

November 28, 2014

By Denver American Horse
Oglala Lakota Nation
Veteran's Service Officer
Veteran Warrior Wakte' glipi.

Hau (Hello) Mitakuyepi, I hope everyone had a very good (Lila washte) turkey Wagle' shun) meal for Thanksgiving. We also remember our Troops who are currently on-duty.

The following three (3) paragraphs are taken from a news reporter's writings during the 1851 Treaty. Credit should be given to him for a little known attempt by the present day mixed-blood's ancestors who tried to secure some land to be set aside for them. This happened on Thursday, September 18, 1851.

"The chiefs and principal men of the tribes were assembled and a proposition was submitted - not by the commissioners, but as coming from the parties most interested, the traders, interpreters, and others having Indian wives, and (mixed blood) children - that a portion of country should be set apart for the future use of the (mixed bloods). A meeting had been held by those having (mixed blood) children, and resolutions had been passed praying the influence of the commissioners and the government to set apart a portion of the lands for the benefit of these (mixed bloods) - whereon farms might be made, schools and churches erected by the parents, and their children brought up in some knowledge of the advantages and usefulness of civilized life. This application on part of the parents of the (mixed blood) children has many strong claims to consideration. They are, in many respects, estranged from civilized society. The white man who has taken an (Indian woman) for a wife, however honestly and virtuously they may have lived, (and in this many of them will compare advantageously with some who claim to be civilized) is, with his wife, forever debarred admission into society. He has shut himself out and must reap the consequences which his own course has entailed upon him. Yet, toward the offspring of this alliance, the affections are as warm, and we believe we could with truth say as devoted, as can anywhere be found in civilized life. The man who has given himself up to the attractions of the wild life of the plains - who has formed matrimonial alliances and abandoned his native land for the exciting and enthusiastic life of the hunter or trader - still looks back at times with pleasure and regret to the early scenes of his youth, and he looks forward with transporting hope to see his children forsake the life of suffering and poverty which marks the savage state. The predominance of this native goodness and just parental spirit is manifest among the major part of the Traders, Hunters, and others who have matrimonial alliances in the Indian country. Many of them are attached to their (Indian wives) by an affection as strong and enduring as can be found in the best circles of refined society - all seem to have a more than ordinary regard for the future welfare of their children. They are often rude, rough, and unseemly men, if we compare them with specimens in polite circles, but beneath the exterior is a heart as devoted as the life blood that circulates in it, and feelings are as warm, pure, impassioned, and intense as a maiden's first love. It is unjust and unmerited to suppose that these men who have identified themselves with Indian life have lost anything of the better feelings of the husband, parent, or friend.

The proposition to make provision for the (mixed blood) children was well received by all the Indians, but the difficulty was to fix a location for this (mixed blood) tract. The favorite and most strongly pressed location was

a district at the base of the mountains, in the country owned by the Cheyenne and Arapahos. This is said to be the only really valuable agricultural land in their whole territory, and efforts have been made, and will continue to be made, to get locations within it. From the description given to us, it must be a most desirable locality, although it is but an oasis in a vast waste.

After the propositions had been fully stated, the Cheyenne and Arapahos took time to reflect, smoke, and consider, and at a subsequent meeting they declined the proposition, so far as their country was concerned. In their objections they showed the intelligence of the Indian as to the topography of the country, and his knowledge of its value. Their objections were numerous, and so resolutely maintained, that the proposition was abandoned."

I cleaned up some of the words (Wicho' ie) that the news man used. The above report and many other narratives will be in a book tentatively set for release this fall, so perhaps it is in the Bookstores now.

My hope is that all of the veterans can read these excerpts so a better understanding (Woableze) of our Self-Determination policies could be articulated in a just and meaningful way. After all, most Lakota history writings tell us that warrior societies (besides feasting LOL) often talked about the business of the Oyate - people, "tribe".

Until next week, stay warm and safe!

November 21, 2014

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

Veteran Warrior Wakte' glipi.

Hau (Hello) Mitakuyepi, my wood stove is keeping me company with its crackling sound and warmth as I write this short Article. Before I begin, I want to tell our Tiwahe (Families) that I know we have been visited by that awful feeling of hurt and loss. Know that I am thinking of you. Life is precious. Relationships are precious. Time is precious. Memories give us the strength to carry on. The White Buffalo Calf Woman (Pte San Win) brought us the Chanupa Wakh' an (Sacred Pipe) to use in times of despair and hardship. I wish I could have saved the little girl.

