Hey Uncle, Uncle Sam!

American Indian GIs and veterans and Red Power activism in the era of the Vietnam War

by

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Abstract

Scholars have shown that Native Americans who served in the US armed forces during the Vietnam War developed radical ideas while in service that led them to become involved in radical activism, primarily with the Red Power (Native sovereignty) movement. Chapter 1 will examine in greater detail than ever before the psychological phenomena that had a radical influence on some Native GIs during the Vietnam era. Chapter 2 will begin to explore the implications of this influence, and will discuss the participation of Native GIs in Red Power activism through the GI resistance movement – a previously unexplored area of study. Chapter 3 will then explore the participation of Native veterans in the Red Power movement after returning from service, as well as the influence of their ideas on the anti-war movement. In concluding, a tentative evaluation will be made of the nature and extent of Native GI and veteran influence on radical politics and activism.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 1

(1) *SERVICEMEN* 4

(2) *DISSENTERS* 27

(3) *VETERANS* 47

CONCLUSION 77

SOURCE MATERIAL 81

Introduction

"Each twentieth-century American war", historian Russel Barsh (2001: 405-406) tells us, "has been followed by a major national Indian-rights movement". Successive generations of Native American veterans, many of whom had never left their isolated communities, returned to the civilian world with "sharpened" ethnic identities, a new found worldliness, more fully-formed political opinions, and keener leadership abilities (Bernstein, 1991: 133-158; Britten, 1997: 184-187). Many of those who returned from the World Wars, for instance, became community leaders and activists, making their presence felt in a number of national debates over government policies relevant to Native people (Abe, 2007: 59-61; Britten, 1997: 174-175 + 184).

Native veterans of WWII, in particular, were very politically active, mainly in response to the government's endorsement of so-called 'termination' – a controversial and divisive series of policies designed to *terminate* the sovereign statuses of Native tribes, and compel them to assimilate with the rest of the country (Holm, 1985: 160-165). A number of WWII veterans who opposed termination rose to prominence in activist organisations such as the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), where they were later joined by like-minded veterans of the Korean War (1950-1953) in leading the charge against termination, and campaigning in favour of policies that they hoped would be more beneficial to their communities (Bernstein, 1991: 116 + 133-136 + 158-159; Carroll, 2008: 146; Cobb, 2007: 61; Holm, 1989: 56-57; Rosier, 2009: 171-175).

During the period of US participation in the Vietnam War (c. 1965-1973), Natives served, as they had during earlier conflicts, at a very high rate (O'Nell, 1999: 445). By conservative estimates, over 82,000 Natives served during the war, more than half of whom are thought to have been sent to Southeast Asia, and 226 of whom never came home (Potts, 2011: 798). While Native GIs fought and died in Vietnam, US involvement in the war was a focal point around which Native communities back in the States formulated and

articulated their campaign against termination policy, and in favour of a restoration of tribal sovereignty.

Advocates of what came to be known as the Red Power movement watched events in the ex-colonial third-world, Southeast Asia especially, with great interest. They recognised parallels between their own struggle against what they increasingly saw as US imperialism and that of the Vietnamese, a seemingly kindred people, with a similar culture, and a similar history of colonisation and oppression (Cobb, 2007: 162-173; Rosier, 2009: 221-222; Shreve, 2011: 41-42 + 158-159; Steiner, 1968: 277-283). The way in which Red Power activists and their supporters drew on the language, imagery, and controversy surrounding the war, and made analogies between themselves and the Vietnamese in their rhetoric, in their writings, on their picket-signs, and in their communications to the government, were also powerful and effective discursive strategies (Allen, 2002: 120-121; Cobb, 2007: 171-172; Rosier, 2009: 249-250 + 260-261; Smith, 2012: 18-42 + 98-100 + 188-195).

Scholars have shown that Native GIs serving on the ground in Southeast Asia developed similar ideas about the war and the people of the region. A number of writers, Tom Holm (1996) and Al Carroll (2008: 147-162) in particular, provide ample evidence of the way in which many Native GIs actively identified with Southeast Asians. As a result, some Native servicemen experienced psychological turmoil and inner conflict, and began to question their roles in the armed forces and the war (Barsh, 2001: 380-381).

Scholars – deferring mainly to Holm's (1996: 169-179) and Carroll's (2008: 147-172) work – have noted that, in response to their troubling wartime and post-service experiences, some Native veterans were politically radicalised, and became involved in the Red Power movement (Barsh, 2001: 390; Forbes, 1994: 125; Johnson, 1996: 31-32; Marez, 2004: 267; Paul, 2014: 247; Pencak, 2009: 45-46 + 54; Potts, 2011: 798; Riseman, 2015: 215-216; Rosier, 2009: 262-264; Schwartz, 2013: 30-31 + 38-42 + 186-187; Tóth, 2016: 36-37; *Way of the Warrior*, 2007).

Though it has introduced a number of compelling lines of enquiry, the work of this small group of scholars on the connections between Native military service and Red Power activism during the Vietnam era has taken place within projects that are focused on other issues, and is thus unavoidably reductive and generalised. Particularly detrimental to our current understanding of this issue is the existing scholarship's exclusive focus on the radicalisation of Native GIs who served in Southeast Asia, without addressing the experiences of those who served elsewhere during the same period. When discussing the implications of radicalisation, the existing scholarship has also focused solely on the radical activities of Native *veterans* post-service, and fails to consider those of Native *GIs*, who, as this study will show, had at least as much of an influence on Red Power while still in service as their veteran peers did after leaving the military.

The following study will begin to fill some of these gaps. Chapter 1 will examine in greater detail the psychological phenomena that had a radical influence on some Native GIs during the Vietnam War. Chapter 2 will begin to explore the implications of this influence, and will discuss the participation of Native GIs in Red Power activism through the GI resistance movement – a previously unexplored area of study. Chapter 3 will then explore the participation of Native veterans in Red Power activism after returning from service, and the influence of their ideas on the anti-war movement. In concluding, a tentative evaluation will be made of the nature and extent of Native GI and veteran influence on the Red Power movement and radical activism more generally.

(1) *Servicemen*

Military service during the Vietnam War – "a war of atrocities, revenge, torture, and cruelty" according to one commentator, "an orgy of indiscriminate destruction" according to another – was incredibly traumatic for those involved in combat on the frontlines in Vietnam, and profoundly troubling, in a more abstract sense, for those who served in other capacities (Cortright, 2005: 154-155; Westheider, 2007: xiii + 120-121). Many ethnic minority GIs, whether fighting in the warzones of Southeast Asia or stationed elsewhere, also experienced racism in the military, which in turn engendered a variety of additional traumas and moral dilemmas, and Native servicemen were no exception.

Cherokee ex-Marine Dwight Birdwell (& Nolan, 2000: 124-126) recalls that Natives like himself were ridden by their non-Native colleagues with derogatory remarks about "firewater" and "redskins". Others recall the way in which Natives and other GIs of colour were often detailed to non-skilled, "dirty" jobs while their white colleagues were able to avoid such tasks (Anderson, et al, 1974: 194-195). Standing Rock Army Sergeant Robert Primaux (quoted in Murg, 2012) felt that non-Natives had issues serving under him. "Their image of Indian people", Primaux (quoted in Murg, 2012) recalls, "was that I'm a drunk."

As Dwight Birdwell (& Nolan, 2000: 124-126) recounts, Natives were invariably in the extreme minority, and could not fall back on numbers. Consequently, he writes, "we had to put up with a certain amount of grief about our Indian blood" (Birdwell & Nolan, 2000: 124-126). Finding allies among non-Natives was not always easy, either. In some cases, Native GIs were taken in by Chicanos, who were much greater in number and shared certain physical and cultural characteristics with Natives that helped break the ice, but racial tensions among US servicemen were high during the course of the conflict, just as they were among American civilians (e.g. Cummings, 1998: 136; Mitchell, 2004: 12 + 16).

As the war dragged on, Potowatomi infantryman Larry Mitchell (2004: 12-13) observed an escalation of ethnic animosities within the American ranks, and would later describe the pattern of race relations among servicemen in Vietnam as increasingly resembling a form of "self-imposed segregation much like in a prison". "Blacks h[u]ng around with blacks … Whites h[u]ng around with whites … And I hung around with the Mexican guys", he writes (Mitchell, 2004: 7-8 + 12).

Moreover, these racial divisions became increasingly political in nature. Dwight Birdwell (& Nolan, 2000: 82 + 120-122) recalls the way in which his own unit "fractured" down racial and ideological lines – "we were as split as the people back home", he writes. In 1968, he accidentally interrupted a meeting of Black Power advocates in one of the tents in his camp, where he was introduced to some of the ideas that were emerging in this increasingly radical political climate. Initially met with the "stony faces" of a group of black GIs, their leader quickly recognised him as a Native, and thus as one and the same – in terms of oppression and second-class status – with the black soldiers. "He's a fuckin' Indian", he reportedly declared, "He's one of us!" (Birdwell & Nolan, 2000: 126).

During this, his first unexpected taste of radical black politics, Birdwell (& Nolan, 2000: xix-xxi + 126-127), who had personal experience of racism, empathised with some of his new friends' complaints, but he did not share their political outlook. In fact, he adopted the cynical stance typical of more conservative-minded servicemen, coming to perceive of such groups, which were at that time thriving among minority GIs, as symptomatic of a wider decline in discipline and morale then taking place within the military. "[B]lack disaffection with the system seemed to take on a life of its own in Vietnam", he concluded, "It became an excuse for not doing your job" (Birdwell & Nolan, 2000: 126-127).

Other Native GIs were more sensitive to issues of race. Blackfoot Marine Woody Kipp (2004: 45-46), for instance, observed formally arranged fights between black and white Marines while serving in Vietnam in the late 1960s. On one such occasion, the men were

reprimanded for fighting among themselves while their "true enemy" – the Vietnamese Communists – remained at large out in the jungle. Kipp (2004: 45-46), who had earlier witnessed white Marines celebrating at the news of Malcolm X's assassination, did not agree. "White men have never understood", Kipp (2004: 45-46) writes, "how dark-skinned men perceive their true enemy":

> The white American doesn't … realize the great gap he created when he let his greed get the best of him: with Indians it's … the land that was stolen; with blacks it's slavery …

Perceived physical similarities between some Natives and Southeast Asians, in terms of hair-type and colour, skin-tone, and certain facial features, sometimes attracted unwanted attention from their non-Native comrades (Kipp, 2004: 35-36). During WWII, Native GIs had even been mistakenly captured by their own colleagues on suspicion of being Japanese interlopers, and at least one similar case of mistaken identity later took place in Vietnam (Holm, 2007: 81-83). When Oglala infantryman Darrell New Plenty Stars (& Evans, 2008: 12-14) was badly wounded, American medics mistook him for an enemy combatant, and he later awoke to find himself back in the States, chained to a bed in a hospital ward for Vietnamese POWs at the Colorado Army Base, too injured to speak and reveal his true identity (New Plenty Stars & Evans, 2008: 13).

While he lay there waiting for someone to realise their mistake, New Plenty Stars (& Evans, 2008: 13-14) came to resent the fact that he was being treated as a foreigner and an enemy, first by his own colleagues, and now in his own country, which was particularly offensive to him because he felt that he, as a Native – "a *First American*" – was "*more American than most of the guys in my unit*". Even after they discovered the truth, New Plenty Stars (& Evans, 2008: 14-15) had to wait some time before the Army would process him out of the POW ward.

Moreover, his troubles did not end after he was finally released. While serving out the remainder of his tour on light duty in Colorado, a black GI was murdered in his barracks, and he became the prime suspect (New Plenty Stars & Evans, 2008: 17-23). New Plenty Stars (& Evans, 2008: 17-21) provided a verifiable alibi – he had not been in the barracks at the time of the murder – but the military police, apparently convinced of his guilt, questioned him aggressively for days, trying to elicit a confession. Driven to what he describes as "a state of near frenzy, angry, exhausted, and scared to death", he began to frame his ordeal within a racial context. "Why have I been singled out for questioning?", he thought to himself, "Is it because I'm an Indian?" (New Plenty Stars & Evans, 2008: 17-21).

Seeking legal advice, he explained his predicament to a group of military attorneys. "It's probably because I'm Indian", he told them, "Things like this happen to us all the time" (New Plenty Stars & Evans, 2008: 21-23). Just as he had feared, New Plenty Stars (& Evans, 2008: 21-25) was soon formally charged with the offence – an injustice that he directly connected to issues of race, and to the history of Natives in the US:

> I had honorably served my country, the country of my birth that had been overrun by Europeans … Ruled by whites for generations, natives like myself continued to suffer betrayal, poverty, prejudice, and every other … injustice my irate mind could think of. Hatred spreads like a fire running wild, and mine was out of control.

At this point, his building resentment was directed at whites – even his new lawyers, who, though sympathetic to his case, in his opinion, would most likely let him down (New Plenty Stars & Evans, 2008: 24-25). "They were, after all, white", he thought, "Whites were my enemies" (New Plenty Stars & Evans, 2008: 25). After he was eventually acquitted, "[r]eluctantly", he writes, "I had to admit … that maybe there were some good white people" (New Plenty Stars & Evans, 2008: 25). When he learned more about the case, however, his resentment was redirected. It turned out that the people who had implicated him in the murder were a group of black servicemen, who had reportedly been involved in a dispute with the victim (New Plenty Stars & Evans, 2008: 25). "Everyone suspected", New

Plenty Stars (& Evans, 2008: 25) writes, “that I, the handy Indian scapegoat, had been set up by those black soldiers”:

> I felt that blacks, of all races, should have known the miseries of discrimination … And so it was that I added blacks to my growing list of people I wanted nothing more to do with.

When New Plenty Stars (& Evans, 2008: 27) was later punished for a minor infraction by being made to polish a cannon, his reaction indicates that, by this point, he was beginning to think about everything that was happening to him in the military in terms of his Native identity and the colonial history of his people. “I probably deserved punishment”, he writes, “but cannons had been turned on my people … I was … polishing the long hated symbol. Talk about adding insult to injury!” (New Plenty Stars & Evans, 2008: 27). After his harrowing experiences, New Plenty Stars (& Evans, 2008: 27-28) got out of the Army as soon as he could, but the sense of betrayal he felt at having first been treated as an enemy, and then later as a scapegoat, by his own countrymen, purely on the grounds of his race, stayed with him, and would underpin his subsequent sympathy – and sometimes active support – for the Red Power movement.

Native GIs were also labelled by non-Native colleagues who, as Oglala serviceman John Means (quoted in Martz, 1986: 8A) put it, “had watched too many movies about Indians.” Hollywood and other forms of popular media have certainly been responsible for disseminating stereotypes of Natives, especially in relation to warfare (Schwartz, 2013: 4 + 29-30). From the blood-drunk, tomahawk wielding savages of the old Westerns, to the stoic, self-sacrificing, impossibly wise and intuitive scouts and trackers of some more recent depictions; these are images with which we are all familiar, and which were applied arbitrarily to Native GIs during the Vietnam era (Holm, 1989: 56-57; Schwartz, 2013: 29-30).

These stereotypes were incredibly pervasive, to the extent that they could actively determine the kinds of roles available to Native servicemen, with potentially deadly

consequences. Native GIs were often assigned to the most dangerous combat roles on the grounds of stereotypical, race-based assumptions about their innate abilities in relation to warfare, such as martial prowess, bush-skills, and intuitiveness – they were even thought to have better hearing and eyesight (Holm, 1989: 62-64). Holm (1996: 88-90 + 137-139 + 150-158) calls this phenomenon "Indian Scout Syndrome" (ISS), and argues that it was a key reason for the inordinate assignment of Natives to roles such as scouting, tracking, covert operations, and 'walking point' – walking ahead of one's unit during missions. It has even been suggested that, by virtue of ISS, Native infantrymen were distributed throughout the Army in such a way that each platoon might have at least one Native walking point (Robinson & Lucas, 2010: 70-71). Consequently, "Indian GI's in Vietnam", one servicemen's newspaper declared in 1970, "are … dying at a disproportionately high rate" (*Military Intelligence*, 1970: 2).

"Oh good," Ojibwe Marine Jim Northrup's (2016) superiors would invariably say when he joined a new unit, "we've got an Indian, he can walk point." Cherokee Army Ranger Billy Walkabout (1988: 78; quoted in Bedard, 1998: 64) was similarly stereotyped by his colleagues as a natural path-finder, and cast into an incredibly dangerous role as the 'point man' of a Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrol, running covert operations behind enemy lines – an assignment that, he felt, was based on erroneous assumptions about his background and abilities. Indeed, back in Oklahoma he had been a member of a country club, not a warrior society, and went golfing, not hunting (Walkabout, quoted in Bedard, 1998: 64). "They figured we had these natural skills," he recalls, "hell, we had the same skills they had" (Walkabout, quoted in Bedard, 1998: 64). In a recent interview, Oglala veteran Tony Bush (quoted in Wetherholt, 2013) makes a particularly poignant statement concerning ISS:

> They're the ones that taught me to fight … They'd all say shit [like] 'Native Americans are natural born fighters' … Yeah, bullshit … I'd say 'We bleed too, we're just like you guys' … They don't like that.

The imposition of stereotypes concerning Native warriorhood was commonly accompanied by the nickname 'chief'. Some of those who understood the meaning and

import of the title of Chief to Native cultures found the dismissive way in which it was used in reference to them offensive (e.g. Northrup, quoted in Molin, 1999: 41). "[A]lthough Army personnel … display their name on virtually every article of clothing", Winnebago ex-infantryman Gerben Earth (quoted in Molin, 1999: 43) tells us, "I was always referred to as 'chief'". Earth (quoted in Molin, 1999: 43) felt that the word was racist, placing it on a par with derogatory terms he had heard US personnel use in reference to East Asian people such as 'nip', 'chink', and, of particular relevance during the Vietnam conflict, 'gook'.

