



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

**The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #ABQ-19-074**

TITLE: To Support Legislation to Revoke the Medals of Honor Issued to Seventh Cavalry Soldiers for Actions During the Massacre of Wounded Knee

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WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, Representative Denny Heck introduced H.R. 3467 in the 116th Congress to rescind the Medals of Honor awarded to the 7th Cavalry troops for the Wounded Knee Massacre, and Representative Deb Haaland, Representative Tom Cole and others have signed on to co-sponsor the bill; and

WHEREAS, in Senate Concurring Resolution 153 of the 101st Congress, the Congress found that on December 29, 1890, the United States 7th Cavalry attacked a Sioux tribal community resulting in the tragic death and injury of approximately 350—375 Indian men, women, and children led by Lakota Chief Spotted Elk (Big Foot) of the Minnicoujou band at Cankpe' Opi Wakpa or Wounded Knee Creek; and

WHEREAS, the Wounded Knee Massacre took place between unarmed Native Americans and soldiers, who were heavily armed with standard issue army rifles and four Hotchkiss guns with 37 mm barrels capable of firing 43 rounds per minute; and

WHEREAS, nearly two-thirds of our Lakota People who were massacred were unarmed women and children who were participating in a ceremony to restore our traditional homelands; and

WHEREAS, poor tactical placement of the soldiers meant that most of the casualties suffered by the United States troops were inflicted by friendly fire; and

WHEREAS, Major General Nelson Miles said a “[w]holesale massacre occurred and I have never heard of a more brutal, cold-blooded massacre than that at Wounded Knee” and recognized that the 7th Cavalry had killed a very large number of women and children; and

WHEREAS, despite General Miles contemporaneous statements and findings, the United States awarded 20 Medals of Honor to soldiers of the U.S. 7th Cavalry for their participation in the Wounded Knee Massacre; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Council called upon the United States to revoke the Medals of Honor from the soldiers of the U.S. 7th Cavalry for the massacre of unarmed men, women, children, babies, and elders of the Minnicoujou Band of the Great Sioux Nation on December 29, 1890, at Wounded Knee Creek; and

WHEREAS, Marcella LeBeau, our Lakota elder, served as an Army Nurse in the U.S. Military in France, during World War II, saving many lives, and on the occasion of her 100th Birthday, Marcella offered the below insights; and

“My great grandfather Rain In The Face (Hunkpapa) fought at the 1876 Battle of the Little Big Horn, also called Greasy Grass. My grandmother was Louise Bear Face Four Bear, Hunkpapa from Standing Rock.

Our People fought against Custer and the 7th Cavalry. They won that battle and they won that flag. Some of us believe that the 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee were taking revenge for Custer’s defeat of the 7th Cavalry at Greasy Grass. Our leader Spotted Elk was ill with pneumonia at the time. When they massacred the innocent, unarmed, men, women, and children under a white flag of truce, the United States compounded the horror of murder by awarding 20 medals of honor to the 7th Cavalry soldiers for bravery.

A pervasive sadness exists on the Cheyenne River Reservation, the home of many descendants of the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890. There has never been closure to the sad and horrible massacre where innocent, unarmed men, women, and children were massacred under a white flag of truce....”

WHEREAS, allowing the award of the Medals of Honor to the 7th Cavalry for the Wounded Knee Massacre dishonors the Medals of Honor and is a message of hostility and genocide by the United States against the Great Sioux Nation and our precious relatives who were massacred at Wounded Knee.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) condemns the U.S. 7th Cavalry officers and soldiers who committed the heinous atrocities and murders against our Lakota Relatives at the Wounded Knee Massacre; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI calls upon Congress and the President to exercise a sense of humanity to revoke the Medals of Honor issued to those 7th Cavalry soldiers for their participation in the Wounded Knee Massacre by passing H.R. 3467, or similar legislation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution affirms and incorporates prior NCAI resolutions going back to at least 1997 to revoke the Medals of Honor issued to 7th Calvary Soldiers for action during the massacre at Wounded Knee; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2019 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Albuquerque Convention Center, October 20-25, 2019, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary