

Seeing son off brings mother some comfort

In the aftermath of the Iraqi war, tribal member Sgt. Rain Circle Courtney is among the U.S. troops still arriving

By Shannon Keaveny
Spilyay Tymoo

In late April in Fort Polk, Louisiana, Bernyce Courtney took part in a festive yet anxious occasion.

Soldiers, many accompanied by their families, threw their army bags on big piles in preparation for their departure to Iraq.

Tribal member Sgt. Rain Circle Courtney was among the soldiers.

The members of the U.S. Army Second Armored Cavalry Regiment had been waiting months for a chance to do their jobs.



ABOVE: Sgt. Rain Circle Courtney poses in uniform with other members of his squadron. LEFT: Courtney and his two year old daughter, Wednesday Courtney, who lives in Florida.

So today, while some soldiers have returned to the U.S. after the war, other families were saying farewell. "I was very anxious and sad about Rain Circle's depart-

ture but the festive environment at Fort Polk sort of lightened my spirit," said Bernyce Courtney, Sgt. Rain Circle Courtney's mother.

The environment was kind of like a college campus except for all the guns and soldiers, she explained.

The families of the soldiers had many newborns and toddlers.

Now, over a month later, Bernyce has received one letter from her son.

Sgt. Courtney also called his daughter briefly in Florida. Bernyce doesn't know if he's receiving her care packages.

"I quit worrying about him a long time ago. But reading about casualties in the paper is sometimes hard," shared Bernyce.

In the letter to his mother Sgt. Courtney wrote that he was still in a military camp outside of Baghdad, preparing to leave soon for the city.

The summer weather was hot, said Sgt. Courtney.

So hot, one day he quit

sweating and found himself at the medics being treated for dehydration.

Following him were four other soldiers from his squadron, one he described as "falling like a ton of bricks" as she arrived dehydrated at the medics.

Otherwise, Courtney was reading a lot of books while waiting to leave for Baghdad, saying his latest was *Catcher in the Rye*.

Weeks later his mother suspects he's arrived in Baghdad.

She thinks he's helping to police the city along with the other soldiers, like he did in Kosovo during the Kosovo-Serbian conflict in 1999.

"He's probably helping to keep the peace," guessed Bernyce.

Courtney is a cavalry scout for the U.S. Army Armored Cavalry Regiment.

The entire regiment is armored vehicles or HHMVs. He's 28 years old and has been in the army for 10 years.

Once released from the Army, he hopes to pursue filmmaking

Courtney is scheduled to leave the army in November if he's completed his job in Iraq.

Once released from the Army, he hopes to pursue filmmaking while living with his wife and two year old daughter in Florida.

During his tour with the Army, Courtney spent time in Kosovo during the U.N. military conflict.

At the time he was stationed in Germany.

Although his mother is unsure of what he is doing in Iraq, the character of her son is displayed by a request he made while in Kosovo.

"Don't send me anything, just send me gloves for the kids here," Courtney requested of his mother in Kosovo during the cold 1999 winter.

Governor signs bill assuring Medicaid to Native Americans

The new law guarantees dental, vision, mental health, and drug treatment for Native Americans

By Shannon Keaveny
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Until recently, the Oregon state budget crisis was taking a toll on the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center.

Waiting rooms were more crowded. Waits to see a doctor were getting longer.

Tribal members in increasing numbers were traveling to Warm Springs from off reservation locations to receive the medical attention that their treaty guarantees.

Off-reservation state-funded facilities with new limits on Medicaid benefits for Oregon's

poor were affecting the American Indian.

"The state Medicaid cuts were taxing our resources at the clinic," explained Russ Alger, director at the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center.

In other locations, Indian drug and alcohol treatment centers were reducing services. Pharmaceuticals from Indian clinics were becoming harder to obtain.

But in late May Gov. Kulongoski signed a landmark bill that ensures healthcare for Native Americans despite Oregon's budget crisis. Oregon Native Americans, who comprise about 2 percent of the state's population, were elevated to Medicaid Plus status.