Others felt that such language was more than just insulting – it created false impressions about them that may actually have fed into ISS (e.g. Kipp, 2004: 35; Molin, 1999: 42; TeCube, 2000: + 216). Oglala Army veteran Chuck Richards (quoted in Martz, 1986: 8A), founder of the Oglala Lakota Vietnam Veterans Association, recalls that "whenever there was something dangerous to do … it was always, 'chief, you walk point' … 'chief, you lead this patrol.'" Echoing his peers' remarks about the influence of Hollywood on ISS, Richards (quoted in Martz, 1986: 8A) reminds us that, though his officers might have stereotyped Native GIs as "the Rambos of Vietnam", in reality, "we were just as scared as everybody else."

As victims of racism themselves, many Native GIs were also deeply troubled by the racist abuse they saw being inflicted upon others. General William Westmoreland (quoted in *Newsweek*, 1967), head of US operations in Vietnam between 1964 and 1968, aptly set the tone for the way the armed forces would treat Southeast Asians throughout the conflict when he declared that, in metaphorical terms, the dynamic between the Communist and US forces there was that between "termites" and "termite killers". Crucially, Westmoreland's (quoted in *Newsweek*, 1967) dehumanising language was chillingly reminiscent of a remark made just over a hundred years earlier by another US military leader, Colonel John Chivington, in reference to the extermination of Native people in Colorado.

"[K]ill and scalp all, little and big," Chivington (quoted in Mann, 2001: 75) reportedly told his men before they descended on a group of Natives at Sand Creek, CO in 1864, "nits make lice." Chivington (quoted in Mann, 2001: 75) would go down in history that day as the instigator of one of the most infamous massacres of the Indian Wars. Thus, Westmoreland's (quoted in *Newsweek*, 1967) later remark was not only evidence of Vietnam-era anti-East Asian racism. It must also be seen as part of a historical continuum of violent racism – one that connects mid-20th century Southeast Asia to the historic US.

Consequently, just as Native GIs themselves were subject to racial discrimination, they also witnessed – and in some cases felt they had been compelled to participate in – the racist abuse of East Asian people. As documented by a number of our sources, derogatory terms like 'gook' were a part of the everyday vernacular of American personnel stationed in Southeast Asia and Japan (Anderson et al, 1974: 194-195; Gano, 2016; Kipp, 2004; Walkabout, 1988: 77-81). As Dwight Birdwell (2000: 134-141) laments, many GIs "had more feelings for their pet dogs" than they did for the Vietnamese civilians – a lack of empathy that was all too often displayed through violence.

According to Larry Mitchell (2004: 20-21), this sort of behaviour was actively encouraged, and he claims that his own period of training before leaving for Vietnam was basically "four and a half months of constantly dehumanizing the Vietnamese". Inculcating servicemen in this way was not without purpose. Some Native GIs came to feel that the use of this type of language dehumanised Southeast Asian people in such a way that it made it "easier for [GIs] to kill and to justify doing so" – it functioned as a coping mechanism for those facing combat (Earth, quoted in Molin, 1999: 43; Mitchell, 2004: 21; Northrup, 2013: 177).

Moreover, a number of Native servicemen noticed that their non-Native colleagues also often referred to enemy-controlled territory as 'Indian country', and the enemy themselves as 'Indians' (Earth, quoted in Molin, 1999: 43; Holm, 1996: 175; TeCube, 2000:

166-167). This type of language was used even at the highest levels of the military establishment, and was part and parcel of a general tendency at this time to translate the imagery and terminology of the historic American frontier, including its original inhabitants, the Native Americans, into a modern Vietnam-era context (Carroll, 2008: 161-162; Paul, 2014: 344-347; Rosier, 2009: 244-247; Fitzgerald, 2002: 367-368).

Scholars have suggested that, during the Vietnam War, Southeast Asia effectively replaced the historic American West as a new frontier, replete with its own *Indians*, who could be dismissed as racially inferior, collateralised, and thus justifiably bulldozed in much the same way as the real Indians of North America had been (Chomsky, 1972: 120; Fitzgerald, 2002: 368; Rosier, 2009: 244-247; Stannard, 1992: 252-253). Advocates of more forceful and destructive military strategies in Vietnam justified their ideas through invoking the Indian Wars, and some of those serving on the ground who were involved in military atrocities, such as the infamous My Lai massacre, are known to have made similar references, often couched in overtly racist terms, in rationalising their own behaviour (Carroll, 2008: 161-162; Drinnon, 1997: 455-457; Fitzgerald, 2002: 367-368; Rosier, 2009: 244-247).

For some Native GIs, the conflation of their own demographic with the Vietnamese Communists – America's number one enemy at that time, and an enemy who they themselves were expected to fight and kill – was a troubling concept. Gerben Earth (quoted in Molin, 1999: 43), for instance, came to feel that the use of terms like 'Indian country' was effectively "keeping the idea … alive that Indian people are still … the enemy." More importantly, he also drew connections between the racist use of the word 'gook' in reference to Southeast Asians and the use of similarly derogatory terms about Natives during the historic Indian Wars (Earth, quoted in Molin, 1999: 43). He was not alone.

Alienated by the racism of their colleagues, the military establishment, and the war itself, some Native servicemen began to draw their own analogies between their ancestors

and communities back home and those of the Southeast Asians with whom they came into contact – connections which, in some cases, had a profound impact on the way they felt about what they were doing. Wichita paratrooper Stan Holder, for instance, came to feel that he had been "brainwashed", that the Army's efforts to create racist killing machines out of its recruits had, at least for a time, worked on him, even in spite of his own experiences of racism:

> I wanted to go out and kill some 'gooks' … I really [did] … I guess I had been totally brainwashed, because I could remember when people used to call me 'blanket-ass', or 'chief', and they still did …, but there I was … saying, 'I wanna go kill some 'gooks'' (*Hearts and Minds*, 1974).

Cherokee-Quapaw Marine Geary Hobson (2016), who served throughout East Asia in the early 1960s, was given cause to reconsider the value and purpose of the American mission there when he witnessed the "incredible disrespect" shown towards the people of the region by his fellow Marines, whose racist behaviour reminded him of his own experiences of racism back in the US. "[A]ntagonism towards Asiatics", he writes, "would bring me back to that feeling of alienation and … leave me wondering, what's really going on here?" (Hobson, 2016).

Psychologist George Mariscal (2006: 355-362) refers to these types of experiences as "structures of recognition". As Mariscal (2006: 355-362) has demonstrated, some minority GIs who served in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam era recognised something of themselves – namely their oppression – in the Southeast Asians with whom they came into contact, thus forming *structures of recognition*. Though Native GIs were not the focus of Mariscal's (2006: 355-362) work, which was based chiefly on analyses of Vietnam War-related fiction written by Chicano veterans, his ideas are easily applicable to the experiences of Native servicemen.

In the cases of Native GIs, structures of recognition were generally formed on initially superficial grounds, in response to a recognition of the perceived physical similarities between Natives and East Asians mentioned above. As Oglala infantryman Guy Dull Knife, Jr. (quoted in Rosier, 2009: 248) puts it, "We kind of looked alike … and it seemed to make a difference. To me and to them." "The Vietnamese scrutinized me," Woody Kipp (2004: 35) recounts, "wondering how I had come to look so like them" (Kipp, 2004: 35). The pidgin English phrase, "You same same Viet Cong", was often directed at Kipp (2004: 35) during such interactions, variations of which appear in similar episodes recounted by other Natives who served in Vietnam (e.g. Mitchell, 2004: 6 + 20-21; TeCube, 2000: 32).

"One villager said to me 'Same, Same'," Larry Mitchell (2004: 6 + 20-21) recalls, "there was a lot of veracity in those two words." Despite having been told repeatedly during his training of the need to fight the spread of Communism, and of "what the gooks would do to us", during his time in Vietnam, Mitchell (2004: 20-21) saw more similarities than differences between himself and these so-called 'gooks'. As Mitchell (2004: 20-21) perceived the situation, "Vietnamese fought for their country and their way of life against overwhelming odds", just as he and many of his colleagues, at that time at least, felt they were doing also.

At the end of his first tour of duty in early 1967, Woody Kipp (2004: 39) immediately re-enlisted, a decision informed by his fondness for the Vietnamese people and culture. Upon his return to action, Kipp (2004: 35-40) availed himself of the hospitality of the Vietnamese locals. Like some other Native GIs, Kipp (2004: 40-41) even began a relationship with a Vietnamese girl, and routinely went AWOL in order to be entertained at her family's home (e.g. Wood, 2011: 75-79). Leroy TeCube (2000: 32 + 157-158) was the guest of honour on a similar occasion, a privilege accorded to him because "these people considered me a lot like them" – a warm sense of recognition that went both ways. "The atmosphere," TeCube (2000: 157-158) recalls, "reminded me of my own people", and he recognised a certain resilience in the Vietnamese sense of humour, an "ability to laugh during times of distress", that he felt was characteristic of his own Jicarilla community back in New Mexico.

Seminole-Navajo military advisor Ron Wood (2011: viii + 22 + 73-78), who looked so similar to the Vietnamese that he was apparently able, on occasion, to jokingly trick them into believing he was actually of Vietnamese origin himself, also related to them "on a very personal level". Homesick, and in need of cultural nourishment, he actively sought out the hospitality of the Vietnamese (Wood, 2011: 73-74 + 90-92). Wood (2011: 73-74 + 90-92) found a certain level of solace, a place of sanctuary in the midst of war, in the homes of these "honest, hard working, reserved country people":

> I thought they were very similar to rural Navajos in … their lifestyles and mannerisms. They would spread a table cloth on the floor and sit around the food to eat … a traditional Navajo custom. They cared for their land and livestock in a manner similar to Navajos …
>
> … I went to bed that night, happy and fulfilled in an emotional sense. I felt like I had just had … dinner with some of my relatives back on the … reservation.

"The Vietnamese didn't seem so strange to me", Woody Kipp (2004: 35) writes of similar experiences, "I would listen to them talking … and wish I could speak with them and ask questions about their lives." What little he could understand of their culture through the pidgin English fascinated him, and, crucially, seemed "somehow familiar" – a sense of cultural recognition that was reciprocated by his new Vietnamese friends (Kipp, 2004: 39-41).

In some cases, Native servicemen came into contact with the indigenous peoples of Southeast Asia, some of whom still lived in tribal communities – a particularly meaningful encounter, considering the tribal origins of Native GIs themselves. Crow-Creek paratrooper Ray Leanna trained royalist guerrilla fighters in Laos in the early 1960s, at which time American military involvement in the region remained largely advisory and logistical (Carroll, 2008: 146). Leanna's trainees were recruited from among the indigenous Ka hill tribesmen, who readily accepted him, based not only on his Asiatic physical appearance, but also, on a less superficial level, his tribal principles, to the extent that they essentially adopted him

into their culture, even offering him a – respectfully declined – local woman for his bride (Carroll, 2008: 146).

Likewise, Cherokee paratrooper George Hoffman (quoted in Carroll, 2008: 160-162) describes "getting in tight" with a group of indigenous Degar people in the Vietnamese highlands as a way of "getting in touch with my tribal roots". Before long, he was mixing elements of Degar clothing with his military uniform, was given a band signifying official tribal membership, and was even given his own Degar name (Carroll, 2008: 160-162). Cherokee CIA operative D.L. Hicks was so profoundly affected by the time he spent among the indigenous Hmong of Laos that he would eventually go on to become involved in the movement to rescue and resettle Hmong refugees in the turbulent aftermath of Communist victory in Southeast Asia (Carroll, 2008: 139-140).

For those involved in combat, these types of experiences were profoundly troubling. As documentary maker Patty Loew puts it, for Native GIs, there was an "extra layer of guilt" in fighting and killing a group of people with whom they were beginning to identify (*Way of the Warrior*, 2007). "It was freaky", Jim Northrup (2016) writes, "in Vietnam to shoot at those people and then to look at them because they had almost the same color skin, same color hair, and eyes … the spirit they had of making do with what they had; just like Indian people". "After a while … I couldn't figure out why I was shooting at those people", Shoshone ex-infantryman Russell Redner (quoted in Stern, 1994: 28) recalls, "I started thinking I had more in common with them than with my side, who treated me like shit because I'm [Native]."

Although sometimes impactful, for many Native servicemen, this reciprocal gaze of recognition remained relatively superficial. As members of a colonised and oppressed minority group, however, the more contact some Native GIs had with the similarly colonised and oppressed Vietnamese, including their ostensive 'enemies', the more, it seems, recognition of their physical and cultural likenesses led them to recognise much deeper

similarities. Apache Marine Ernie Dogwolf Lovato (2016), for instance, found common ground with the Vietnamese through participating in their spiritual customs. While serving in a Combined Action Program (CAP) unit alongside South Vietnamese troops, Lovato (2016) would sit and smoke opium with the Vietnamese villagers, who used the substance to induce a meditative state.

From Lovato's (2016) perspective, what went on in the opium dens felt similar to Apache spiritual practices, and while the Vietnamese taught him about their culture, he taught them about his own. Moreover, "when I started hallucinating", he writes, "the people around me … actually [became] my Indian people" (Lovato, 2016). Indeed, he seems to have found something of a sanctuary in these opium dens. As a consequence of such close contact, Lovato (2016) writes, "I related more to the Vietnamese … than to the Americans":

> The way they lived, the way they ate, and the way they survived with next to nothing. I felt a lot of compassion for the Vietnamese …, and I think a lot of people felt that maybe I was too compassionate.

Lovato (2016) thus felt particularly uneasy about the way in which the US presence in Vietnam had introduced the people there to capitalism – indeed, he came to feel that the US was actively trying to change the culture of the Vietnamese, peddling a brand of cultural imperialism in Vietnam that was very similar to that imposed upon Natives throughout American history. Woody Kipp (1997: 211) shared these concerns, and felt that the "white invaders" in Southeast Asia "hated" the people of the region not only on the grounds of their racial difference, but also because of their agricultural lifestyles and lack of technological advancement. "It took me a while to realize", he writes, "that the hatred and contempt the Americans felt towards the nontechnological Vietnamese peasants was the same hatred and contempt that had moved without conscience throughout the American West" (Kipp, 1997: 211).

The brutality of the American war effort in Southeast Asia was particularly disturbing to some Native GIs. Body-counts were used to measure the progress of the war effort, entire communities were forcibly displaced from their ancestral homelands, the US military's unprecedented reliance on bombing campaigns and chemical weapons made heavy civilian casualties effectively unavoidable, and even ground troops were often unable – and, in some cases, unwilling – to distinguish between enemy combatants and civilians (Cortright, 2005: 262; Fitzgerald, 2002: 370-376). As Jim Northrup describes it, the attitude developed by many servicemen in Vietnam, himself included, was "if it moved, shoot it, if it doesn't, burn it" (*Way of the Warrior*, 2007).

The seemingly wanton destruction caused by the American war machine in Southeast Asia was an affront to the tribal sensibilities of some traditionally-minded Native GIs, who entered the military with very different ideas about warfare to those of most non-Natives. In many North American tribes, traditional notions of warfare were more akin to contact sports, in which the object was often not on killing the enemy, but on outwitting them and achieving feats of courage that would earn certain cultural benefits back in their communities (Holm, 1992: 354-356). Death and destruction were not unknown, but they were recognised, in a spiritual sense, to be an interruption of the natural order (Holm, 1992: 354-356).

Having experienced what could arguably be described as the quintessential early 20th century Native upbringing, from his family's "canvas tent" on the Jicarilla Apache Reservation, NM, to the boarding school where he learned English as a second language, Leroy TeCube (2000: 107-108 + 210) was chosen to lead a combat platoon in Vietnam, and perceived his obligations from a traditional Jicarilla perspective, as those of a warrior, or *Nahn Than*:

> Only the very strong took on the responsibility. One had to set a good example and ensure … the needs of everyone ... were met before he thought of himself. He must never be corrupted or gain wealth from his position ... never retreat in battle and ... show a lot of courage. He had to be the first one into a conflict, and if need be …

> fight single-handedly with an enemy leader ... In a sense, I was now a Nahn Tahn, although under circumstances different from the old days. However, I knew that the criteria would still apply, especially in battle.

Here, TeCube (2000: 210) displays an awareness of the fact that traditional Native ideas about the responsibilities of warriors are not simply equivalent to modern ideas about those of US soldiers. Moreover, he can be seen to have recognised the fact that this was a very different kind of war in comparison to those to which his Jicarilla forebears might have been accustomed historically. However, he appears to have been determined to fulfil the terms of his role as a warrior, a *Nahn Than*, nonetheless, even if, as he claims, those around him had abandoned such virtues entirely (TeCube, 2000: 137 + 210). Accordingly, TeCube (2000: 137) refused to participate in looting or other abuses of civilians; activities in which he claims many of his colleagues engaged more freely.

Others were entirely unable to reconcile their tribal principles with the brutality of the war. Holm (1989: 65) quotes a Native veteran who was disgusted by the violence he witnessed in Vietnam, especially in light of his own traditions:

> The first body I saw in Nam was a little kid. He was burnt up – napalm … Made me sick. It turned me around. See, in our way we're not supposed to kill women and children in battle. The old people say it's bad medicine and killing women and children doesn't prove that you're brave. It's just the opposite.

Woody Kipp (1997: 214) acknowledges the fact that Natives had always engaged in warfare throughout history, but felt that before the arrival of whites in the Americas and the introduction of non-Native, European approaches to waging war – i.e. annihilation or 'total war' – "there was still an element of honor, of the sanctity of life". "In Vietnam, in your [i.e. white American] war zone," Kipp (1997: 214) continues, "there was no honor."

