

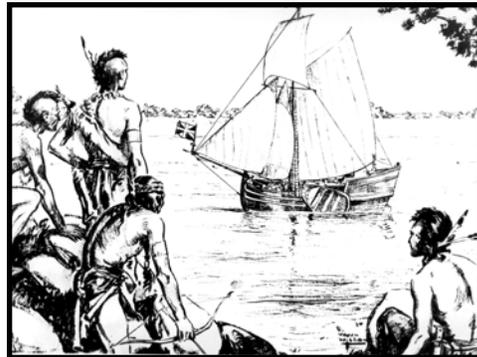
Native Americans in the United States Navy

A Long Tradition Of Participation

American Indians have participated with distinction in United States military actions for more than 200 years. Their courage, determination, and fighting spirit were recognized by American military leaders as early as the 18th century.

I think they [Indians] can be made of excellent use, as scouts and light troops. --Gen.

George Washington, 1778



Many tribes were involved in the War of 1812, and Indians fought for both sides as auxiliary

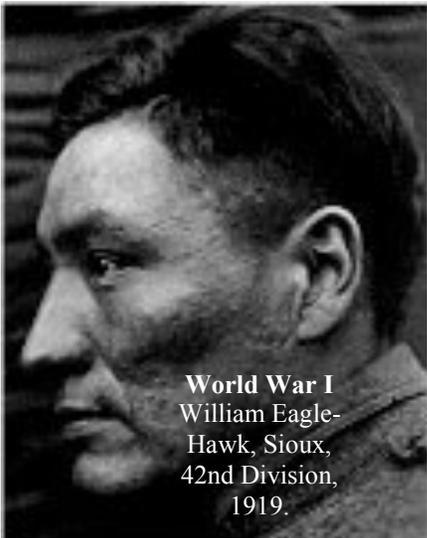
troops in the Civil War. Because of their knowledge of the terrain and proficiency in hunting techniques, scouting the enemy was an acknowledged skill of the Native American soldier

Contributions In Combat

It is estimated that more than 12,000 American Indians served in the United States military in World War I. Approxi-

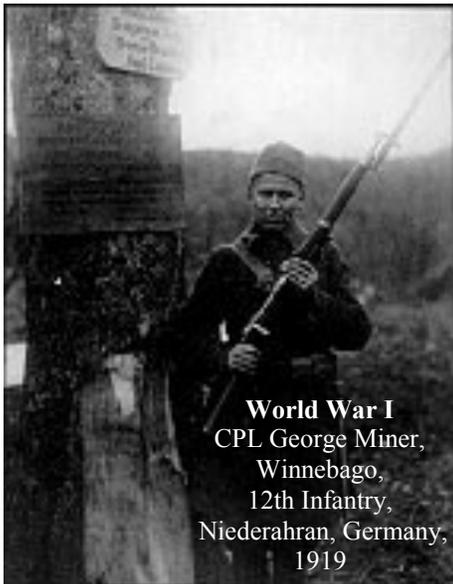


mately 600 Oklahoma Indians, mostly Choctaw and Cherokee, were assigned to the 142nd Infantry of the 36th Texas-Oklahoma National Guard Division. The 142nd saw action in France and its soldiers were widely recognized for



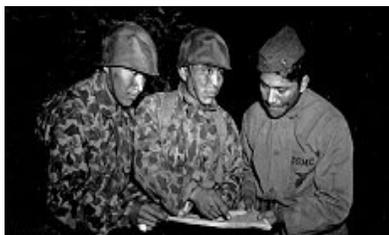
World War I
William Eagle-Hawk, Sioux,
42nd Division,
1919.

their contributions in battle. Four men from this unit were awarded the Croix de Guerre, while others received the Church War Cross for gallantry.



World War I
CPL George Miner,
Winnebago,
12th Infantry,
Niederahrn, Germany,
1919

The outbreak of World War II brought American Indian back to the battlefield in defense of their homeland. It was because of their participation in WWI that the Snyder



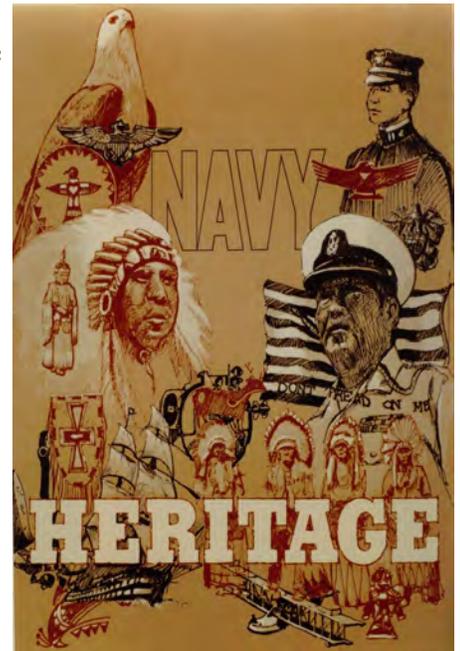
Navajos at
Amphibious Scout School,
Southwest Pacific, 1943

Act was passed. Outstanding service in that war prompted congress to pass the act conferring citizenship of Native Americans.

Battle-experienced American Indian troops from World War II were joined by newly re-

World War II were joined by newly recruited Native Americans to fight Communist aggression during the Korean conflict. The Native American's strong sense of warriorhood and courage emerged once again during the Vietnam era. More than 42,000 Native Americans, over 90 percent of them volunteers, fought in Vietnam. Native American contributions in United States military combat continued in the 1980s and 1990s as they saw duty in Grenada, Panama, Somalia, and the Persian Gulf.

United States military service provides an outlet for Native Americans to fulfill a cultural purpose rooted in tradition - to fight and defend their homeland. This purpose is particularly important since it comes when young people



of the tribe are normally not old enough to assume a leadership role in their traditional



culture. The cultural expectation to be a warrior provides a purpose in life and is an important step in gaining status in Native American culture.

