



American Indians in World War 1: At War and At Home

Thomas A. Britten

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During World War I, about 10,000 Native Americans either enlisted or were drafted into the American Expeditionary Force. Three related questions are examined in depth for the first time in this book: What were the battlefield experiences of Native Americans? How did racial and cultural stereotypes about Indians affect their duties? Did their wartime contributions lead to changes in federal Indian policy or their standard of living?

Many American Indians distinguished themselves fighting on the Western Front. And as compared to black and Mexican American soldiers, Indians enjoyed near universal respect when in uniform. To celebrate their patriotism during and after the war, Indians could even perform a variety of traditional ceremonies otherwise proscribed. Both in combat and in their support roles on the homefront, including volunteer contributions by Indian women, Native Americans hoped their efforts would result in a more vigorous application of democracy. But the Bureau of Indian Affairs continued to cut health and education programs and to suppress Indian cultures.

"This is a first-rate book and a significant contribution to twentieth-century Indian history."--Professor Donald L. Parman

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