the Apaches or possibly in conjunction with them, the next, and final, significant mention of the Apache scouts comes on August 11. Though the expedition had essentially drawn to a close after the Battle of Carrizal on June 21, American forces were still in the area. The Apache scouts had grown restless from the inactivity, to the point of even having to be placed in their own separate camp. Among the issues that necessitated this were war dances and disputes as to how many notches a scout could cut in his pistol stock for his kills. The article concludes by noting: "It also requires close watching to keep beverages with more than 3 per cent alcohol out of the Apache camp. On one occasion Lieutenant Shannon who is responsible for the good conduct of the Indians, had to call upon his boxing ability to subdue two scouts on a celebration."²⁵³

Once America had made its decision to get involved in World War I, the government had to figure out where it would get enough men to serve in the military for such a massive undertaking. As with previous conflicts, this need also provided Indians with an opportunity to serve in the military. There were, however, a few problems for the Indians who wished to serve and their advocates in government and various organizations. One of the biggest of these problems was the fact that many Indians were still not citizens by June 5, 1917, which was when

²⁵² "Apache Scouts Kill Outlaw in Skirmish," *New York Times*, June 4, 1916, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=FA0A11FF3E5D1A728DDDAD0894DE405B868DF1D3> (accessed May 3, 2013).

²⁵³ "Apache Scouts Hate Peace," *New York Times*, August 11, 1916, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F10E13F8355512738FD8A80994D0405B868DF1D3> (accessed May 3, 2013).

the first call to register for the draft went out. As Thomas Britten notes, “Native Americans also had to enroll, but only those possessing citizenship were liable for the draft.”²⁵⁴

The approach the government ended up taking is that all Indians, whether citizens were to register for the draft, but this did not mean they were necessarily eligible for The issue became too much for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and they eventually turned the matter over to the local draft boards, who had a considerable amount of autonomy in dealing with the application of the Selective Service Act. This led to a substantial amount of inconsistency from one board to the next in the rulings, and this “only exacerbated the confusion and disillusionment of Native American registrants.”²⁵⁵

In her work studying the papers of Joseph Kossuth Dixon, one of the most notable crusaders for Indian policy reform of the era, Susan Krouse mentions that his effort to document Indian World War I veterans, begun in 1920, produced some interesting results when it came to determining how they came to serve in the military. Dixon was able to obtain reports from 2,846 different Indian veterans for his project. According to Krouse, “In response to Dixon’s questions ‘Were you Drafted?’ and ‘Did you Enlist?’ 723 indicated they were drafted, 772 that they enlisted, and 4 answered ‘yes’ to both questions.”²⁵⁶ Examining more of Dixon’s records reveals how the citizenship issue and the inconsistent manner in which the Selective Service Act was applied from local board to local board continued to complicate the drive to get Indians to serve in the military during the war. Krouse notes, “Of those 374 identified as noncitizens in Dixon’s records,

²⁵⁴ Thomas A. Britten, *American Indians in World War I: At Home and at War*, 51.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

²⁵⁶ Susan A. Krouse and Joseph K. Dixon. *North American Indians in the Great War* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska, 2007), 156.

217 did indeed enlist, as did many Indians who were considered citizens. Despite their supposed exemption, however, 151 of the noncitizen Indians documented by Dixon were drafted.”²⁵⁷ It should also be noted that Joseph Dixon did not get reports from every Indian veteran, but the number of reports he did get is sufficiently large enough that it can be considered a reasonably accurate picture of what was happening to other Indian veterans as well. The overriding concern for the military appears to have been the desire to get warm bodies to fill the ranks, and as evidenced by the sizable number of noncitizen Indians who were drafted, it did not seem to truly matter whether they were citizens or not.

Nevertheless, the citizenship issue did not stop many Indians from signing up to join the American war effort. Some 17,000 American Indians registered for the draft. Herman J. Viola writes in his book, *Warriors in Uniform: The Legacy of American Indian Heroism*, that there were 17,213 Indians who signed up for the draft. Of these, 6,509 were inducted, and most of them entering as volunteers.²⁵⁸ Tribes large and small registered for the draft. For example, the Pasamaquoddy of Maine, one of the smaller tribes, saw 500 of theirs volunteer, including Peter Neptune, their Chief.²⁵⁹ Viola mentions in his book that of this 17,213, only 228 were turned away with exemptions, usually because of their age. Furthermore, according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, around 10,000 Indians served in the Army and 2,000 served in the Navy.²⁶⁰ For some tribes, merely sending their men off to fight was not enough. They wanted to make the war a more personal conflict. One nation, the Onondaga of the Iroquois Confederacy, “citing ill-

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 156.

²⁵⁸ Herman J. Viola, *Warriors in Uniform: The Legacy of American Indian Heroism* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2008), 67.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 67.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 67.

treatment of tribal members performing with a Wild West show and stranded in Berlin when the hostilities began” actually declared war on Germany themselves.²⁶¹

As with any other issue involving native peoples, the response to the need for fight in World War I was hardly monolithic. There were those who objected as well. Barsh notes that “the Indian Office anticipated resistance from the beginning, and it superintendents to register Indians quietly and without talking to the press.”²⁶² The Navajos and Utes provided two notable examples of resistance. A June 6, 1917, *New York Times* article notes that the situation on the Navajo reservation in Arizona had deteriorated to the point where the Indians there were able to drive federal officers off the reservation when the latter came to register them for the draft. The Ute Indians in Colorado on the Southern Ute Reservation were similarly riotous. They performed war dances in native costume and threatened to burn down the tribal capital of Ignacio, Colorado. Threats were also made against the Indian agent on the reservation.²⁶³ Their resistance did not last long, though. The very next day, June 7, the *Times* reported that all but eleven of the protesting Utes submitted for registration, and the local sheriff had called up a posse to search for the remaining ones.²⁶⁴

These two tribes were not the only resisters to the draft or war effort. Exactly one year later, on June 6, 1918, the *New York Times* reported that 200 Creek Indians in Henrietta, Oklahoma, rose up in anger over their men being drafted, and three white farmers were killed in the carnage. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the paper tried to link it to

²⁶¹ Ibid., 67.

²⁶² Russell Lawrence Barsh, “American Indians in the Great War,” *Ethnohistory* 38, no. 3 (Summer 1991) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/482356> (accessed December 13, 2013), 280.

²⁶³ “Soldiers Rout Butte Rioters,” *New York Times*, June 6, 1917, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=FB0A15FE385E11738DDDAF0894DE405B878DF1D3> (accessed May 21, 2013).

²⁶⁴ “Order Restored in Butte,” *New York Times*, June 7, 1917, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F70C1FFE385E11738DDDAE0894DE405B878DF1D3> (accessed May 21, 2013).

anti-German sentiment. The insurrection, the *Times* notes, was supposedly started by a Creek woman, and it might have been part of “systematic pro-German propaganda practiced among the tribes. She is said to have returned ten days ago from Washington, where, it is charged, she consulted with persons suspected of pronounced anti-American sentiment.”²⁶⁵ The *New York Times*, however, does not appear to have done any follow up on the survey.

Finally, there were two other Indian tribes whose resistance to the draft is worth noting: the Gosiute and the Shoshone, both located in the West between Utah, Nevada, and Idaho. David Wood has written an excellent article on the subject for the *Utah Historical Quarterly*. When the Shoshones were instructed that their sons had to register for the draft, at least a thousand of them gathered in council and soon after advised them not to enroll. Then, “the tribesmen reportedly bought ‘between thirty and forty rifles’ and ‘a goodly quantity of ammunition.’ Then, some fifty of them fled to the hills.”²⁶⁶ Fortunately, the situation was resolved rather amicably, and 106 eligible Indians were registered on June 5, with only fourteen unaccounted for.²⁶⁷

The Gosiute, meanwhile, present a more complicated case. Their superintendent, Amos Frank described them as circulating treasonous letters condemning President Woodrow Wilson for getting America involved in the war. These letters were circulated between high ranking members of the tribe, including Annies Tommy, its chief. When Frank was finally able to describe the draft law to them, all of the eligible men left the Utah side of the reservation at Deep Creek, which is today called the Confederated Tribes of Gosiute Reservation, and absconded to Nevada, supposedly to shear sheep. In the end, no Gosiutes registered.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ “Creek Indians Rise Against the Draft,” *New York Times*, June 6, 1918, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F20B16F93D5A11738DDDAF0894DE405B888DF1D3> (accessed May 21, 2013).

²⁶⁶ David L. Wood, “Gosiute-Shoshone Draft Resistance, 1917-18,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 49 (Spring 1981), <http://content.lib.utah.edu/utils/getfile/collection/USHSArchPub/id/7765/filename/7800.pdf> (accessed May 21, 2013), 174-5.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 175.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 175.

The situation did not get better from there. G.J. Knapp, the officer in charge of liquor control on the reservation, reported to Washington that Frank and his wife had been hog-tied and that the Indians were threatening to kill them and burn buildings. To make matters worse, when two Gosiute tried to telegram their version of events, Knapp had them arrested.²⁶⁹ In exchange for guaranteeing the safety of the Franks, a party of whites working on behalf of the superintendent and Knapp released the two messengers. Even so, it took the work of special agent L.A. Dorrington from the BIA to settle finally the situation in a council with the Gosiutes. The Indians were adamantly against registration, but Dorrington likewise stood firm as he laid out the government's position:

The investigator warned them that their recalcitrance would lead to arrest, imprisonment, and a stint in the army. He informed them that the commissioner had extended their enrollment period ten days, and, he told them, as tribal Indians they would not be conscripted. Early in the afternoon of the second day of meetings, Jim Clover, the interpreter, offered to register in what Dorrington described as "a splendid and manly manner." The investigator excused himself and went to get Superintendent Frank.²⁷⁰

Dorrington found pandemonium when he returned with Frank. One Indian, Willie Ottogary, demanded a new superintendent, but when Dorrington called his bluff, Ottogary wilted and his attitude immediately changed. Having settled the major issues at this meeting, most of the eligible Gosiute men registered by the end of June.²⁷¹

This was hardly the end of the trouble with the Gosiute and the Shoshone's draft resistance. By January 1918, the situation on the Deep Creek reservation had deteriorated to the point where Superintendent Frank and his fellow officials, including Dorrington, felt it necessary to request the help of a fifteen soldiers from the nearby army installation Fort Douglas. "The army's presence, they reasoned, would prevent bloodshed, would

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 176-7.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 177-8.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 178.

leave no doubt that the United States was acting, and would have a ‘good effect’ on all Indians ‘inclined to oppose authority.’”²⁷² By late February, Annies Tommy and a group of his companions had been arrested and sent to Salt Lake City. Wood’s description of the reservation and BIA agents is particularly telling of the attitudes of the United States’ government toward Indians in general during this era. They wanted the Indians to “feel indebted to the government, not civilians,” and they recommended the release of Tommy and the others only after they had “agreed to obey the law and devote their energy to the proper improvement of their lands and the building up of homes on the reservation.”²⁷³

After a three weeks confinement, Tommy and the rest of his group seemed repentant, and they assured the authorities that the draft trouble was over. Upon promising to behave properly and obey the superintendent, they were released.²⁷⁴ Once released, Tommy and Jim Straight, another member of the group of rebellious Indians, did not go back to their reservation, and it is likely that they wandered off to Nevada. In late March, rumors of conspiracy to kill Superintendent Frank and all whites, except for Mormons, in the Deep Creek reservation came to the attention of the authorities. After Dorrington consulted with a source he evidently trusted, a man named Indian Tom who lived in Nevada near Cleveland Ranch, a settlement near the reservation, he decided the conspiracy was just a rumor. The registration in September 1918 presented another opportunity for unrest among the Gosiutes, and Tommy urged his fellow Indians not to register. While the situation did look bad for a while, some more conservative Indian elders and nearby white ranchers helped complete the registration by the end of October.²⁷⁵

²⁷² Ibid. (accessed May 22, 2013), 181.

²⁷³ Ibid., 183.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. (accessed May 23, 2013), 183.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. (accessed May 23, 2013), 184.

One rather controversial issue that American Indian participation in the war brought up was how they should be incorporated into military units. The assimilationists naturally favored integrated units, while the preservationists favored keeping Indians in segregated units. One of the biggest factors that played a part in this issue was the way the American Indian was perceived. In this era, as Thomas Britten notes in his book *American Indians in World War I*, the notion that the Indian was a “Vanishing Race” played heavily into the government’s policies towards them, and the advocates of this particular perspective felt this way because of his “alcohol use, disease, interracial and intraracial warfare, and land loss.”²⁷⁶ Time was of the essence, and action had to be taken immediately before Indians were but a footnote to history. Advocates of segregated units, according to Britten, argued that putting Indians in their own units would “aid in the preservation of a ‘pure’ Indian identity in the United States and give momentum to the campaign to gain citizenship for all Native Americans.”²⁷⁷

Joseph Dixon was one of the most prominent voices in favor of segregated units.

Britten sums up his basic position on the issue thusly:

[T]he “Indian spirit would be crushed if we insist that he take his stand beside the white man.” He added that when Indians are banded together, there is “an *esprit de corps*, a unity of feeling, an enthusiasm and an expression of daring purpose, not to be encompassed in any other possible fashion.”... Indian military participation in World War I, he hoped, would resurrect some of the Indians’ romantic martial qualities that he so admired—provided that Native Americans were kept segregated from the powerful influences of Anglo culture.²⁷⁸

A major part of Dixon’s plan for segregated units came in the form of a bill before Congress.

H.R. 3970, also known as the “Kahn Bill” after its author, Representative Julius Kahn of

²⁷⁶ Thomas A. Britten, *American Indians in World War I: At Home and at War*, 28.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

California, would establish the units Dixon wanted so much.²⁷⁹ His reasons for supporting the bill included a belief that it would improve the terrible state of reservation Indians, that a majority of Indians supported the creation of Indian-specific units; and that Indians' inherent "strength, courage, intelligence, loyalty, power of endurance, stoicism, sagacity, persistence and relentlessness of purpose" made them ideal fits for a soldier's job.²⁸⁰

According to the assimilationists, the only way to save the Indian was to bring him into white culture. The conflict of assimilation versus preservation was a much bigger one than just the question of whether the military units should be segregated or not, but the argument was played out within the context of the segregation question. Numerous Indian rights organizations opposed segregated units. The Society of American Indians was one of these groups. Britten quotes their leader at the time, Arthur C. Parker, as saying, "[S]egregation has done more than bullets to conquer the red man."²⁸¹ Herbert Welsh of the Indian Rights Association, which supported Indians' "complete absorption into the majority society," echoed Parker's sentiments, saying that any attempt to segregate Indians was a "backwards step."²⁸² In the end, the assimilationists won out, and the segregated Indian units that people like Joseph Dixon had campaigned so hard for never came to fruition.

