

Office of Army Cemeteries finalized fifth disinterment project at Carlisle Barracks, July 7, 2022

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The U.S. Army finalized their fifth disinterment project in returning five Native American children and two Alaskan Native children to their families, July 7, 2022.

CARLISLE, Pa. – The U.S. Army finalized its fifth disinterment project in returning five Native American children and two Alaskan Native children to their families. These children died after being sent to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School and who were buried there more than 100 years ago.

The Office of Army Cemeteries presented its findings Thursday, July 7, 2022, of the multi-phase disinterment project with archaeological and anthropological expertise from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The OAC's team's findings of the human remains found in the gravesites assigned to Raleigh James (Washoe tribe), Ellen Macy (Lower Umpqua), Lottie Sireech (Ute), Paul Wheelock (Oneida), Frank Green (Oneida), Anna Vereskin (Aleut) and Anastasia Ashouwak (Alaskan Native) were biologically consistent with the information contained in their student and burial location records.

Each child was returned to their family in a dignified transfer ceremony, and

many have already been reinterred on their native lands.

On June 18 the Army conducted a dignified disinterment of grave B-13 at the Carlisle Post Cemetery, which records indicated was for a Catawba child, Wade Ayres. The remains recovered however were inconsistent with those of a boy of the approximate age of 13-14 and instead found to be that of a girl of the approximate age of 15-20. The unknown remains were reinterred in a dignified ceremony on Monday, June 20th with the caring assistance and compassion of the Catawba family. The Army is committed to reviewing all available resources and seeking out new information that may help us identify any possible error that led to this anomaly so we can make the appropriate effort to return Wade to his family and the Catawba nation.

“The Army is once again honored to reunite the families with their children so they may begin the healing process. On behalf of my team, I would like to thank all of the families for making this difficult journey and allowing us to share in this experience with them,” said Karen Durham-Aguilera, Executive Director, Office of Army Cemeteries and Arlington National Cemetery.

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

OAC stands ready to disinter and transfer custody to families who are able to establish the closest family link between the decedent and requestor, following Army Regulation 290-5. The transfer will enable families to return the children to cemeteries of their choice. The Army will reimburse families for their travel to participate in a transfer ceremony and is also funding the cost for transport and reinterment of the deceased children.

In a private ceremony, the Army formally transferred the remains to the respective families. The families will subsequently travel to the cemeteries of their choice for reinterment of their loved ones.

“The combined Army team was privileged to support families and return seven more children this summer, totaling 28 over the past six years. We are committed to caring for the graves of children who remain buried at the Carlisle Barracks Post Cemetery and will continue to support the disinterment of those requested to be returned,” said Renea Yates, Director of the Office of Army Cemeteries.