We had some guests come to the Billy Mills Hall on Wednesday, November 19th at 8:00 a.m. for another Round of "Consultation" and updates regarding the questions surrounding the Veterans VA at Hot Springs. The three (3) related parts of the meeting lasted until 3:00 p.m. All the Veterans who were there made good talks and I was very pleased that the Treaty (s) was a major reminder in John Yellow Bird-Steele's opening remarks to the group. I believe two (2) of the guests and their staff are from Washington, D.C. Congresswoman Kristi Noem's West River Regional Director, Brad Otten was there. He took a copy of my complaint so we will see how far that paper (s) goes. At the end of the first meeting (Consultation), it was announced that a Report of the meeting will be available in a couple (2) of weeks. We will be on the request list to get a copy for anyone who is interested in seeing these papers.

For the Veterans who are following these developments, I will include here the short biographies of two (2) of the staff from the VA Hot Springs who were present at the consultation meeting on Wednesday. I suspect there will be more contacts between our Lakh' ota Veterans and these upper echelon staff from Hot Springs VA so it would be good to know who the names are. Here is that information:

*Steve DiStasio. Director, Black Hills Health Care System. - As Director of the Black Hills Health Care System. Mr. DiStasio is responsible for the oversight and management of two VA centers located in Hot Springs and Fort Meade, South Dakota, as well as 12 other sites of care located throughout western South Dakota, western Nebraska, and in Newcastle, Wyoming. Mr. DiStasio has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Southern Mississippi and a Master of Science in Human Resource Management & Development from Chapman College. He has served as the Associate Director, VA Black Hills Health Care System for the past 6 years. Prior to that Mr. DiStasio had a distinguished career in the United States Air Force Medical Service and retired from military service at the rank of Colonel. His military career included deployments to Afghanistan and elsewhere. Mr. DiStasio served as Commander (Chief Executive Officer) of several military healthcare organizations and also served as Acting Director for both VA Black Hills HCS and Sioux Falls VA HCS in previous years. Mr. DiStasio is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE). In addition, he possesses a current registered nurse license and is certified as an Advanced Nursing Administrator by the American Nurses Credentialing Center. At the national level, he serves as a coach for the Health Care Leadership Development Program and as a mentor and preceptor for the Executive Career Field candidates. Additionally, he is active as a mentor for employees at both the local and network levels and for Veterans transitioning from active, reserve and National Guard service.

*Jo-Ann Ginsburg. Associate Director for Patient Care Services, Black Hills Health Care System. - Jo-Ann Ginsburg, RN, MSN, was appointed to the position of Associate Director for Patient Care Services in September 2011. In this position she oversees Pharmacy, Nutrition & Food, Tele-Health, Voluntary, SPD, Ward Administration, Education, Canteen, Prosthetics departments as well as serving as Nurse Executive for VA BHHCS. Mrs. Ginsburg received her BSN and MSN, Nursing Administration/HIV sub-specialty from Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing in New York, NY. Ms. Ginsburg began her VA Career in Cheyenne, Wyoming, April 2008 serving as the Designated Learning officer/Chief Learning Resources and the Acting Associate Director for Patient Care Services.

In closing, I would like to say that, since the Tribal Veteran Services Officer is temporarily filled for now, I will return to my original office hours as follows; Mondays 8am-4:30pm., Tuesdays 8am-4:30pm., and Wednesdays 8am-12:30pm. You are also welcome to call me for an appointment that fits your schedule. Office number 867-2555. Wopila.

Until next week, tohksa ake wounglakin ktelo (We will talk again).

November 14, 2014

By Denver American Horse
Oglala Lakota Nation
Veteran's Service Officer
Veteran Warrior Wakte' glipi.

Hau (Hello) Mitakuyepi, toh niktukapi hwo? (How are you all?) Matanyan yelo (I am fine/well).

Another week (Okok) has come and gone along with a very special day for men and women Veterans (Akichita). For those of us who are still on the top side of the sod, we are thankful (Pilaunyapi) for your service in defending a US nation as well as all of our "Indian" nations. Where ever you are, you are well thought of with fond blessings for comfort, healing, and a strong heart. We look to the sky and the earth, and the stars, so that the flags of the POW/MIA calling your names in the wind will bring you home. I am a Redman, and I believe that nature will show us the way.