As a part of the American war effort, American Indians were just as courageous as their fellow American doughboys. Unfortunately, there are very few published firsthand accounts from Indians who served in the war or from those who served with them. One of the best available sources comes from a Captain Ben-Hur Chastaine, who was stationed with the Army's Thirty-Sixth Division from its days training for deployment at Camp Bowie, Texas, onward. He

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 38.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 40.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 44.

²⁸² Ibid., 44.

spent some time as a reporter for the newspaper *The Daily Oklahoman*, based out of Oklahoma City, and while he served with his division, he sent periodic dispatches to the newspaper, which were later compiled into a book called the *Story of the 36th*.²⁸³

The Indians who served in the Thirty-Sixth Division were almost exclusively in the 142nd Company, and while they were hardly the main players in Chastaine's story, a few things can still be learned from looking at his account. While they were in training at Camp Bowie, the author mentions that the rigors of military life presented some problems for the recruits, both Indian and white. He writes, "Men who had lived all their lives in the open and managed their own affairs found it difficult to obey someone else in nearly everything they did, especially as it was not always explained why the thing was to be done." He also takes care to note that "[t]he Indians from Oklahoma presented one of the most difficult problems."²⁸⁴ He does not go any further than noting that problems existed, but it does appear that these issues resolved themselves over time.

The 142nd Regiment had a rather eventful transit across the Atlantic Ocean, and although Chastaine does not mention Indians specifically in his account of the voyage, this was the regiment into which many of them were placed. They departed from Camp Mills on Long Island, where they had arrived in mid-August of 1918, but one of the battalions from the company was delayed by a bad rudder, meaning they were trapped at the camp for a couple more days.²⁸⁵ While in transit across the Atlantic, the ships carrying the 142nd's First Battalion were attacked on three occasions by German U-

²⁸³ Walter M. Harrison, foreword to *Story of the 36th: the Experiences of the 36th Division in the World War*, by Ben-Hur Chastaine (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=uNIMAAAAYAAJ&pg=PR1#v=onepage&q&f=false> (accessed May 19,2013), i-ii.

²⁸⁴ Ben-Hur Chastaine, *Story of the 36th: the Experiences of the 36th Division in the World War* (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=uNIMAAAAYAAJ> (accessed May 19, 2013), 17

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 31-2.

Boats. “[T]he latter part of the voyage has been declared to have been the most adventurous experienced by any convoy crossing the Atlantic during the entire war.”²⁸⁶ Chastaine then tells the story of the most serious attack, which occurred about a day before they landed in Brest, France. The submarines appeared in the middle of the fleet. The standard response for such a sighting was to have every available piece of artillery fire upon the enemy craft, and Chastaine states that more ammunition was used on this trip than any of the Navy’s others across the Atlantic until that time. The guns, however, were slow at getting into action, and before they could fire, the submarine “launched a torpedo which barely missed the stern of the ‘Maui,’ the transport bearing the First Battalion of the 142nd Infantry, probably the closest call experienced by any of the troops.”²⁸⁷ Fortunately for the Americans, a destroyer accompanying the fleet was bearing down upon the German craft, which was finally taken out by a depth bomb.²⁸⁸

While the 142nd Regiment saw action on the front just like so many others, the Indians of this regiment were able to make contributions that no one else could: as “code talkers”, even though they never called themselves by such a term. The Navajo are better known for being Code Talkers in World War II, but World War I was the first time this experiment was tried, albeit on an ad hoc basis. Colonel Alfred Bloor, of the 36th Division’s 142nd Regiment, told the following to Commanding General of the 36th Division as part of his explanation as to why Code Talkers were necessary:

There was every reason to believe every decipherable message or word going over our wires also went to the enemy. A rumor was out that our Division had given false coordinates of our supply dump, and that in thirty minutes the enemy shells were falling on the point. We felt sure the enemy knew too much. It was therefore necessary to code every message of importance and coding and decoding took valuable time.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 33.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 33.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 33-5.

²⁸⁹ Alfred W. Bloor, "Transmitting Messages in Choctaw," U.S. Army Center of Military History, <http://www.history.army.mil/html/topics/natam/wwi-choctaw.html> (accessed June 22, 2013).

Fortunately, his regiment had a number of Choctaw soldiers from the reservations in Oklahoma who were fluent in their native tongues. When this fact was discovered, “Colonel Bloor selected some of the most intelligent Indians from Company E, composed almost entirely of redmen from Oklahoma, and stationed them at the telephones.”²⁹⁰

This decision paid great dividends for the 142nd Division. Bloor notes in his memo that the first time they were put to use was to help the Second Battalion of the regiment withdraw from Chufilly to Chardeny on night of October 26, 1916, an operation that was completed successfully. The Choctaw code talkers were also used in the preparations on October 27 for the attack on Forest Farm. “The enemy’s complete surprise is evidence that he could not decipher the messages,” Bloor writes.²⁹¹

Chastaine’s account goes into some more detail on the subject. When the Germans finally left their dugouts, he says that “they found the 142d Infantrymen waiting for them with rifles, grenades and trench knives in their hands. The Huns barely had time to realize what was happening before they were prisoners.”²⁹² By the time the action was over, the battalion of the Prussian Guard stationed there had been wiped out. The Allied forces were able to take 194 prisoners, consisting of four officers, five non-commissioned ones, and 185 privates. They were also able to capture thirty-one machine guns and many rifles, grenades, mortars, and trench stores. Another indicator of the success of the Choctaw code comes from Chastaine’s analysis of these stores, where he notes, “The general appearance of the stores and their arrangement indicated that the enemy had

²⁹⁰ Ben-Hur Chastaine, *Story of the 36th; the Experiences of the 36th Division in the World War*, (accessed May 20, 2013), 232.

²⁹¹ Alfred W. Bloor, “Transmitting Messages in Choctaw.”

²⁹² Ben-Hur Chastaine, *Story of the 36th; the Experiences of the 36th Division in the World War*, 232.

expected to maintain his position on the south side of the [Aisne] river indefinitely.”²⁹³ This position was not supposed to be one captured relatively easily. That the Allies were able to do so can at least in part be attributed to the success of the Choctaw code.

Even though these operations were successful, that does not mean they did not present some problems for the Choctaw. The limitations to their language left them without accurate cognates for certain military terms. This meant they had to do some improvisation. The memo Colonel Bloor wrote cites as example, the usage of the Choctaw word for “Big Gun” as the code for artillery, “little gun shoot fast” as the word for a machine gun, and finally, “the battalions were indicated by one, two and three grains of corn.”²⁹⁴ The problem with the differences between the Choctaw and English vocabularies was not the only problem they faced, though. Verbatim translation from Choctaw to English is not possible, but after a brief training period, Bloor writes that “the results were very gratifying.”²⁹⁵

As with any other American soldier, the Indians also laid down their lives for the American war effort. There is some dispute about the exact percentage of Indians who were casualties of the war effort, and while the differences are not major, they are still worth comparing. In his *Warriors in Uniform* book, Viola writes that the percentage of American Indians killed or injured in the war was about five percent.²⁹⁶ Meanwhile, Susan Krouse goes into more depth about the number killed. She cites the Bureau of Indian Affairs, who state that, of the 12,000 who served 331, or 2.75 percent, died.²⁹⁷ However, she does give qualification to these numbers, saying that, “one of those listed served as a nurse, and many in fact died in the

²⁹³ Ibid., 234-5.

²⁹⁴ Alfred W. Bloor, “Transmitting Messages in Choctaw.”

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Herman J. Viola, *Warriors in Uniform: The Legacy of American Indian Heroism*, 67.

²⁹⁷ Susan A. Krouse and Joseph Kossuth Dixon. *North American Indians in the Great War*, 80.

years following their service, at least one as late as 1931.”²⁹⁸ Another set of numbers from Krouse comes from Joseph Dixon’s sample of 2,846 Indian soldiers and sailors, which found that of these men, eighty-four, or 2.95 percent, died.²⁹⁹ Some tribes sacrificed more than others, as Viola also makes a mention in his book that an estimated fourteen percent of Pawnee and ten percent of various Lakota groups were killed in the war.³⁰⁰

Many American Indian soldiers served with great distinction and bravery in World War I. The bravery of American Indians in combat was noticed by their contemporaries in America. Among whites, it seemed to vindicate not just the American cause but, predictably, their entire set of values and policies toward the Indian and even other indigenous peoples. As Russell Barsh notes, non-natives saw it:

After all, if Indians who had so recently resisted assimilation, were now defending European civilization, there must be some irresistible truth to Western values and democracy. Indian defense of the flag was likewise the ultimate vindication of U.S. expansionism, since it proved that the vanquished were better off having been conquered.³⁰¹

The sense of paternalism so many whites must have felt is palpable even by reading this piece from so critical an author as Barsh. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells was one of the people eager to publicize American Indian heroism during the war. In a circular the Bureau sent out, he instructed his superintendents on the reservations to send him any such stories they came across, as “I cannot but feel that the Indian as a soldier, with the associational advantage of white

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 80.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 80.

³⁰⁰ Herman J. Viola, *Warriors in Uniform: The Legacy of American Indian Heroism*, 67.

³⁰¹ Russell Lawrence Barsh, “American Indians in the Great War,” 287.

comradeship, must have broadened, matured, and received educational benefits promotive of practical and self-reliant character.”³⁰²

Some Indians, meanwhile, used this opportunity as a chance to prove their own patriotism. Arthur Parker played to the sort of attitude whites were taking by noting, “The American Indian has common cause with the Allies. The Indian weeps for devastated Belgium Belgium and his sorrow for France is that of a brother. The American Indian is with America to the finish.”³⁰³ As he and his Society for American Indians had done in the past, though, Parker used the opportunity to push the agenda for Indian citizenship. The Indian fights not just because he loves freedom, he writes, but “because his country, his liberties, his ideals and his manhood are assailed by the brutal hypocrisy [*sic*] of Prussianism. Challenged, the Indian has responded and shown himself a citizen of the world an exponent of an ethical civilization wherein human liberty is assured.”³⁰⁴

Many Indians served with distinction, whether they were officially recognized for it or not. Viola quotes Major Tom Reilly, who was the commanding officer of the Third Battalion, 165th Infantry Division, as saying, “Indians were always at the front....When an Indian went down, another Indian immediately stepped to the front.”³⁰⁵ Thomas Britten mentions a Paiute named Robert Dodd who received both an ankle and shoulder injury but “[n]evertheless, he ‘kept up his courage as well as the courage of the men’ and ‘kept on shooting’ until ‘his gun got too hot to shoot.’”³⁰⁶ He mentions Captain Wendell Westover of the Fourth Machine-Gunners

³⁰² “Information About Indians’ Military Service Invited,” *United States Bulletin*, Vol. 1, United Business Service, May 19, 1919, <http://books.google.com/books?id=hycgAQAAMAAJ&pg=RA6-PA9#v=onepage&q&f=false> (accessed May 21, 2013).

³⁰³ Arthur C. Parker, “Why the Red Man Fights For Democracy,” *The Carlisle Arrow*, October 26, 1917, <http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=QIEsAAAIAIBAJ&sjid=2MoEAAAIAIBAJ&pg=6981%2C474494> (accessed May 20, 2013).

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁵ Thomas A. Britten, *American Indians in World War I: At Home and at War*, 79.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

Battalion, Second Division, who said of his Indian troops, “[they] were courageous, steady, skillful, [and] reliable....They could be counted upon to do the thing required under any circumstances...No finer group of Americans...served on the Western Front.”³⁰⁷ Numerous Indians were recognized for their distinguished service. Britten points out in his book that an estimated 150 American Indians won medals for their valor in battle, and ten of them received France’s Croix de Guerre.³⁰⁸

Among all of these native who served with distinction, Joseph Oklahombi, a Choctaw of the 141st Infantry, is perhaps the most famous Indian hero of the war. He was awarded the French Croix de Guerre for actions in the St. Etienne sector, and according to the Department of the Interior’s annual report for 1920, his citation reads:

Under a violent barrage, dashed to the attack of an enemy position, covering about 210 yards through barbed-wire entanglements. He rushed on machine-gun nests, capturing 171 prisoners. He stormed a strongly held position containing more than 50 machine guns and a number of trench mortars. Turned the captured guns on the enemy and held the said position for four days, in spite of a constant barrage of large projectiles and of gas shells. Crossed 'No man's land' many times to get information concerning the enemy and to assist his wounded comrades.³⁰⁹

Oklahombi was awarded the Silver Star by General Pershing for his actions, and today, he is remembered as quite possibly Oklahoma’s greatest hero of World War I.³¹⁰

Other stories of Indian heroism show up in that same report. Raymond Ross, a Cherokee, joined the marines when he was only seventeen years old, and despite being wounded several times, he still managed to win the cord of the Legion of Honor for conduct at Chateau Thierry. Sergeant Alfred G. Bailey, who was also a Cherokee, killed

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 79.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 84.

³⁰⁹ United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1920 (Google Book), <http://books.google.com/books?id=Mrtleh9zMR0C> (accessed May 20, 2013), 357.

