Our Warrior Spirit: Native Americans in the U.S. Military

Native Americans have served in the U.S. military since the American Revolution, and by percentage serve more than any other ethnic group in the armed forces. Join us at a special program as Native veterans share their heroic and unforgettable stories of service in conflicts, and noted scholar and author Herman J. Viola, curator emeritus at the Smithsonian Institution, chronicles the roles of Native soldiers from 1770 to the present, including tales of tragedy, humor, loyalty, and conflict.

The program features a panel of American Indians who have served our country in the armed forces, including Debra Kay Mooney (Choctaw), an Iraq War veteran who organized and hosted a powwow in a war zone in Iraq in 2004 (objects from the powwow will be on display at the museum during the program); Chuck Boers (Lipan Apache/Cherokee), an Iraq War veteran and the recipient of two Bronze Star and three Purple Heart medals; John Emhoolah (Kiowa), a Korean War Veteran who joined the Oklahoma Thunderbird Division when he was still in high school and later helped lobby for the passage of the Native American Religious Freedom Act; and Joseph Medicine Crow, a World War II veteran who was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 by President Barack Obama. Jason Giles—attorney, Marine Corps Captain, and tribal citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation—moderates.