On a deeper level, Kipp (2004: 47) also noticed the technological disparities between the Vietnamese and US forces, and thereby formed a fundamental, historically-informed structure of recognition. “As thousands of bullets, backed up by cannon fire, raked the ground,” he writes, “I began to more clearly comprehend what my people had faced in the American West when the whites came with the Gatling guns” (Kipp, 2004: 47). Indeed, as Kipp (2004: 47) was beginning to realise, the racism and brutality of the American war effort in Vietnam was not unprecedented – it had happened before, on an even grander scale, back in the US.

According to Kipp (2004: 35), his white cohorts, “like white soldiers [since] the time of Columbus … cursed the dark-skinned people as … inferior”. His fondness for the *dark-skinned people* of Vietnam earned him the approbation of his superiors, and, while on hard-labour duty as punishment for his frequent absences out in the villages, he witnessed what he perceived to be a racially motivated attack on an elderly Vietnamese man by a fellow, white, prison-labourer (Kipp, 2004: 43-46). This experience was a tipping point for Kipp (2004: 35 + 43-46), who began to see more clearly the parallels between the abuse of the Vietnamese and that of his own ancestors:

> What I had just witnessed was not war but racial hatred … Many years later, after having joined the [Red Power movement] … I eventually realized that what I had seen had … taken place over and over as the Europeans stormed into … the American West. Other old men – my grandfathers – had suffered similar treatment at the hands of American soldiers … The legacy of that misunderstanding, that hatred, that prejudice, persists.

Likewise, Dwight Birdwell (2000: 139) struggled to maintain his faith in the war’s moral basis as he began to develop a similar sense of historical déjà vu:

> [T]hese so-called gooks were the people we were [supposed to be] fighting for, and blended in with all that was the thought of old cruelties inflicted upon … Indians at the hands of the U.S. Army. Being of Cherokee heritage, I didn't want to turn around three or four generations later and perpetuate the same sort of abuse myself,

> especially with people who were poor farmers just like my people … and who in some cases looked almost exactly like the Indians I knew back in Oklahoma.

Here, we can see that Birdwell (2000: 139) had not only begun to perceive of the violence of the war in Vietnam as excessive and racist in nature, but that he was also forming two fundamental structures of recognition – not only that between the colonial histories of the Vietnamese and his own people, but also that between himself and the coloniser they held in common. Birdwell (2000: 139) and others like him were making the uncomfortable realisation that they themselves were now active agents in the colonial oppression of a people who had been colonised and racially denigrated in much the same way as the Native people of North America. Guy Dull Knife, Jr. (quoted in Rosier, 2009: 248), for instance, "often wondered if what we were doing to the Vietnamese wasn't the same as what the [US] army had done to us":

> We were kicking them out of their homes, killing their animals, herding them [around] … trying to force a government and a way of life on them that they didn't really want.

Another of the Native veterans quoted by Holm (1989: 65) drew much the same historical analogy:

> We went into their country … killed them and took land that wasn't ours. Just like what the whites did to us. I helped load up ville after ville and pack it off to the resettlement area. Just like when they moved us to the [reservations]. We shouldn't have done that. Browns against browns. That screwed me up, you know.

To recall the terminology of Westmoreland and Chivington, the *lice* were not only beginning to identify with the *termites*, but also with the *termite killers*. These ideas naturally had a profound impact on the way some Natives felt about their roles as servicemen. Psychologist Robin LaDue (1983: 5) quotes another Native veteran for whom this experience was a major turning point:

> One day, this VC prisoner … pointed to my skin … hair and eyes and said 'Same, same' … I hated him for saying this but one day, out on patrol, I realized he was right, that I had been a red man killing yellow men for the white man. I put my gun down and I couldn't kill anymore. There was no honor in what I had done. I had shamed myself and the gifts of courage and strength that had been given me.

For LaDue's (1983: 5) veteran, this experience was simply too powerful to ignore or brush off. He felt that, by perpetuating racial violence, he had "shamed" himself, even going so far as to claim that his guilt in this respect was sufficient to force him to decide that he, the American Indian, could no longer conscionably continue to fight the Vietnamese *Indian* (LaDue, 1983: 5).

One Creek-Cherokee veteran quoted by Holm (1996: 175) "woke up one morning … and realized that … I was on the wrong side of everything I wanted to believe I was about". He was also painfully aware of the contradiction inherent in the fact that, while the US justified its presence in Vietnam – and its orders to GIs like himself to fight and kill the Vietnamese – by citing its treaties with foreign countries, it had showed no such commitment to its historical treaties with Native tribes – a perspective shared by Red Power activists back home (Banks, quoted in Wyant, 1970: 1B; Holm, 1996: 175). Going one further than his peers, Holm's (1996: 175) veteran came to the conclusion that "I was fighting the wrong people". Like Woody Kipp (2004: 45-46), this individual began to feel that his *true enemy* was not the Vietnamese Communist insurgency, but the white-run US military, of which he himself was an increasingly reluctant agent (Holm, 1996: 175).

In addition to their own first-hand observations and experiences, Native GIs were also exposed to outside, extra-military influences, which in some cases contributed towards their radicalisation. Indeed, many of those whose testimonies have been discussed above were serving at a time when minority discontent at social inequities in the US was boiling over into increasingly radical forms of protest against the American establishment. This

social upheaval then going on in the civilian world was not lost on Natives serving in the military.

Oglala paratrooper Bill Means' (quoted in Waltz, 2009) "journey to political activism" began in Vietnam in the late 1960s. Means (quoted in Rosier, 2009: 265; quoted in Waltz, 2009), who describes his time in service as a "political education", came to feel, like some of his peers above, that "I was almost becoming the cavalry, as opposed to maintaining my Indian identity, and I realized that a lot of military tactics and policies used in Vietnam were the same … used against Indians in the last century."

Crucially, in the midst of this identity crisis, he experienced what scholars have referred to as the 'contagion effect' – the idea that news of the social movement back home, whether received via the media or by word of mouth, could have a significant influence on the way in which GIs thought about their involvement in the war (Carbonella, 2016: 126-128). "In 1968," Means (quoted in Waltz, 2009) recalls, "I read about [Red Power], and I realized … there was an active and organized movement of Indian people fighting for treaty rights, civil rights, and human rights". Speaking at a recent conference, Means (quoted in Norrell, 2013) added that, on one such occasion, he saw a picture of his own brother, Russell Means, at that time a rising luminary in the Red Power movement back home. From thereon out, Means was eager to get out of the military and join his brother (Norrell, 2013).

Likewise, when another Oglala GI and future Red Power advocate, Z.G. Standing Bear (quoted in Nagel, 1995: 960), heard about Red Power protests while serving in Vietnam in 1969, "I thought 'Right on! That's great what those guys are doing.'" In Standing Bear's (quoted in Nagel, 1995: 960) case, we do not know the exact source of his 'contagion', but it was likely that, as in Means' case, it came through some form of print media. There were a great many underground newspapers in circulation among GIs around the world in the late 1960s and early 1970s, many of which gave sympathetic coverage to the Red Power

movement, and, crucially, drew connections between the oppression of Natives and that of the Vietnamese (e.g. Anderson, 1970: 8; *Liberated Barracks: Service News for Occupied Hawaii*, 1972: 4; *FTA with Pride*, 1973: 6; *Rip-Off: News for Asia*, 1971: 11-12; *Strategic Hamlet*, 1970: 4 + 12).

Some of these radical publications included contributions from Native GIs and veterans, who aired their complaints about military life and their radical ideas about the war while promoting the Red Power cause (e.g. *Attitude Check*, 1970; *Barrage*, 1972: 9-12; Blevins, 1969; *The Bond*, 1970b: 6; *Fed Up!*, 1971: 11). Others were aimed specifically at Natives, such as *Akwesasne Notes*, which was made free to all Native GIs in the hope that "any Indian in the service who reads this paper will get mad enough to question what he is doing" (Rarihokwats, quoted in *The Bond*, 1971: 4-5). Most importantly, such publications outlined the movement's needs in terms of support, and included details of how to get involved. Thus, the GI press not only provided Native servicemen who had begun to form radical ideas with more information and encouragement, but also gave them the chance to express those opinions, and to put them into action.

During periods of leave, some Native GIs were exposed to more direct sources of 'contagion'. While on leave in Europe, Ron Wood (2011: 95 + 101-103) met American ex-patriots who were draft-dodgers and advocates of the so-called 'hippy' counter-culture, and later, while visiting Japan, he was forced to confront the fervent anti-war and anti-American feelings that had developed among the people there in the decades since WWII. Both encounters had a profound impact on Wood (2011: 101-104), who began to think differently about what he was doing in Vietnam. "I had become more critical about American involvement in the war", he writes, "my attitude had changed" (Wood, 2011: 104).

Those stationed in the US or back home on leave had, perhaps, the most direct exposure to radical outside influences. Woody Kipp (2004: 51), for instance, first came into

contact with hippies and anti-war protestors while between tours of duty at Camp Pendleton, CA in the summer of 1967. “Growing up Catholic … and serving in the marines had cemented some very conservative ideas in my mind”, Kipp (2004: 51 + 60-61) writes:

> Although I did not join the hippies …, concepts of nonviolence and abhorrence to war began to take root within my consciousness [and] their message that summer never let go. I was beginning to understand that what I had seen and experienced in Vietnam was an atrocity against the human spirit … Whatever potion was inciting the anti-Vietnam protests, the civil rights marches, and the sexual revolution was also working on me.

In Kipp’s (2004: 51 + 60-61) case, this experience of ‘contagion’ was an integral stage of a process of political radicalisation that, as we have seen, was also fuelled by structures of recognition formed in Vietnam – a process that, as we shall see, would eventually lead him into activism.

During the 1969-1971 occupation of Alcatraz Island, CA by Red Power activists, one of the occupiers, Luwana Quitiquit (quoted in Smith & Warrior, 1996: 34), recognised the paradox inherent in the fact that her GI brother, then home on leave from Vietnam, came to offer her and another of their siblings moral support from the side-lines. “Here he was fighting for America”, she reportedly stated, “To come home and support us! It was kind of strange to see him there” (Quitiquit, quoted in Smith & Warrior, 1996: 34). We do not know whether Quitiquit’s (quoted in Smith & Warrior, 1996: 34) brother’s support for the movement ever went beyond this gesture of familial solidarity, but his visit to Alcatraz must have had an influence on his psyche, especially in light of the significance of other such experiences, like that of Kipp (2004: 51 + 60-61) at Camp Pendleton (e.g. Anderson et al, 1974: 194).

For some Native GIs, the experiences outlined above had a profound and lasting ideological influence, one they would carry with them for the remainder of their tours, and beyond. Woody Kipp, Guy Dull Knife, Jr., and Bill Means, for instance, would later resurface

as Red Power activists after leaving the military, and their activities in this respect, as well as those of many other Native veterans, will be discussed in Chapter 3. As we shall see in Chapter 2, there were others who began to put their newly formed radical ideas into action while still in service.

(2) *Dissenters*

As the war dragged on, the radical social movement raging among the civilian population in the US spilled over into the military, and morale and discipline among servicemen stationed in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, including the US itself, diminished to a sometimes mutinous extent (Cortright, 2005; Linden, 1972; Solis, 1989: 124). In increasingly high numbers, GIs engaged in various forms of dissent that ranged from shirking their duties and refusing to obey orders, to unauthorised absence (AWOL) and desertion, to, in more extreme cases, sabotage of military property and the violent assault or even murder of their own colleagues (Cortright, 2005; Fitzgerald, 2002: 422-423; Linden, 1972).

There is little evidence available to us about Native GIs engaging in such radical dissent while serving in Southeast Asia or elsewhere outside of the US. Most of the Native GIs whose stories have been documented did not respond to the psychological influences outlined in Chapter 1 by developing radical ideas or engaging in subversive behaviour. Even those who did begin to develop dissenting opinions about the military and the war – which were, in some cases, sufficient to dissuade them from re-enlisting and pursuing military careers – generally kept such ideas to themselves (e.g. Benavidez, 2005: 81 + 167-173; Birdwell, 2000: 159-168; Cummings, 1998: 134-135 + 196-198 + 266; TeCube, 2000: 62 + 251 + 257-258).

When Ron Wood (2011: 104 + 108) voiced his growing doubts about the morality of the war, his superiors intervened and were able to suppress his concerns, effectively nipping whatever subversive opinions he might have been developing in the bud. “I [was] chastised … counselled … encouraged to be professional … have a positive attitude and finish out my tour in a good way”, he recalls, “I took [these] words to heart and tried to think positive thoughts about my situation [thereafter]” (Wood, 2011: 104 + 108). Danny Bruner (1988a: 114-115) came to regret his own decision not to join in a more conspicuous act of dissent.

"One guy, a city black, … told the lieutenant … he'd had enough … threw down his rifle and [left] on a resupply chopper", Bruner (1988a: 114-115) recalls:

> I remember thinking he was a troublemaker and a coward, but soon I realized he was right. He was streetwise, he understood death and war; he'd seen it back home. I was just a little … Indian boy … playing at war, trying to be a hero. His were the words of wisdom.

Others admit actively breaking the rules while in service, but not with the intention of making a statement of dissent or resistance. A particularly common admission, for instance, is that of going AWOL, in some cases on numerous occasions and for considerable periods of time, but most Native GIs who engaged in such behaviour did so for reasons that were unrelated to the types of psychological turmoil and ideological change outlined in Chapter 1, and, thus, cannot be seen as expressions of dissent (e.g. Mitchell, 2004: 45-65; Walkabout, quoted in Bedard, 1998: 61 + 64-65).

There were exceptions, of course. No stranger to the brig, Woody Kipp (2004: 40-42) spent the final weeks of his second tour in Vietnam locked-up as punishment for his many unauthorised absences out among the local villagers. Kipp's (2004: 42) superiors, who suspected that he was at risk of "going native", eventually decided he had spent long enough in Vietnam, prevented him from re-enlisting for a third tour, and sent him home.

In early 1968, one stateside GI newspaper drew attention to the similar case of a Native draftee, identified only as "Pvt. Nash", apparently stationed in Cam Ranh Bay on the southeast coast of Vietnam, who had recently been sentenced to six-months' hard labour for threatening to kill two of his superiors (*The Bond*, 1968: 4). According to the article, Nash felt "extremely bitter" about having grown up on an impoverished reservation, especially after the government added insult to injury and drafted him into the Army (*The Bond*, 1968: 4). Nash had also formed structures of recognition, and, like Kipp (2004: 42), his affection for the Vietnamese attracted the ire of his superiors.

"He could easily identify with the Vietnamese … living in barricaded villages," we are told, "so when he began to spend more time with them than in his own tent, his platoon leaders tried to punish him with a GI haircut" (*The Bond*, 1968: 4). We are not told which tribe Nash had grown up in, but, in many tribal cultures, hair is sacred, and the threat of having it sheered off under duress is a traumatic prospect – hence, perhaps, Nash's outburst (Waldman, 2009: 76). The dismissive attitudes of military officials towards Native customs, including prohibitions against culturally significant hair-styles and clothing, appear to have been common complaints among Native GIs (e.g. *1st of the Worst*, 1970: 2; *Amex->Canada*, 1973: 19; *Barrage*, 1972: 10).

In early 1972, an appeal surfaced in the GI press from a Native serviceman known as Red Sun, who had also fallen foul of military policy concerning hair length while serving on an Air Force base in Japan (*The 1st Amendment*, 1972: 4; *Omega Press*, 1972: 11). In response to what he saw as the abuse of his religious freedoms, Red Sun (quoted in *The 1st Amendment*, 1972: 4) – originally Michael Smith – began to go by his tribal name, and declared that he had taken it upon himself to raise awareness about the "discrimination and moral injustice" that Native GIs had to endure. "[U]nfortunately", Red Sun (quoted in *The 1st Amendment*, 1972: 4) wrote, "I'm fighting alone":

> I am in great need of hearing from my brothers and sisters in other services no matter where you are … We must make contact … so that although we are separated by a great many miles, we can communicate … to make the basis of our revolution and regain our souls that have been repressed by the military.

The fundamental basis of this "revolution", Red Sun (quoted in *The 1st Amendment*, 1972: 4) declared, was that "Indian people should have no part in nor have to put up with the atrocities of the Armed Forces." As such, Red Sun's message was effectively a call for a coordinated, international movement of Native GIs who would be willing to stand together and oppose the conduct of the US military towards both its own Native personnel and the Vietnamese.

During the occupation of Wounded Knee, SD by Red Power activists in 1973, the occupiers received a phone-call from a group of twelve Native GIs then serving with the Army in Vietnam who expressed their desire to participate (Banks & Erdoes, 2011: 190; Zimmerman, 1976: 233). “They told us … they realized now that the real war was at home,” a leading occupier said, “that they have no business fighting over on somebody else’s property in some foreign country, and that they wished … they were there at Wounded Knee” (Banks, quoted in Zimmerman, 1976: 233).

The group must have been on leave to be able to get together and make the call, and this might be taken as an indication that, while on leave, Natives serving abroad were sometimes able to organise, albeit in a very modest sense, to engage in subversive behaviour specific to the interests of their own demographic. As Hunkpapa Marine John Luke Flyinghorse (2016) observed, Native GIs serving in Vietnam, whenever possible, “always looked each other up, no matter what tribe we were from.” Generally, however, Native servicemen, being in the extreme minority and rarely serving in close proximity to one another, appear to have been unable to establish even small-scale local groups, let alone the kind of international network hinted at in Red Sun’s (quoted in *The 1st Amendment*, 1972: 4) appeal.

Dwight Birdwell’s (& Nolan, 2000: 126) aforementioned encounter with Black Power advocates, and the general acceptance of Natives into Chicano social groups, indicates that, in some cases, Native GIs stationed abroad may have been able to join in with the radical activities of black and Chicano groups. Natives were also almost certainly – if only on the grounds of statistical inevitability – involved with some of the larger multi-ethnic organisations of radical GIs, as well as some of the major mutinies and GI protest events of the era, but the primary evidence that would give us an idea of their numbers, or allow us to better understand their involvement, is not forthcoming.

In relation to Native GIs serving back in the States, on the other hand, there is much more evidence available to us. Moreover, this evidence indicates that, within the US at least, Red Sun's (quoted in *The 1st Amendment*, 1972: 4) vision of a coordinated Native GI resistance movement was, if only for a brief moment, realised. While the war itself was no more popular among Natives than among other demographics, draft-evasion and other forms of resistance to military authority were frowned upon, and particularly uncommon, likely because military service was an important, even essential, element of many tribal cultures, having become intertwined over the centuries with older, traditional conceptions of warriorhood and rights of passage (Carroll, 2008: 147-150; Holden, quoted in Lemay, 2012; Holm, 1996: 23 + 117-122).

In a 1968 interview, Spirit Lake Native rights advocate Alvina Alberts (quoted in Gershen, 1968: 14) gave voice to the prevailing opinion in Indian Country concerning military service. Alberts (quoted in Gershen, 1968: 14) stated that she, as the mother of three servicemen, one of whom had recently been killed in Vietnam, had thereby earned her role as a spokeswoman for her people, and expressed her romantic, but commonly held, opinion that Native military service was somehow a continuation or modern equivalent of tribal warrior traditions:

> I'm not bitter about my boy dying … He died for a good cause … You see, we have no Indian draft dodgers or Indians w[h]o burn draft cards. When it's time to go, you go. Just like in the old days when the chief said it was time to go on the warpath and the young men went.

The "good cause" to which Alberts (quoted in Gershen, 1968: 14) was referring here was not the Vietnam War itself, but, rather, her son's fulfilment of what she saw as the obligation of a Native *warrior* to answer the call of duty. However, Alberts' (quoted in Gershen, 1968: 14) romantic sentiments about military service, though very common among Natives, were not universal, and her assertions were not entirely correct (Two Hawk, quoted in McKenna, 1972: 9). As we have seen, not all Native GIs and veterans were proud of what

they were doing or had done in Southeast Asia, and some of those who had yet to serve there did not relish the prospect.

Contrary to prevailing opinion, some reservation communities reportedly provided sanctuary to draft-evaders throughout the war (*Ann Arbor Sun*, 1976: 26). At the so-called 'Spring Mobilization' in New York City in April 1967, during which Martin Luther King, Jr. famously first spoke out against the war, a one hundred-strong "contingent" of Natives came from the Rosebud Reservation, SD to demonstrate their opposition to the war and the drafting of Natives to fight in it (Hunt, 2001: 6-7; *Roundup of Nationwide Mobilization Activity*, 1967: 5; Sorin, 1967: 14). "The more I see of [US] policy towards … Vietnam," then-Rosebud tribal chairman Robert Burnette (quoted in *Roundup of Nationwide Mobilization Activity*, 1967: 5) declared, "the more it reminds me of the way Indians ended up on reservations. We know now that our battleground is here in our motherland."

Individual cases of Native GIs who resisted being sent to fight in Southeast Asia also surfaced in the press, such as that of Shoshone draftee Richard Williams, who defied orders to ship out to Vietnam in mid-1967. Facing court-martial, Williams turned to his tribal council, some of whom agreed to back his cause (*Berkeley Barb*, 1967a: 3). In the process, the Shoshone leaders took the opportunity to raise their issues with the conscription of Natives more generally, which, like many throughout Indian Country, they believed to be an illegal breach of historic treaties made between Native tribes and the US (*Berkeley Barb*, 1967a: 3; Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy, 2015: 160).

Williams' decision to stand against the Selective Service authorities earned him the support of radicals, Native and non-Native alike, from across the country, and the services of J.B. Tietz, an attorney who specialised in defending conscientious objectors, were secured by a Los Angeles-based pro-Red Power organisation called the Traditional Indian Land and Life Committee (*Berkeley Barb*, 1967b: 7; *Berkeley Barb*, 1967c: 7). "[A] treaty Indian", the defence declared, "is neither a citizen of the United States nor a resident alien within the

meaning of [the] Universal Military Training and Service Act" (*Sarasota Journal*, 1967: 9). Thus, Williams (quoted in *Sarasota Journal*, 1967: 9) argued, he and other Native draftees should never have been conscripted in the first place, let alone be compelled to go into a warzone.

Crucially, this argument echoed those being made by Red Power advocates concerning other disputes between Natives and the government over such contentious issues as the rights to land and resources. If the federal courts would not uphold what he saw as the government's end of the treaties, Williams (quoted in *St. Petersburg Times*, 1967: 2A) threatened to take his case to the UN, "to tell what the white man has done to the American Indian." In concluding his testimony, Williams (quoted in *Berkeley Barb*, 1967c: 7) reportedly told the board officer, "I'm an American Indian and you're standing on my land, boy."

By relying on the idea that Natives were not properly US citizens, however, Williams and his supporters were bound to fail, because in the eyes of the government all Natives *were* citizens, and had been since 1924 (*News Notes of the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors*, 1967: 2). Consequently, Williams lost the case, and was sentenced to five-years' hard labour (*Berkeley Barb*, 1967a: 3; *St. Petersburg Times*, 1967: 2A). Although his attempt to challenge the Selective Service system had failed, Williams' case had briefly drawn the attention of both the mainstream and radical medias to Native ideas about conscription, and his supporters vowed to continue his campaign against the draft (*Berkeley Barb*, 1967a: 3; Smith, 2012: 82).

The most well-known Native GI to publicly raise his objections to the war and his complaints about the military during his time in service was not a draftee, but an enlisted man – Yakima-Cherokee paratrooper Sid Mills. Over the course of nearly two-and-a-half years of service, Mills (quoted in Rosier, 2009: 244) had developed moral doubts about the war, and would later claim to have witnessed and heard about "many My Lais" while serving

in Vietnam. “[I]t’s not an invading army we’re hurting”, he stated, “It’s the women and especially the children we’re outright murdering” (quoted in Rosier, 2009: 244).

While on medical leave at Fort Lewis, WA in 1968, Mills’ eyes were opened to what had been happening while he was away. Tribes in the Pacific Northwest were engaged in a struggle with local authorities for the right to engage in traditional fishing practices – a right that had, they argued, been secured by historic treaties (Wilkinson, 2006). Mills (1999: 24-25) had friends and family in the movement, many of whom, including women and children, he soon learned, had been arrested and brutalised by the authorities while he had been away fighting in Vietnam.

Mills’ friend and fellow Yakima GI Richard Sohappy, who at the time of Mills’ return was back in Vietnam serving his third tour of duty there, had racked up an extensive criminal record for his involvement with fishing rights protests (Fisher, 2010: 221-223; Mills, 1999: 24). Mills (1999: 23-24) felt that there was a disconnect between the fact that a decorated combat veteran, who had risked his life in service of the US, would return home only to be beaten and jailed by the police for trying to serve his family and community through what he believed were legitimate, treaty-assured, means. Mills’ already fragile allegiance to the military was being strained to breaking point. “It was a matter of working for a government that was oppressing you”, he later stated, “It didn't make any sense” (Mills, quoted in Johansen, 2013: 192).

Moreover, at the time of Mills’ return, Fort Lewis was developing into a major centre of the GI movement in the US, and it is likely that he was exposed to the subversive influence of other radical GIs on the base, and that, in turn, he, as a veteran, might have exerted an even more powerful influence on those around him – the ‘contagion effect’ worked both ways (Carbonella, 2016: 128; Cortright, 2005: 76-77 + 85-86). Indeed, as a wounded combat veteran, Mills’ superiors would likely have considered him to be particularly dangerous in terms of the subversive influence that men like himself could have

on younger, less experienced GIs – in some cases, GIs who were yet to be sent abroad were told to stay away from combat veterans when they returned from the war, and the influx of these traumatised, and often embittered, individuals has been connected to increases in radicalism on Stateside bases (Cortright, 2005: 27 + 85-86 + 247).

In response to his surroundings, Mills (1999: 22-23) was moved to make "a decision of conscience, of commitment and allegiance". On October 13, 1968, he issued an important statement, one that would transform him into what one contemporary GI newspaper called "a symbol of GI struggle for Indians" (*Column Left,* 1970: 21). Mills (1999: 22-26) severed whatever loyalties he still had to the Army, effectively declared he would not be returning to Vietnam, and announced that his moral obligations were now for the movement, and the movement only. "I renounce, and no longer consider myself under, the … jurisdiction of the U.S. Army", Mills (1999: 23) declared:

> I have served the United States in a less compelling struggle in Vietnam and will not be restricted from doing less for my people … The U.S. would have accepted sacrifice of my life in Vietnam in a less legitimate cause … Yet I have my life and am now prepared to stand in another battle … I have given enough to the U.S. Army – I now choose to serve my people.

Mills soon became an important local icon of both Red Power and GI resistance. In early 1969, he spoke at a number of radical GI gatherings in the Seattle/Tacoma area (Smith, 2012: 178). One such event was the 'Anti-war Basic Training Days', a conference organised by the GI-Civilian Alliance for Peace (GI-CAP), held from April 5-6, 1969 at the Moore Theater in Seattle, where Mills spoke alongside more seasoned radicals from groups like the Black Panthers and the Young Socialist Alliance (*Counterpoint!*, 1969: 4). The content of Mills' contribution to the GI-CAP conference is, unfortunately, unrecorded, so we cannot know for sure whether or not he brought up Native issues, but, given his reasons for leaving the Army, and the way in which he is referred to in press coverage of the event as "an Indian rights fighter", it is very likely that he did (*Huachuca Hard Times*, 1969: 5; *The Student Mobilizer*, 1969: 2).

Still an active GI when he entered the movement, Mills' involvement in fishing rights protests soon attracted the attention of military authorities, and he eventually found himself in the Fort Lewis stockade on AWOL charges, a reminder that, although he might have considered his commitments to the Army null and void, the Army itself did not – he would ultimately have to wait until mid-1970 before he could obtain a satisfactory discharge (Adams, 2011b: 185; *The Bond*, 1969: 3; *Eugene-Register Guard*, 1972: 10A; Johansen, 2013: 192). Undeterred, Mills was soon working closely alongside one of the *de facto* leaders of the fishing rights movement, Hank Adams, who was himself a reluctant veteran of the Vietnam era.

When Adams had been drafted back in early 1964, he was already involved in Red Power activism in the Pacific Northwest, and attempted to resist conscription, arguing that, while their treaty rights went unrecognised, Natives should not be forced to serve in the armed forces (Gridley, 1972: 4; Johansen, 2013: 3). His stance was unpopular with the local tribal establishments, and contributed towards their official disavowal of he and his fellow fishing rights activists, who were already seen as dangerous, fringe figures by many tribal leaders (Olson, 1984: 212).

Adams ultimately lost his fight, and served in the Army for two years (Johansen, 2013: 3). After returning from service, Adams' (2011a: 64-65; 2011b: 185-186) determination had only increased, and he continued to consider the issues surrounding the war, especially the drafting of Natives to fight in it, as inextricably connected to his work with the fishing rights protests and the wider Red Power movement (Gridley, 1972: 4-5 + 7-8). Over the following years, he continued to back Native efforts to resist the draft, most notably that of the Puyallup tribe, who, in 1970, passed an ordinance prohibiting the conscription of Puyallup men on the grounds that they should not be compelled to serve a government that was neglecting and abusing their people – much the same grounds as those on which Adams' own case had earlier rested (Adams, 2011a: 64-65; Gridley, 1972: 4-5).

Throughout the 1960s, such cases of Native draft-resistance and dissent within the military were few and far between (Smith, 2012: 82). They were not coordinated, and do not appear to have been part of a national, or even regional, Native GI resistance movement. As the conflict in Southeast Asia dragged on, however, opposition to the war became more widespread, and, by the end of the decade, the Red Power movement had begun to make its presence felt on a national stage, sending a wave of renewed pride in Native identity and culture across the country (Morningstorm, 2004: xvi). In this changing social climate, a more coordinated network of dissenting Native GIs, who endorsed Red Power ideas alongside a more general resistance to military and state authority, as well as the war itself, emerged in the Pacific Northwest.

Around the time Sid Mills was making his first forays into Red Power and GI activism, Wasco draftee and fellow Fort Lewis GI Deni Leonard (quoted in *Fed Up!*, 1970a: 4) was a "fairly gung ho recruit" in basic training. Confronted with training films that he felt glorified the Indian Wars, Leonard (quoted in *Fed-Up*, 1970a: 4) soon changed his tune, and formed a structure of recognition, concluding that Natives and Vietnamese had been treated similarly by the US military, and deciding that he could not conscionably go to fight other oppressed non-white people (*The Bond*, 1970a: 1 + 3). He raised these issues with superiors, but his protestations were repressed, and when he was ordered to ship out to Vietnam, he deserted (*The Bond*, 1970a: 1 + 3; Leonard, quoted in *Fed-Up*, 1970a: 4). Eventually court-martialled, Leonard turned to the treaty argument – once again, it failed, and he was sentenced to six months in the stockade at the Presidio, in San Francisco, CA (Leonard, quoted in *Fed-Up*, 1970a: 4).

On January 21, 1970, Leonard, now free from prison and a committed organiser for GI resistance, primarily with the Fort Lewis chapter of the American Servicemen's Union (ASU), "testified" against the Army at a mock-trial staged by dissenting GIs in Tacoma, WA (*The Bond*, 1970: 1 + 3; *Fed-Up*, 1970a: 4). Leonard (quoted in *The Bond*, 1970: 1; quoted in *Fed-Up*, 1970a: 4) explained his reasons for refusing to go to Vietnam, again drawing

connections between contemporary and historic acts of "genocide" committed against Vietnamese and Natives respectively. He also told of his harrowing experiences in the Presidio stockade, and of meeting the 'Presidio 27', a famous group of GI anti-war protestors, to whom he apparently explained the structures of recognition he had formed during service (Leonard, quoted in *Fed-Up*, 1970a: 4). "[The US Army] wiped out a lot of my people and started taking their land", Leonard (quoted in *Fed-Up*, 1970a: 4) told them, "And I thought, I'm being used to wipe out other people and take their land."

"A jury of … active-duty soldiers", we are told, "found the military 'guilty' on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity and violations of soldiers' rights" (*The Bond*, 1970a: 1). The sentence was "death", and Leonard soon began efforts to carry it out, defying his superiors' attempts to repress dissent by holding a meeting with fellow Fort Lewis GIs about the results of the trial (Rader, 1970: 3). What is more, all those involved in the mock-trial had "stressed their sympathy" for the Vietnamese – not only the civilian populace, but also the Communist insurgents – and this too was soon acted upon (*The Bond*, 1970a: 1).

On January 31, in Vancouver, Canada, a group of Fort Lewis ASU members met and exchanged gestures of friendship with delegates from the Vietnamese National Liberation Front – representatives of one of the US military's principle enemies in Southeast Asia, the 'Viet Cong' (Rader, 1970: 3). We are not told whether Leonard went with them, but, as a leading figure in the Fort Lewis ASU, he was almost certainly involved. In less than a year, then, Leonard had gone from entering the Army as a 'gung ho' recruit, to being willing to engage in – or at least associate himself with – one of the most radical, near-treasonous, acts of intra-military dissent imaginable, all as a result of him forming structures of recognition, and all without even setting foot in Southeast Asia.

In the February 26, 1970 issue of *Fed Up!*, a GI newspaper produced by the Fort Lewis ASU, Leonard (1970a: 8) issued "an appeal to all my GI Indian Brothers to consider who you are and how tragic a situation we are now a part [of]":

> The winning of the West meant the Genocide of the American Indian. The winning of Vietnam means the Genocide of the Vietnamese … Our people were murdered by this very Army we are now serving with! Is there an alternative? Can we somehow stop working for these Killers and start working for our INDIAN PEOPLE. I don't have any pride serving in the … Army and feel … imprisoned [at] Ft. Lewis. Refuse to be Brain-washed into believing you're protecting the country the Army forcibly stole from you.

At the foot of his appeal, and again during a speech at Fort Lewis two days later, Leonard (1970a: 8) announced the foundation of a Fort Lewis-based, all-Native organisation called Hey-Tra-Sneyo[1], or the Indian GI Resistance Movement, formed earlier that month with the objective of advising and assisting all Native servicemen (*Fed Up!*, 1970b: 2; *Liberation News Service*, 1970: 7).

In the April 15 issue of *Fed Up!* (1970b: 6), an unnamed spokesperson – most likely Leonard, who was a student prior to being drafted, a capable writer, and a regular contributor to ASU publications – laid out Hey-Tra-Sneyo's core philosophy. According to this article, a manifesto of sorts, the organisation stood in opposition to racism and imperialism, and advocated for the preservation of Native treaty rights, the revival of Native cultures and religions, a renewal of pride in Native identity, and "unity among our people" (*Fed Up!*, 1970b: 6). As such, Hey-Tra-Sneyo was more than just a group of dissenting GIs – it also stood for Red Power, and its leaders appear to have viewed their advocacy of Native GI resistance within the context of the wider Red Power movement.

The manifesto referred to the US military as enforcers of white supremacy, representatives of "the INVADERS", from whom Natives should be protected, not drafted to serve (*Fed Up!*, 1970b: 6). Hey-Tra-Sneyo's overarching objective was to apply an understanding of the histories, cultures, and treaty rights of all tribes to their work in providing Native GIs who were unwilling to serve, and/or being subjected to repression,

[1] Originally named Hey-Kecaw-Na-Yo.

with protection and legal assistance (*Fed Up!*, 1970b: 6). Ultimately, they also hoped to make all Natives exempt from the draft (*Fed Up!*, 1970b: 6). "Indian servicemen are a small part of the Armed Services," the manifesto acknowledged, "but we are … standing for our people and standing for our rights" (*Fed Up!*, 1970b: 6).

Convinced that the military had brainwashed Natives into serving their own oppressors, Hey-Tra-Sneyo felt they had been "called upon by our ancestral 'Warrior' predecessors to rise and make our voices heard" – a subversive interpretation of Native traditions of warriorhood that was very different to that of less radical Natives like the aforementioned Alvina Alberts (quoted in Gershen, 1968: 14), but directly in line with that of the Red Power movement (*Fed Up!*, 1970b: 6). What is more, they endorsed a militant approach. "Indian people are tired of begging for what belongs to them", the manifesto asserted, "Indian youth are … no longer begging; we demand or take!" (*Fed Up!*, 1970b: 6).

This line of thinking had already been put into practice in March 1970, when Hey-Tra-Sneyo lent its support to a series of protests at another nearby military installation. Red Power activists from the Seattle-based United Indians of All Tribes (UIAT) were attempting to reclaim soon-to-be surplus land at Fort Lawton, WA, on which they hoped to build a cultural and educational center (Whitebear, 1994). The government planned to transfer the land to city authorities, causing UIAT, who believed the land to be theirs by treaty right, to stage several occupations of the facility in protest (Whitebear, 1994). On March 14, Hey-Tra-Sneyo launched a subsidiary demonstration at Fort Lewis (*Fed Up!*, 1970b: 4).

We know nothing of the organisation's leadership structure, but at Fort Lewis, they appear to have been represented primarily by Deni Leonard (Whitebear, 1994: 5). In the weeks following its foundation and leading up to the Fort Lewis protest, Hey-Tra-Sneyo had forged connections with leading figures in other spheres of the radical community. Leonard had visited Alcatraz Island, CA, then under occupation by Red Power protestors, a contingent of whom would then come to help at Forts Lewis and Lawton (*The Bond*, 1970d:

1). One contemporary news report about the actress and anti-war spokeswoman Jane Fonda's involvement with the protest tells of her meetings with representatives of local Native fishing rights, land rights, and prison rights organisations, alongside "red-bereted members of an Indian GI resistance group" – undoubtedly Hey-Tra-Sneyo (Dunphy, 1970: A20).

Accordingly, Hey-Tra-Sneyo's agenda at Fort Lewis was twofold. As signified by their red berets, they hoped to show solidarity with UIAT, and to draw police attention away from Fort Lawton, where activists, including Sid Mills, who was still an active GI at this time, had allegedly been physically assaulted by the authorities (Johansen, 2013: 141 + 192; *Fed Up!*, 1970b: 4 + 9). In addition to this Red Power agenda, Hey-Tra-Sneyo was, at its core, a GI's organisation, and was supported at Fort Lewis by non-Native GIs and civilian peace activists – including Fonda – in making a stand against the war, the draft, and the treatment of Native servicemen (*The Bulletin*, 1970: 1; *Fed Up!*, 1970b: 4 + 9).

Hey-Tra-Sneyo picketers carried signs that connected the Indians Wars with Vietnam, essentially articulating structures of recognition, including "No Vietnamese ever murdered my People or Stole My Land", and "Custer Had It Coming, So Does Gen. Pearson" (*Fed Up!*, 1970b: 4). They proclaimed their support for UIAT, and handed out leaflets to the public about the hardships faced by Native communities (*Fed Up!*, 1970b: 4). After five hours, during which time they managed to disrupt activities at the base, and attract the attention of the authorities and the media, Hey-Tra-Sneyo joined UIAT at Fort Lawton – where the occupiers' claims were eventually recognised, resulting in the foundation of the Daybreak Star Cultural Center, still in operation to this day (*Fed Up!*, 1970b: 4; Whitebear, 1994: 5).

Thus, Hey-Tra-Sneyo's contribution to the Fort Lewis, and, to a lesser extent, Fort Lawton protests, just like the organisation itself, must be seen as a synchronisation of Red Power and GI resistance agendas – and an effective one, at that. Due to their focus on treaty

rights, Native advocates of GI resistance were by default also advocates of Red Power, and at Forts Lewis and Lawton Hey-Tra-Sneyo was an integral member of a "coalition" of Native treaty and civil rights groups from throughout the US and Canada (Whitebear, 1994: 5). As such, Hey-Tra-Sneyo might reasonably be described as a servicemen's wing of Red Power – an idea that has not surfaced elsewhere, perhaps because we know so little about the organisation, and even less about Native GI resistance more generally, let alone how it might have fed into Red Power.

Historians have noted the existence of Hey-Tra-Sneyo, but thus far have been unable to analyse its activities in any detail, probably because relevant source material is so elusive (Cortright, 2005: 77 + 329; Kindig, 2008; Rosier, 2009: 243). The organisation put out a publication called *Yah-Hoh*, about which we know nothing other than the fact it was "published briefly during the summer of 1970" – no copies appear to have been archived or otherwise made available (*RITA Notes*, 1974: 6). The distribution of a "newsletter … [to] bases, reservations and organizations" appears on a list of objectives in the *Fed Up!* (1970: 6) manifesto, so *Yah-Hoh* was clearly intended for a wide readership. As GI movement historian and former participant David Cortright (2005: 239-240) tells us, newspapers and newsletters were "the best means available for communicating with other GIs." However, short-lived as it was, *Yah-Hoh* was likely never circulated as widely as its producers intended, if at all outside of the Seattle/Tacoma area.

The number of Native servicemen who came to the organisation for help is also unknown, and we have no idea how effective it might have been in this respect. As we have seen, the reliance on treaty rights had failed in the past, and Hey-Tra-Sneyo would need a fresh approach if they were to be more successful at keeping Native GIs out of Southeast Asia. At any rate, as was typical of Vietnam-era GI groups, the organisation does not appear to have been active for very long. After the spring of 1970, aside from a couple of outdated references, Hey-Tra-Sneyo ceased to exist as far as the press was concerned (e.g. *Liberation News Service,* 1970: 7; *RITA Notes*, 1974: 6; United States Servicemen's Fund, 1971: 8). Deni Leonard continued his work with both the Red Power and GI resistance movements for

some time after the Lawton-Lewis protests, even after his subversive activities earned him an 'unfit' discharge from the Army in mid-1970, but none of the stories about him, nor any of his own writings, ever mentioned Hey-Tra-Sneyo again (*The Bond*, 1970c: 4; GI Alliance, 1970: 1).

If Hey-Tra-Sneyo itself was short-lived, its legacy may not have been. Janet McCloud, a leading fishing rights activist and early associate of Hey-Tra-Sneyo, became deeply involved with Native GI resistance in the Pacific Northwest, and continued to be so long after Hey-Tra-Sneyo had faded into obscurity. "[Native GIs] are going to jail", she once declared, "rather than help King Cong fight the Viet Cong" (McCloud, quoted in Rosier, 2009: 243). Throughout the early 1970s, McCloud hosted a radio show where she discussed the issues surrounding Native military service – which came highly recommended by Deni Leonard (1970a: 8) – on Seattle-based *KRAB FM*, and ran an operation out of the Native American Free University (NAFU) in Yelm, WA that functioned in much the same capacity as Hey-Tra-Sneyo, providing advice and assistance to Native GIs. With a view to spreading awareness, McCloud (quoted in *KRAB Program Guide*, 1973) and her associates at NAFU also produced a booklet for wider circulation entitled 'Winning the Peace', a collection of "all educational materials we have been able to gather concerning Native people and the draft."

Like Hey-Tra-Sneyo, McCloud (quoted in *KRAB Program Guide*, 1973) and co. believed that Natives should be exempt from conscription, and in February 1973, they issued an "S.O.S. message to all people of peace", asking for support from *KRAB* listeners with the ongoing legal defence of a relative of hers, Umatilla draftee Michael McCloud – better known as Sumac (*Amex->Canada*, 1973: 19). Drafted in early 1970, Sumac quickly developed a disdain for the violence and racism of Army life, and in April 1970 he went AWOL from Fort Lewis (*Amex->Canada*, 1973: 19; *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 1974: 28). By the time authorities caught up with him in August 1972, he had been absent for more than two years (*Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 1974: 28). Awaiting AWOL charges at Fort Ord, CA, Sumac wrote an open letter to his commanding officer (*Amex->Canada*, 1973: 19; *Great Speckled Bird*, 1972: 15).

In his statement, Sumac, who had a close family connection to the fishing rights movement and appears to have been an advocate of Red Power prior to being drafted, once again invoked the treaty argument (Adams, 2011a: 64-65; *Amex->Canada*, 1973: 18). "I am … a natural born citizen of the Umatilla … Nations", Sumac (quoted in *Amex->Canada*, 1973: 18) declared, "[who] have an existing … treaty with the [US, and] to my knowledge have not declared war upon any nation":

> I wish to remain loyal to my people … and to remain at … peace with all … nations. My conscience will not allow me to be used as an instrument to destroy other people or property because it is against the things I have been taught by my family, … tribal elders, and … spiritual leaders.

His words echoed those of his allies at NAFU, who had clearly helped him compose the statement (*Amex->Canada*, 1973: 18-19). Former draft-resister Hank Adams (2011a: 64-65), a close associate of Janet McCloud and other members of Sumac's family, including his grandfather, leading fishing rights advocate Willie Frank, Sr., also lent his support to the case. "It is not fitting that 93-year-old Willie Frank should be compelled repeatedly to appear in State and Federal courts to protect his rights and properties", Adams (2011a: 64-65) declared, "yet find his grandchildren dragged off by the [US] to serve in its military, or [else] be faced with lengthy sentences in military stockades". The Army offered Sumac a way out – an 'undesirable' discharge – but he insisted upon defending his side of the larger dispute over Natives and draft-exemption at court-martial (*Amex->Canada*, 1973: 18-19; *Fed Up!*, 1973a: 9).

During the subsequent proceedings, Sumac's legal counsel adopted a new approach to an old argument, through which they hoped to settle the dispute between Natives and the government over conscription "once and for all" (*Amex->Canada*, 1973: 19). As we have seen, the snag of previous attempts to invoke treaty rights in draft-resistance cases was the fact that, by virtue first of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, and then a string of confirmatory acts over the following decades, all Natives were officially considered US

citizens, and thus eligible for the draft (*Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 1974: 28). Sumac's legal team, however, argued that existing legislation regarding Native citizenship was unconstitutional, and that Natives who considered themselves citizens of their own tribes, like Sumac, should not be compelled to submit to US citizenship if they chose to reject it (*Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 1974: 28). Inevitably, the outcome was not in their favour, and Sumac was dishonourably discharged (*Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 1974: 28).

We do not know if Janet McCloud and her colleagues at NAFU ever organised Native GIs to take part in protests, but their work, though perhaps more intellectual, and less militant, than that of Hey-Tra-Sneyo, had a similarly hybridised political agenda – equal parts Red Power and GI resistance. Thus, McCloud's work may have in part represented an effort to take up the mantle of Hey-Tra-Sneyo, which, as we have seen, had disappeared from view, and most likely disbanded, by the end of 1970, if not earlier. Evidence of similar organisations elsewhere in the US, outside of the Pacific Northwest, is not forthcoming. This begs the question – why might the Pacific Northwest have been the only region in which a coordinated Native GI resistance movement took root during the Vietnam War?

Firstly, the Pacific Northwest has a fairly large Native population, and during the Vietnam era there was a well-established support base for Red Power among the various tribes in the region, many of which were at that time united in their pursuit of a common goal – fishing rights. Secondly, by the early 1970s, there was an equally well-established GI movement in the region, centered around Fort Lewis, which appears to have housed a substantial population of Native GIs who were members of local tribes. While there were other regions with higher Native populations, other regions with thriving Red Power movements, and other regional centres of GI resistance, in the Pacific Northwest all three of these factors appear to have come into play at just the right time. Hence, perhaps, the success of Native GI organisers like Sid Mills and Deni Leonard, the emergence of Hey-Tra-Sneyo at Fort Lewis, and the work of Janet McCloud and co. at *KRAB* and NAFU.

As American military involvement in the war wound down throughout 1970-1973, the government moved towards creating an all-volunteer military, and with it an end to conscription, and thus the wider GI resistance movement lost momentum as the war, and the draft, drew to a close (Cortright, 2005: 85 + 238 + 271-272). While legal cases involving individual Native draft-resisters continued throughout the later years of the war and beyond, any large-scale, pan-tribal, coordinated campaign of resistance to military authority by Native GIs – which, as we have seen, likely never existed outside of the Pacific Northwest – seems to have dissipated, despite the efforts of McCloud and co., after the dramatic events of 1969-1970.

(3) *Veterans*

As we have seen, those Natives who got involved with GI resistance while serving – or avoiding service – in the US also became, as a matter of course, Red Power activists. In entering the Red Power movement, they were joined by recently discharged Native veterans, whose own experiences of military service, though often drastically different to those of domestic GIs – especially in the cases of those who had seen combat in Southeast Asia – had led to similar changes in the way they thought about Native identity, history, and politics. Moreover, these processes of ideological change did not end when they left the service, and continued as they attempted to make the difficult readjustment from military to civilian life.

Across much of Indian Country, veterans were treated with respect when they returned from service, regardless of how they or their communities felt about the war (Bruner, 1988b: 159; Smith, quoted in Murg, 2011b; Swinney, quoted in Chickasaw Nation, 2014). In mainstream society, however, particularly towards the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s, increasingly widespread opposition to the war was often misdirected towards returning veterans. As Anishinaabe ex-Marine Jim Northrup (1997: 205) puts it, he and his peers were "the visible symbol of the failure of America's policies".

Many Native veterans who served overseas recall meeting with a cold reception, and sometimes active hostility and abuse, especially from anti-war protestors, when they arrived back in the States – experiences that they often resented (e.g. Cano, quoted in Armitage, 2014; Combs, quoted in Murg, 2011a; Flyinghorse, 2016; Morningstorm, 2004: 12-14; Murg, 2011c; TeCube, 2000: 259; Walkabout, quoted in Bedard, 1998: 63; Walker, 2013). "We [had] fought a white man's war," one Native veteran said, "and the first thing that happens when I get back is that some white kid … spits on me" (Holm, 1989: 65).

For many Native veterans, such experiences can only have added to the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). While PTSD is a universal problem among veterans, studies have found that the onset and severity of the disorder depends to a significant extent on the nature of their service, which during the Vietnam era could in turn depend on race. Intra-military racism has been causally linked to higher rates of PTSD among minority veterans, as has combat experience (Beals, 2002; Loo et al, 2001; Scurfield, 2006: 83-84).

Native GIs, being subject to ISS, were disproportionately involved in combat, leading to noticeably high rates of PTSD among Native veterans after their return from the war (Holm, 1996: 9). The disorder, characterised by flashbacks, insomnia, social alienation, and depression, among other debilitating symptoms, had not yet been properly recognised during the Vietnam era, and several of our sources highlight the lack of support available to them when they returned home (e.g. Barse, 2016; Holm, 1989: 65; Mitchell, 2004: 79-80; Murg, 2011d; Wood, 2011: 106).

Those veterans who came from reservation communities often received a warmer welcome than those who had to make their way in the non-Native world, but, because of the controversy surrounding their service, the nature of their return from the war, much like the nature of the war itself, could be troubling for those with traditional sensibilities. “They returned separately, usually at night,” Holm (1996: 169-171) tells us, “slipping silently back home, just as their warrior ancestors had done only in defeat.” Moreover, on most reservations, socio-economic conditions were dire – indeed, many had enlisted in an attempt to escape such problems, and now returned to find that things had, in many cases, gotten even worse while they had been away (Johnson, 1996: 32).

Struggling to find work as “an Indian in a white-run town”, Darrell New Plenty Stars (& Evans, 2008: 27-28) returned to the Pine Ridge Reservation, SD, which was in a bad way. “I became aware for the first time just how trapped my people were”, he writes, “poverty, sickness, alcohol, … drugs … [and] hopelessness. There were times when it felt as though I

was … watching some cruel play unfold – a play I knew would have no happy ending" (New Plenty Stars & Evans, 2008: 28-29). In the face of such despair, he, like many others, turned to drink (New Plenty Stars & Evans, 2008: 29-43).

LaDue (1983: 5) quotes a Native veteran from the Pacific Northwest, who, like the aforementioned Sid Mills, returned from Vietnam only to find himself in another "war zone", in which his people were fighting and dying in the dispute over fishing rights. "I am a treaty fisherman, an American Indian and a Vietnam combat veteran", LaDue's (1983: 5) veteran stated, "I've got three strikes against me":

> I saw things in Vietnam I can't forget, people dying because of me. Then I came home to the reservation and I see my people die and I can't stop it. It's like a war zone all over again. Sometimes I feel like my whole life has been a war.

While on some reservations, veterans, with their leadership expertise and greater experience of the outside world, were naturally seen as potential leaders and spokespeople, they still needed to find work, and, thus, many left their reservation communities, availing themselves of the incentives made available to them by the Relocation Act, and moved to urban areas (Johnson, 1996: 32; Loew, quoted in Fischer, 2007: 41). However, they often found little in the way of infrastructure to help them adjust to the more "cutthroat" nature of urban life (Anderson et al, 1974: 61).

Racism barred their access to stable employment, and they were further disadvantaged by their association with an increasingly unpopular war, as well as the psychological issues and social stigma concomitant with PTSD – as Larry Mitchell (2004: 59-60 + 68-69 + 81) puts it, outside of their own communities, Native veterans like himself were effectively "blacklisted" (Cano, quoted in Armitage, 2014; Hernandez, 2016; Johnson, 1996: 32). Moreover, for those who had expressed radical ideas and displayed subversive tendencies during service, or who had simply fallen foul of increasingly strict military laws,

finding employment and gaining access to veterans' benefits would be even more difficult (Cortright, 2005: 232-233; Wetherholt, 2013).

In short, Native veterans faced an uphill struggle. "All doors normally opened", one observer declared in strong terms, "have been slammed shut in their faces. The only doors the Indian veteran finds open are racial discrimination, unemployment, slum housing, broken families, suicide, alcohol and skid row" (Petite, quoted in Smith & Warrior, 1996: 292-293). Faced with such dire circumstances, Native veterans naturally sought for a way to improve things, and for some this would lead them into radical territory.

Many turned to university education, often taking advantage of the financial assistance made available to them under the remit of the GI Bill (Johnson, 1996: 32; Rios, 2008: 45). University campuses were centres of radical political activity during the Vietnam era, and some of those veterans who had begun to develop radical opinions during their time in service would find much to fuel the growth of such ideas (Holm, 1989: 59; Johansen, 2010: 251). Woody Kipp (2004: 85-89), for instance, first began to make sense of his experiences of racism and the structures of recognition he had formed during service while attending the University of Montana as a GI Bill student in the early 1970s – his liberal professors even allowed him to defer his studies to become involved with Red Power activism, due to the movement's potential educational value.

In some cases, Native veterans responded to the issues they and their communities were facing by attempting to return to the traditional ways of their elders, and thus joined the wider revival of Native customs that was taking place across the US at that time (Carroll, 2008: 147-148 + 162; Holm, 1984; DeGroot, 1986). Those affected by PTSD, for instance, often found little in the mainstream world to help them deal with their trauma, and turned to the elders and medicine men of their tribes, through whom they were sometimes able to find respite in traditional customs concerning the spiritual healing of veterans (Barse, 1994;

Holm, 1989: 66; Scurfield, 1995; Smith, quoted in Murg, 2011b; Walkabout, quoted in Johnson, 1986: 4B).

As a direct reaction to his experiences in Vietnam and his post-service PTSD, Z.G. Standing Bear (1996: 82-85) sought to reconnect with his cultural roots. He became interested in Red Power, and describes hearing a speech by Red Power leader Russell Means as a turning point in his life, which motivated him to embark upon what he calls a "Medicine Path", studying and becoming involved in the revival of a variety of Native religious traditions, many of which had been and continued to be repressed by the US government (Standing Bear, 1996: 84-86).

Oglala ex-pilot Ed McGaa (2014: 214) felt particularly bitter about the fact that Native cultures, religious customs in particular, had been repressed while, "[i]n the meantime, we faithfully served our country". Prior to leaving for service in both Korea and Vietnam, he took part in ceremonies designed to ensure his safe return (McGaa, 2014: 216 + 237-238). When he came back in one piece, he attributed his good fortune to these ceremonies, and, despite his self-avowedly hawkish stance on the war, decided to "leave the warring to politicians", and to "set his course upon another path" (McGaa, 2014: 166 + 174-177). He subsequently became deeply involved with the more spiritual side of the Red Power movement, working alongside some of the leading movement figures of the early 1970s (McGaa, 2014: 166 + 232-241; Means, 1995: 188-189 + 304).

Consumed by bitterness over the discrimination he felt he had experienced in the military, and struggling with unemployment and alcoholism post-service, Darrell New Plenty Stars (& Evans, 2008: 29-30 + 44) saw his problems as the result of racism, of being "under the white man's thumb", and came to feel that "acting like white people", and trying to engage with the white capitalist mainstream, would not bode well for Native culture. When a dispute arose in his community between those who wanted to maintain tradition and those who, in his opinion, were willing to reject their culture and exploit their reservation

for the sake of profit, New Plenty Stars (& Evans, 2008: 30-43) chose the side of the traditionalists, and, ultimately, Red Power.

In late 1969, Seminole ex-Marine Alan Miller was among a group of Red Power activists called the Indians of All Tribes (IAT) who occupied Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay, CA, in hopes of reclaiming the land for Native people (Fortunate Eagle & Findley, 2002: 170-171). After relocating to San Francisco from his Oklahoma reservation, Miller had found that whatever advantages his military service might initially have granted him in terms of adjusting to urban life were of little use once he was "cut loose" in the city (Miller, quoted in Fortunate Eagle & Findley, 2002: 58).

Finding sanctuary in his local Indian Center, he came into contact with advocates of Red Power, became an early proponent of the foundation of Native American Studies courses at San Francisco State University, and got involved with the group of activists that would eventually occupy Alcatraz (Fortunate Eagle & Findley, 2002: 58; Kenmitzer, 1997: 115). Adam Fortunate Eagle, one of the masterminds behind the occupation, may have had Miller in mind when he stated that recently relocated veterans were among those who had a radical political influence on him when he arrived in San Francisco in the late 1960s (*Contrary Warrior*, 2010).

Throughout the occupation, which lasted from November 1969 to June 1971, a number of veterans joined Miller at Alcatraz. Santee Navy veteran John Trudell, who had only recently returned from his second and final tour of duty in Vietnamese waters, joined the occupiers in hopes of reconnecting with his Native roots, and quickly became a leading spokesperson (Johansen, 2013: 255). Another recent returnee, Shoshone-Paiute veteran Thomas Joseph, Sr., mustered a group of fellow UCLA students to go to the island with him and take part (Lost Coast Outpost, 2015). Some of the veterans involved in the occupation drew direct, causal connections between their activism and their experiences of service. Pomo-Wailaki veteran J.R. Laiwa and the aforementioned Bill Means, both combat veterans,

had been profoundly influenced by the structures of recognition they had formed in Vietnam, and were drawn to activism as a result (Norrell, 2013; Rahimi, 2009).

The roles and motivations of the most substantial group of veterans to take part in the occupation are, unfortunately for historians, shrouded in controversy. When the occupiers' *de facto* leader Richard Oakes left the island in early 1970, a leadership crisis ensued, and Stella Leach, who ran the occupiers' health clinic, assumed a leading position in IAT. Her rise to prominence has been connected to a group called the 'Thunderbirds' – a band of Native youths from her hometown of nearby Oakland, CA (Johnson, 1996: 157). The regrettably scant body of evidence relating to the 'Thunderbirds' indicates that a number of them were Vietnam veterans. Commentators, however, are divided in their interpretations of the group.

They have been described by some as an all-Native "street gang", consisting of "bikers, Vietnam vets, and street toughs", among whom were Stella Leach's own sons, who, in return for her patronage, reportedly donned Army fatigues and acted as her armed enforcers and security guards, violently intimidating those who did not agree with her, and exploiting their position to make money from boot-legging and drug-trafficking while on the island (e.g. Dewing, 1995: 27; Fortunate Eagle & Findley, 2002: 158 + 169-170; Goldstein, 2011: 97-98; Johansen, 2013: 18; Smith & Warrior, 1996: 66).

In conflicting accounts, they have been depicted as a more benign presence – a "social group" (e.g. Johansen, 2013: 18; Johnson, 1996: 158). Leading occupier LaNada Boyer claimed that her brother Dwayne, who was the leader of the group, had brought the 'Thunderbirds' to the island at the behest of his family, who had asked him to protect his sisters (Johnson, 1996: 158 + 206). While on the island, she claimed, the group were in fact a positive influence, and were partly responsible for keeping the occupiers' operation going during the difficult aftermath of Richard Oakes' departure (Johnson, 1996: 158).

If the 'Thunderbirds' were indeed a gang, then the presence of recent returnees from Vietnam among their ranks would give us an indication of the sort of groups that traumatised, disgruntled Native veterans might gravitate towards if they ended up in the wrong place at the wrong time. Other Native veterans have documented their self-destructive tendencies and PTSD-fuelled involvement with drink, drugs, and criminal activity, sometimes violent, in the aftermath of their return from service, and Oakland, which was at that time one of the main terminals for GIs both headed for and returning from East Asia, was and is known for its problems with gangs (Beeman, 2011; Harris, 2011; Johnson, 1986: 4B; New Plenty Stars, 2007: 45).

Alternatively, if we accept a more positive interpretation, veteran membership of a group like the 'Thunderbirds' might have represented another form of constructive readjustment to post-service life – a support network. As the true nature of their role in the occupation remains unclear, however, to write with any authority on the 'Thunderbirds', and what their presence at Alcatraz might tell us about the post-service activities of some Native Vietnam-era veterans, would be impossible at this time. While the demands of the Alcatraz occupiers were never met, their widely publicised actions made an impression on the government, the media, and the public, putting Red Power on the map, and giving fresh impetus to the development of the movement. Throughout the early years of the 1970s, Native radicals would stage many similarly high-profile protests across North America – protests on which Native veterans would begin to have a more visible, and characteristic, influence.

In February 1972, an appeal surfaced in the underground press from Richard Yeahquo (quoted in *Barrage*, 1972: 10), a Native veteran who had served in both Korea and Vietnam, and had been relatively lucky upon his return home, being given a warrior's welcome, "but there was still something missing, a feeling … you could not put into words":

> Then you realized … it was the feeling of an Indian living in a White man['s] world, with [the] rules of the White man by the Whiteman, … for the Whiteman. This is your land and yet you feel you don't belong … But the time has come for the Indian

> warrior to stand up again. To walk to the beat of the drum that is put inside every Indian by the creator … [G]o to your closet, get that jacket [the military] gave to you, … put it on and walk with your people as [an] Indian, as a Race, as Brothers.

Yeahquo's (quoted in *Barrage*, 1972: 10) appeal to his fellow Native GIs and veterans – his "Brothers" – was for more than just a rejection of the white man's world and a return to Native culture, it was for them to make a united declaration of support for Red Power. While there does not appear to have been any formal veterans' Red Power organisation, returning Native veterans contributed towards the revival of the next best thing – traditional warrior societies (e.g. Bruner, 1988: 159; Holm, 1992: 362-364; Lackenbauer, 2014: 172-173; Meadows, 1999: 397-398). Of particular importance was a group called the American Indian Movement (AIM), founded in 1968. Though its leaders "embraced the term 'warrior society'", AIM, unlike most such organisations, was pan-tribal, and politically engaged, ultimately becoming involved in militant Red Power activism (Carroll, 2008: 142-143 + 151 + 171-172; Holm, 1992: 362-364; Lackenbauer, 2014: 172).

Scholars have noted that Native veterans, moved by feelings of frustration and betrayal, joined AIM in high numbers in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Pencak, 2009: 54; Schwartz, 2013: 28 + 40 + 186-187). Indeed, as Maureen Schwartz (2013: 186-187) has suggested, the influx of activists with military experience into AIM was a central precept of its development as a warrior society, and the knowledge and expertise they brought to the table "allowed AIM to become the warriors they had always wanted to be." Some of these veterans assumed leading roles, such as Ponca ex-infantryman Carter Camp, who had served in Germany in the late 1950s, and the aforementioned Vietnam veteran John Trudell, who was recruited into AIM at Alcatraz (Johansen, 2013: 14). Indeed, one of the organisation's co-founders, and principle leaders, Ojibwe veteran Dennis Banks (& Erdoes, 2011: 44-55), had formed structures of recognition while serving on an Air Force base in Japan in the mid-1950s that foreshadowed, to a certain extent, those later formed by Native GIs in Southeast Asia, and that subsequently informed his work with AIM.

In October 1970, a number of AIM leaders spoke at a radical student-sponsored symposium, held at the University of Oregon (UO), entitled 'Perspectives on Racism', during which the ongoing conflict in Southeast Asia was a recurring theme (*Eugene-Register Guard*, 1970b: 5B). That discussions would touch upon Vietnam was typical of political forums at that time, but, whereas most references to Vietnam by Red Power activists throughout the preceding half-decade had concerned US involvement in the war itself, the UO symposium gave an early indication that ideas about Native military service and veterancy had also begun to have an influence.

Among the "Brown, Black and Red" luminaries who took to the podium during the five-day conference were a number of veterans, whose presence was particularly noticeable in the Native camp (Radical Collectives Union, 1970). Indeed, three out of the half-a-dozen or so Natives who spoke on behalf of Red Power that week were ex-servicemen. Speaking alongside Dennis Banks and John Trudell, at this time a representative of both AIM and IAT, was the aforementioned Ed McGaa, AIM sympathiser/associate and then-Chairman of Indian Education at the University of Minnesota (*Eugene-Register Guard*, 1970a: 7B; Radical Collectives Union, 1970).

In relation to the war, and to those serving in it, the various parties in attendance, among whose ranks were a number of non-Native returnees from Southeast Asia, are said to have presented a united front. "All the speakers", we are told, "supported the motion … that American minorities are being used to wage a racist war against Asians" (*Eugene-Register Guard*, 1970b: 5B). The guilt and betrayal felt by minority veterans at having fought in service of what they now saw as racist oppression and imperialism, while they continued to be treated as second-class citizens both in the military and back home in the civilian world, was also made abundantly clear (*Eugene-Register Guard*, 1970b: 5B).

Crucially, speakers suggested that the time for peaceful protest may have come and gone (Luta, 1970: 6B). Ray Eaglin (quoted in *Eugene-Register Guard*, 1970b: 5B), a Vietnam veteran and Black Panther, made an emphatic statement about the need for action:

> It's too late to do anything but decide your choice of weapons … If you think writing … will do it, write. If you think … picketing, picket. If you think praying will help, then pray. Or if you think arming yourself to the gills will do it – then arm yourself.

In the increasingly volatile American socio-political landscape, many minority radicals, Natives included, became frustrated with the more gradual, integrationist approach of their forebears, who had hoped to work with the mainstream establishment, and adopted an increasingly militant and confrontational approach to activism. Groups like the Black Panthers had already chosen the last of Eaglin's (quoted in *Eugene-Register Guard*, 1970b: 5B) options, in some instances taking up arms against the authorities – a tactical shift that was facilitated in part by the expertise of veterans who joined the organisation during and immediately after their periods of military service (Austin, 2010; Westheider, 2006: 340-344).

At the time of the UO symposium, Red Power activists had not yet gone to such extremes. However, through its aggressive and confrontational approach, AIM soon began to develop an increasingly antagonistic relationship with the authorities which, perhaps inevitably, set the organisation on a course towards violence (McKenzie-Jones, 2015: 93-100). As we shall see, when armed hostilities eventually broke out, the unique set of skills and ideas possessed by those of its members with military experience would become an invaluable asset for AIM. For the time being, however, while veterans continued to participate in the movement, in some cases assuming leading roles, whatever unique significance or influence, as opposed to that of their civilian peers, they might have brought to the table remains unclear.

In other spheres of radical politics, the unique contributions made by Native veterans at this time were more visible. As we have seen, by the turn of the 1970s, the Native GI resistance movement in the Pacific Northwest had effectively developed into a servicemen's wing of Red Power, and its advocates naturally and necessarily connected Red Power ideas and objectives with their radical ideas about military service and the war. Meanwhile, Native veterans were taking a similarly hybridised, though less coordinated, approach to their work with the anti-war movement.

Though Native ex-servicemen do not appear to have formed any all-Native veterans' anti-war organisations, they were certainly active in multi-ethnic groups like Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) (Means, 1995: 271). The aforementioned Geary Hobson (2016), for instance, was an early proponent of the peace movement in the mid-late 1960s, and Bill Means, who returned from service later in the decade, became involved with VVAW in the early 1970s, by which time, as we have seen, he was also an active participant in Red Power protests (Johansen, 2010: 135; Norrell, 2013).

During the so-called 'Winter Soldier' investigations in Detroit in early 1971, a veterans' anti-war summit organised by VVAW, Seminole Navy veteran Evan Haney (quoted in Vietnam Veterans Against the War, 1971), the only Native speaker at the event, gave a damning testimony against the war, and in doing so drew on the structures of recognition he had formed while serving in Southeast Asia. "[I]t took me a long time to realize", Haney (quoted in Vietnam Veterans Against the War, 1971) told the audience, "that [what] is happening in Vietnam … is not new":

> I would like to point out that if you took the Vietnamese war … and compared it to the Indian wars a hundred years ago, it would be the same thing. All the massacres were the same. Nowadays they use chemical warfare; back then they put smallpox in the blankets and gave them to the Indians.

Haney (quoted in Vietnam Veterans Against the War, 1971) lamented the fact that, until now, he had effectively bought into his own oppression, and had lived by "the white man's ways" – "Indian, but … not really … Indian". "[W]hen I watched TV … and watched the Indians and the cavalry," he recalled, choking back tears of regret as he spoke, "I would cheer for the cavalry. That's how bad it was" (*Winter Soldier*, 1972). After returning from service, Haney (quoted in Vietnam Veterans Against the War, 1971), like many other Natives, was now trying to reverse this process of assimilation, to regain something of his own culture, and he announced that, in addition to his work with VVAW, he had also become involved in Red Power activism, and was at that time living among the occupiers on Alcatraz Island. His speech was met with a standing ovation (*Winter Soldier*, 1972).

In the following months, Haney appears to have continued to be a leading spokesperson – and quite possibly the only leading *Native* spokesperson – for both the veterans' and servicemen's wings of the anti-war movement. Most notably, when leftist radicals from the Venceramos Brigade visited Cuba in March-May 1971 to show their solidarity with the Communists in Cuba and elsewhere, Haney was part of a caucus that met "to plan and present an … explanation of the G.I. movement to the Cubano and Vietnamese delegations" (*G.I. News & Discussion Bulletin*, 1971: 28). After the spring of 1971, however, Haney's name ceased to appear in media coverage of the movement, so we know nothing of his activities throughout the remainder of the war, and we know even less about those of other Native veteran advocates of the peace movement more generally.

Whether or not Haney himself continued to make his presence felt in the peace movement, his ideas about the war had a profound influence on one of VVAW's foremost spokespeople. In April 1971, recently returned Navy veteran and future Secretary of State John Kerry (1995: 457) testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on behalf of VVAW. In articulating his argument against the war, he chose to include in his speech the words of "[an] American Indian friend of mine who lives in the Indian Nation of Alcatraz" – almost certainly Evan Haney (Kerry, 1995: 457). Kerry (1995: 457) relayed to the Committee Haney's story about watching Westerns as a boy and cheering for the cowboys:

> Then suddenly he stopped in Vietnam one day and said, 'My God, I am doing to these people the very same thing that was done to my people.' And that's what we are trying to say, that we think this [war] has to end.

Thus, via Haney, the ideas developed by Native GIs and veterans about Vietnam reached the highest levels of the veterans' anti-war movement at a time when that movement was, arguably, at its peak in terms of popular and political support, and, via Kerry, were then transmitted to – though ultimately ignored by – leading figures within the US government (Cortright, 2005: 259-261; Hunt, 2001: 118-119).

It was not until late in the following year, however, that Native ex-servicemen began to make a characteristic impression on the Red Power movement. In October 1972, Red Power activists, directed primarily by leaders of AIM, assembled on the west coast, formed a protest caravan, the so-called 'Trail of Broken Treaties' (TBT), and headed for Washington, D.C. with a list of demands concerning the restoration of tribal sovereignty called the 'Twenty Points' (*Akwesasne Notes*, 1974). Veterans were foremost among those who embarked on the cross-country trek. Dennis Banks, Carter Camp, John Trudell, Sid Mills – names that had become synonymous with Native activism in recent years, and all veterans.

During the early stages of the TBT, Camp (quoted in *The Bend Bulletin*, 1972: 22) told the press that, along with demands for political reform, the protestors would also demand that Native POWs be brought home from Vietnam, and "that Indian people not be forced to serve in the military". Another inside source would later claim that one of the TBT's "primary purposes" was to raise long-standing Native issues with the draft and with the mal-treatment of Native GIs by military authorities (*The Conspiracy*, 1972: 6). The list of 'Twenty Points' eventually presented to the government in D.C., however, made no mention of these issues (*Akwesasne Notes*, 1974: 63-88).

The vague suggestion that Native POWs should be given priority in terms of repatriation was not expanded upon by Camp (quoted in *The Bend Bulletin*, 1972: 22), and does not appear elsewhere, indicating that it may have been an under-developed idea. It is, perhaps, more surprising that the long-advocated prospect of Native draft-exemption did not receive specific mention in the 'Twenty Points', especially considering the fact that Hank Adams, whose stance on Natives being forced to undergo mandatory military service has been discussed above, was the principle author of the original document (Johansen, 2013: 5).

However, as draft-exemption was seen by many Natives as an issue of either treaty rights, or, in some cases, religion, then the compilers of the 'Twenty Points' may well have considered the matter covered by points 1 through 8, which concerned the honouring of treaty commitments, and point 18, which demanded protection of religious freedoms (Adams, 2011b: 185; *Akwesasne Notes*, 1974: 63-88). Whether or not the issues surrounding Native military service remained high on the TBT agenda, the initial intention to press them may give an indication of the influence of veterans at the highest levels of the Red Power organisations that took part, AIM in particular.

Woody Kipp (2004: 95) was a GI Bill student at the University of Montana when the TBT arrived in Missoula. In the summer of 1972, he had attended a powwow, where he first met advocates of Red Power (Kipp, 2004: 85-89). Kipp (2004: 87-89) had been taught about issues of race and oppression at university, but before the powwow, he writes, "I had never heard Indians discuss [them] in detail". "My Vietnam experience", he adds, "threw … these concepts into sharp relief" (Kipp, 2004: 85-86). These radical new friends, who were members of AIM, had a profound influence on Kipp (2004: 87-89), and he joined their organisation. By the time the TBT arrived, Kipp (2004: 85-86) had come into "a different sense of who I was as a minority member …, something I had always known but … never understood". Eager to find a practical application for this new found understanding, he joined the TBT on its trek to D.C.

When the TBT reached its destination, talks with officials turned sour. The situation escalated, and on November 3 about five-hundred activists staged an impromptu occupation of the national HQ of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). A court order for their departure was issued, deadlines were set, and the occupiers, anticipating a forceful response by police, prepared to defend themselves. Robert Burnette (& Koster, 1974: 212), one of the leaders of the TBT, witnessed ceremonies held inside the BIA in which those who were willing to lead the defence, and to assume the mantle of "warriors", had their faces painted (Banks & Erdoes, 2011: 139).

Woody Kipp (2004: 95-109) was among them – "I hung out with the warriors", he recalls. Considering his experience with the Marines in Vietnam to have been something of a proving ground, however, he felt no need for a ceremony to confirm his own warrior status (Kipp, 2004: 104). He does not mention whether any of his fellow defenders were also veterans, but it seems likely that at least some of them were. According to Burnette (& Koster, 1974: 212), Vietnam-era veterans were among those who most readily accepted the war paint, and with it the promise to "go down swinging." Kipp (2004: 102-104) and the other defenders armed themselves with whatever they could find, and set about constructing makeshift weapons and fortifications (Blair, 1972b: 73).

"In subsequent days", Kipp (2004: 103) tells us, "the occupation proved similar to my Vietnam experience – long stretches of boredom punctuated by periods of frantic activity as deadlines for evacuation neared". The feared assault never came, however, partly owing to the efforts of Hank Adams, who, unlike Kipp and the other veterans inside the BIA, did not ready himself for combat. Adams, who advocated a much less aggressive approach to activism, was concerned by what the originally peaceful TBT had devolved into, and assumed the role of a mediator between the occupiers and the government in hopes of avoiding bloodshed (Adams, 2006; Blair, 1972a: 1). After five days, the occupation ended without violence, due in no small part to Adams' mediation (Adams, 2006; Deloria, Jr., 1973: 43).

In the months after the TBT, there were further indications that veterans and the ideas surrounding Native military service were beginning to have a more tangible influence on the movement, AIM especially. Oglala ex-Navy man Bob Yellow Bird Steele and Omaha veteran John Two Birds Arbuckle, for instance, were important organisers for AIM in Nebraska, most notably during the occupation of the Fort Robinson Museum in late 1972, but the way in which their veterancy may have fed into their activism is unclear (Magnuson, 2008: 222-225; Mason, 1984). In early 1973, AIM activist Ron Petite (Smith & Warrior, 1996: 292-293), although not a veteran himself, spearheaded a campaign to boycott businesses in Rapid City, SD, to raise awareness of what he saw as the neglect of returning Native veterans by the government – a situation that had, in his opinion, reached a point of "crisis".

In the spring of 1973, AIM turned its attentions to the Pine Ridge Reservation, SD, becoming involved in a dispute between local Oglalas and a newly inaugurated, and allegedly corrupt, tribal administration. When AIM attempted to hold a press conference in the hamlet of Wounded Knee, the organisation met with a hostile response from the authorities, and the situation escalated, ultimately resulting in an impromptu armed occupation of Wounded Knee by several hundred militants (Churchill, 2015: 712). The 71-day occupation – February 27 to May 8, 1973 – known as Wounded Knee II (WKII), epitomises the crossover between Native military service and Red Power during the Vietnam era.

As a sizable force of federal and tribal authorities, and even military personnel, built up around Wounded Knee, it became apparent to the occupiers that they were under siege, and that their most pressing need was to defend themselves (Anderson et al, 1974: 2-3; Dewing, 1995: 60-61). AIM leader Russell Means (1995: 259) describes how, in the early days of the occupation, a meeting was held. "I asked Vietnam vets and anybody who had military service to come forward", he recalls (1995: 259). Under the supervision primarily of the aforementioned Stan Holder, by this time a veteran of three tours in Vietnam, those who answered Means' (1995: 259) call, including his brother Bill, who had joined AIM back at Alcatraz, were made responsible for maintaining security.

Such familiar figures as Sid Mills, John Trudell, Bob Yellow Bird Steele, John Two Birds Arbuckle, Woody Kipp (2004: 115-136), and Guy Dull Knife, Jr. would all become important occupiers, and were joined by a number of other recently returned veteran-activists of the Vietnam generation, at least two of whom – the aforementioned Tony Bush, who was from Pine Ridge, and Penobscot airman John Moore – were still in active service, and went AWOL in order to take part (Buckley, 1974: 21; Magnuson, 2008: 228-230; Schwartz, 2013: 40; Wetherholt, 2013). "The young men defending Wounded Knee", read a contemporary report by the *Akwesasne Notes* (1973: 5), "are militarily skilled and trained":

> Almost all are Vietnam veterans, and most of those were in the Special Forces – the Green Berets. In Southeast Asia, they learned about guerrilla warfare, courtesy of the U.S. government, and now they are using what they learned for their own people.

The actual number of Native veterans who took part is unclear – one observer estimates "half a dozen … maybe more", while at other times there may have been as many as "a few dozen" (Torres, quoted in Moser, 1996: 118; Zimmerman, 1976: 197). At any rate, the pro-Red Power editors of the *Akwesasne Notes* (1973: 5) were almost certainly overstating the presence of veterans among the defenders at WKII – possibly with a view to heightening government apprehension about the occupiers' manpower and defensive capabilities.

Russell Means (1995: 259) tells us that the veterans were tasked with training other security team members who did not have military expertise. These civilian defenders were organised into "squads", each of which was headed by veterans with combat experience (Means, 1995: 259). Thus, veterans, rather than making up the bulk of the WKII defence force, may in fact have been more like something akin to an officer class, having a certain amount of command and responsibility over their less experienced, but more numerous, civilian peers. There were originally forty-five defenders in the WKII security team, organised into only four squads – another indication that the veterans among them were

not nearly as numerous as the *Akwesasne Notes* might of had us believe (Carroll, 2008: 167). Likewise, the claim that most of the veterans at WKII were battle-hardened ex-Special Forces members also appears to have been something of an exaggeration – in reality, the known service backgrounds of the veterans at WKII varied widely.

Stan Holder was made responsible for the day-to-day activities of the security team, and additional military-style training and leadership was provided throughout the occupation by Dennis Banks (& Erdoes, 2011: 166) and Carter Camp, "a war leader … with his warriors" who would eventually take over Holder's position after he left on April 16 (Camp-Horinek, quoted in Eaton, 2014; Carroll, 2008: 166-168; Dewing, 1995: 112). Once the team had been organised, the occupiers' limited supply of guns and ammunition was distributed, and Holder, according to Means (1995: 259), "made sure everyone who got a weapon knew how to use it – and would." A defendable perimeter was established around the hamlet, surrounding which was "a sort of no-man's land", as Dennis Banks (& Erdoes, 2011: 163) puts it, separating the occupiers and the besieging government forces. This 500-yard strip was referred to as "the DMZ", or demilitarised zone, recalling the language used by military personnel in Vietnam – a trend also evidenced by the way in which the occupiers' supply route was dubbed "AIM's Ho Chi Minh road" (Banks & Erdoes, 2011: 163 + 167; Camp, 2009).

Painfully aware of how exposed their position was at Wounded Knee, those with military training quickly set about capitalising upon what little defensive potential the site could offer them (Magnuson, 2008: 228). Guarded roadblocks were erected to rival those put in place by government forces, sentries began patrolling the perimeter, and makeshift fortifications were constructed, modelled on those that the combat veterans among them had learned to build while in service (Dewing, 1995: 53-70). Initially limited to digging basic foxholes and ditches, the defenders were eventually able to erect bunkers reminiscent of those in which some of them had been ensconced back in Vietnam, placed at strategic points around the perimeter, and arranged in such a way as to allow the defenders to stay

mobile while under fire, and to use overlapping arcs of gunfire against the government forces (Camp, 2009; Carroll, 2008: 166-167; Dewing, 1995: 69).

There were ultimately nine such bunkers, each of which was manned by members of Holder's security team, who maintained round-the-clock guard duty, and slept, ate, and effectively lived in and around their assigned bunkers (Anderson et al, 1974: 76; Carroll, 2008: 166-167; Dewing, 1995: 69). Continually enlarged and reinforced throughout the occupation, these bunkers were eventually augmented with "homelike" accoutrements such as wood-burning stoves (Means, 1995: 277-278). Those stationed in the bunkers, at the roadblocks, and out on patrol used citizen-band radios to communicate with security HQ, established in a building previously used as the Wounded Knee Museum, from where Holder and co., once they got hold of higher grade radio equipment, monitored the communications of the government forces (Anderson et al, 1974: 78-79; Means, 1995: 277).

By all accounts, Holder, who was reportedly known for being able to keep a cool head under pressure, ran a tight ship (Zimmerman, 1976: 163). According to one observer, by early March, the former paratrooper had put together the "best organized" aspect of the occupiers' operation at Wounded Knee – an achievement that appears to have had much to do with the military expertise possessed by Holder and the leading members of his team (Anderson et al, 1974: 81). As Seminole occupier and ex-Marine Ken Tiger told reporters, the veterans at WKII "knew how to give orders, … they knew how to do things and they didn't have to be told twice" (*We Shall Remain*, 2009).

Their expertise would prove to be an essential asset to the occupiers, many of whom reported that conditions inside Wounded Knee felt very much like a warzone (DeCora, quoted in Anderson et al, 1974: 72-73; King, quoted in Silver, 1973: 2; *We Shall Remain*, 2009; Zimmerman, 1976: 13 + 158 + 261-265). "I'm a Vietnam veteran," one participant stated, "and the things I have seen here … it's … like a flashback" (Kelly, quoted in Banks & Erdoes, 2011: 177). Indeed, because of how exposed their position was at Wounded Knee,

and how disadvantaged they were in terms of manpower and firepower, the conditions endured by the security team were, in many ways, worse than those to which some of them had become accustomed while serving in Southeast Asia. “We took more bullets in seventy-one days than I took in two years in Vietnam”, Oglala veteran Roger Iron Cloud (quoted in Weyler, 1982: 83) stated. According to Russell Redner (quoted in Stern, 1994: 28), who had also seen a lot of action in Vietnam, “the firefights at [WKII] were the worst I ever went through.”

As one might expect, civilian occupiers found it more difficult to cope with the “chaotic scene” inside Wounded Knee, and thus were particularly reliant on their veteran peers (Camp, 2009; Kipp, 1997: 215). “Aside from a few dozen … combat veterans,” one observer reminds us, “the people of Wounded Knee were as unfamiliar with this kind of warfare as any other townspeople in America” (Zimmerman, 1976: 197). Dwain Camp (2009), brother of AIM leader Carter Camp, arrived early in the occupation, and joined his brother in the security force. “Not having been in the … military”, he writes, “I had not been under enemy fire … so I had some trepidation” (Camp, 2009). Only through seeking advice from veterans, including his brother Carter, was Camp (2009) able to learn how best to survive in this hostile environment.

While military expertise may have afforded veterans certain practical advantages, as Russell Means (1995: 279-280) reminds us, in psychological terms, “[t]he constant shooting was hard on everyone, including the Vietnam veterans.” In fact, for those with combat experience, many of whom would have been suffering from PTSD, it was especially difficult. Means (1995: 279) recalls one veteran who started to weep when the government forces began one of their nightly bombardments:

> He said, ‘Those fuckers are still firing at me, and look – this is what I gave to this fucking country!’ He was in a wheelchair, swaddled in a blanket. When he lifted it, I saw that both his legs were gone.

Generally, however, morale among the veterans inside Wounded Knee was high, mainly because, in contrast to their experiences of military service, they felt there was a real purpose to what they were having to endure at WKII. “There's a tremendous amount of coolness, considering that we're outgunned … considering our odds,” one Navajo veteran told reporters:

> [P]eople stay because they believe; they have a cause. That's why we lost in Viet Nam, … there was no cause. We were fighting a rich man's war, for the rich man, being used as cannon fodder, with no regard for what happened to us at all. In Wounded Knee, we're doing pretty damn good, morale-wise (Anderson et al, 1974: 79-80).

Moreover, although, in a practical sense, they applied their US military training to constructing and manning the defences at WKII, in more abstract terms, Holder’s security force did not approach their role as the defenders of Wounded Knee from a conventional US military perspective. Some of the veterans inside Wounded Knee, as we have seen, had come to see the US armed forces as an immoral entity, an arbiter of imperialism, and at WKII they reacted against its conventions, preferring to take their cues from older, more traditional Native influences. “We knew we had to fight”, Carter Camp (quoted in Dowell, 2011) later stated, “but we could not fight on Wasicu [i.e. the white man’s] terms.”

Traditional Native ideas about warriorhood were foremost in the minds of the occupiers, who generally referred to themselves, and, indeed, all other militant advocates of Red Power, with pride as *warriors* – even a baby that was born to one of the occupiers was dubbed “our little Wounded Knee warrior” (Banks & Erdoes, 2011: 194). As mentioned above, for many of its members, AIM itself was basically a large-scale, pan-tribal warrior society, and, by mid-March, the WKII security force had formed their own sub-warrior society, one which stood in opposition to the conventions of the US military (Banks & Erdoes, 2011: 182; *Beaver County Times*, 1973: A3).

The philosophy behind this so-called "New Warrior Society", as explained to the press by Stan Holder (quoted in Anderson et al, 1974: 76-77), was a synthesis of traditional Native ways of thinking about warfare and warriorhood with modern military technology and tactics (Means, quoted in *Beaver County Times*, 1973: A3). Holder (quoted in Anderson et al, 1974: 76-77)– who, the reader may recall, felt he had been "brainwashed" to hate the Vietnamese while in service – expressed his disdain for the way in which the US military "dehumanized" both its own GIs and the people it was fighting – both in Vietnam and at WKII (*Hearts and Minds*, 1974). "That's why they rake the entire town with fire when they open up on us," he stated, "They just have no personal feeling at all" (Holder, quoted in Anderson et al, 1974: 76-77).

Holder (quoted in Anderson et al, 1974: 76-77), on the other hand, appears to have envisioned his own role as that of the war chiefs of old – he treated the members of his security team as equals, and encouraged them to adhere to traditional Native conceptions of warriorhood, and to acknowledge the "spiritual aspect" of what they were doing. To this end, fellow veteran-occupiers Carter Camp and Sid Mills arranged a routine so that those stationed in the bunkers and exposed to the violence of "the firing line" could spiritually purify themselves with nightly sweat baths – ceremonies similar to those some of them had undergone after returning from service (Banks & Erdoes, 2011: 185).

