Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk conveyed the nation's gratitude to the families of seven police officers who were being remembered and honored at the 20th Annual Indian Country Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Service held today at the United States Indian Police Academy in Artesia, N.M. The Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services (BIA-OJS) holds the memorial service each year to honor and commemorate tribal, state, local and federal law enforcement officers working on federal Indian lands and in tribal communities who have given their lives in the line of duty. The Assistant Secretary was joined by BIA Director Mike Black and OJS Deputy Director Darren Cruzan.

"As law enforcement officers stand together as brothers and sisters to protect one another, so this administration will stand with you," Echo Hawk said. "On behalf of a grateful nation, President Obama and Secretary Salazar, we honor and remember your sacrifice – now and for future generations."

This year, seven names were added to those already inscribed on the Indian Country Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, bringing the total number to 96. Those added at today's ceremony were:

- BIA Deputy Special Officer A.H. Scott, killed June 22, 1925
- Uintah and Ouray Tribal Police Officer Joshua Yazzie, killed June 2, 2010
- City of Hoonah, Alaska, Police Officer Anthony Michael Wallace, killed August 28, 2010
- City of Hoonah, Alaska, Police Officer Matthew Dean Tokuoka, killed August 28, 2010
- U.S. Border Patrol Agent George Debates, killed December 19, 2004
- U.S. Border Patrol Agent Michael Vincent Gallagher, killed September 2, 2010
- Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Police Officer Merrill Allen Bruguier, killed October 9, 2010

In his remarks, the Assistant Secretary drew upon his law enforcement experiences in Idaho as chief general legal counsel to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, as a county prosecuting attorney and as state attorney general.

In addition to Assistant Secretary Echo Hawk, other speakers included New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez, Artesia City Mayor Phillip Burch, National Sheriffs' Association President B.J. Roberts, International Association of Chiefs of Police Indian Country Law Enforcement Section President Joe LaPorte, FLETC Deputy Director Ken Keene and U.S. Border Patrol Division Chief Manuel Padilla.

Following the service, the Assistant Secretary presented folded American flags to representatives of the families of Officers Scott, Tokuoka and Wallace and to family members of Officers Bruguier and Yazzie. Officials of the U.S. Border Patrol presented flags to family members of Agents Debates and Gallagher.

The Indian Country Law Enforcement Officers Memorial was first dedicated on May 7, 1992, at the U.S. Indian Police Academy, which was then in Marana, Ariz. The academy and the memorial were later moved to their present site on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) campus in Artesia. The memorial was rededicated there on May 6, 1993.

The earliest name inscribed on the memorial dates back to 1852. In addition to those from BIA and tribal law enforcement, officers listed represent 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. The BIA-OJS holds the memorial service in conjunction with the ICAP Indian Country Law Enforcement Section, the National Sheriffs' Association, FLETC, the U.S. Border Patrol and other law enforcement agencies.