

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Code talker medal exhibit to honor Native Americans, veterans

RAPID CITY, S.D. – An Oceti Sakowin (Oh-CHAY-tee Shaw-KOE-ween) Code Talker Congressional Medallion exhibit will tour several South Dakota cities in October and November in observance of Native American Heritage Month.

The traveling exhibit “Honoring Native Pride and Spirit – Yesterday, Today and Forever” honors code talker veterans, their families and all veterans who served or are currently serving in the military. The medals are Congress’ highest recognition and appreciation of people, institutions or events.

The exhibit will be open for public viewing from 10 a.m.–3 p.m. local time on each scheduled date along with an honor ceremony beginning at 11:11 a.m. The ceremony will include a featured speaker from the SDNG and highlight the service of code talker veterans and their families from all local tribes.

The public, family members of code talker veterans and all tribal members are invited to attend.

Recruiters from the SDNG will be available during the exhibit to speak about career opportunities for those who may want to serve.

The exhibit tour will conclude with a special celebration on November 11/Veterans Day at Crazy Horse Memorial, which will include a blast honoring all veterans at 11:11 a.m.

Exhibit dates and locations are:

- October 14 – Pierre: Indian Learning Center, New Gym, 3001 E. Sully Ave.
- October 21 – Watertown: Lake Area Technical Institute, 1201 Arrow Ave., Student Event Center (level 4)
- October 28 – Sioux Falls: University Center, 4801 N. Career Ave., Admin Bldg. (1st floor commons area)
- November 11/Veterans Day – Crazy Horse Memorial, Welcome Center

The South Dakota National Guard is partnering with the SDNG Museum, SD Department of Veterans Affairs, Crazy Horse Memorial, Tanka, Black Hills Area Council #695, Boy Scouts of America, Throwback Softball, Sperlich Consulting, Women Veterans of the Black Hills and the Rapid City Chamber of Commerce to host the events.

Code Talkers Recognition Congressional Medals Program

On November 20, 2013, in Emancipation Hall at the U.S. Capitol, 33 tribes were recognized for the dedication and valor of Native American code talkers to the U.S. Armed Services during World Wars I and II. Of the tribes recognized, 25 were presented with their Congressional Gold Medals.

The Code Talkers Recognition Act of 2008 (Act) (Public Law 110-420) required the Secretary of the Treasury to strike Congressional Medals in recognition of the dedication and valor of Native American code talkers to the U.S. Armed Services during World War I and World War II. "Code talkers" refers to those Native Americans who used their tribal languages as a means of secret communication during wartime.

Under the Act, unique gold medals were struck for each Native American tribe that had a member who served as a code talker. Silver duplicate medals were presented to the specific code talkers, their next of kin, or other personal representatives. In addition, bronze duplicates are available for sale to the public.



Rosebud Sioux Tribe Congressional Gold Medal:

Obverse: Designer: Justin Kunz - Engraver: Phebe Hemphill

The obverse design depicts a World War II code talker and Sicangu Lakota warrior in profile. The code talker wears his dog tags parallel to the traditional bone-and-bead choker of the Rosebud Sioux warrior who also wears a feather in his hair. Eagle feathers are also included in the lower border of the design. Inscriptions are "SICANGU LAKOTA" and "CODE TALKERS."



Reverse: Designer: Don Everhart – Engraver: Jim Licaretz

The reverse design depicts the Rosebud Sioux Nation seal. Inscriptions are "ROSEBUD SIOUX TRIBE," "WWII" and "ACT OF CONGRESS 2008."

(Graphics courtesy of the U.S. Mint/Released)

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