

December 12, 2014

By Denver American Horse
Oglala Lakota Nation
Veteran's Service Officer

Veteran Warrior Wakte' glipi.

Hau (Hello) Mitakuyepi, wakh' anyeja kin iyushkin pelo (The children are happy). Chin, Waziya ichani u ktacha (Because, Santa is coming soon). Waziya, Lakh'ota kte sel? (Will Santa be a Lakh'ota, I wonder?)

Akichita kin anag' optan po (Veterans listen up). South Dakota West River American Indian Veteran Advisory Council is hosting a meeting in Rapid City on Friday, December 19, 2014 at the Retired Enlisted Association building; 1901 Centre Street, and starts at 0900 Hours (9am). There will be many interesting reports and important updates.

The purpose of the meeting is to bring VA Black Hills Care System, Black Hills National Cemetery, Dakotas Regional Office, SD Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, SD Department of Labor, Indian Health Service, Tribal Health, Tribal Veteran Service Officers, Tribal Veteran Representatives and others who advocate for Veterans together to help promote the use of their benefits, programs and services by our American (Mila Hanska) Indian Veterans; discuss concerns; promote seamless transitioning and share information.

Lunch will be provided by the Rosebud Sioux Tribe's SNEPT Program. They are asking for a RSVP if you plan to dine with them. Please contact them by calling (605) 747-2393.

Also (Nakun), I want to include here, two (2) of the guests who were present for the Consultation meeting at the Billy Mills Hall on November 19, 2014. Basically, they were hear to listen to the Lakh'ota Veteran's opinions about the possible realignment of services out of the VA Hospital in Hot Springs. Both David M. Montoya and Stephanie Birdwell are from Washington, D.C. I believe they have indicated that a written report of this meeting will be available when it is put together.

David M. Montoya. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. David is the principal advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, on policies, plans, and operations related to the Department's intergovernmental, international, tribal, veteran homelessness outreach and strategic communications, and consumer affairs programs. He joined the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in August 2014.

Prior to joining VA, Mr. Montoya was a Financial Services Professional at New York Life Securities, a Successful Small Businessman, Chief of Staff for Nuclear Weapons Program at Los Alamos National Laboratory

and Military Legislative Assistant for United States Senator Jeff Bingaman.

Mr. Montoya served in the United States Air Force as an Intelligence Officer supporting Air Force Fighter Operations, Joint Personnel Recovery Missions and at National Intelligence Agencies. Originally from Santa Fe, New Mexico, David has two children Megan 12 and Benjamin 9.

He served 3 tours in the Iraqi Theatre of Operations; Operation Desert Fox, Operation Southern Watch, and Operation Northern Watch. He is also a graduate of the US Army Airborne School, Ft. Benning, Georgia and Army Air Assault School, 25th Infantry Division (Light), Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

Stephanie Birdwell. Department of Veterans Affairs. Director, Office of Tribal Government Relations. Stephanie has twenty (20) years' experience working in Indian Affairs, at both the federal and tribal government levels. She began her federal career as a social worker with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Northern Pueblos Agency in New Mexico. She moved on from the agency social service program to serve as the BIA southwest regional social worker (Albuquerque, NM) and BIA division chief, human services at the headquarters level (Washington, D.C.). She also served in various leadership and management capacities (BIA Southwest Regional Office Acting Deputy Director, Indian Services; BIA Central Office Acting Assistant to the Deputy Bureau Director, Office of Trust Services, Bureau of Indian Education Deputy Director, Policy, Evaluation and Post-Secondary Education) within DOI/BIA/BIE and was selected to participate in the DOI Senior Executive Candidate Development Class #16. Along the way, she served for two years with the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census managing field operations in New Mexico, Utah and Navaho Nation during the 2000 Decennial "undercount" survey.

Stephanie earned her Master's Degree in Social Welfare from the University of California at Berkeley and her Bachelor's Degree in Journalism from the University of Oklahoma. On a personal note, she is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma, where she was born and raised, and is the mother of twin daughters. Stephanie was inspired to become a social worker by her father, Dwight Birdwell, a Vietnam Veteran.

The VA Office of Tribal Government Relations was established in 2011 as part of the agency's effort to implement the VA tribal consultation policy and enhance relationships with 566 tribal governments located in 38 states.

It is always good to know who the upper echelon persons are to get problems solved or at least send them a letter to advise them of what is going on. Since this meeting on November 19th, we have been able to partially solve a Veteran's pharmacy issue between the VA and IHS. The 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty obligation (s) by the U.S. Government is

closely associated between the Lakh'ota Veteran and the IHS. Mainly, the co-payment burden that many Veterans struggle with from the VA prescription medicine services and the IHS billing practices towards the Veteran.

