Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – Acting Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Donald "Del" Laverdure honored three law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty, expressing his gratitude and appreciation to their family members, friends and colleagues at the 21st Annual Indian Country Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Service.

Held May 3 at the U.S. Indian Police Academy in Artesia, N.M., the ceremony was hosted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services to remember and honor tribal, state, local and federal law enforcement officers working on federal Indian lands and in tribal communities who have died in the line of duty since the 1800s.

"Every officer memorialized here worked on behalf of the United States, on behalf of tribal communities and their citizens, and on behalf of those people living and working in Indian country," Laverdure said. "President Obama, Secretary Salazar, and I are committed to improving public safety and justice, including officer safety, in Indian country. Through the Tribal Law and Order Act the President signed in 2010 and the Secretary's Safe Indian Communities and High Priority Performance Goal Initiatives, we in Indian Affairs are working to help tribes address quality-of-life issues in their communities that can help law enforcement in its mission to protect lives and property."

The officers' names were added at the event to those inscribed on the Indian Country Law Enforcement Officers Memorial's stone tablet monument, bringing the total to 99. The three are:

- Bureau of Alcohol, Firearms, Tobacco and Explosives Federal Agent William Louis Pappan, who was killed on December 4, 1935, in Indian Territory while inspecting beer licenses near Tulsa, Oklahoma.
- San Carlos Apache Tribal Police Officer Aaron Daniel Peru, who died on February 13, 2011, on the San Carlos Reservation in Arizona from injuries he received in a motor vehicle accident while on official business.
- Navajo Nation Tribal Sergeant of Police Darrell Cervandez Curley, who died on June 25, 2011, on the Navajo Nation Reservation from a gunshot wound he received while making an arrest in a domestic dispute.

In his remarks, Laverdure, who is a member of the Crow Tribe in Montana, noted that one of the names inscribed on the memorial belonged to BIA Law Enforcement Officer LeRoy A. Pine, Jr., a Northern Cheyenne tribal member who was assigned to the Crow Reservation. In 1988, Officer Pine assisted in breaking up a drinking party and was killed when a driver leaving the party struck his parked car. His name was added to the memorial on May 2, 1991.

The acting Assistant Secretary was accompanied by BIA Director Mike Black and OJS Deputy Bureau Director Darren Cruzan, and OJS Special Agents in Charge Matthew Pryor and Mario Red Legs.

The OJS holds the service in conjunction with other law enforcement organizations and agencies including the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Indian Country Law Enforcement

Section, the National Sheriffs' Association, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC).

In addition to Laverdure, Black and Cruzan, other speakers included Department of the Interior Director Polly Hansen, IACP Indian Country Law Enforcement Section Chairman Joe LaPorte, FLETC Deputy Director D. Kenneth Keene, ATF Assistant Director John Torres, Captain Jerry James of the San Carlos Tribal Police Department, Captain Bobby Etsitty of the Navajo Nation Police Department, and Artesia Mayor Phillip Burch.

Also speaking was Ted Quasula of the Indian Law and Order Commission, an advisory body established by the Tribal Law and Order Act charged with reporting to the President and Congress proposals to improve safety and justice for Native Americans living and working on Indian lands.

Following the service, relatives of the officers being added to the memorial were presented with American flags in honor of their loved ones: Agent Pappan's son and daughter-in-law, Officer Peru's parents, and Sergeant Curley's wife and daughter.

The Indian Country Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Service was first held in 1991, and the memorial itself first dedicated on May 7, 1992, at the U.S. Indian Police Academy, when it was then in Marana, Ariz. The academy and the memorial were later moved to their present site on the FLETC campus in Artesia. The memorial was re-dedicated there on May 6, 1993.

The earliest name inscribed on the memorial dates back to 1852. In addition to BIA and tribal law enforcement, agencies represented include the U.S. Border Patrol, the New Mexico State Police, the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the Navajo County Sheriff's Office, the U.S. Customs Bureau, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The list includes one female officer from the Navajo Nation Department of Public Safety, who was killed in 1998; a father and son, both BIA officers, who died in 1998 and 2001, respectively; and two FBI agents killed on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in 1975.

The memorial's design is based upon indigenous design concepts. Comprised of three granite markers sited within a circular walkway lined with sage, a plant of spiritual significance to many tribes, the memorial includes four planters filled with foliage in colors representing people of all races. The planters represent the four directions and are located near the walkway's entrance.