



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Army Conducts Seventh Year of Disinterment and Return of
Native American Children at Carlisle Barracks**

CARLISLE, Pa. – The U.S. Army will continue its commitment to reunite Native American families with their loved ones through its seventh year of disinterment operations at Carlisle Barracks, beginning Sept. 3, 2024.

The Army is actively working to help bring healing and closure to eleven Native American families and six tribes whose children died after being sent to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School and who were buried there more than 100 years ago. On behalf of the Army, the Office of Army Cemeteries (OAC) is scheduled to begin the multi-phase disinterment project in September, with forensic archaeological and anthropological expertise from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The decedents who will be disinterred are: William Norkok from the Eastern Shoshone Tribe; Almeda Heavy Hair, Bishop L. Shield, and John Bull from the Gros Ventre Tribe of the Fort Belknap Indian Community; Fanny Chargingshield, James Cornman, and Samuel Flying Horse from the Oglala Sioux Tribe; Albert Mekko from the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma; and Alfred Charko and Kati Rosskidwits from the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes. One tribe wishes to remain anonymous.

“The return of these eleven children to their Native American families is one of the Army’s highest priorities and we hope it will bring them the long-awaited peace and closure they deserve,” said Karen Durham-Aguilera, executive director of Army National Military Cemeteries and the Office of Army Cemeteries. “We will continue to work with families and tribes in their courageous undertaking to return these children home.”

In 1879, Carlisle Barracks became the site of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, which was operated by the Department of the Interior until 1918. The school enrolled more than 10,000 Native American children, with representation from approximately 50 Native American tribes from across the nation.

OAC will disinter and transfer custody to families and tribes able to establish the closest family link between the decedent and requestor, following Army Regulation 290-5.

The transfer of custody will enable families and tribes to return these children to an interment location of their choice. The Army will reimburse families for their travel to participate

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in the disinterment process and a subsequent transfer ceremony, as well as the cost for transport and reinterment of the children.

“The Office of Army Cemeteries recognizes that this has been an extremely difficult journey for families and tribes,” said Renea Yates, project director and director of the Office of Army Cemeteries. “We sincerely appreciate the trust they have given us to assist in returning their children. The Army team will continue to treat every gravesite, family, tribe and child with dignity and respect.”

The Carlisle Barracks Post Cemetery will be closed to visitors starting Aug. 19, when site set-up begins, until the completion of the scheduled disinterments, tentatively scheduled for Oct. 14. Out of respect for the families and tribes, and consistent with Army cemetery protocol, the entire cemetery area will be enclosed with privacy fencing. Access to the cemetery will be restricted to the OAC staff along with tribal members and their families.

Media Photo Opportunity:

A cemetery photo/video opportunity will be scheduled for credentialed media organizations during the first week of September. This is the only time that photos and video will be permitted in the cemetery. There will be limited opportunities for interviews by request only. More information will become available in August.

Please submit questions to: olivia.r.vandenheuvel.civ@army.mil.

Requests for Interviews with Families:

Family interviews are not permitted at the cemetery or on Carlisle Barracks grounds. OAC is not permitted to release family names or contact information to media personnel without a signed media consent form from the family. Reporters must coordinate directly with the family if given permission to conduct an interview.

Press Conference (to be scheduled):

To protect the families' privacy, OAC will not discuss findings while the project is ongoing. However, OAC Public Affairs will conduct a press conference at the conclusion of the disinterment project. At that time, OAC representatives will be available to discuss forensic archaeological and physical anthropological findings.