Until next week, Happy Trails!
December 5, 2014

By Denver American Horse
Oglala Lakota Nation
Veteran's Service Officer

Veteran Warrior Wakte' glipi.

Hau Mitakuyepi, toh ni ktu kapi hwo? (How are you all?) Chaje oih'pe unkyapi wana iyechetu. (Our voting has now come to be.) Washte slechecha. (It seems to be good). Oyate kin kashka wichayuzapi shni yo. (Do not oppress the people.) Tanyan awanwichankapi yo. (Take good care of them.)

This would be a good time to inform the faithful readers of this column (Woth'anin wowapi) that my Lakh'ota word (s) spelling may look different to you. That is because I write my Lakh'ota words the natural way as you would hear it pronounced and the way you see it pronounced. You will not see my Lakh'ota words with many dots, v's, (Diacritic marks) above certain Lakh'ota letters like the sh, and ch sounds. Only the guttural g and guttural h sounds will have a dot above it or a comma mark after the letter, example; Ag' uyapi (Bread) and H' tayetu (Evening). I know the younger children (Wakh' anyeja) can read my writing and pronunciation much better using this natural way. After all, we are Lakh' ota, and we should not let the white man (Washichu) hi-jack our speech and writing styles. Of course, the Washichu will want to argue with me about that too. They have already infiltrated lakh' ota studies with their orthography (writing style) upon all of the reservation schools and (Nahan) even the daycare LOL. So, (Cha) I hope the new Editor will let my Lakh' ota words shine as I write them for the benefit of our younger (Th' echa) readers and those who want to speak lakh' ota. My first language is Lakh' ota at home and with very few of my relatives, so at times, my writings appear broken-English. Forgive me (Emichi ktunja po).

All of our Veterans should be grateful to Clarence Wolf Guts from Wanblee. He is one of the Lakh' ota Code Talkers who helped the United States of America defeat the enemy (Th' oka) with his skillful (Wopika) use of our language. I first met Mr. Wolf Guts in the spring and summer of 1992 when I was a state social worker out of Martin, South Dakota. Those were precious times when I could speak with him about various topics in Lakh' ota. I still have a colored picture (Wichite owapi) on my wall showing him being honored by Senator Tim Johnson and Senator John Thune. That was a pretty star quilt he was given too. The older ones who speak Lakh' ota don't realize how much I look up to them, and Clarence is one of them.

Sylvester Bad Cobb is also a Veteran from Wanblee whom I enjoyed speaking with in Lakh' ota. Another Veteran is Isaac White Face from Porcupine who always had a calming presence and a calming way of speaking Lakh' ota that I liked very much. Being young I was always ready to go kick the enemy's unzeki (butt) especially when he talked about the Treaties, I eventually calmed down though LOL. I learned new Lakh' ota words and sayings from them that I use today at appropriate times. Good words, nothing (Takuni) bad. They are all gone now. These were true Lakh' ota warriors who included in their talks the 1868 Treaty to make some point about the current state of Lakh'ota life and the continuing need for pursuing Treaty obligations.

I cannot end these good memories (Wokiksuye) without mentioning Jake Little Thunder, also from Wanblee. One time I gave him a birthday card with some money in it and at Christmas time, he responded by giving me a Christmas card with extra writings of condolences for losing my father just two (2) months before in October 1997. He told me that he often saw my grandfather from Long Valley when he came to Wanblee. At the time, I was doing my "family tree" research so I was extremely happy to hear this from him. He remembered him as always wearing a white (silver belly) cowboy hat with an eagle feather in it. Mr. Little Thunder saw with his own eyes Lakh' ota history and I am glad that I was able to speak Lakh' ota with him. I still have the Christmas card he gave me and occasionally read it to prompt me on with encouragement. Most Lakh' ota boys want to know their grandfathers and I was able to get a small glimpse of mine, thanks to Jake Little Thunder. Wopila.

In closing, I would like to say that in last week's writings, I included a short piece about the request by the traders, interpreters, to have some land set aside for their mix-blood children during the waning days of the 1851 Treaty gathering. And I am happy for them. I am happy for them because, if they were able to receive their separate tract of land they could have built a more progressive place than what they have now. They could have built Banks, perhaps better Schools, etc. The best part is, that their ancestors thought of them and their future well-being.

Until next week, Happy Trails!