

# Army to reunite Northern Arapaho families with children buried at Carlisle Barracks Cemetery

## Army to reunite Northern Arapaho families with children buried at Carlisle Barracks Cemetery more than 100 years ago

More than 130 years after their deaths far from their homes, three Native American children will be disinterred from the Carlisle Barracks Cemetery and returned to their homes in Fremont County, Wyoming. The U.S. Army's archeological team is scheduled to begin the project here August 8. These actions are in response to requests from the families of the Northern Arapaho Tribe.

Little Plume (aka Hayes Vanderbilt Friday), Little Chief (aka Dickens Nor), and Horse (aka Horace Washington) were members of the Northern Arapaho Tribe who died in the early 1880s while attending the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. The Army has maintained a post cemetery since 1918 when the Bureau of Indian Affairs closed the school and the post returned to the control of the Department of the Army.

On behalf of the Army, the Office of Army National Military Cemeteries will manage the disinterment project. ***"The Army is grateful to have the opportunity to help the Northern Arapaho families find closure by reuniting them with their relatives who were buried at Carlisle Barracks Cemetery more than 100 years ago,"*** said Karen Durham-Aguilera, Executive Director of Army National Military Cemeteries. ANMC is disinterring and transferring custody of three members of the Northern Arapaho Tribe to their families. Additionally, the Army is paying for the transport and reinternment of the deceased in Fremont County, Wyoming, in private cemeteries selected by the families. Army Regulation 210-190 guides the disinterment process, as well as the documentation required to establish a link between the decedent and requestor.

The Carlisle Barracks Cemetery will be closed to visitors starting July 30 when set-up begins until completion of actions, tentatively by August 17. The small parking area on Jim Thorpe Road will also be closed during this period.

In respect for the families and tribe, 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 ANMC

staff; access to the tribal and ceremony tentage will be restricted to family and tribal members.

At this time, no other disinterments are scheduled. This may be the first of several disinterments over the next few years. The Army is contacting all Native American Tribes whose members attended the Department of the Interior Carlisle Indian Industrial School between 1879 and 1918.

### **Background:**

What was known as the Carlisle Indian School Cemetery was established on or adjacent to a burial ground with a complex history. Known as the “Old Burial Ground,” this cemetery may have originated during the British Encampment during the French and Indian War (1757-1763), and appears to have been used for the burial of British prisoners of war and potentially others during the Revolutionary War. This location then became the site of the Holmes family burial ground, and became a U.S. military cemetery following the establishment of the Carlisle Barracks in 1837.

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 nearly 50 Native American Tribes from across the nation.

Driven by a massive expansion of Carlisle Barracks in 1927 as a result of the Medical Field Services School, the Carlisle Indian School cemetery was relocated to a new burial ground at what was then a quiet, remote part of the installation. Records indicate that more than \$4,000 were allocated to move the cemetery, including the purchase of wooden coffins and removing and re-erecting headstones. This cemetery was subsequently used for the burial of military personnel and their families.

Today, there a total of 231 decedents interred in the Carlisle Barracks Post Cemetery: 180 of the decedents are known Native Americans. ANMC representatives believe that the cemetery includes one unknown Native American, 37 veterans and/or their family members, and 13 unknowns not believed to be Native American.

The first burial occurred in February 1882 in the original location. When the Army assumed control of the post in 1918, the cemetery became a military cemetery. The cemetery was closed to further interments in 2005 and is operated at the same standards as Arlington National Cemetery.

Find additional information related to Native Americans buried at the Carlisle Barracks Post Cemetery – to include ground-penetrating radar study (Fall 2016), Archival Research Report (Spring 2017), notes from the listening sessions with Native American nations about disinterment:

<http://www.belvoir.army.mil/ANMC/ReturnOfNativeAmericanRemains.asp>