³¹⁰ *Joseph Oklahombi*. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. <http://www.choctawnation.com/History/index.cfm?fuseaction=HArticle&HArticleID=39> (accessed April 18, 2010).

two German machine gunners and captured another one and his gun while in action near Moulins, France, on July 15, 1918, and he was thus awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Unfortunately, Sgt. Bailey was killed in battle just a few days later. Lieutenant Bland Bland Breeding, who was Creek, and his command were faced with an overwhelming number of number of the enemy's forces, and all of them died bravely fighting to the last man. Odis Leader, a Choctaw, "was wounded several times, cited for bravery, and selected by the French Government as the model original American soldier, an oil painting of whom is to hang upon the walls of the French Federal Building, where will be displayed types of all the allied races."³¹¹

One particularly interesting scene involving American Indians after the war came at the memorial service for the Unknown Soldier from the First World War in November of 1921. From an account in an article running in the *New York Times*, one finds many unsurprising names among the list of dignitaries in attendance, such as President Warren Harding, Vice President Calvin Coolidge, members of Congress and the armed services, family members of soldiers who had died abroad, foreign statesmen, and various organizations like the Boy Scouts, the Knights of Columbus, and the Jewish Welfare Board. There is, however, one particularly interesting name on this list: the Crow Chief Plenty Coups. He was there as a way of recognizing the contributions American Indians had made toward the war effort. As part of his tribute, he laid his war bonnet reverently on the soldier's sarcophagus, and then, he placed his coup stick next to the bonnet. According to the *Times*' account, he said this as he carried out these actions:

I feel it an honor to the red man that he takes part in this great event, because it shows that the thousands of Indians who fought in the great war are appreciated by the white man. I am glad to represent all the Indians of the United States in placing on the grave of this noble warrior this coup stick and war bonnet, every eagle feather of which represents a deed of valor by my race. I hope that the Great Spirit will grant that these noble

³¹¹ United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1920, 352.

warriors have not given up their lives in vain and that there will be peace to all men hereafter. This is the Indians' hope and prayer.³¹²

It is particularly interesting to note what Plenty Coups says is one of the reasons Indians fought in World War I: to prove that their sacrifice is recognized. While this was indeed one of the reasons Indians fought, it is also important to note that Plenty Coups might have been playing to the expectations of his mostly white audience. Though the article does not mention it, the speech had quite an effect on the crowd. Tate notes that, while President Harding was the only person scheduled to speak, "it was the unrehearsed actions of Plenty Coups that captured the attention of the one-hundred-thousand-person audience and the large corps of newspaper reporters."³¹³

What makes the bravery of the American Indians in combat all the more amazing is that they proudly served the United States while they were not citizens of the country. After the war, Congress rectified this by passing an Act in 1919 that granted citizenship to any Native American veteran who requested it. In order to receive this citizenship, the Indian veteran in question must first be one "who has received or shall hereafter receive an honorable discharge," and second, he must be subject to "proper identification before a court of competent jurisdiction."³¹⁴ This act can be seen as an acknowledgement of the decades of activism by so many who had pushed for American Indian citizenship. It also helped prove that Indians, too, were deserving of the same rights that were granted to other Americans. This act, however, only gave citizenship to those who fought in World War I. Even so, it did not lead to an influx of new citizens. As Michael Tate notes, "Since many of the veterans already had citizenship through the allotment process and others

³¹² "Solemn Journey of Dead: Ceremonial Procession In Which Nation's Leaders Walk Stirs Capital," *New York Times*, November 12, 2013, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F10D11FB3F551A738DDDAB0994D9415B818EF1D3> (accessed April 29, 2013).

³¹³ Michael L. Tate, "From Scout to Doughboy," 417.

³¹⁴ "An Act Granting Citizenship to certain Indians." *United States Statutes at Large*. 41 Stat. 350.

saw no advantage in seeking it, the numbers who requested the status were relatively few.”³¹⁵

The 1919 act was an important part of the drive to make Indians citizens, but it was not the culmination of this effort. That was the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, which granted citizenship to all Indians in the United States, whether they had fought in World War I or not.

The Choctaw Code Talkers have gained some recognition of their own in recent years. On October 15, 2008, the Code Talkers Recognition Act of 2008 was passed, which recognized the services of any and all natives who were Code Talkers. The act recognizes that:

(4) Because the language used by the Choctaw code talkers in the transmission of information was not based on a European language or on a mathematical progression, the Germans were unable to understand any of the transmissions.

(5) This use of Native American code talkers was the first time in modern warfare that such a transmission of messages in a native language was used for the purpose of confusing an enemy.³¹⁶

Because of this act, the Choctaw Code Talkers, or their descendants, will be able to receive Congressional Gold Medals.³¹⁷ In 2010, these Choctaw were honored with an hour long documentary that was broadcast nationally on various PBS networks. Gale Anne Hurd, one of the producers of the documentary, trumpets in a press release from Native American Public Telecommunications, “This is an important story of heroic men whose wartime contributions helped to change the course of world history...The Choctaw American Indian soldiers outwitted their German opponents, turning the tide of the War and ensuring the Allied victory.”³¹⁸

³¹⁵ Michael L. Tate, “From Scout to Doughboy,” 435.

³¹⁶ United States House, 110th Congress, H.R. 4544, *Code Talkers Recognition Act of 2008*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 2008, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-122/html/STATUTE-122-Pg4774.htm> (accessed June 24, 2013).

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ “Choctaw Code Talkers, a compelling documentary about America’s World War I heroes, comes to public television in Fall 2010,” Native American Public Telecommunications, www.nativetelecom.org/files/release_choctaw_code_talkers7-15-10.pdf (accessed May 20, 2013).

The effects of World War I on the American people were far reaching, and American Indians were no exception to this. The Indian view of their service is probably best summarized by Louis Atkins, a Pottawatomie Indian:

War is a terrible thing, but I'm glad I was in it. I feel that I can look the whole world in the face now that I went and have come back. The realization of duty well done is satisfying. I was gassed badly, and the doctors say that I will be a long time recovering, but even so I would not have stayed at home. I don't live on a reservation. We are full citizens, you know. I live with my mother. She wept when I left home, but she said to me, 'Go over and help to end it all quickly. Remember the traditions of your forefathers, and be brave in action.' I tried my best to follow her instructions.³¹⁹

However, what makes their efforts in battle all the more amazing is that they fought under the flag of a nation in which they were not yet citizens. For that matter, the Indian Wars had only ended a couple of decades before then, so the tribes who fought were only about twenty years removed from fighting against the same United States military they now served with. Their contributions to the war effort helped advance their quest for rights and recognition from the U.S. government, but it was only a step forward. There was still much more that had to be done. The Indians fought bravely, and they should be recognized and lauded for what they did.

³¹⁹ "American Indians True to Tradition in the War," *The Literary Digest*, February 8, 1919, <http://books.google.com/books?id=aFwxQAAMAAJ&pg=RA5-PA54&#v=onepage&q&f=false> (accessed May 23, 2013).

Chapter 5: World War II

Indians provided valuable services throughout World War Two. This is, in so many ways, the culmination of the drive finally and formally to recruit Indians as regular soldiers like non-natives in American society, as opposed to the ad hoc forces from wars past. There was a full scale effort to recruit, enlist, and draft Indians into the armed forces, and for their part, Indians proved their mettle time and again on the battlefields of Europe, North Africa, the Pacific, and even at home in the United States.

Just like their fellow countrymen, Indians were eager to join the United States war effort, and they were even prepared to join the military before war had even been declared. As Allison Bernstein notes in her book *American Indians in World War II*, by the time of Pearl Harbor, there were about 4,000 Indians in the military. Using numbers from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, she mentions that roughly 25,000 had served in the military by the war's end, with 21,767 serving in the army, 1,910 in the navy, 874 in the marines, and 121 in the Coast Guard. She writes, "These figures represented over one-third of all able bodied Indian men from age 18 to 50, and in some tribes the percentage of men in the military was high as 70 percent."³²⁰ Interestingly, the Department of Defense's website commemorating Indian service in the war gives a vastly different number. They state that 44,000 Indians saw military service.³²¹ Regardless of which of these numbers is accurate, it is true that Indians on the whole were eager to volunteer and willing to be drafted.

³²⁰ Alison R. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 40.

³²¹ "American Indians in World War II," United States Department of Defense, <http://www.defense.gov/specials/nativeamerican01/wwii.html> (accessed May 28, 2013).

Most Indians preferred to enlist rather than be drafted. As Bernstein notes, “Among the Plains tribes, the number of volunteers exceeded inductees by a two-to-one margin, while for Indians as a group, one and one-half times as many men enlisted as were drafted.”³²² More evidence of this preference comes from an article carried in several newspapers, including the *Mt. Adams Sun* in Bingen, Washington. It reports:

A typical incident reported is that of nine young men of the Sioux, employed as carpenters on a government building project in their reservation. They heard an announcement of the draft. They snorted derisively and one said: “Since when has it been necessary to conscript the Sioux as fighters?” Whereupon they laid down their saws and hammers and reported at once to the nearest recruiting office. They are now in training with the hospital detachment at Hamilton Field Air Base at Ross, Calif.³²³

As with any anecdote such as this, there is always a chance that the truth was embellished along the way, or it might even be entirely apocryphal. Whether the story did or did not happen, it is not hard to imagine it being true or happening in some form given the willingness Indians displayed to enlist.

As with the First World War, race was once again an issue. Unlike the First World War, it was fairly agreed upon that Indians on the whole should serve in integrated units. There was a suggestion by some reformers and policymakers that a few Indians, particularly among the Navajo, who had little understanding of English or life outside their culture, would be placed in a unit devoted especially to them. As Kenneth Townsend notes in his book *World War II and the American Indian*, this would allow these Indians to become accustomed to a military environment, and the ability to associate with fellow Indians who had a similarly poor understanding of white culture to learn the necessary skills faster so they could be placed in a

³²² Alison R. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs*, 42.

³²³ Associated Press, “American Indians Enlist for Active Service in Army,” *Mt. Adams Sun*, April 4, 1941 (Google News Archive), <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1392&dat=19410404&id=iPMmAAAIAIBAJ&sjid=RSUMAAAIAIBAJ&pg=1714,946136> (accessed May 28, 2013).

white unit at some point in the future. Furthermore, even “[i]f the segregated unit fell short of performance expectations, then a semi-trained unit would exist for national defense within the territorial boundaries of the United States,” and in 1941, the threat of a land invasion by the Axis powers was seen as a credible possibility.³²⁴

In the end, nothing came of these plans. It was the higher echelons of the military command that essentially killed the idea. Townsend notes, “In spring 1941, Assistant Chief of Staff General William E. Shedd flatly rejected any consideration of an all-Indian training unit. Shedd stated categorically that Indians should serve with, and as, white recruits in both training and combat.”³²⁵ The decision against creating a separate unit for unacculturated Indians helped prove to Indians across the nation that the military was committed to integrated units, both for training and combat. As an agent of assimilation the military is probably unmatched, and Indians were evidently aware of this. Townsend writes that “Indians who preferred assimilation with the larger society believed the army’s refusal to create separate training units actually hastened the process of acculturation and eventual blending into white society.”³²⁶ Somewhat surprisingly, this decision was not viewed favorably by some proponents of assimilation. This refusal was a signal that so-called “primitive Indians” would be denied the opportunity to begin the process of acculturation. To them, this refusal showed that the government was willing to let a segment of Indians fall short of the final goal of assimilation into white society. “Unable to secure the basic knowledge required for induction into the armed forces,” Townsend notes, “primitive Indians retreated into their homes, ever more suspicious of federal authority.”³²⁷

³²⁴ Kenneth W. Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 69.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 71-2.

The debate over integrated versus segregated units was not the only place where the issue of race surfaced. In the South, many Indians confronted the same obstacles African Americans did as their Indian identities were called into question by pro-segregation (of blacks, not Indians) officials. Bernstein gives as one example an incident in 1942 when a draft board in Richmond, Virginia, refused to accept three members of the Rappahannock tribe and told them to report to the black induction station at Ft. Meade, Maryland, instead. Since they claimed they had registered as Indians, they refused to go and demanded that they be placed in integrated units. State officials rejected their argument, pointing to a study from 1934 that claimed that all native-born Indians in Virginia had at least some African American blood in them. The lawyer for the three Rappahannocks contacted the BIA, but as much as John Collier wished to help them, he admitted it was beyond his authority since the tribe was not under federal jurisdiction at the time. A federal court in Richmond ruled in favor of the draft board, found that the Indians were in violation of the Selective Service Act, and sentenced them to six months in prison.³²⁸

These Rappahannocks were not the only Indians who faced these issues. Several other tribes in the South had similar problems. The Mississippi Band of Choctaws faced a similar problem. Once he recognized that the local draft board could not be persuaded to register members of his tribe as Indians, the chief of the tribe tried to get the board to register his men as whites. Unlike the Rappahannocks, though, the Mississippi Choctaw were a federally recognized tribe. Even so, Commissioner Collier admitted he was still essentially powerless to overrule the board's rulings. In the end, Choctaws who could pass as white were drafted as whites, while those who could not were placed into segregated units.³²⁹

³²⁸ Alison R. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs*, 41.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

There are several other stories of this kind of racism against Indians during the drafting process, but the Pamunkeys of the Tidewater region Virginia have one of the most protracted and notable ones. Kenneth Townsend devotes a substantial amount of space to their plight in his book, and as he notes, it was the State Registrar for Vital Statistics Walter Ashby Plecker who was the Pamunkey's chief antagonist. Plecker "breathed the fire of the stereotyped southern racist," and he considered the possible "racial contamination" that could arise if whites and Indians mingled together to be of the same level of nefariousness as the same between whites and blacks.³³⁰

Even though he had limited experience and reading in the field, he nevertheless considered himself an expert on Indian ethnicity, and the power his office held gave him a substantial say in state politics.³³¹ The chief argument he made was that Indians and blacks had intermingled substantially during the nineteenth century. As a start, he used written accusations by mid-nineteenth century whites and a document from a T.W.S. Gregory who had hoped to secure land owned by the Pamunkeys by alleging they had intermingled with local blacks. While the accusations by whites were, at best, dubious, the state had actually rejected Gregory's attempt and confirmed the reservation's integrity. Aware of how weak his arguments based upon these documents were, Plecker looked to academia. He found a couple of turn of the century-era documents that described Virginia's Indian population as "heavily mixed with the Negro race, and the Pamunkeys specifically were said to have 'not a little tie' with the black community of the state."³³² Plecker also found a scholarly work from 1939 titled *The Negro Family in the United States*, where the Pamunkey tribe was described as essentially so intermingled with local blacks that they had lost their Indian character. As Townsend notes, "the empirical evidence

³³⁰ Kenneth W. Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian*, 87.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

³³² *Ibid.*; 88.

proved nonexistent, but the mere fact that scholars of sound reputation drew such a conclusion sufficed for Plecker and his cadre of state officials.”³³³

Plecker’s antics came to a head with the case of Oliver Fortune, a Pamunkey who had attempted to register with his local draft board on February 16, 1942. In fact, he had decided not to wait for his induction notice and went ahead and volunteered for the army the next month. When he read his orders, he noticed he had been assigned to the Negro Military Training Center. Determined not to be classed as an African American, he pursued what he thought was the only course open to him: noncompliance. This act brought a federal charge of refusal to serve, which set events in motion for the Pamunkey tribe.³³⁴ The Pamunkey, for their part, complained to their congressman, Dave Satterfield, who spoke to Commissioner Collier on the subject. Again, Collier protested that he had no direct authority over the draft boards, but he did admit that something should be done on the matter. Nevertheless, Collier essentially washed his hands of the matter as best he could. Undaunted, the Pamunkey Tribal Council continued its protest.³³⁵

On October 30, 1942, Oliver Fortune appeared in court. The prosecution gave as evidence documents noting that Fortune had in the past enrolled in a black school and that one of his parents and a grandparent were listed as “colored” residents. Beyond Fortune and his family, the prosecution noted the work of anthropologists and ethnologists who had argued that the Pamunkeys belonged to a larger group of tribes that had intermarried with freed blacks in the years after the Civil War, “although the prosecution admitted that scholars possessed no verifying documentation.”³³⁶ Finally, the state provided as evidence testimonies from

³³³ Ibid., 88-9.