Only patients categorized as Medicaid Standard in the state of Oregon are subject to reductions in Medicaid services.

The new law guarantees dental, vision, mental health, and

drug treatment for Native Americans.

Federal money is funneled down through state funds for Indian medical costs. The state is reimbursed 100 percent for Indians and Alaska Natives utilizing Medicaid.

For this reason, Oregon Indians are not subject to the same state Medicaid cuts as other Oregonians. The 1965 Medicaid Act, which set eligibility Medicaid standards for all patients, failed to acknowledge this important difference between Oregon Indians and other Oregonians.

Other Western tribes, feeling the pinch from state economic woes, are interested in implementing a similar bill in their state.

The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians has endorsed Oregon's recently signed bill. The Washington state legislature is considering a similar measure.

Breaking ground at the UO



Shannon Keaveny/Spilyay

Tribal Council person Bernice Mitchell, second from left, creates a line with representatives from the other eight Oregon tribes, and David Frohnmeyer, president of the University of Oregon, to break ground for the new U of O longhouse. Construction of the longhouse is scheduled to be completed this fall.

Warm Springs Tribal Council and members from other Oregon tribes traveled to Eugene for the groundbreaking ceremony in May. The celebrated and long overdue project will provide a community center for the some 250 Native Americans attending the U of O.

Courtney wins \$500 scholarship

At a recent national Workforce Investment Act Conference in Anchorage, Alaska, a Warm Springs tribal member received an award, amounting to \$500 for educational purposes.

Nikiya Courtney, 21, was the first Warm Springs tribal member to win the Howard Yackus Memorial Award in 24 years.

The award is a scholarship provided by the United States Department of Labor for youth that have succeeded after overcoming many obstacles and barriers.

"Nikiya doesn't give up. He's persistent and motivated. He's everything we look for in youth for youth work," said Corey Clements, director of the Workforce Development Department in Warm Springs.

Courtney was born with a spinal condition and has been confined to a wheelchair since he was 3 years old.

He praises his mother as his biggest supporter and advocate and doesn't let his disabilities get in the way of his academic development and participation in social activities.

"Through it all Nikiya keeps his enthusiasm and doesn't see his disabilities as a barrier. Nothing stands in his way," said Clements.



Nikiya Courtney with Jerry Brunoe at the 24th Workforce Investment Act Conference in Anchorage, Alaska.

As a young boy, Courtney was active in the Boy Scouts of America, Junior ROTC, and attended camp.

As a summer youth participant, he worked as a police cadet for two summers. Courtney also worked as a student intern with the diabetes program at the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center in the summer and after school.

Because of his good performance while participating in the Workforce Investment Act program, Courtney was hired as a

health technician for the Indian Health Services.

In 2000 Courtney was one of two students in Oregon to receive the Oregon Health Reform award for outstanding leadership capabilities. He was selected for his involvement in the community and for serving as a positive role model.

Currently, Courtney attends Central Oregon Community College. He plans to earn a master's degree in nutrition, hoping to return to IHS as a diabetic or nutrition supervisor.

On our 10th Anniversary

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us on May 31 to celebrate the Museum at Warm Springs 10th Anniversary

Thank you to the following people:

Washat drummers

Wasco Welcome Dancers

The Veterans

The Drum Groups and Dancers

Memorial Parade Riders and Walkers

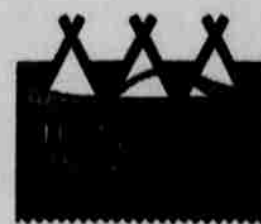
Warm Springs Police Department

Warm Springs EMT's

Volunteers



Your help and participation honored and celebrated the vision of the museum's founders, and will continue to inspire us to do our best to fulfill our mission.



The Mission of the Museum at Warm Springs is to preserve, advance and share the knowledge of the cultural, traditional and artistic heritage of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

