

# Around DCMA



Comanche Code Talkers

## *Speaking in Code*

“Once a person dies, their name is never spoken again,” said Charlene “Sue” Morris, a member of the Comanche Nation, Okla. This is a strong cultural code for the Comanche, but one that is difficult to follow while attempting to preserve their tribe’s contribution to U.S. military history.

Morris, the featured speaker during the DCMA Aeronautical Systems and Naval Sea Systems Divisions celebration of American Indian and Alaska Native Observance month, told attendees the story of the Comanche code talkers who assisted our troops during World War II.

The Comanche code talkers frustrated enemy code breakers by translating Army messages into their native language. The enemy never broke the code. Seventeen young men were trained in military communications but transmitted their information in their native tongue — a language unknown to most of the world. “Both my father

and my uncle were among the 17 Comanche recruited as code talkers.” Morris told the attendees. The Comanche code talkers created their code at Fort Benning, Ga., in 1941. The code was comprised of a 100-word vocabulary of military terms. Since there is no Comanche word for “tank,” the code talkers used their word for turtle. “Hitler was *posahthaivo*, or ‘crazy white man,’” said Morris.

Adolf Hitler knew about the successful use of code talkers during World War I and sent a team of some 30 anthropologists to learn Native American languages before the outbreak of World War II. However, it proved too difficult to learn all the many languages and dialects that existed. Because of Nazi German anthropologists’ attempts to learn the languages, the U.S. Army did not implement a large-scale code talker program in the European theater. Fourteen Comanche code talkers took part in the D-Day invasion of Normandy and continued to serve in the 4th Infantry Division during further European operations.

According to Morris, American Indians have the highest percentage of their population serving in the military when compared to other ethnic groups. Currently, 2.1 percent of our military is comprised of American Indian and Alaska Native service members. Morris also stated that Comanche served alongside our military members in every conflict and war from 1800 to the present. “As of today, there are 190,000 American Indian veterans,” said Morris.

— By Ann Jensis-Dale, DCMA Public Affairs Staff



**Premo and Cowin with Strykers**  
1st Lt. Tristen Premo (left) and Staff Sgt. Donald Cowin (right) from 5th Squadron 1 U.S. Cavalry Regiment of the 1-25 ID Brigade.

### **DCMAN San Diego Supports Operation Iraqi Freedom**

AUGUST – After a successful retrofit of *Stryker* vehicles in October 2007, Defense Contract Management Agency Naval Sea Systems Division San Diego received a letter of delegation from DCMA Detroit to support retrofit operations of 317 *Stryker* vehicles. By working together closely to inspect the vehicles, DCMAN San Diego and the U.S. Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command ensured all requirements were met to support the 1st *Stryker* Brigade combat Team, 25th Infantry Division — 1/25 SBCT — deployment to Iraq.

All 317 *Stryker* vehicles arrived from Fort Wainwright, Alaska, by July 29 and were retrofitted by contractor General Dynamics Land Systems at the Port of San Diego, Calif. The primary purpose of DCMAN San Diego's involvement was to perform inspection and acceptance activities to ensure all vehicles had the required retrofit and upgrade installations done correctly. Specifically, DCMAN San Diego engineering and manufacturing technology specialists

and quality assurance specialists audited the part and component installation processes for slat armor, common ballistic shields, exhaust deflector shields, weapon mounts, hull protection kits and tire fire suppression kits.

Final inspection of the *Stryker* vehicles was performed by the DCMAN San Diego quality assurance specialists and TACOM representatives. The retrofit operation's success was due to the total team effort of DCMAN San Diego, DCMA Detroit, TACOM LCMC, GDLS and, most importantly, the warfighters of the 1/25 SBCT.

— By Rachelle Munz and Tom Mulqueen, DCMA Naval Sea Systems Division San Diego



*Stryker* vehicles