



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPENDENTS SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, EUROPE
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November 9, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL DODDS-EUROPE EMPLOYEES

SUBJECT: National American Indian/Alaskan Native Heritage Month - November 2006

November is National American Indian/Alaskan Native Heritage month. The national theme for the 2006 commemoration of American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month is "one people, a diversity of culture." Each of our American Indian and Alaska Native peoples has its unique traditions and history. As Alaskans and Native Indians honor the past, we also take pride in the united efforts of so many who faithfully carry their traditional Native values forward into the modern Western world. This year's theme emphasizes the importance and value of recognizing and appreciating the richness of our first inhabitants, and what they have contributed to the cultural history of our nation. The special observance reflects the rich heritage and great influence that American Indians and Alaska Natives have contributed to our nation's history and culture and also reflects our continuing commitment to American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments as an integral part of the social, political, and economic fabric of the United States.

As we move into the 21st century, American Indians and Alaska Natives will play a vital role in maintaining our nation's strength and prosperity. Almost half of America's Native American tribal leaders have served in the United States Armed Forces, following in the footsteps of their forebears who distinguished themselves during the World Wars and the conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf. Today, their patriotism is reflected in the more than 13,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives serving on active duty and the more than 6,400 reservists. In Iraq, Specialist Lori Piestewa of the Army's 507th Maintenance Company and a member of the Hopi tribe was the first American servicewoman killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom and the only known American Indian woman killed in action in any conflict. Her bravery, service, and sacrifice are an inspiration to our men and women in uniform and to all Americans.

Please join me in celebrating this rich and diverse culture by participating in planned events that are taking place in your area. I encourage all DoDDS-E employees to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities. Let us all take advantage of this time to learn more about the history of Native Americans and how they have contributed to the culture and heritage of our nation.

//Original signed//
Diana J. Ohman
Director, DoDDS-Europe