Oh I smile and laugh every now and then, but deep down it is always difficult to mix these special days of Remembrances, Honorings, and the void in place, because of the missing and our own family member Veterans who have made the journey to the spirit world. I did not call any Veteran on this November 11 day to send greetings and good cheer, as much as I had planned to do so. I know some are still healing and I recognize those boundaries. I did find comfort in knowing that my Father is where he wanted to be among the Black Hills (H'e Sapa) at the Veterans National Cemetery near Sturgis. His Lakh' ota name is Sacred Buffalo (Tath'anka Wakh' an), and that inscription is on his military headstone. I remember one time when we were children (Wakh' anyeja), we took a horse to water and my little brother Chub and I were already on the horse (Shunka Wakh' an) when Dad had the bright idea that we three would all ride back to the house. He grabbed the horse's mane to help him swing onto its back and in doing so, we all fell off the horse. That was funny so we all had a good laugh (Ih' ata). Good memories yelo.

I would like to thank (Wopila) Victor, my mechanic friend (Kh' ola) for calling me on Veterans Day that there will be a free meal at the Billy Mills Hall starting at 3:00 p.m. It was a cold day and I thought of hot soup and fry bread, but I also knew that I needed to chop some firewood for the wood stove so I had to settle for a delicious imaginary meal and hot coffee.

I would also like to thank my former High School student Wiyaka, for taking part in the Voting on November 4th. Right on. Wiyaka is an important member of the future and the Seventh Generation that will lead us to greater horizons. Keep up the good (Washte) work.

In closing, I would like to remind all of our Veterans that the VA has begun implementing the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014. Veterans will begin receiving their Choice Cards in the mail with a letter of explanation.

Until next week, Happy Trails!

November 7, 2014

By Denver American Horse
Oglala Lakota Nation
Veteran's Service Officer
Veteran Warrior Wakte' glipi.

Hau Mitakuyepi, I want to share with you this week a part of history that the warrior societies and their families would have been talking (Iwoglaka) about as current events and as they make preparations for the coming months.

The following message (Hoiyekiya) was being forwarded to the Agents and others about the coming Treaty (1851) gathering. The message was being sent out as a "Circular" from St. Louis by the Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

CIRCULAR TO INDIAN AGENTS AND TRADERS

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

ST. LOUIS, APRIL 4th, 1851.

To the Indian Traders and others on the Upper Missouri, Arkansas and Platte Rivers:

GENTLEMEN: Congress has authorized the President of the United States to hold a Treaty with all the Prairie Tribes of Indians residing South of the Missouri River and North of Texas. The objects of the Government are just and humane, and intended entirely for the benefit and future welfare of the Indians. Should the Treaty be productive of all the good we anticipate, it will tend greatly to promote the safety and interests of the Traders, as well as the Indians themselves. It is, therefore, confidently hoped and expected that you will all unite and use your best exertions to aid in assembling the Indians at Fort Laramie on the first of September, 1851, at which time and place I will meet them, for the purpose of making such a Treaty as will, it is hoped, be greatly to their advantage for the time to come. You are authorized to assure the Indians that they will be amply compensated for all the depredations of which they complain, on account of the destruction of game, timber, etc., by the passing of white men through their country. You can also say to them, that after the ratification of the contemplated Treaty, each Tribe will receive an annual present, in goods, from their Great Father - the amount to be made contingent upon their faithful observance of treaty stipulations. A suitable quantity of provisions will be provided.

You can also state to them, that they can assemble at the time and place designated, and remain there during the necessary time for holding the Treaty, with the most perfect safety - as a large military force will be on the ground, for the purpose of keeping order and preserving friendly relations.

The different tribes are authorized to come en masse, with all their women and children; or to send delegations, composed of men alone: the

former, however, would be much preferred, as the presence of the women and children would be an additional guarantee for the good conduct of the parties present. It is hoped, among other beneficial arrangements, (intended for the permanent good of the Indians,) that we will be enabled to divide and subdivide the country into various geographical districts, in a manner entirely satisfactory to the parties concerned. This, if accomplished, will go far towards extinguishing the bloody wars which have raged from time immemorial - producing such a horrible waste of human life, and innocent blood. The many objects so fondly hoped to be accomplished are, however, too numerous to be stated or commented upon in this brief Circular; they will all be fully explained around "our council fires."

As this undertaking will involve some expense, and great labors, a fair compensation will be allowed in proportion to the services rendered. This is intended to apply to the Indian Traders, Interpreters, &c. - not to any officers of the Government, their compensations having been fixed by law.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. D. MITCHELL, Sup't Indian Affairs.

*In hindsight, we know that The 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty aka Treaty of Horse Creek was Amended and eventually not ratified by the Senate. Also, as early as 1967, we know that Leo P. Gilroy mentioned this same observation on Page 9 of the Buechel Dictionary.

In closing, I would like to remind all of the Veterans to make sure the correct FAX number is being used by the VA for your prescriptions being sent to the Pine Ridge IHS. That FAX number is (605) 867-3279.

Until next week, Happy Trails!