³³⁴ Ibid., 96-7.

³³⁵ Ibid., 97.

³³⁶ Ibid., 98.

neighboring whites that said the Pamunkeys maintained close ties with the local African American community.³³⁷

The defense, meanwhile, refuted any argument that the Pamunkeys had a biological connection with African Americans. They also argued that any associations Fortune might have had with any blacks arose from necessity only. Another thing they noted was that state documents only classified people as white or “colored”. Furthermore:

That Fortune’s mother was not white did not imply she was African American. And neither attendance at black educational institutions nor general association with African Americans affected racial identity. . . In fact, state documents themselves forced Fortune to attend the all-black Virginia State College for Negroes. A designation as “colored” on official forms blocked the Pamunkey’s admission to traditionally white institutions. The same listing barred Pamunkeys, like Fortune, from white medical facilities and other public services.³³⁸

In other words, the only reason Fortune or any other Pamunkey was called “black” was because the state had deemed them so, and the rest of the defense’s arguments bears this assessment out.

In the Reconstruction Era, Pamunkeys and other tidewater Indians were essentially forced by the Republicans in control of Virginia at the time to identify themselves as colored people.³³⁹

It mattered little how many verifiable facts or concrete evidence Fortune’s attorneys could bring up, as they could not get around the fact that Fortune had associated with blacks, whether by choice or necessity. This meant that the Selective Service Court had no other option but to rule against him.³⁴⁰ This was not the end of the Pamunkey’s plight, though. With help from Frank Speck of the University of Pennsylvania, a true expert on the tidewater Indians, and a deluge of public support, John Collier finally decided to intervene by denouncing Plecker.

Townsend notes, “Local draft boards interpreted his denunciation of the registrar to be the final

³³⁷ Ibid., 98.

³³⁸ Ibid., 98-99.

³³⁹ Ibid., 99.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 99.

recognition of Indian identity in Virginia, and...boards readily listed Indian recruits as whites and ordered them to the appropriate training facilities.”³⁴¹ The good guys, in this instance, had finally won.

In basic training, Indians proved themselves to be, in general, excellent recruits. One typical story was carried by South Carolina’s *Spartanburg Herald*. It discussed their reception at Fort Benning in Georgia, which was roundly positive. The article notes:

There are 16 Indians from Oklahoma in the Fourth Signal battalion here and their officers wish there were more like them...“Those Indians are the best morale tonic on the shelf,” says First Sgt. Charles G. Hurst, “They take a hard job and make a game of it. We could use more like ‘em.”³⁴²

The article did not hesitate to speak with the Indians there either. After noting that they did exceptionally well in the army’s Louisiana Maneuvers, the article notes Charlie Chibitty from Lawson, Oklahoma, who says, “We were used to hunting, fishing and living in the outdoors...It was easy for us to work in the maneuvers.”³⁴³

As was true during the First World War, the draft aroused its share of controversy among Indian tribes this time around. The opposition arose for a variety of reasons, although in some ways it was not wholly different from the kinds of opposition expressed by other Americans. As Kenneth Townsend notes in his book, many of the Indians who resisted based their objections on religious belief or traditional values, much like many whites did. Others raised concern over racism they had faced in the past and even in the process of enlisting. Regardless of what the

³⁴¹ Ibid., 101

³⁴² “Uncle Sam Finds Indians Make Good Soldiers; They Enjoy Hardships in Army,” *The Spartanburg Herald (South Carolina)*, November 7, 1941 (Google News Archive), <http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=QIEsAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=2MoEAAAAIIBAJ&pg=6981%2C474494> (accessed May 30, 2013).

³⁴³ Ibid.

particular reasons for resisting were, Townsend is right to say that it “underscored serious issues unresolved by recent changes in federal Indian policy....”³⁴⁴

Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier anticipated that some Indians might resist, so after the Selective Service Act was passed, he “pricked his ears for whatever negative response Indians might offer.”³⁴⁵ As with the Indian Reorganization Act he had championed years before, he assumed that most opposition to the draft was based upon misunderstanding of the law authorizing it. Other Indians who might be perfectly amenable to volunteering to serve might find the idea of being compelled to do so less patriotic by comparison. As such, Collier urged a certain amount of leniency in dealing with Indian resisters, and on the whole, he believed, more or less correctly, objections to the draft were quite minimal.³⁴⁶

The Navajo provide one example that vindicated some of Collier’s beliefs about misunderstandings of the draft law being Indians’ primary reason for refusing to register. Donald Parman spends some time discussing their resistance in his book *Indians and the American West in the Twentieth Century*. While some did claim that their religious beliefs prohibited them from serving, there were others who objected to the fact that they could not drink or vote and that their land had been stolen by whites. Others refused to register because they had heard they would be hauled away in big trucks, but they became willing after the chairman of the Navajo tribe, J.C. Morgan spoke to them. Finally, at a registration board in Flagstaff, Arizona, “no one appeared because the local headman claimed that Navajos should not fight unless Hitler invaded the United States and that the treaty of 1868 prohibited them from fighting.”³⁴⁷ The Navajos, however, were only a relatively minor example of draft resistance. Many cases of draft resistance

³⁴⁴ Kenneth W. Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian*, 81.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 81-2.

³⁴⁷ Donald L. Parman, *Indians and the American West in the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 111.

involved similar issues to this. As Parman notes, “In many cases, they lived in remote areas, held migratory jobs, or did not know about registration. In still other instances, they reported to regular draft boards rather than to agencies.”³⁴⁸

There were other instances of draft resistance that had at their core more complex issues than simple misunderstandings. The Zuni of New Mexico and Arizona were one such tribe. One tribal religious leader who had earlier registered for the draft had, upon further thought, realized that service would violate his religious beliefs. His application to be a conscientious objector was granted, and the draft board viewed his case as no different from ministers of other religions. Having secured this deferment, the Zuni then moved to have all of their men who held religious posts deferred, which the draft board likewise granted without issue. It was when they tried to claim all Zuni men held some form of a priesthood that the federal government balked. In turn, the Zuni responded by creating new religious offices and reviving those that had been abandoned over the years. In the end, they were able to net some deferments through these actions, but some still had to serve, and they did so reluctantly.³⁴⁹

The neighboring Hopi provide one of the best examples of draft resistance, both in general and of the sort that defied Collier’s expectations. They had essentially the same religious reasons for objecting as the Zunis, and tried the same basic tactics, but they were much less successful. In October 1940, the superintendent of the reservation, Seth Wilson, wired Collier that fourteen Hopis wished to receive deferments for religious reasons. Collier responded that they should instead go through the official channels of filing appeals with the Selective Service System. After a couple of weeks had passed, the Selective Service board reported back and informed the men that eight of them had received deferments, but the other six were expected to

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 112.

³⁴⁹ Kenneth W. Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian*, 83.

register. The Hopis vehemently denounced this and, even in the face of threats of prosecution from Washington, held fast to their religious opposition.³⁵⁰

These six Hopi men who had been denied deferments fled into the hills to avoid arrest. Superintendent Wilson tried to defuse the rising tensions by soliciting help from Commissioner Collier, but it was to no avail. Despite Wilson's attempt to explain that all who were involved with this situation in Arizona, including local whites, were sympathetic to the plight of the Hopis, Collier dropped his objections to the move to prosecute them. All six were tried and sentenced to one year in prison.³⁵¹ Even though his account of the Hopi resistance is shorter, Parman actually offers some more detail on what happened. According to his description, the judge in the case held that religious tradition had no bearing on registration. Wilson conferred with the judge and got him to forego the sentence if the men registered, but all of them refused.³⁵² Parman's conclusion is rather interesting. When new draft resistance arose from the tribe in 1942, Wilson noted that the same six were back, and they were the envy of the tribe. Beyond that, "[t]heir new clothes and positive comments about the food and accommodations at the prison camp, he added, had prompted inquiries about getting into the institution."³⁵³

Collier and the draft board's major problem in these instances was that they failed to recognize that significant amounts of opposition centered on issues beyond merely misunderstanding the law. They failed to take into account the importance of tribal customs and religious beliefs when trying to register Indians for the draft. The nature of the involvement of the United States in the war also affected the considerations of the aforementioned tribes. As Townsend notes, "Like their Zuni neighbors, these Hopis did not object to defensive warfare,

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 83-4.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 84-5.

³⁵² Donald L. Parman, *Indians and the American West in the Twentieth Century*, 112.

³⁵³ Ibid., 112.

only to offensive action, which American involvement would most likely be.”³⁵⁴ They were also concerned about the possibility that their young men would be corrupted by white influence. “Absorption of white values would be nearly impossible to prevent,” Townsend writes, “if inducted into military service; facing the greatest threat of corruption would be Hopi spirituality.”³⁵⁵

The Zunis’ own reluctance to fight is perhaps best demonstrated by the reception the tribe’s veterans received upon returning home. As Townsend notes, they were not given a hero’s welcome and “were viewed with suspicion for signs of corruptive white influence.”³⁵⁶ This alone does not tell the whole story. Parman’s account mentions that the Zuni veterans were forced to undergo a cleansing rite, and “[t]he Zuni veterans excessive drinking and refusals to meet family responsibilities upset conservatives.”³⁵⁷ Other issues also persisted. Bernstein mentions that Zuni veterans who wore their uniforms or double breasted suits faced ridicule from the rest of the tribe. The effects on tribal unity were disastrous. Bernstein writes, “As a result of this kind of treatment, nearly one-third out of the original two hundred Zuni veterans who returned to the tribe had left by the summer of 1947.”³⁵⁸ The Zuni appear to be the only tribe who treated their veterans in such a way. The neighboring Navajo, for example, required no cleansing ceremony, and “[e]ven the traditionalists tolerated innovations that ex-servicemen introduced, and no one attempted to force conformity.”³⁵⁹

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor is one of the most well-known events in American history, but few people recognize that it was not the only Japanese attack on United States soil

³⁵⁴ Kenneth W. Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian*, 83.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

³⁵⁷ Donald L. Parman, *Indians and the American West in the Twentieth Century*, 125.

³⁵⁸ Alison R. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs*, 134.

³⁵⁹ Donald L. Parman, *Indians and the American West in the Twentieth Century*, 125.

during World War II. Indeed, what was then the territory of Alaska, situated on the far northwestern extremity of the North American continent, also faced the threat of attack from Japan. In the months after Pearl Harbor, sightings of Japanese submarines and aircraft were common along the Aleutian Islands. On June 3, 1942, the Japanese made their move, launching an air attack on Dutch Harbor and the town of Unalaska, which was situated on two of those islands. Though they were unsuccessful at actually taking the town, the Japanese were able to occupy three Aleutian Islands farther west: Attu, Kiska, and Adak. The Battle of Attu, which finally ended the Japanese occupation of these islands, was fought between May 11-30th, 1943, and holds the distinction of being the only land battle fought on incorporated United States territory.

This persistent threat of Japanese attack combined with the large Native American presence in Alaska to create a unique opportunity for the latter, who were then referred to broadly as Eskimoes. Ernest Gruening, the territorial governor, realized in 1941 that the four National Guard units in Alaska, which had been federalized as the 297th Infantry, would not be enough to defend adequately his territory from the very real threat of Japanese attack, so he decided to organize a Territorial Guard under the command of the state government. As he wrote in his autobiography, one infantry unit “was not enough and I felt it desirable to organize a Territorial Guard in which every able-bodied male not subject to the draft or engaged in essential war work would be enrolled.”³⁶⁰ The idea was received favorably by General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., the commander of the United States Military’s Alaska Defense Command. Buckner recommended two men to Gruening to lead this endeavor: Major Marvin Marston and Captain

³⁶⁰ Ernest Gruening, *Many Battles: The Autobiography of Ernest Gruening* (New York City: Liveright, 1973), 308.

Carl Scheibner. “I decided to assign each to one half of the territory,” Gruening notes, “Marston to the west, Scheibner to the east.”³⁶¹

The recruits for the Territorial Guard were largely from the many native peoples of the area. While popularly known as Eskimoes, they were far more diverse than this. Among the Guard’s ranks were Aleuts, Athabaskans, Tlingits, Haida, Inupiaq, and others, including a few whites. Marvin Marston, who also went by the nickname of “Muktuk” among the natives, recalls in his memoirs that in March of 1942, Joe E. Brown, the actor and comedian, went to entertain the troops in Alaska. After he had finished the tour with a stop in Nome, he requested “to see some Eskimoes.”³⁶² They decided to visit the city of Gambell on St. Lawrence Island, where many natives resided. As they were leaving following the visit, the plane they were on developed engine trouble, and the pilot decided to land back on the island. The natives were happy to help, but securing a plane to an ice bridge to protect it from the wind is a difficult ordeal. It requires water to freeze around the ropes, but there was not a large amount of water available. In order to rectify this situation, the native men of the area decided to urinate on the ropes, which quickly froze. “There and then the Tundra Army took embryonic form,” Marston writes, “This incident at Gambell convinced me that the successful defense of the Arctic could be made only by the Eskimoes.”³⁶³

The resourcefulness and knowledge of the area displayed by the Alaskan natives was second to none. Nevertheless, that did not prevent them from facing the prejudice of those who did not understand the value and capabilities of these particular soldiers. At an Army base across from Bethel, Alaska, in the winter of 1943, the commanding officer derided the abilities of the native soldiers. As part of his reply correcting the officer, Marston told him:

³⁶¹ Ibid., 309.

