



The Voice of the Native American Veteran

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## Who Are We?

The National Native American Veterans Association (NNAVA) was formed to provide the Native American Veteran representation and assistance in dealing with the Department of Veteran Affairs. As an organization NNAVA feels that every Veteran deserves representation which addresses the unique and special needs of that Veteran. This is especially important for the Native American Veteran as the Culture and Heritage of the Native American People is vastly different from that of the rest of the American Population. The differences in our Culture and Heritage forms the basis of the mission of the National Native American Veterans Association.

## Our Mission Statement

The mission of the National Native American Veterans Association is to educate and assist Native American Veterans and their families without regard to Tribal Affiliation, Degree of Indian Blood, Branch of the Armed Forces or Combat Status in obtaining benefits and entitlements from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The National Native American Veterans Association will assist any Tribal Leadership, Federally recognized or not, is developing programs for Native American Veterans and act as a resource center for Tribal Leadership for information on Veteran's benefits and entitlements which may be incorporated into existing Tribal Programs.

## Membership Requirements

There are two classes of membership with in the Association. They are::

- **General Membership.** This class of membership includes all veterans, cadets, spouses, and widows of veterans as defined by IRC 501(c)(19) and the Associations guidelines for membership.
- **Associate Membership.** This class of membership shall include all other members not qualifying as General Members as set forth by IRC 501(c)(19) and the Associations guidelines for membership and may not exceed 2.5% of the total membership, and are issued on a case by case basis.

Auxiliaries may be formed in accordance with the guidelines of IRC 501(c)(19), but must be organized as separate organizations and the membership of the auxiliary must conform to the specific guidelines of the pertinent IRS codes and regulations.

## **The Need for a National Organization**

The commitment of the Native American Peoples to the defense of the United States is unparalleled by any other population sector of the United States. As a people, we are the smallest ethnic group of the American population, and yet on a per capita basis we provide more members to the Armed Forces than any other population sector. The Native American People provide more members to the elite force structure of the Armed Forces than any other population sector. Native American Veterans however, utilize their Veteran Benefits the least of any population sector.

There are currently over five hundred Federally recognized Tribes and Nations in the United States. Each of these Tribes and Nations has their own form of Government and programs established to assist their Tribal and Nation members. The one program that is seriously lacking is one for Native American Veterans. VA benefits and entitlements parallel many of the established Tribal and Nation Programs including Housing Assistance, Education benefits, Medical Treatment, Compensation for Service Connected Injuries, and a Non-Service Connected Pension for qualifying Veterans. Many of these programs may be incorporated with existing Tribal and Nation Programs .

So why do Native American Veterans utilize their VA benefits the least of any group of Veterans? There are several reasons, the foremost is that Veterans, not only Native American Veterans, are not aware of the benefits they have earned through military service. Secondly, for the Native American Veteran, it is much easier to obtain benefits from their individual Tribe or Nation rather than having to deal with the red tape of the Veterans Administration. Lastly, VA benefits are controlled by the Congress and are subject to change at any time. Combining these three factors is easy to understand why a Native American Veteran would rather go to their Tribe or Nation for benefits and assistance.

The National Native American Veteran Association will work to change this situation by providing representation for the Native American Veteran in dealing with the VA. We will assist Tribes and Nations in setting programs that will incorporate the use of VA benefits with existing Tribal Programs.

## **What We Offer**

As a Veterans Organization we offer many of the same benefits you will find in other organizations. This should not be a surprise. National Veterans Organizations are required to follow certain guidelines and regulations outlined by the IRS to qualify as a tax exempt, non-profit organization. So what is it that makes the National Native American Veterans Association different, and why should you consider joining us over other Veterans Organizations?

With our focus on the Native American Veteran, we not only monitor what is happening with the Veterans Administration and the Department of Defense; but we monitor what changes are being made by Congress to the Native American Community as a whole. This is what sets us apart from the mainstream Veterans Organizations. As Native Americans helping Native Americans we are better able to recognize and respect the Cultural Heritage and Traditions of the Native American Peoples. We understand the pride and commitment it takes for a Native American to serve this country and still remain true to our Culture and Heritage.

Benefits of joining the National Native American Veterans Association are:

- Advocacy for Native American Veterans in dealing with the Department of Veterans Affairs
- A private group site where you can post messages, voice concerns, meet other NNAVA members and keep up with the workings and events happening within the NNAVA.
- Group Life Insurance through USBA with options on the type of policy which will meet your individual needs.
- Professional Genealogy services at a discounted rate.
- A quarterly newsletter to keep you up to date on what is happening in NNAVA
- Our most important benefit is the ability to have place where Native American Veterans can bond with like minded Veterans and work for the good of all Native Peoples.

As we continue to grow and the needs of our membership change, we will add new programs to meet those needs. This Organization was formed for you the Native American Veteran , and you will always be the focus of this Organization.

If you have further questions please contact us at [membership@nava.org](mailto:membership@nava.org), or you may call the information line at 405-692-6365.