



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

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PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: 2017 Department of Defense American Indian Heritage Month

The Department of Defense (DoD) is pleased to announce the observance of November as American Indian Heritage Month. Together we celebrate the heritage and legacy of the first Americans, and honor their contributions to the strength and security of our Nation.

From the Revolutionary War to present-day missions around the world, American Indians and Alaska Natives have contributed and continue to contribute greatly to national defense. These patriotic Americans have served our military forces and participated in every major conflict since the time General George Washington enlisted their help in America's fight for independence. During World War II, Native American military personnel encoded messages in native languages to prevent enemy code-breakers from deciphering sensitive information. Combining their unique talents with their resilient spirit, American Indians and Alaska Natives have valiantly served our military throughout our Nation's history.

American Indians and Alaska Natives continue to enrich this great Nation with traditions of the past and innovation for the future. Let us take this opportunity to celebrate the contributions of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the Nation, along with their rich legacy – deeply woven throughout our Nation's fabric.

From the birth of our Nation onward, American Indians and Alaska Natives have been integral to the fortitude and readiness of the Total Force. DoD is committed to honoring and recognizing military members and DoD civilians who are American Indians and Alaskan Natives for their continued contributions to the strength of our Nation, and dedicated service to and protection of the United States.

Especially during November, and throughout the rest of the year, I encourage DoD personnel to recognize the achievements and contributions of American Indians and Alaska Natives and to celebrate the diversity of the DoD Total Force. Mr. Norvel Dillard is the DoD point of contact for this observance and can be reached by telephone at (703) 614-3397 or at [norvel.l.dillard.civ@mail.mil](mailto:norvel.l.dillard.civ@mail.mil).

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. M. Kurta".

A. M. Kurta  
Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of  
Defense for Personnel and Readiness

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