³⁶² Marvin “Muktuk” Marston, *Men of the Tundra: Eskimoes at War* (New York City: October House, 1969), 27.

³⁶³ Ibid., 31-32.

“One Eskimo guardsman can be more valuable to you than a dozen of your own sentries. These natives are spread out over this entire area. They have knowledge of what goes on along the coast and up the rivers and in every igloo in the back country. If you are smart enough to make friendly contact with them, they will be your outposts and scouts... You can smile at my Tundra Army if you wish, but I’ll bet you any money that I could land 750 Eskimo guardsmen on your island, over the ice by dog team in winter or by kayak in summer, before you and your 500 men could defend yourselves.”³⁶⁴

This evidently had an effect on the officer. He promised to make contact with the territorial guard the next day. As Marston notes in his conclusion to this anecdote, “The next morning I saw not one but several sergeants going up and down the river in jeeps making liaison contact with my Eskimo scouts at several villages on the Kuskokwim [River].”³⁶⁵

In addition to the normal duties that could be expected of a territorial or state national guard unit, the Alaska Territorial Guard made some contributions to the war effort. To the Alaskan Natives, the Japanese were known as “Little Men”, something Marston notes in his memoirs.³⁶⁶ At one point, Marston records receiving a letter stating that, near the village of Noatak in the far Northwest of Alaska along the Kotzebue Sound and the Chukchi Sea, “the Little Men had shown up. [The natives] had told them to halt, but they still kept coming. The Eskimoes ran to their boats and went down to the next camp, but they showed up there too. After that they went back to their village of Noatak and called out the Guard.”³⁶⁷ Marston does not actually mention if the Guard actually fired any shots upon being called out, but the fact that the Japanese had found this place does underscore the need for the Guard in the area. In another instance just a few days later, the Guard shot down a Japanese air balloon. These had been known to carry both bombs and radios on them, so taking them down was a priority in the

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 188-189.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 188-189.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 159.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 153.

remote coastal reaches of Alaska.³⁶⁸ Marston also mentions that, at one point, some members of the Territorial Guard played a vital role in rescuing an American pilot who had ejected from a disabled plane in the area around the village of Ruby.³⁶⁹

The Alaska Territorial Guard served bravely but their services were not always well recognized, whether during the war or since. Buried within the University of Alaska's Digital Archives, an "Alaska History Nugget", part of a series of short documentaries produced by the state's public broadcasting system, mentions that these Guard members frequently sported only shoulder patches, and their uniforms and rifles all too often were left over from World War I.³⁷⁰ They fought bravely, but it was a thankless job. This clip notes that the Guard did their work without pay.³⁷¹ An anecdote from Governor Gruening's autobiography corroborates this. He mentions that, once the islands of Attu and Kiska had been occupied, the establishment of a Territorial Guard became even more urgent. "In a few of the white communities, men asked how much they would be paid. No Eskimo ever asked that question."³⁷² Official recognition of their service did not come until August of 2000, when Alaska Senator Ted Stevens proffered an amendment to the Defense Appropriations Act for the Fiscal Year of 2001 stating:

Service as a member of the Alaska Territorial Guard during World War II of any individual who was honorably discharged therefrom under section 8147 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2001, shall be considered active duty for purposes of all laws administered by the Secretary.³⁷³

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 159.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 204.

³⁷⁰ Alaska Public Broadcasting, "Alaska Territorial Guard," *Alaska History Nuggets*, Alaska Film Archives, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, 2005, <http://vilda.alaska.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cdmgl1/id/35386/rec/7> (accessed April 1, 2013).

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ernest Gruening, *Many Battles: The Autobiography of Ernest Gruening*, 310.

³⁷³ United States House, 106th Congress, H.R. 4576, *Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2001*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 2001, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-114/pdf/STATUTE-114-Pg656.pdf> (accessed April 1, 2013), 705.

This amendment finally made it possible for Guard veterans to receive the kind of benefits given to other soldiers. Even almost thirteen years after this law's passage, veterans are still coming forward. An article in the *Anchorage Daily News* from March 2, 2013, mentions the case of Henry Neligan, an almost 101-year-old Tlingit from Ketchikan who finally received his discharge from the Guard. As the article notes, "Neligan is the oldest living Alaska Territorial Guard veteran—and likely the oldest living member of any branch of the U.S. military—to formally receive his discharge."³⁷⁴

The Navajo Code Talkers are perhaps the most well-known Indians from World War Two, to the extent that they even had a movie made about them in 2002 titled *Windtalkers*, but their story extends beyond what Hollywood says. The decision to use Navajo as a code language came about because the Japanese had broken every other code the United States had tried. Much like Alfred Bloor and the Choctaw in his unit during World War One, the military began looking into the Navajo's language. The advantages it had were obvious: it had no alphabet and the vocabulary, tonal inflections, grammar, and syntax were all complicated, to the point that, in order to be fluent in it, one almost certainly would have to be exposed to it from birth.

Sally McClain has done an excellent job covering the Code Talkers in her book *Navajo Weapon*, including extensive interviews with the surviving Code Talkers themselves. They were trained at Camp Elliot in Arizona. After a free day, the Navajo men who had been chosen were brought into a building where they were informed that their task was to form a code based upon their language. The irony of this situation became apparent in the Navajo men's response to this order. As McClain notes:

³⁷⁴ Mike Dunham, "100-year-old Alaska Territorial Guard veteran finally gets an honorable discharge," *Anchorage Daily News*, March 2, 2013, <http://www.adn.com/2013/03/02/2809727/100-year-old-alaska-territorial.html> (accessed April 1, 2013).

Many of these men had been punished, sometimes brutally, for speaking Navajo in classrooms similar to this, classrooms in schools run by the same government that included the armed forces. Now this government that had punished them in the past for speaking their language was asking them to use it to help win the war. Bilagaana (white people) were stranger than the Navajos had imagined.³⁷⁵

After the shock had worn off, the men began to develop a code. Given Navajo's complexities and the requirements of the military, they had to agree upon a standard set of words and pronunciations. After deciding upon a list of words and pronunciations and typing that list up, "the men began calling them out, in no particular order, until everyone had them memorized."³⁷⁶

Once in the field of battle, the Navajos put their code to work. One place they were used was Guadalcanal. Lieutenant Hunt, the signal officer working under General Alexander Vandegrift put them to work. Initially, Hunt planned to have them compete with a code machine. He informed the Navajos that it would take about four hours to send and decode the message. When he asked how long it would take the Navajos to do the same, code talker William McCabe told him it would take two minutes.³⁷⁷ One way they were used during this battle was to bring food and ammunition to a patrol caught behind enemy lines in October of 1942; a patrol that a code talker Sam Begay happened to be accompanying. Lieutenant Hunt searched the field map, located a secret cache, and informed McCabe. McClain writes, "That information was relayed back to Begay in code, secure from Japanese interception and decoding, and made the difference between life and death for that patrol."³⁷⁸ On January 4, 1943, the Navajo used their language code to have the destroyer *Reid* fire 360 rounds of 5-inch shells on Japanese positions between Kokumbona and Visale, both of which were near Cape Esperance.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁵ Sally McClain, *Navajo Weapon: The Navajo Code Talkers* (Tucson, AZ: Rio Nuevo Publishers, 2001), 50-1.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 52-3.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 67-8.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

Navajo code talkers played an important role in battles throughout the war in the Pacific. One notable example of the service they were able to provide came at one of the most grueling battles in that theater, the one for Iwo Jima. One Navajo, Teddy Draper even witnessed the flag raising, and he transmitted the message “1st Lieutenant H.G. Schrier’s platoon raised U.S. flag and secured Mount Suribachi at 10:20” via the Navajo code. He recounted, “I was about 100 feet away when I saw the men struggle with that long piece of pipe. I saw the lieutenant look around for an extra man to help, then he yelled, ‘Ira Hayes! Ira Hayes!’ Then two more of the guys jumped up to help them, and the big flag went up. It was a sight to behold.”³⁸⁰

At Okinawa, Navajos played a vital role in aiding the American forces. Sergeant Dolph Reeves, a non-Navajo who was working with Radio Intelligence, gave the following account of how the Navajos helped with landing on the island, which happened on April 1, 1945:

I was a radio supervisor in Joint Operations. I had at least two code talkers with me at all times. When a message was given to me for delivery...I immediately checked the classification. If classified, I would instruct the operator on the appropriate circuit to request a talker for the other end. Then with a few grunts and unusual sounds from our talker, and an acknowledgement from the other end, the message was delivered. Time saved by omitting the crypto center, and by delivering a plain language message that no one other than another Navajo talker could decipher, was enormous.³⁸¹

Their usefulness did not end there. On April 12, gunfire directed by the Navajos along with twenty-seven artillery battalions rained 19,000 rounds on the Shuri and Naha area. As the marines advanced further, yard by bloody yard, Navajos continued to prove their worth. Among other things, they requested tank support for E Company, mortar fire twenty-five yards behind A Company, and medical assistance to the rear echelon of B Company, all of which were from the First Division. “The Navajo radio net,” McClain writes, “began sending and receiving countless

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 80-1.

³⁸¹ Ibid., 208-9.

messages from the front lines to the rear echelons.”³⁸² The bloody fighting continued on for over two more months, and the island was finally secured on June 22, 1945. Even then, minor skirmishes continued until the Japanese commander formally surrendered on September 7, 1945, almost a month after the second atomic bomb had been dropped on Nagasaki. Without the aid of the Navajo code talkers, it is almost certain that it would have taken much longer to secure Okinawa, and the number of American casualties would have likewise been much worse. McClain concludes, “The logistics of this battle...were greatly enhanced through the use of the Navajo radio nets.”³⁸³

While the Navajo Code Talkers are probably the most well-known of the Code Talkers, the usage of Indian language as military code was hardly limited to their tribe and neither was it limited to the Pacific Theater. On the European Front, seventeen Comanches were enlisted by the Army into the Fourth Infantry Division to use their language to transmit messages. Fourteen of these men took part in Operation Overlord, the Normandy Invasion, and as William Meadows notes in his account of the actions of the Comanche Code Talkers, thirteen of these men saw active combat with the Fourth Division. They did not hide why they wished to serve, as Meadows’ narrative notes, one of the main reasons they enlisted “was to use their native language as a communications tool for the army...[they] were well prepared and had come to Europe to fight Taawohonuu (‘Our Enemy,’ the Germans) and Po’sataiboo’ (Crazy White Man), their name for Adolph Hitler.”³⁸⁴

³⁸² Ibid., 211.

³⁸³ Ibid., 212.

³⁸⁴ William C. Meadows, *The Comanche Code Talkers of World War II* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2002), 135.

The Comanches were assigned to land on Utah Beach.³⁸⁵ While the invasion at Utah was a relatively easier job for the soldiers than that at Omaha Beach, it was nevertheless a difficult and dangerous undertaking for the troops involved. The Code Talkers began their work not long after they arrived on the beach. The first Comanche message they received from division command was from Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., who was alerting them that he had landed safely.³⁸⁶ Their particular duties that day should be unsurprising. As Meadows notes, “One of the first duties of signal corps members, upon reaching a secure position above the beach, was to string wire for communications lines. Whenever possible, lines were strung on existing telephone poles.”³⁸⁷ They did this as the Allied forces continued to advance inland, regardless of the conditions around them. Meadows mentions of how they had to be careful of incoming artillery rounds, using the sound to judge whether the shells were nearby and the troops needed to take cover or not.³⁸⁸

From there on, the Comanches served with the rest of their comrades in the Fourth Division as they progressed into Germany through Belgium. They saw action at the Siegfried Line at Schnee Eifel, the Hurtgen Forest, and even the Battle of the Bulge. Once in Germany, they marched across the Rhine River, taking Worms and Wurzburg as they headed into and through Bavaria, finally to be relieved on May 2, 1945, at Miesbach on the Isar River. The Comanches, like the other American soldiers, fought bravely, although Meadows’ account of their later actions does not go into as much detail that he does while discussing their actions at Utah Beach and immediately afterward. Meadows’ account is the only lengthy scholarly discussion of the Comanche Code Talkers specifically, so the relative lack of information he

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 137.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 141

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 143.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 145

gives over the latter part of their time in Europe presents a problem when writing on the topic. However, during the Battle of the Hurtgen Forest, he does mention that the Code Talkers had a great deal of difficulty in maintaining the communication lines, a job the Code Talkers were in part responsible for. "Enemy artillery constantly knocked telephone lines out, forcing wire patrols, including the code talkers, to spend a large amount of time checking lines and troubleshooting."³⁸⁹

There are no living Comanche Code Talkers. The last one, Charles Chibitty, died in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 2005. This is the same Charlie Chibitty who was mentioned in the earlier article in the *Spartanburg Herald*. The obituary that appeared in the *Washington Post* noted of his service:

As a radio man with the 4th Infantry Division, Mr. Chibitty took part in some of the fiercest fighting of the war, including the breakthrough at St. Lo, Hurtgen Forest, the Battle of the Bulge and the rescue of the "lost battalion." The division was the first American unit to participate in the liberation of Paris and the first infantry division to enter Germany.³⁹⁰

For his service, Chibitty earned five campaign battle stars, and he was awarded France's Chevalier of the National Order of Merit, like all other Comanche Code Talkers.³⁹¹ Perhaps the most interesting thing from this obituary is a quote from 2002 where he states, "It's strange, but growing up as a child I was forbidden to speak my native language at school....Later my country asked me to. My language helped win the war, and that makes me very proud. Very proud."³⁹²

As Chibitty's words indicate, the United States had had little use for Indian languages during the era in which he grew up, a standard aspect of the campaign to assimilate the American Indians

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 156

³⁹⁰ Joe Holley, "Comanche Code Talker Charles Chibitty Dies," *The Washington Post*, July 26, 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/25/AR2005072501542.html> (accessed April 1, 2013).

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid.

into the rest of American society. However, when World War II began, the United States military started to realize the importance of these languages, if for no other reason than strategic value. Even though it was an unintended side effect, the ability to embrace part of one's own culture while still serving in the United States Army doubtlessly played a large role in forming and reforming the identities of many native soldiers.

There were other tribes who served as code talkers during World War II. On August 21, 2004, Frank Sanache of Iowa, the last of the Meskwaki Code Talkers, passed away. On July 4, 2002, *USA Today* published an article telling his story and the story of fellow Meskwaki Code Talkers. Twenty-seven men from the tribe, which is located in Iowa, enlisted for service, which was sixteen percent of the tribe's entire population. Of these men, eight were chosen to become code talkers, and they served on the North African front. The newspaper quoted the tribal council chairman Alex Walker as saying, "Frank used to tell me about how he would be sent out as a scout....They used to send him about two miles ahead of the troops in dangerous conditions. There were only eight of them so they worked 24-hour shifts."³⁹³ Clearly, the kind of conditions he and his fellow talkers faced were of the same general nature as those by talkers in other tribes. Sanache himself, as the article notes, was captured by the Germans at Fied Pass in Tunisia. One of the most interesting assertions he makes is that the Army had orders to kill code talkers who were captured in order to maintain the code's secrecy, but the military officially denies these rumors. Regardless, he survived his time in captivity and returned home to the states after the war.³⁹⁴ They, including Sanache, received a hero's welcome at home with their tribe. As the article notes, "Walker, who grew up hearing tribal tales of the code talkers, said the eight veterans were revered when they returned from the war. 'They would tell their stories at the

³⁹³ Associated Press, "Last Meskwaki code talker remembers," *USA TODAY*, July 4, 2002, <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002/07/06/codetalkers.htm> (accessed April 1, 2013).

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

tribal ceremonies,' Walker said. 'They were treated like the old time warriors.'"³⁹⁵ This is the same sort of response that natives across many tribes received when they returned home, regardless of whether they were code talkers or not. Even though they had different cultures and histories, some values clearly remain the same.

Perhaps the single most famous Indian veteran is Dr. Joe Medicine Crow, who is a member of the Crow tribe. He was born on October 27, 1913, near Lodge Grass, Montana, and he is still alive today at the age of ninety-nine. He joined the army at Fort Douglas, Utah, in 1942, and he became a scout in Company K, 411th Infantry, in the 103rd Division. In the years after World War Two, he has established himself as one of the most important scholars of Indians, and the preeminent scholar on the Crow tribe. He has given many interviews over the years, written and contributed to many books, and has made numerous appearances speaking on behalf of his tribe and all Indians to educate the public.

To this day, he is the last Crow to earn the title of War Chief, for which he had to perform four specific war deeds. According to Crow tradition, in order to achieve this rank, a Crow warrior had to touch an enemy soldier; disarm one, although not necessarily the same soldier; lead a successful war party; and finally, steal one or more of the enemy's horses. In an interview he gave in December of 2012 to Utah's *Deseret News*, he noted that he was aware of his tribe's great warriors of the past, but he was not specifically searching for opportunities to perform those war deeds for their own sake on the field of battle. If anything, he was skeptical if such a rank could even be achieved again. "Naturally, I thought about the famous warriors when I went to Germany," he told Steven Law, from the newspaper, "I had a legacy to live up to. My goal

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

was to be a good soldier and to perform honorably in combat. But I did not think in terms of (attaining war deeds). Those days were gone, I believed.”³⁹⁶

In spite of the daunting task, made even harder by how warfare was modernizing, Joe Medicine Crow was able to accomplish each of the four deeds. The first one he accomplished was to lead a successful war party, which he did in January of 1944. Leading six other soldiers, no small feat for a man holding the rank of private, he crossed the Siegfried Line and ran into no man’s land to retrieve dynamite that the Allies would use to blow up German guns and pillboxes. With the help of smoke screen shells from his fellow Americans, his party was able to make it to the other side and back, the latter half accomplished while carrying fifty pound boxes of dynamite. All the men made it back safely.³⁹⁷

The second and third deeds came at roughly the same time. In March of 1944, the force he was with was positioning itself to capture a German village. When they attacked it, Medicine Crow, as a scout, was assigned to sneak into the town from behind and assess both the Germans’ position and their artillery. While he was sneaking into the village, he encountered a German soldier. The latter tried to raise his rifle, but as Medicine Crow told Law, “my reactions were a bit quicker than his. I hit him under the chin with the butt of my rifle and knocked him down, sending his rifle flying. He reached for his rifle but I kicked it out of the way.”³⁹⁸ These actions left the soldier at Medicine Crow’s mercy. He could have pulled the trigger on his own gun. However, he did not want to attract any more attention, so he got down on the soldier and “tore into him.”³⁹⁹ As Medicine Crow was choking him, he heard the soldier plead for his mother,

³⁹⁶ Steven Law, “The last Plains Indian war chief still fights for his home, his people and their way of life,” *The Deseret News*, December 6, 2012, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865568235/The-last-Plains-Indian-war-chief-still-fights-for-his-home-his-people-and-their-way-of-life.html?pg=all> (accessed May 31, 2013).

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

which caused Medicine Crow to let up. Wanting to escape before any other Germans found him, he quickly ducked out of the village, having accomplished two more war deeds: touch an enemy soldier and disarm him. Again, Medicine Crow reiterates to Law that he was not intentionally looking for these war deeds, who writes, “The war deed days were too long past, Medicine Crow says. ‘It didn’t even cross my mind that what I had done had been a war deed.’ But he did view it as a brave deed that would have made his war chief grandfathers proud.”⁴⁰⁰

The fourth and final war deed, capturing an enemy’s horse, might have been the hardest to accomplish, given how even during World War Two, horses had become more or less obsolete on the battlefield. This was something that Medicine Crow was most eager to do. He told Law, “Even though I wasn’t thinking about counting coup, I had been looking for a chance to capture a horse...To me that was the best thing I could do to prove I was worthy of my ancestors.”⁴⁰¹ Fortunately for him, near the end of the war, his unit encountered a group of about fifty SS officers who were on horseback. At about midnight one night, they took over a farmhouse and left their horses out in a pasture. The Americans surrounded the farmhouse and the small village nearby and were preparing to attack. Suddenly, Joe Medicine Crow gets the idea to go out and round up the horses, which his commanding officer approved. Early in the next morning, he left to take them, and the only other soldier who was with him was there to open the gate. Medicine Crow crept into the pasture, found a horse he liked, mounted it, and began the process of rounding the others up. As he recounted:

“I got on it, rounded up the other horses and I stampeded them out of there,” Medicine Crow recounts with a laugh.

The job of the soldier that Medicine Crow had brought with him was to open the gate when he heard Medicine Crow whistle. As Medicine Crow stampeded the horses in the

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

direction of the gate, he gave the signal and the soldier opened the gate. “Then I gave a Crow war cry, and those horses took off,” Medicine Crow says.

Medicine Crow says it was the proudest moment of his life.⁴⁰²

In May 1945, Germany surrendered, and Joe Medicine Crow was discharged from the army.

From there, he returned home to Lodge Grass.

Upon returning home, Joe Medicine Crow was given a hero’s welcome along with all the other returning Crow soldiers, and the tribe held a grand reception in their honor. When Medicine Crow entered the hall, the drummers sang his grandfather Chief Medicine Crow’s war song, and after dancing around the floor for a while, a group of elders requested that he recite his war deeds, even though they had not heard of his actions in Europe. “When he finished telling his war deeds, the elders declared, ‘You have done it! You have done the four deeds! You are a war chief!’ says Medicine Crow.”⁴⁰³ In the years before the war, he graduated from Linfield College with a bachelor’s degree in sociology, and he began working on his master’s in the same subject at the University of Southern California before being called up to service. After the war, he finished his work and received the degree. Afterward, the Crow nation asked him to be their spokesman and historian.⁴⁰⁴ He has also received two honorary doctorates, and he has won the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Bronze Star, and France’s Legion d’honneur.

Other than a few like Dr. Joe Medicine Crow, the stories of Indian veterans have unfortunately not received much attention. Omaha Indian Hollis Stabler is something of an exception to this. In 2005, with the help of editor Victoria Smith, his memoirs were published under the title *No One Ever Asked Me*. He enlisted in the army in 1939 after being turned away from the navy, who had apparently fulfilled their enlistment quotas at the time. He served under

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

General George Patton, participating in combat in North Africa, Italy and France, and he holds the distinction of being one of the few to survive Anzio. He was briefly part of the Eleventh Cavalry, but he was later shifted over to the Second Armored Division's Sixty-Seventh Armored Regiment. However, after Sicily fell, he joined the Fourth Ranger Battalion, which he stayed in for the rest of the war. He said of this decision:

While I was waiting at the replacement depot to rejoin the Second Armored Division [which had gone to England to train for D-Day while he had been in the hospital], I noticed a crowd, with some Rangers there. Those Rangers asked for volunteers to form a little cannon company...I was tired of waiting to catch up to the Second, so I volunteered to join them...I always liked to keep moving. So they took me, me and another guy. I never did see him afterwards. They put us in the Rangers and sent us to Agropolu and that's how I ended up in Darby's Rangers.⁴⁰⁵

By the time World War II was over, he was a highly decorated veteran. He had won four Bronze Stars, one Silver Star, and a Purple Heart.

Stabler's leg injury was what won him the Purple Heart. On March 9, 1944, he and his group of men were located on the west side of the Mussolini Canal near the village of Conca. While they were trying to cross a bridge in the process of moving their line forward, a couple of shells hit the group. The first hit one of his comrades in the chest, a man whose name Stabler gives as Smith, injuries the man died from while Stabler had the misfortune of watching. The second got Stabler, and he was hit in five places: the shoulder, hip, thigh, foot, and in the middle of his back He was blown from the top of the bridge into the water. Stabler says of this:

When I hit the water, I realized I was wounded. It hurt, stinging like when firecrackers burst in your hand. I tried to stand up and found I could not. I crawled to the bank. I wasn't there too long when two Eighty-Second Airborne medics came down the bank. One guy came to help me and the other went to check on Smith, but I knew he was dead.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁵ Hollis D. Stabler and Victoria Smith, *No One Ever Asked Me: The World War II Memoirs of an Omaha Indian Soldier* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 70.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 92-3.

Fortunately for Stabler, the doctors were able to save his leg, and he later reported back to his company. However, his leg was not the only part of his body damaged during the war. He also lost some of his hearing at the Battle of Anzio. A few days before he sustained his leg injury, he recalls that his right ear popped followed by water coming out of his left ear. Stabler says, “My left eardrum had been broken. I had been wearing a steel helmet. A piece of shrapnel must have hit my helmet but did not penetrate it. It sure made a lot of noise. Because of this incident I have had to wear hearing aids to get along.”⁴⁰⁷

Even while he found himself fairly well accepted in military culture, Stabler still dealt with prejudice in some way both in and out of the army. His encounters with Sergeant “Red Dog” Poland of Alabama are one example. Stabler described him as “a real ‘redneck’: redheaded, with a loud mouth, and into white supremacy. He never knew just how to take me.”⁴⁰⁸ The two had a rough start, but it appears they came to an understanding not long afterward. The two resolved their issues so well that Stabler was eating breakfast as a guest at Poland’s house when they received news of Pearl Harbor. “During maneuvers in Louisiana,” Stabler stated, “we had come nose to nose, confronting each other, but nothing ever came of it. By now, we knew each other pretty well and we were still friends.”⁴⁰⁹ While Stabler and his unit were taking part in a battle near the Italian town of Gela. Stabler and Poland had no problem traveling together. Stabler noted, “We had gone two miles when we found out we were out of water, so I volunteered to get some.”⁴¹⁰ Regardless of what prejudices Poland held, he still realized that the two of them were serving the same country in the same war. Editor Victoria Smith wrote in her conclusion, “Yet, despite their differences, they were all-American

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 91.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 36.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 36.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 67.

soldiers... a class distinction that bonded them and overrode differences when confronted by ‘foreigners.’”⁴¹¹

The other notable instance of prejudice Stabler mentioned came just after he was discharged, and it did not end as well for him. While waiting Omaha’s Union Station, he decided to head down to the bar there for a beer and hamburger. While eating, he was approached by a city policeman. Stabler described what happened next:

He said, “Are you drinking?” I said “Yeah,” you know. “Indians aren’t supposed to drink.” That’s what he said to me. I just dropped the bottle and walked out. I still had my uniform on. It was a city policeman, not an MP....It made me wonder what I’d been fighting for. I never went back to that place.⁴¹²

While drinking was something all soldiers, regardless of race or ethnicity, enjoyed during their time in the service, it had been illegal for Indians to drink since 1802, but this situation changed in the years after the war. As Allison Bernstein notes, “Finally, in 1953, following nearly a decade of protest, Congress placed Indians in the same status as non-Indians with respect to alcohol when off the reservation by repealing all liquor prohibitions.”⁴¹³ Attitudes toward Indians were slowly changing in America, but it was a very slow process.

World War Two can be seen as, ultimately, the culmination of the various efforts during and since the Civil War to enlist Indians as regular soldiers. In this war, the United States military brass showed that it had learned from previous experiences, whether it was the exploits of Indians during the Civil War in various but generally ad hoc capacities, the utilization of Indians as scouts during the Indian wars of the latter half of the 1800s, the experiments with Indians as regular soldiers during the early 1890s, or figuring out the early issues with enlisting Indians in a major war effort during the First World War along with realizing the usefulness of

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 143.

⁴¹² Ibid., 122.

⁴¹³ Alison R. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs*, 138.

Indian languages as codes. Old prejudices die hard, though, as the conception of the Indian as a “Vanishing Race” was still very much in the public consciousness, as was the conception that Indians were natural fighters. Even so, Indians more than proved themselves as capable as any white man, and many Indians brought back the lessons learned from military life during World War Two to their tribes.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz argues, “The aim of war should be what its very concept implies—to defeat the enemy.”⁴¹⁴ This is the theme that his entire book is built around. Of course, the military, including the local militias, is the physical force used to fight in a war. Of the great commanders of history (Clausewitz names Alexander, Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII, and Frederick the Great) he notes, “If the army had been destroyed, they would have all gone down in history as failures.”⁴¹⁵ As for the militaries themselves, they must meet two basic conditions: first, “[t]o score a decisive victory over the enemy’s,” and second, “[t]o make the effort necessary to pursue our victory to the point where the balance is beyond all possible redress.”⁴¹⁶

Granted, this is obviously only a very rudimentary discussion of Clausewitz, it should be of little surprise that the biggest questions the United States’ military seems to ask are “Can this man fight?” and “Will he benefit the nation’s war effort?” To those ends, the military has thus proven itself far more willing to use Indians, even when prejudices against them ran high in the rest of society. When Alfred Bloor, for example, happened upon a few of his soldiers talking in Choctaw during World War I, he did not chastise them for failing to speak in English, as Indian children were at boarding schools in the United States. Instead, he saw the potential Choctaw language had to help in the nation’s war effort. Thus, he put the Choctaws under his command to work using their language as an unbreakable code, and this experiment was so successful that it

⁴¹⁴ Carl von Clausewitz, Michael Howard, and Peter Paret, *On War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 595.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 596.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 597.

became official policy during World War Two. Several different tribes, among them the Navajo, Comanche, and Meskwaki, were asked to use their language as a code.

