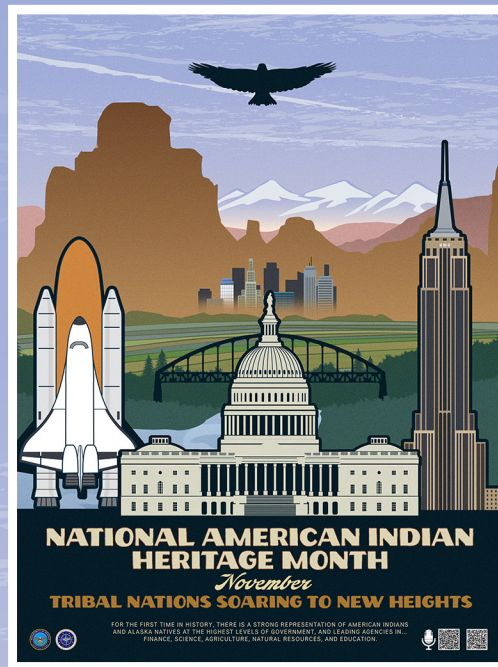


CULTURAL  
AWARENESS

# OBSERVANCE

**NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH**  
**TRIBAL NATIONS SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS**



Every November, the Department of Defense (DoD) joins the Nation in celebrating National American Indian Heritage Month. The event is also known in some circles as American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month.

It's an opportunity to recognize the rich and diverse cultures, traditions, stories, and important contributions of Native American and Alaska Native peoples.

There are over 9 million American Indian and Alaska Natives living in the United States today.

With over 574 federally recognized tribes, there are hundreds of different cultures that are as unique as the people they represent.

For 2023, The Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) has chosen the theme: "Tribal Nations Soaring to New Heights."

For more than 100 years, generations of Mohawk ironworkers shaped the skylines of North American cities. These men built prominent landmarks, including the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, the George Washington Bridge, and the World Trade Center.

The Mohawk tradition of ironworking began in the mid-1880s. They were hired as unskilled laborers to build a bridge over the St. Lawrence River onto Mohawk land. Quickly, they earned a reputation for being hard workers on high steel, earning the nickname "skywalkers."

In the 1960s, when New York City announced plans for the World Trade Center, which would be the tallest in the world, hundreds of Mohawk men played a vital role in the construction.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the towers, descendants of the original ironworkers returned to the structure to aid in rescue and cleanup at ground zero.

Fittingly, Mohawk ironworkers then helped build the new Freedom Tower, now known as One World Trade Center.

American Indians and Alaska Natives have built a legacy of professionalism and selfless service that inspires future generations.

