



TACI BETTIS IS RUNNING FOR ARMY PFC. LORI ANN PIESTEWA

The first Native American woman to die in combat was also the first female military death of the Iraq War

American women risk their lives for their country every day. In fact, women have served alongside men in combat long before they were legally "allowed." That being said, women didn't have the option of joining the military in fields outside of nursing until after the Vietnam War. With such a history, it's important to tell the stories of the women who served and lost their lives while defending our country.

Honoring our fallen warriors is a longstanding, sacred tradition in our military. It's part of our DNA to recognize the sacrifice of those that die in combat.

Let's take a moment to remember Pvt. Lori Ann Piestewa, who was not only the first woman in the U.S. military to lose her life in the Iraq War, she was also the first Native American woman to die in combat with the United States Armed Forces. Piestewa was a Native American of Hopi descent with Mexican-American heritage.

Her native name was White Bear Girl.

Piestewa is the first American Indian woman to die in combat on foreign soil. (U.S. Army photo)

Hailing from her hometown of Tuba City, Ariz., Piestewa was from a military family. She was the daughter of a Vietnam veteran and the granddaughter of a World War II veteran. Her own interest in the military began in high school, where she participated in a junior ROTC program. Piestewa enlisted in the Army and was attached to the 507th Maintenance Company in Fort Bliss, Texas and deployed to Iraq after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion.

Her company, the 507th, was infamously ambushed near Nasiriyah, Iraq, on March 23, 2003.



MIA Pfc Lori Anne Piestewa seen here with her son.



Piestewa was driving the lead vehicle in a convoy when one of their vehicles broke down. They stopped to make a repair, then continued north to catch up to the rest of the convoy. Along the way, they made a wrong turn and were ambushed by Iraqi troops.

The missing numbered 15 total.

A few days later, Pfc. Jessica Lynch was rescued from an Iraqi hospital. Nine members of the 507th were killed in action, including Piestewa. A rocket-propelled grenade hit the Humvee she was driving.

Piestewa left behind a son, a daughter, and a mother and father, Terry and Percy Piestewa, who toured the country attending memorial services held in her honor.

She was posthumously promoted to Pfc. Lori Ann Piestewa and Arizona's offensively-named "Squaw Peak" was renamed Piestewa Peak. It was "given the name of hero," as her tribe described it.



Lori Piestewa will live forever in our memory and in the memory of her fellow soldiers as the Hopi woman warrior that gave her life for her country: White Bear Girl.