Examples can be found beyond Colonel Bloor's ingenuity, though. Even during the Civil War, when the utilization of Indians as soldiers, regular or otherwise, was not something advocated by many in Washington or the military, there were those who saw potential in Indians. The events in the western theater of the war provide one example. General John Frémont was one of those who was interested in enlisting Indians, in particular the Delaware. With the help of the Delaware Indian explorer Falleaf, he was able to recruit fifty four from the tribe, in spite of opposition from some of their chiefs, and they performed well in avoiding being spotted by the Confederates.

James H. Lane, Senator from Kansas and Union General, could be his own worst enemy, but he was as staunch advocate of using the local Indians in Kansas, teamed with local whites, as home guards. Furthermore, as Adjutant General Thomas informed General Halleck, Lane's mission was "to open the way for the friendly Indians who are now refugees in Southern Kansas to return to their homes and to protect them there."⁴¹⁷ The Indians he recruited, for their part, seemed to prefer Lane to practically any other white commander, and it was because they beseeched Lincoln to keep him around that the troublesome General Lane was not removed from the command of the group in the Spring of 1862. While the overall results of the mission were rather mixed, it did prove to the military that Indians could be enlisted, trained, and sent on missions, including battles.

The Confederacy, for its part, had some similar experiments. The last shots fired in the Civil War were fired either by Indian soldiers or soldiers under the command of an Indian. In the

⁴¹⁷ United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Vol. 8, 624.

East, Colonel William Holland Thomas led a group of Cherokees from the Eastern Band in North Carolina, and his men terrorized Union soldiers and sympathizers in eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina, where there were many who had no use for slaves or the Confederacy. In the West, the prominent Cherokee Stand Watie actually made the rank of brigadier general, and he and his men were also the last major Confederate force to surrender, doing so on June 23, 1865.

The Iroquois Ely Parker's career shows that, even before there was a concerted effort to recruit Indians into the military, they were still able to find ways to serve and serve well. Even before the Civil War, he had already led an eventful life as a civil engineer, and a project he was working on in Illinois had even led him to become friends with Ulysses S. Grant. During the Civil War, Parker served under Generals J.E. Smith and Grant, and while he was with Grant, he became well known as the Indian in charge of various engineering jobs. Parker was also trusted enough by Grant to transcribe the latter's correspondence, and Parker also holds the distinction of being the one to write down the terms of surrender for Grant at Appomattox.

The case with Ely Parker and his fellow Iroquois also shows what problems Indians faced in trying to serve. Racism against them from recruiters was rampant, but personal prejudices were not the only problem. The fact that most Indians were not citizens created even more problems for government bureaucrats trying to figure out if they could serve or not. This is, of course, a recurring problem that was not solved until the 1924 citizenship act. Even so, the racism in New York seems to have been particularly harsh, as research shows Indians in neighboring states faced nowhere near the difficult time the Iroquois in New York, including Ely Parker, faced in trying to volunteer for military service.

The few major examples of recruiting Indians during the Civil War proved that Indians could fight just like any white man, and they should not be overlooked when it came to recruiting people for military service. People in the military and Washington were beginning to take notice, but it was a long time before recruitment of Indians was anything more than a mostly ad hoc force. The first signs of real progress came during the years immediately after the Civil War. The Pawnee scouts serving under General Samuel Curtis with the help of Frank and Luther North during the waning days of the Civil War and the mid-to-late 1860s proved themselves so well on the field of battle that Congress authorized the military through the Military Reorganization Act of 1866 to recruit up to 1000 Indians to serve as scouts.

The primary champion of Indians in the military during the Indian Wars was General George Crook, but he was not without his share of skeptics and adversaries in the military and Washington, and he used 1866 act to its fullest extent. Indians frequently played vital roles in his campaigns, as he trusted their knowledge of the terrain and ability to track down other Indians more than any white man's. His rather unorthodox methods led to success after success in the Indian campaigns he was tasked with, whether they were Cheyenne, Lakota, Paiute, or an Apache band.

Even so, General Crook had his adversaries and skeptics, and they more than anything else were what stymied his plans. Generals Halleck and Steele were not enthusiastic supporters of his methods, but evidence, such as his success against the Paiutes in Oregon, shows the two men could be persuaded. General Sheridan, who once supposedly said "The only good Indian is a dead Indian," came to be fed up with Crook's unorthodox methods after Geronimo escaped. Crook, for his part, evidently understood he had done all he could do after this particular incident, and he subsequently asked to be relieved of his command. In all, Crook had his flaws

and critics, but his willingness to make distinctions between Indian tribes instead of viewing them as a monolithic hostile entity, his recognition of the fighting abilities and special skills of Indians, and his interest in engaging in good faith negotiations with tribes shows him to be a fairly enlightened person on Indian issues for the time.

In the years after the Civil War, and especially in light of the successes people like Crook had with Indian scouts in the Indian Wars led some people, among them Richard Pratt, to wonder about recruiting them into regular service. In the early 1890s, an experiment testing this idea began. It was not immediately successful, but it created a precedent for all future attempts. By this point, the government was beginning to entertain the idea that Indians could serve in the army just like whites, or blacks, for that matter. Ironically, they refused to have integrated units of Indians and whites, the latter being the race assimilationists were trying to get the Indians to emulate, and integrating either race with blacks was certainly out of the question. These Indian units were not successful in the field, but the endeavor on the whole was enough to convince future policymakers that recruiting Indians as regular soldiers could be tried.

While a relatively minor war in United States history, the Spanish-American War was another attempt for Indians to distinguish themselves in the field of battle fighting with the rest of America's forces. The anecdote involving those eight Spokanes shows, if nothing else, that the United States' attitude towards the idea of Indians as soldiers was beginning to change. If they were to fight, they would do so in the same way as the rest of America. Meanwhile, Theodore Roosevelt's praise of his Indian comrades in the Rough Riders shows that, even at this relatively early point in the process of recruitment of Indians into the regular army, Indians were still proving themselves to be excellent soldiers. Roosevelt, it should be noted, was never

enthusiastically pro-Indian in his outlook on the race as a whole, but he was willing to give individuals of every race and creed a fair assessment based upon their individual merits.

Between the end of the Spanish-American War and the advent of World War I, the United States was largely at peace, although it was involved in a few minor skirmishes like the Pancho Villa Expedition. Indians served in these, but the actions were so minor that they, like many of their white comrades, never were able to do much to distinguish themselves. However, Indian Affairs Commissioner under Theodore Roosevelt Francis Leupp's book *The Indian and His Problem* does show that people in Washington were taking note of the potential of Indians as regular soldiers in the armed forces, and he recognized at the same time its potential as a tool of assimilation. Revisiting his words from earlier, perhaps the most notable passage of his book is:

The Indian, when he enters the army, enters it on the same footing as any other citizen of the United States. He takes his place between two white soldiers, is amalgamated at once with the organization he has joined, and, barring the fact that he is usually the most popular man in the ranks, becomes indistinguishable from the rest of the soldiers.⁴¹⁸

This kind of attitude is typical of any assimilationist who favored opening up the ranks of regular service to Indians. It also shows an acknowledgement that, as a soldier, the Indian was at the very least equal to his fellow whites, an attitude that regrettably did not pervade in the attitudes of the rest of so many Indian reformers toward the people they were supposedly looking after.

As the first major war the United States had become involved in since the Civil War, World War I gave policy makers in Washington and the military a new chance to try using Indians as regular soldiers. Once again, the citizenship issue complicated matters for Indians when they tried to volunteer or register for the draft. Even though roughly two-thirds of all Indians were citizens by this point, many of them were uncertain about their status, and confused local draft boards and BIA officials were not always much help. The 1919 act granting

⁴¹⁸ Francis E. Leupp, *The Indian and His Problem*, 167.

citizenship to all honorably discharged Indian veterans who sought it can be seen as the United States recognizing the valor of Indian soldiers and deeming them equal to whites, even if it only applied to the relatively few Indian veterans who were not citizens already. The citizenship issue was not fully resolved from the United States government's standpoint until the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act, but even then, reception of the act on reservations was not uniformly positive. From the standpoint of recruiting and enlisting Indians into the military, though, it was a great step forward and the end of a large headache for draft boards.

Colonel Bloor's ingenuity and the skills of the Choctaws under his command have already been noted here, but Indian contributions during the war extended beyond this. As the Department of the Interior's 1920 report shows, numerous Indians distinguished themselves on the field of battle, even at the cost of their own lives, and the report contains only a small selection of Indian heroes. Many others, as Thomas Britten's research shows, also won praise for their efforts. Joseph Oklahombi is one that should stand out among all the others. The contemporary press reports of his deeds were full of comparisons to Sergeant Alvin York. One magazine from the time, *The Oklahoma Teacher*, noted that the state gave America "the second greatest 'World War' hero, Joseph Oklahombi, a fullblood Choctaw Indian," but what followed this glowing praise was a more somber note that seems common to most Indian veterans, "He came back to his country and to his native state unheralded and unknown. Few know just what a record he made. It was just a few less prisoners he took than Alvin York."⁴¹⁹ Whether their exploits might be mostly forgotten today, people at the time took note of how capable Indians were as soldiers, meeting and even surpassing the standards set by their white comrades.

⁴¹⁹ "Valuable Materials for Students," *The Oklahoma Teacher*, March 1921, <http://books.google.com/books?id=dVwwAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA103#v=onepage&q&f=false> (accessed June 7, 2013), 103.

While the deeds of Oklahombi and many of his fellow World War One Indian veterans might be forgotten, the Choctaw Code Talkers have at least gained some attention in recent years. The Code Talkers Recognition Act, honoring all code talkers, recognized the Choctaws as the ones who set the precedent for all similar operations. They also were the subject of a 2010 PBS documentary. However, any effort to research the Choctaw code talkers or any other Indian veteran from World War One is hampered by the fact that none of them are still alive, and the efforts to record their experiences while they were alive were minimal at best. Fortunately, historians and other researchers are learning from their mistakes.

By the time of Pearl Harbor, Indians had had many chances to prove themselves to be capable, even exceptional, soldiers in the instances where they had been allowed to serve as army regulars. They had proven that they were capable of fighting for America just as courageously as any white man, and they were willing to do it of their own accord, whether out of a sense of patriotism, a desire to gain the respect of their tribes as warriors, or a desire to escape the poverty and boredom of reservation life. As the early experiment with code talking shows, they had also proven themselves intelligent and capable enough to devise an intricate code to help their fellow soldiers. Furthermore, this code only came into existence because they were Indians. World War Two, in a sense, was the culmination and ultimate proving ground for Indians after all the efforts over the years at recruiting and making them regular soldiers.

By the time the Selective Service Act of 1940 had been signed into law, the military, particularly the army, already had thousands of Indians who had volunteered for service. Many Indians were annoyed at the prospect of being drafted, but only because, to them, it showed less of a willingness to fight than volunteering. In spite of this willingness to serve, though, officials in Southern states, especially Virginia, seemed content to rely on their racial prejudices to

obfuscate Indian attempts to sign up and create an entirely manufactured crisis of identity among the tribes in question. However, Indians do not consider themselves as black, and they fervently objected to this classification. Indians think of themselves as Indians, neither white nor black, regardless of what a given official might try to suggest.

At the same time, while John Collier was not the venomous racist that certain Southern state officials were, he was not without his flaws. During those racial inquisitions, he was a typical bureaucrat, trying to do his job by the rules without upsetting the balance of power unless he must. He repeatedly asserted that he was powerless to help the Pamunkeys and other tribes, and he only intervened in the Pamunkeys' case when the public outcry became too great to ignore. His attitude toward draft resistance also had some flaws. While the Navajos' case fit reasonably well into his ideas that draft resistance was generally due to misunderstandings of the draft law or that Indians who were very willing to volunteer would be reluctant to be drafted, the issues presented by the Zuni and Hopi were very different. His unwillingness to take into account the idea that deeply held tribal traditions or religious beliefs might cause some Indians to be reluctant, if not totally unwilling, to serve only inflamed the problems with these tribes.

While it might seem rather trivial now, throughout the war, the threat of Japanese attack on the United States mainland was a very real fear, and nowhere was it felt more than in Alaska, whose Aleutian Archipelago extended across the northern Pacific. With little support from the United States government outside of the military bases in the territory, Alaska essentially had to fend for itself, and this led to the creation of the Alaska Territorial Guard. This opened up opportunities for the many tribes of Alaskan Natives to contribute to the war effort, because they knew the icy terrain of the Alaskan mainland and the islands better than almost any white. Throughout the war, they displayed ingenuity, devotion, and a selfless willingness to give all

their meager resources to a cause they likely did not fully understand that far outpaced most whites.

The code talkers are undoubtedly the easiest Indians to single out from World War Two, but at the same time, the popular idea of a code talker, to the extent that it exists at all, is of a member of a Navajo tribe in the Pacific theater. However, code talking extended beyond just this tribe, and it was not limited to the Pacific front, either. Among the other code talking tribes, there are the Comanches and Meskwaki. Both tribes served on the other side of the war. The Comanches landed in France on Utah Beach on D-Day, and the Meskwakis served on the North African front, one of the most hostile climates of the war. What might be most surprising, though, is that they devised their codes using languages which, like all other Indian languages, were frowned upon when used back in the United States. These languages saved countless American lives, and they made field maneuvers much smoother and more secure than they might have otherwise been.

While gathering the stories of Indian veterans of the previous wars mentioned here is a problem in all but a few cases, historians and other social scientists have been much more attentive toward gathering the stories of World War Two Indian veterans, even if the number of stories is still relatively small. However, the stories fit well into the threads that have already been discerned. Indian veterans across tribes served bravely and with distinction, and frequently, the reception they received by whites in the military was much better than they were given back home. Dr. Joe Medicine Crow is the most famous of these and for good reason: he is the last Crow to meet the necessary qualifications to become a war chief, a feat that might never happen again. Medicine Crow has also distinguished himself as a scholar over the years, and he is generally recognized as the foremost authority on and “voice” of the Crow Nation.

