

### #3- American Indian Women Veterans

#### Greetings-

Most of us are familiar with the story of Lori Piestewa, the Hopi mother who became the first woman soldier to die in the current war in Iraq. But we are probably less familiar in general with native women's contributions to the military.

The Department of Defense has some very interesting webpages concerning Native Americans in the Service. Here is one with information on American Indian Women Veterans, including many personal stories and pictures: <http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/americanindian/women.html>

"Very little is known about the contributions of Native American women to the United States military. The Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation is attempting to fill this gap by encouraging Native American women veterans to register with the Memorial so that their stories may be recorded and preserved. They are also conducting research on the contributions of Native American women of earlier eras.

Historians have only recently rediscovered and verified the actions of an Oneida woman, Tyonajanegen, at the battle of Oriskany during the American Revolution (1775-1783). Tyonajanegen was married to an American Army officer of Dutch descent. She fought at her husband's side on horseback during the battle, loading her husband's gun for him after he was shot in the wrist.

The story of Sacajawea, the Shoshone woman who accompanied the Lewis and Clark expedition of the early 19th century, is somewhat better known. Much of what is common knowledge is myth, however. Sacajawea has been remembered as a guide. In reality, she served as an interpreter for members of the expedition, who were unfamiliar with the Indian language. "Bird Woman's" service is described in the journals kept by Army Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark during the expedition.

Four Native American Catholic Sisters from Fort Berthold, South Dakota worked as nurses for the War Department during the Spanish American War (1898). Originally assigned to the military hospital at Jacksonville, Florida, the nurses were soon transferred to Havana, Cuba. One of the nurses, Sister Anthony died of disease in Cuba and was buried with military honors."