

## Proud of mixed-blood Native Veterans

Dear Editor,

I'm writing this letter in an attempt to try to help you understand the struggles we have been through. I am one of the 490 original Uintah Band members from the Ute Indian Tribe of Utah. The only band in Utah since termination that is still not reinstated or federally recognized. How could that happen in our great country? Lawsuit after lawsuit.

For 50 years, gosh give us a break. God knows I haven't had one for a long time. I can't say for the others, but we have lost a lot of our people since this suit began

in 2002. My mother was one in 2003, proud American like my father, he died in early 1984 in the V.A. hospital in Salt Lake City in poverty. He served with Merrill's Mauarders and took suicide missions because it had to be done. My dad would not talk about it. My uncle Dode told me he was in the Air Force at that time. He fought and gave it all he had only for them to come home to termination - land they fought to save, gone for them anyway.

I am proud of our Veterans, so called mixed-blood vets. Their still proud, but their plaque is in the V.A. office in Fort Duchesne, pushed in a corner in a little room, no other plaques just that one. Some of the names were gone. It looked like a bird did his business on it and it ran down the plaque onto my dad's name. I waited for awhile, called and asked if we could have it, and the "No!" almost broke my ear. I don't know if the plaque is still there but I have the pictures.

I am proud of our Veterans, non-members, mixed-bloods and tribal for having the courage and honor to go to World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War and now Iraq, and pray their plaque does not end up in a little room. It should be where all the world can see.

World War II Veterans: Names like Charles L. Johnson - lost, Aaron Daniels - lost, Wilson Reed, Charles T. Reed, Kenneth LaRose, Ellis Denver, Richard Burson, Weldon Burson, Alvin Denver, Dee Hendricks, Frank LaRose, Glen Murdock, Kenneth Reed, Ruben Russell, Nelson Jr. Young, Daniel Crumbo, Robert Burson, and my dad, Norman Nielson. Like I say some of the names are gone. It is a beautiful plaque if it was taken care of, cleaned up, and the names put back.

Come on guys, most of these men are gone now but they and their families deserve some respect. And the ones alive deserve a big thanks. That was a bad war. My uncle Dode, for one, he's a great man, my hero.

Norma N. Bird