Hollis Stabler's memoirs are also worth studying. The title *No One Ever Asked Me* ought to be a profound comment on the efforts to record Indian veterans' voices alone. Beyond that, though, it is full of insights into an Indian's experience fighting in Europe and his life before and after. Among other things, he survived the action at Anzio in Italy, and during the war, he suffered a severe leg injury, from which he recovered, and lost part of his hearing.

His comments on the prejudices he faced during and after the war are among the most insightful parts of his memoirs. They are useful reminders, first, that as relatively egalitarian as the military is in its consideration of a man's worth, its members are still bound by the same biases that are found in the rest of society, because they are a product of this society. Second, it is a reminder that life outside the military was still radically different for an Indian in what he did and did not have the privilege or right to do. His experiences with Red Dog Poland, the racist Alabaman, show that even some racists were able to be persuaded by the abilities and production of their Indian comrades. Meanwhile, his experience at the bar in Omaha's Union Station show that the United States still had some issues left to confront when it came to treating Indians equal to whites.

By almost any measure, Indians should have proven themselves beyond all doubts during World War Two, as during previous wars. In the wars following the Second World War, Indians have continued their tradition of distinguished service in the military. Extended individual accounts for the Korean War are lacking, but many Indians were involved regardless. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, at least 10,000 Indians served in Korea, and among those numbers were a few rather influential names. For example, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, a Northern Cheyenne, became a representative and later senator from Colorado, and Admiral

Joseph “Jocko” Clark, a Cherokee, commanded the Navy’s Seventh Fleet.⁴²⁰ Others include Choctaw Hal L. Muldrow, Jr., a major general who commanded the Division Artillery of the Forty-Fifth Infantry Division, and the Creek Atwa Autry, a colonel and later brigadier general who commanded the 189th Field Artillery Battalion of the Forty-Fifth Infantry. Three Indians also received a Medal of Honor during the Korean War: Corporal Mitchell Red Cloud, Jr., a son of a Winnebago chief; Private First Class Charles George, a North Carolina Cherokee; and Captain Raymond Harvey of the Chickasaw. All but Harvey’s were awarded posthumously. As the department’s website explains, this was what Harvey did to earn the medal on March 9, 1951, near Taemi-dong, South Korea:

When Harvey's company was pinned down by automatic weapons fire from several well-entrenched emplacements, he braved bullets and grenades to advance to the first North Korean machine gun nest and killed its crew with grenades. Rushing to the edge of the next emplacement, he killed its crew with carbine fire. Captain Harvey then moved the 1st Platoon forward, but it was again stopped by automatic weapons. Disregarding the hail of fire, he charged and destroyed a third emplacement. Miraculously, Harvey continued to lead the assault through the intense crossfire. After spotting a well-camouflaged enemy pillbox, he moved close enough to sweep the emplacement with carbine fire and throw grenades through the openings, killing its five occupants.⁴²¹

Even after all of this, Harvey refused to give up. He ordered his company forward and continued to direct its attack, though he was wounded and in pain. He refused to evacuate until he was certain that the mission would be accomplished.⁴²²

The Vietnam War is perhaps the most controversial major war America has ever been involved in, but regardless, Indians still answered the call to serve. The Department of Veterans’

⁴²⁰ United States Department of Veterans’ Affairs, *American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans: Lasting Contributions*, by Lindsay F. Holiday, Gabriel Bell, Robert E. Klein and Michael R. Wells, Office of Policy, Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning, and Preparedness, September 2006, www1.va.gov/VETDATA/docs/SpecialReports/AIANpaper9-12-06final.doc (accessed June 8, 2013), 4.

⁴²¹ "Native Americas in the Korean War," United States Department of Defense, <http://www.defense.gov/specials/nativeamerican01/korea.html> (accessed June 8, 2013).

⁴²² Ibid.

Affairs states that over 42,000 Indians served between 1965 and 1975.⁴²³ Dr. Robert Sanderson of the University of Arkansas has studied American Indian Vietnam veterans extensively. Among other things, he notes that according to the 1980 census, 82,000 Indians served in the military during the Vietnam Era, a number which is obviously radically different from Veterans' Affairs number. His research also indicates that the motivation for Indian service has not changed much over the years. He notes, "For many Native Americans, the Vietnam War presented a way out of the cycle of poverty experienced on government reservations. For others, it was a way of demonstrating patriotic pride, and following the warrior's path through active military service."⁴²⁴

Fortunately for researchers, there are still many Indian Vietnam War veterans still alive, and many are willing to tell their story. In addition to Sanderson's research, there have been other attempts at recording their stories, including by the Indians themselves. Leroy TeCube of the Jicarilla Apache's *Year in Nam* is one of the most detailed narratives of his war service of any Vietnam veteran, Indian or not. His introduction might help explain another reason why autobiographies and memoirs by American Indians are comparatively rare. He explains, "From an American Indian viewpoint, it might be said that one does not put his life or parts of it in writing," but then he explains why he defied this idea, "This might be so, but I feel that it is best to do this for future generations."⁴²⁵

In his chapter on the Hiep Duc Valley, TeCube spends some time reflecting on how serving in Vietnam resembled the Indian Wars of the late 1800s. He says:

⁴²³ United States Department of Veterans' Affairs, *American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans: Lasting Contributions* (accessed June 9, 2013), 4.

⁴²⁴ Robert Sanderson, "Vietnam Powwow: The Vietnam War as Remembered by Native American Veterans," University of Arkansas at Little Rock, <http://www.ualr.edu/sequoyah/uploads/2011/11/SanViet.html> (accessed June 9, 2013).

⁴²⁵ Leroy TeCube, *Year in Nam: A Native American Soldier's Story* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999) xix.

Now the circumstances were different. We now fought on the side of the U.S. government. If you could visualize the latter part of the nineteenth century, immigrants were pouring into the western United States by the thousands. For every white man killed there were a hundred ready to take his place. On the other hand, there were few Indians to replace those killed. Overwhelming odds beat the Indians. Ironically, in Nam the situation was reversed. For every VC or NVA killed, it seemed that there were many more ready to take his place. And although the territory was different, the enemy practiced a guerrilla-type warfare, as my ancestors had.⁴²⁶

He follows up these remarks by noting that, from the perspective of his enemies, it did not matter if he was Indian, white, black, or any other race. What mattered for the enemy “was that I wore a U.S. military uniform. Charlie wouldn’t hesitate to blow me away,” but he makes the following note about his fellow American soldiers, “I might have been in an isolated outfit, but I never felt that I was singled out in a negative way for being Indian.”⁴²⁷ Later on in the book, he mentions a meeting with a soldier who was a Navajo. TeCube mentions that since Jicarilla Apache and Navajo are similar enough to allow some mutual comprehension and since he had a Navajo friend growing up, he was able to greet his fellow soldier in Navajo. “It was good to talk to another person who shared a common heritage,” TeCube explains, “He took the liberty of talking in Navajo every now and then. I knew he just had to speak his language, having been away from it all these months, and I welcomed it.”⁴²⁸ What followed after this conversation was a sad reality of military life. They shook hands at the end with the understanding that they would meet again one day, but they never saw each other again. TeCube does not say whether the Navajo died or not. He probably does not know, but this is all too common in military life.⁴²⁹

Since the Vietnam War, American Indians have continued to be involved in the military. The Alaska National Guard continued to employ Alaskan Natives as Eskimo Scouts for years after World War Two ended, but the original Territorial Guard was disbanded in 1947. A *Los*

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 167.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 167.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 216.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 216.

Angeles Times article from March 27, 1988, mentions that there were, at the time, 1,500 natives employed as scouts, and they came from ninety-one Eskimo villages scattered throughout the interior and along the west coast of the state. Captain Timothy Wipperman, who trained some of the scouts, told the *Times*, "They are the eyes and ears of the North...No one can be trained to do the job they do in this environment."⁴³⁰ Their reasons for serving are, again, much the same as Indians before them. "For many young Eskimos," the *Times* notes, "participation in the National Guard historically has brought relief from the boredom of long winters and, more importantly, provided significant income," and the article further notes that most of the scouts are so poor that in the First Battalion alone, almost all members are eligible for food stamps.⁴³¹ The scouts have since been disbanded, but their legacy lives on. On October 4, 2006, an article appeared in the *Juneau Empire* discussing a group of Alaska National Guard soldiers who had been chosen to deploy to Iraq. Almost 600 soldiers were selected, and they came from eighty-one different communities, including over half a dozen cultures, among them Tlingits, Haidas, Aleuts, Athabascans, and Eskimos. Then-Governor Frank Murkowski told these men, "You follow a long line of warriors...You are the descendants of the (Alaska) Territorial Guard and the Eskimo Scouts. We owe you an extreme amount of gratitude that we can never repay."⁴³²

After Vietnam, America's major wars have all been fought in the Middle East. The numbers for the Department of Veterans' Affairs show that over 3,000 Indians have served in Iraq when adding together the total from Desert Storm and the present war. The report also makes note of the Hopi veteran Lori Piestewa, who was killed in the ambush in which Jessica Lynch and her comrades were captured, and Arizona distinguished her with the posthumous

⁴³⁰ Molly Moore, "Special Eskimo Unit Guards America's Frigid Frontier on Soviet Border," *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1988, http://articles.latimes.com/1988-03-27/news/mn-194_1_national-guard (accessed June 9, 2013).

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² Associated Press, "Alaska officials send off Guard soldiers," *Juneau Empire*, October 4, 2006, http://juneauempire.com/stories/100406/sta_20061004025.shtml (accessed June 9, 2013).

honor of renaming Squaw Peak as Piestewa Peak.⁴³³ Her death left such an impact upon the broader Indian community that the Hopi and Navajo were willing to set aside their centuries-long feud for a short while and meet in a joint prayer ceremony. Britain's paper *The Guardian* noted of the occasion: "At a rally last week, leaders from the two tribes made a rare joint appearance as about 5,000 people gathered to pray for Piestewa and the other missing soldiers. 'Navajo, Hopi, nobody cares now,' says Archie Ortiz, an army veteran. 'We are all together in remembering her.'"⁴³⁴

Another veteran from the Iraq War is the Navajo Joseph Beimfohr, who was wounded in action on July 5, 2005, only a few months into his first deployment. He was profiled by the Department of Defense's Wounded Warrior Diaries. He and fellow soldier Christopher Dickison had gone on patrol north of Baghdad when they encountered a wire from an IED on the road. They got out of their vehicle to cut the wire, and as they were returning the soldier he was with stepped on another one that had been hidden.⁴³⁵ Beimfohr said of his experience in a video:

He was on it when it went off, and I was six feet behind him. He was killed instantly... I remember I didn't hear an explosion. All I heard was like a really loud pop, and I got hit with debris and I was just kind of stunned for a second. I was, like, I didn't know what happened, and I just kind of looked around and there's dust, people are yelling everywhere, and for some reason, I looked down and all I see is blood just pouring out of my vest.⁴³⁶

Because of the blast, both of Beimfohr's legs had to be amputated. Since he was discharged, he has worked for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Interior, and now he works as a motivational speaker, paratriathlete, and handcyclist.

⁴³³ United States Department of Veterans' Affairs, *American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans: Lasting Contributions*, 5.

⁴³⁴ Gary Younge, "What about Private Lori?" *The Guardian*, April 9, 2003, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/apr/10/iraq.garyyounge> (accessed April 9, 2003).

⁴³⁵ United States Department of Defense, "Joseph Beimfohr, Staff Sgt. United States Army Retired," *Wounded Warrior Diaries*, October 28, 2009. http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2008/0908_wwd/index_beimfohr.html (accessed June 9, 2013).

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*

Any survey of American Indian history would show that the military has been used as an agent of assimilation for over a century, whether it was through boarding schools or the idea that culture could be drilled out of natives in military life. What has been more overlooked is the fact that Indians found their own reasons to serve in the military, and their reasons have not changed over the years. Many found an opportunity to distinguish themselves as warriors in combat for their tribes, and this was often linked with a desire to accrue respect and influence in tribal affairs. Some felt a sense of patriotism to America, and in a similar vein many felt a desire to defend their tribes and their homeland from what they saw as threats to their existence. Others were merely looking for employment, given the lack of jobs available on their reservations. Some just wanted an escape from the boredom and despair of reservation life.

Frequently, Indians serving in the military were actually treated better by their fellow soldiers than they were by the rest of non-Indian society. Hollis Stabler's memoirs are an excellent example of this, but his story is only one of many. As Ben Nighthorse Campbell told the Navy's Military History website, "There was a camaraderie [in the Air Force] that transcends ethnicity when you serve your country overseas in wartime."⁴³⁷ Robert Holden, a Choctaw-Chickasaw who heads up the National Congress of American Indians, told *Indian Country Today* a similar sentiment, "When they were in those bunkers or those foxholes, there was no black, yellow, red or white, it was just covering each other's backs."⁴³⁸ Beyond more equal treatment, though, military service also gave Indians opportunity to develop their identities as Indians. The code talkers of all tribes are perhaps the best example of this, putting their language to work as an agent of war for the United States. However, any Indian who served alongside another Indian

⁴³⁷ "Native Americans in the U.S. Military," Naval History and Heritage Command, <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-1.htm> (accessed June 9, 2013).

⁴³⁸ Konnie Lemay, "A Brief History of American Indian Military Service" *Indian Country Today Media Network (New York)*, May 28, 2012, <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/article/a-brief-history-of-american-indian-military-service-115318> (accessed June 9, 2013).

had this opportunity, even when they were not from the same tribe. As one nameless Lakota Korean veteran told the Navy, “Thanks to my military service [in the Navy], I now have friends in 500 tribes.”⁴³⁹

The other thing to note is that, throughout the years, Indians in the military have proven themselves to be intelligent actors capable of thinking for themselves. They have proven that they can match anything a white soldier can do and that they can be just as patriotic as they are, even when the nation they fought for still refused to recognize these facts. They were not pawns of the Bureau of Indian Affairs or the rest of the government. If anything, the performance of Indians as soldiers exceeded the expectations placed upon them. They deserve to be recognized and applauded for their bravery just like any other veteran, and their place in history should not be forgotten just because their numbers are small or their skin is not white.

⁴³⁹ "Native Americans in the U.S. Military," Naval History and Heritage Command.

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