



Oglala Sioux Tribe

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UGLALA SIOUX TRIBE RESPONDS TO DEFENSE DEPARTMENT REFUSAL TO REVOKE MILITARY MEDALS OF HONOR FROM WOUNDED KNEE MASSACRE

(Pine Ridge, SD) – Frank Star Comes Out, President of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Chairman of the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Association, U.S. Marine combat-veteran, and direct descendant of "Chief Bigfoot," issued the following statement in response to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's announcement that the Military Medals of Honor awarded to soldiers of the 7th Cavalry for their role in the 1890-Wounded Knee Massacre will not be revoked:

"Secretary Hegseth's refusal is despicable, untruthful, and insulting to the Great Sioux Nation. More than 300 unarmed Lakota men, women, and children were massacred at Wounded Knee — it was NOT a battle, it was REVENGE for America's only loss on what they consider their home soil, The Battle of the Little Bighorn on June 25, 1876. It was the 7th Cavalry, led by Lt. Col. George A. Custer, who was defeated by the Great Sioux Nation. We were never defeated militarily. The United States government came to us and negotiated treaties of peace, yet to this day we must continue to fight to see them honored.

To call Wounded Knee a 'battle' dishonors the truth, desecrates the memory of our relatives, and insults Native American veterans who fought and died for this country from Normandy to present. The Oglala Sioux Tribe will never stop demanding that these medals be rescinded, that history be told with accuracy, and that descendants of Wounded Knee — and all tribal nations — be treated with respect and dignity."

Documented Timeline & Cover-Up of Wounded Knee Massacre

- **December 28, 1890** – Chief Big Foot and 350 Lakota intercepted by the 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee Creek, forced to camp under military guard.
- **December 29, 1890** – Soldiers attempted to confiscate weapons. A scuffle broke out; soldiers opened fire with Hotchkiss guns. Over 300 Lakota men, women, and children were slaughtered.
- **Immediate aftermath** – Soldiers pursued fleeing women and children up to two miles from camp, killing indiscriminately. Many bodies were later found in ravines.

- **December 30–31, 1890** – Victims' bodies left frozen on the ground. On January 1, 1891, the Army hired civilians to dig mass graves.
- **1891** – The U.S. Army falsely declared Wounded Knee a "battle," issuing 20 Medals of Honor.

Eyewitness Accounts of Atrocity

- Major General Nelson A. Miles condemned Wounded Knee as "the most abominable criminal military blunder and a horrible massacre of women and children."
- Captain Edward S. Godfrey admitted soldiers fired into their own ranks in reckless frenzy.
- Civilian witnesses such as General Leonard W. Colby denounced the killings as unjustifiable.

Political Work to Rescind the Medals

- **1990s** – Tribal nations began formal calls on the 100th anniversary.
- **2001** – Congressional discussions stalled.
- **2019** – Bipartisan legislation introduced, blocked in committee.
- **2021–2022** – Hearings and testimony renewed national attention.
- **2023–2024** – Tribal leaders and allies pressed the White House and Department of Defense.

Resilience of Wounded Knee Descendants

- Families hold annual memorials every December to honor the victims.
- Descendants have served honorably in every U.S. conflict, from World War I to Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Despite intergenerational trauma, Lakota communities continue to uphold ceremony, language, and tradition.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe and the Oceti Sakowin will never accept lies in place of truth, nor silence in place of justice. These Medals of Honor remain a stain on the conscience of this nation. Until they are revoked, the United States cannot claim to stand for honor, integrity, or justice. We will not rest — not today, not tomorrow, not ever — until the truth is acknowledged and this national disgrace is corrected, our story must be told for generations to come.



Frank Star Comes Out, President
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