Moreover, having made a conscious decision to join this fight, Holder's force did not need to be subjected to the sort of strict discipline to which military personnel were accustomed (Holder, quoted in Anderson et al, 1974: 76-77). "It's a 180-degree change from the U.S. military", Holder (quoted in Anderson et al, 1974: 76-77) declared:

> The men here – they don't gripe, they don't say, 'it's cold out,' or anything like that. They realize … there's a need to defend their women and children …, … a need to defend the sacred land … we're living on, and they do it. They keep their respect for nature. They don't go around wanting to defoliate, as the [US] did in Viet Nam. They don't go around wanting to indiscriminately kill people, because they realize that the

> loss of a life, whether a white, black, red, or yellow, is still the loss of a life and it's a loss to nature, it's upsetting the balance.

"Ours was a wonderfully strange army", Dennis Banks (& Erdoes, 2011: 182-184) tells us, "as unlike the U.S. army as possible … an army of equals … of men and women who respected life and hated killing". To the veterans inside Wounded Knee, these ideas about the responsibilities of Native warriorhood – as opposed to the alleged irresponsibility and moral bankruptcy of the US armed forces – were particularly prescient. Russell Redner (quoted in Stern, 1994: 29), for instance, came to feel that, despite his time in service, he had not really been deserving of the title *warrior* until he took part in WKII. "This is a war … just like 'Nam was", Redner (quoted in Stern, 1994: 29) stated, "But I'm a warrior now … protecting my people. At least now I know what I'm fighting for. The training they gave me I'll put to good use."

As a former specialist in counter-insurgency, Holder's own military training meant that he understood not only how to fight insurgents, but also how to *be* an insurgent (Dewing, 1995: 69). Much like the Vietnamese Communists, the security team at WKII were wholly outmatched by the government forces, and limited to a strictly defensive position, with their sole objective being to hold out for as long as possible, and hope that popular opinion would turn in their favour (Kipp, 1997: 221). In doing so, they consciously employed similar strategies of resistance – "guerrilla warfare tactics", as some veteran-occupiers put it – to those used by the insurgents in Vietnam (Anderson et al, 1974: 197-198).

Like their Vietnamese counterparts, they relied on stealth and an understanding of the local landscape to remain highly mobile and to avoid being pinned down in lengthy and expensive – in terms of ammunition – firefights, exercising what they would refer to as "patience" and "restraint" in the face of government aggression in hopes of outlasting their enemy (Anderson et al, 1974: 145 + 197-198). They exaggerated their numbers and capabilities, even displaying fake weaponry in order to convince the authorities and the

media that they had access to much more than a small supply of hunting rifles and shotguns (Carroll, 2008: 169-170; Means, 1995: 280-281; *The Sunday Times*, 1973: 5).

Likewise, when government negotiators came into Wounded Knee, Dennis Banks made a show of force by running the security squads through military drills (Means, 1995: 280). Although they mostly remained on the defensive, members of the security team sometimes ventured out to harass the government forces, sneaking up on their armoured personnel carriers (APCs) and ricocheting bullets off of them in order to unnerve those holed up inside (Means, 1995: 280).

The occupiers' only military-grade firearm, an AK-47, was of little practical use to the security force – inside sources claim there was no ammunition for the weapon, while others say it had less than 50 rounds (Banks & Erdoes, 2011: 163; Silver, quoted in Harrington, 2014). Instead, it was used as a showpiece to attract government and media attention, and it worked, garnering considerable controversy – some conservative media outlets even used photos of the Soviet-made weapon to claim that the WKII occupiers were being supplied by foreign Communists (Banks & Erdoes, 2011: 163; Dewing, 1995: 69; Holm, 1996: 177; Kipp, 1997: 220; Zimmerman, 1976: 165-166). Such claims were patently false, and the AK-47 had most likely been captured in Vietnam and brought back either by its owner, Kiowa veteran Robert Onco – whose service record has since been disputed, and may or may not have served in Vietnam – or another of his veteran peers (Kipp, 1997: 220-221; Urbom, 2012: 161-162).

However, the conservative press was right on one front – the influence of the Vietnamese Communists on the veteran-insurgents inside Wounded Knee *was* more than just practical. Some felt a real sense of solidarity with their former enemies, coming to believe that they, as non-white insurgents facing off against an invading, technologically superior white-run military force, were, in many ways, fighting for the same cause, and that the tactics being used against them by government forces – i.e. propaganda, excessive

firepower, destruction of the natural environment, and the use of fellow Natives against one another – were also the same as those used in Vietnam (Anderson et al, 1974: 113 + 123 + 128 + 194-201).

One occupier told reporters how the veterans inside Wounded Knee often compared their own cause to that of the Vietnamese Communists (*Battle Acts*, 1973: 26-27). "Many … things were different", they admitted, "and certainly not on the [same] scale …, but we were [both] fighting the imperialist U.S. government" (*Battle Acts*, 1973: 26-27). Indeed, a number of scholars have gone so far as to suggest that, in both material and abstract terms, the occupation was effectively a "re-creation", or miniaturisation, of the conflict in Southeast Asia (Marez, 2004: 265-268; Rosier, 2009: 262-269; Tóth, 2016: 36-37). As historian Heike Paul (2014: 347) puts it, during WKII, "'Indian Country' migrated back from Vietnam to the American heartland".

Many within the contemporary radical community shared this interpretation. The underground press likened the foreign colonialism of the war in Vietnam to the domestic colonialism they felt was in evidence at WKII – "Same Fight – Same Foe", as one veterans' publication put it (e.g. *Column Left*, 1973: 1 + 7; *Lewis-McChord Free Press*, 1973: 4; *Liberated Barracks: Service News for Occupied Hawaii*, 1973: 6). Non-Native veterans, mostly advocates of the peace movement who had developed similar ideas about the connections between Native America and Vietnam, were important supporters (Anderson et al, 1974: 72-73 + 80-81 + 194-195). VVAW, in particular, contributed money and supplies to the occupiers, spread word of the occupation, and smuggled a number of its members into the hamlet, most notably a seven-man counter-sniper team who joined the security force (*Berkeley Barb*, 1973: 2; Churchill, 2015: 712; Moser, 1996: 118).

On March 7, and again on April 17, supplies were flown into Wounded Knee by plane, and on both occasions the supply-drops were organised primarily by non-Native veterans. The first drop was made by Rocky Madrid and Owen Luck (2006), both of whom

had served as medics in Vietnam and, at WKII, put their medical training to use in helping care for injured security team members (Banks & Erdoes, 2011; 176 + 188; O'Neill, 2013). The April 17 drop was a more ambitious affair, made by a larger group of non-Native anti-war activists, some of whom had served in Vietnam, and had come to recognise "striking parallels" between the excessive and racist violence of the ongoing conflict in Southeast Asia, the historic Indian Wars, and the current standoff at WKII (Zimmerman, 1976: 10-11 + 67-71 + 106-108 + 158-159 + 178-181 + 201 + 276 + 310 + 346).

With such ideas foremost in the minds of those defending Wounded Knee, the fact that their Vietnamese counterparts had by this time effectively prevailed over the US military, in the face of overwhelming odds, was an important motivational factor. A number of the Native veteran-occupiers who had formed structures of recognition while in service told the press that they felt they held the same deeply spiritual connection to their ancestral lands as those held by the Vietnamese, and that without such a connection, without such deep motivations, the US armed forces were "getting their ass kicked" in Vietnam, and would never truly prevail at WKII either (Anderson et al, 1974: 194-197). "Something else we learned from … Viet Nam", one veteran-occupier added, "is about technology and machinery":

> A man can sit in a machine and think he is superior when he's actually not … We have this tendency to … under-estimate ourselves and what we can do. But with a little courage and strength on our part and a little knowledge of what we are up against, [the US] can be defeated. There's nothing but people sitting in those machines and behind those guns (Anderson et al, 1974: 197-198).

When the government sent Phantom jets over Wounded Knee, Woody Kipp (1997: 210), who had arrived early on in the occupation alongside another Blackfoot Vietnam veteran by the name of Bradley LaPlant, began to understand how the technologically undeveloped Vietnamese peasantry must have felt when the US sent its most sophisticated war machines against them. He also recognised the irony inherent in the fact that he had once been responsible for the maintenance of these jets back in Vietnam. "[H]ere, on the

Plains of … South Dakota, the fighter bombers … that I, for twenty long months, had identified with, were looking for me", Kipp (1997: 214) writes:

> I knew these birds of prey … They belong to my uncle, Sam. Hey, Uncle! Uncle Sam, look it's me, your nephew Woody; it's me who fed your birds while you were negotiating or doing whatever it is you big shots do during a war … I thought we were fighting for all those good things I learned about in high school … freedom, democracy, justice … Actually, Uncle, I feel much closer to those ideals when I am fighting for my own people here in my home country, where I'm more sure about what [we are] trying to accomplish.

It was during such instances that Kipp (2004: 126) experienced what he calls an "epiphany". During a firefight one evening, Kipp (2004: 130-131) and LaPlant rushed to the cover of their bunker. "We lay on the flat ground," he recalls, "bullets streaking over us … [from] the same machine guns I had been trained to use to kill Viet Cong" (Kipp, 2004: 130-131). While under fire, the familiar phrase, "*You same same Viet Cong*", came back to Kipp (2004: 126 + 130-131), this time taking on a much more literal meaning. "*I was the gook now*", he realised, "No wonder the Vietnamese … had presciently told me, *You same same Viet Cong*. I damn sure was" (Kipp, 2004: 126).

Other members of the security force came to much the same conclusion. Guy Dull Knife, Jr. (quoted in Rosier, 2009: 265), for instance, felt that "[we] had become the Viet Cong in our own homeland", and Bill Means (quoted in Rosier, 2009: 265) would later state that he and his fellow veteran-insurgents "went from being the hunter … to being the hunted". The structures of recognition that these veterans had formed in Vietnam had now come full circle – the *termite killers* had become the *termites* once more.

Like Sid Mills before him, Kipp (2004: 48) came to the conclusion that "I was living in a country whose people would use me for their own reasons … then turn their guns on me when I no longer suited their purpose." When Oglala veteran Webster Poor Bear was injured during a firefight on March 8, his father, former tribal chairman Enos Poor Bear

(quoted in Riseman, 2015: 215), came to a similar realisation, and expressed his outrage to the press in strong terms. “It ain’t right”, he lamented, “My boy was a paratrooper in Vietnam and he got a Purple Heart fighting for his country. Now federal marshals have shot him. I tell you, it ain’t right” (Poor Bear, quoted in Riseman, 2015: 215). “My son went through Vietnam without getting a scratch,” he continued, “and now he gets shot by the same government that sent him there” (Poor Bear, quoted in Burnette & Koster, 1974: 234-235).

Likewise, when Oglala ex-Marine Buddy Lamont was shot and killed during a firefight on April 27, those closest to him expressed similar sentiments. In the wake of Lamont’s passing, Oglala medicine man and fellow occupier Wallace Black Elk (quoted in Anderson et al, 1974: 233) issued an assertive statement to the press:

> This boy was murdered by the United States Government. He served in Viet Nam, he fought for them. Then when he came home to ask for his rights, [they said] ‘You shut up — or else!’ And then they shot him, right through his heart.

Agnes Lamont (quoted in Stern, 1994: 156-157), mother of Buddy and herself an important movement advocate, spoke in similar terms of her son’s demise at the hands of the authorities:

> He volunteered, went in the service … to go across, [to] fight for his country … And … in the end the government killed my son. He should have got killed overseas … I’d feel much better if he’s killed in war … but he came back alive … Then he went into … Wounded Knee. That was his belief. And here comes Uncle Sam and killed him … right there on his own land …

Lamont’s send-off was that of both a US soldier and a Native warrior – emblematic of the dual, hybridised identity assumed by many of the veterans inside Wounded Knee. During the funeral, he was accorded military honours. Under Dennis Banks’ (& Erdoes, 2011: 207-208) orders, ten security force members stood at attention and gave their former

cohort a 100-gun salute, and his grave bore his Army serial number and the name of the unit he had served with back in Vietnam (McKiernan, 2014). Banks, we are told, “spoke of him as a warrior who died a warrior’s death” (Anderson et al, 1974: 232). The loss of Lamont was a major blow to the occupiers, and was a significant factor in their decision to finally agree to a permanent truce, and to bring the occupation to an end (Banks & Erdoes, 2011: 4 + 208).

Conclusion

Not all of the radical Native veterans involved in WKII joined the security force. Desperate to avoid bloodshed, Hank Adams was, again, a key mediator between the occupiers and the authorities, and was instrumental in organising the final ceasefire (Adams, 2006). Though sympathetic to AIM, Ed McGaa (2014: 242-245), who was from Pine Ridge, served as a government-paid negotiator. Pine Ridge resident Darrell New Plenty Stars (& Evans, 2008: 29-55 + 58-62 + 70-71 + 88) had by this time become a Christian and turned away from the use of violence, but he supported the occupiers in other ways, smuggling supplies and people into the hamlet, spreading word of the occupation, which he felt was not being reported truthfully in the press, and even allowing the militants to use his home as a safe house.

Overall, however, Native American Vietnam-era veterans assumed a starring role as the defenders of WKII, and were it not for their expertise and unique ideas about the connections between themselves and their former enemies, the occupiers would most likely have been unable to hold out against the government in the way that they did. Without these veterans, the occupation, which had a profound influence on the development of the movement thereafter, and has since become an iconic symbol of Red Power, would likely either have ended quickly and faded into obscurity, or have ended in a bloodbath. Indeed, the fact that Buddy Lamont was one of only two fatalities suffered by the occupiers inside Wounded Knee – despite being trapped in an exposed, virtually undefendable, position, and under constant fire – is almost certainly a testament to the expertise and staying power of the veterans involved.

Although the roles assumed by Native veterans in most other spheres of the wider Red Power movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s were not as high-profile, or as characteristic in terms of the practical expertise they were called upon to employ, they appear to have been well represented among the membership and leadership of the major

Red Power organisations of the era, and the influence of their ideas about the war and the military was made apparent during such key events as the UO symposium and the TBT. However, as the reader may have noticed, our knowledge base concerning the contributions made by Native veterans to the Red Power movement, outside of WKII, is sorely lacking, and full of gaps which can only be filled by more research.

Through their application of Red Power ideology to their work with the GI resistance movement, Native advocates of GI resistance in the Pacific Northwest were at the forefront – if only for a brief time – of what might reasonably be described as a servicemen's wing of Red Power. While the same cannot be said of Native contributions to the veterans' wing of the anti-war movement, which were not coordinated, and appear to have been modest by comparison, what they lacked in numbers was more than made up for by the power of their ideas, which reached the highest levels of that movement at a critical moment, when both official and popular attention was focused on the war and those who were making a stand against it. As previously unexplored areas of study, the scale and significance of Native contributions to the GI resistance and veterans' anti-war movements remains to be seen, and, again, much more research into all aspects of this little known topic is needed if we are to be able to write in less speculative terms.

In the aftermath of WKII, the authorities came down hard on the movement, and the heyday of Red Power came to an end, but some radical Native veterans continued to make characteristic contributions, and to apply their military expertise to armed activism, especially among the Algonquian and Iroquoian warrior societies of southern Canada and the northern US (Carroll, 2008: 151-154). In mid-1973, for instance, when a newly-formed Mohawk warrior society in Kahnawake, Quebec made efforts to evict non-Native people from their land, the Vietnam veterans among them gave their civilian peers military-style training, and were thereby able to successfully repulse Quebec authorities when they attempted to intervene (George-Kanentiio, 2006: 34-35; York & Pindera, 1991: 178).

The following spring, when warriors from Kahnawake and Akwesasne, NY occupied an area of Moss Lake, NY and established a settlement called Ganienkeh, the occupiers invited AIM to come and set up "a land base … where their Vietnam veterans may train young warriors in the art of defending their homeland" (Hall, quoted in Barlow, 2004: 206; George-Kanentiio, 2006: 34-35). Although the promised land base was never established, Shawnee combat veteran and former WKII occupier Richard 'Cartoon' Alford came to help the Ganienkeh militants construct their defences, and organised and trained an effective security force that would ultimately hold the site for more than three years (Landsman, 1988: 185-186; York & Pindera, 1991: 178-179).

Russell Redner (quoted in Stern, 1994: 278-279) continued to view his work with AIM as a war – a cause for which he was more than willing to take up arms. In late 1975, he was among a group of fugitive Red Power activists apprehended after a shootout with the FBI. During the subsequent legal proceedings, Redner (quoted in Stern, 1994: 29 + 235-238) refused to talk or to make deals with the authorities, instead reaffirming his identity as a *warrior*, and referencing his veterancy in such a way as to further imply that he considered his current activities much more worthwhile than what he had done in Vietnam. "My name is Russ Redner", he asserted, "I don't have a rank or serial number anymore. I'm a warrior for my Indian people … warriors don't surrender, and that's all there is to it" (Redner, quoted in Stern, 1994: 29 + 235-238).

Moreover, the influence of Native Vietnam-era veterans in this respect continued long after the war in Vietnam came to an end, most notably during a spate of armed confrontations between Mohawk militants and Canadian and US authorities in the 1980s and 90s, such as those at Akwesasne, NY, and Oka and Ipperwash in Canada, where, once again, they applied the skills they had learned during service, taking an even more militaristic approach than they had at WKII (Busatta, 2005: 4; Lackenbauer, 2014: 184-185; Swain, 2010: 60-61 + 86 + 217; York & Pindera, 1991: 135-136 + 139-140 + 240-241 + 244-247 + 305 + 357 + 360-361). Thus, nearly twenty years after the last US servicemen had

returned from Vietnam, Native Vietnam-era veterans continued to play a characteristic role in Red Power activism that was directly inspired by their experiences of military service.

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