

Army Aircraft Honor Native Americans

To recognize the service and sacrifice of this group of warriors, here's a look at how the Army continues to honor them through the naming of Army helicopters

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Vietnam veterans most likely have vivid memories of the Army's UH-1H Iroquois "Huey" helicopters. The most commonly used helicopter in the Vietnam War, the Huey was used for troop insertions and extractions as well as medical evacuations off the battlefield.

While "Huey" was its nickname, its true name of Iroquois was named for the Native American tribe of warriors who hail from the northeast area of the United States. And it's not the only helicopter with such a lineage.

The Blackhawk, Lakota and Apache are just a few of the Native American names given to the Army's fleet of helicopters.

According to an Army news release, it was Army Gen. Hamilton Howze who named the H-13 Sioux in the 1950s. The Sioux would go on to be used in the television series "M.A.S.H."

Howze's decision to name the chopper after the Native Americans who fought in the Sioux Wars and claimed victory against the 7th Cavalry Regiment at the Battle of Little Bighorn, would pave the way for many more Native American names to follow.

In 1969, Army Regulation 70-28 was established to assign names to equipment. According to AR 70-28, Army aircraft were to be given names of "Indian terms and names of American Indian tribes and chiefs." The Bureau of Indian Affairs provided the names for the Army.

While the Army said AR 70-28 was eventually replaced with other policies that do not mention the Native American criteria, the naming tradition has continued over the years.

In 2008, the Army named its primary training helicopter the UH-72A Lakota after the Lakota tribe of the Great Sioux Nation in North and South Dakota. That year, Rosebud

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Sioux tribal leaders celebrated the newest helicopter at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama, during a ceremony with the Army.

A few years later, in 2012, Lakota elders bestowed ritualistic blessings on two South Dakota Army National Guard UH-72A Lakotas.

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