

CAMERON BLAGG — "It's not how much (Indian) you have in your blood, but how much you have in your heart."

Cameron Blagg grew up in Oklahoma at the edge of a bunch of Indian Reservations — Cherokee and Choctaw among them. Indians were friends and family. So, his art came out of his love of western history and Native cultures. "I began to realize that the more I learned, the more that was out there that I still didn't know," he said. When he was 12, his folks bought him a set of oil paints, and he was off.

Today, he paints with both oils and acrylics on canvas, but he said that he has worked on buffalo scrolls "and anything that would hold still." Most of his work is manageably sized — 2 feet by 3 feet, 16 inches by 20 inches — but he has also been commissioned to do some murals that "go on and on."

Of particular note are murals on two sides of a building on the Yakama Reservation in Toppenish, Washington. The Indian side holds coyote stories and the white side deals with early commerce, he said. He put together a crew of artists to help him with that job, including Yakama and Flathead, and among them was Gene Andy, a professional Yakama Indian painter who has been confined to a wheelchair for years.

Blagg also has left his mark in the world of sculpture with a limited number of bronzes cast out of clay originals. Among them is a bust of Chief Joseph, the Nez Perce leader, whom he calls his hero. "Night Howl," of a wolf, and "Ghostdancer" are others.

"My best selling work is ethereal work," Blagg said, referring to the images that come from legends and visions and spirits of the Native world. "I have had educated people tell me what I'm doing — that these pictures lead people to think."

But Blagg is confident in being self-taught,



CAMERON BLAGG AT WORK.

and is often "lost in the work" for countless hours when he'll emerge from his studio in full dark with everyone else long asleep not even knowing where the time has gone. "You do your best work when you are not thinking about time or dollars," he said.

"If I'm not at a show," he said, "I'm painting." But between himself and his son, Cameron Blagg III, who works full-time promoting the work and taking it on the road, they cover 35-40 events a



CAMERON BLAGG III

year. Most of the events are in Montana, Washington and Oregon — Blagg, the artist, lives in Montana now — but they also sell the work — from originals to lithographs to posters — at events in Colorado, Kansas City, and Tucson. Most recently, they opened up a new gallery at the Two Rivers Market in downtown Albany, Oregon.

Blagg, the son, based in Portland, hits the Tribe's Pow-wow here in Grand Ronde every year.

"I'm dealing with the third generation in some families," Blagg, the artist, said. The key to his success with Indians, he thinks, is, "as somebody said, 'It's not how much (Indian) you have in your blood but how much you have in your heart.'"

WILLIAM "HUNTER" BREEDLOVE — Evoking the feeling.



WILLIAM "HUNTER" BREEDLOVE

The hand of serendipity guided William "Hunter" Breedlove into a corner of the art world where today, in part thanks to the digital revolution, he has developed a unique and evocative style.

Sidetracked to the Gathering of Nations Pow-wow in Albuquerque in 1996, on his way to Taos, he said, "I was moved by what I saw. I took pictures at the pow-wow, but they didn't give me the feeling that I had. I wanted to evoke the feeling, the movement and intensity. It was like a religious feeling. It took me until a couple of years ago to depict a style. I've got thousands of images of costumes. The last thing I want is just another costume picture. But when I went to the pow-wow at Grand Ronde, I got back the first rolls and I thought, I can do something with this. And then it just exploded."

Though trained as an artist, he makes a living in the Portland advertising industry as a pho-

tographer and retouching specialist, but this Indian work really has new meaning for him, and may send him back to his artistic roots. Because galleries have been cool to digitized prints that can be easily duplicated, Breedlove's next step is to use his prints as drawings from which he will paint these exciting images, making each one an original.

Simultaneous with this growth as "just a white guy" artist doing this spectacular Indian art is his and wife, Helen's, growing interest in her Indian background. "We know that her great grandmother married a railroad man in Oklahoma," he said. But when he was out of town, she lived in a teepee and wouldn't live in a house."

Breedlove donated a number of large prints to the Tribe. They have since been framed and auctioned to raise money for the Tribe's Veteran's Memorial project.

STEVE BOBB — The most important work of his life.



STEVE BOBB

His professional work turns up all over Oregon's west side: the signs for Burger King, Roth's grocery stores, Wittenberg Inn, the Factory Outlet stores in Lincoln City and Coyote Joe's among others. A lot of his work — more than 20 years worth — could be driving by on cars and trucks. He has painted names, faces and native scenes on

hundreds, maybe thousands, of them.

But coming up soon will be his biggest — and most meaningful — work of art: the Veterans' Memorial to be dedicated on the Tribe's grounds on Memorial Day, 2003. Bobb designed and created the piece,

which will include two 8-foot bronze statues and four 12-foot monoliths made of black granite from India. The statues are representatives of Indians who have served in the military and those who still will serve, and the black granite will bear their names. The memorial, however, will include all Veterans from the Grand Ronde, Willamina, and Sheridan area.



VETERANS' MEMORIAL

Earlier this year Bobb recreated the 1856 Trail of Tears

march with a 265-mile trek from Table Rock to Grand Ronde to raise money for the \$300,000 memorial (the cost has since increased to \$360,000, so a few more fund raisers are still ahead).

Bobb crafted the statues in clay from photographs of Tribal members Mark LaBonte and Courtney Galligher, posing at his direction. His original statues, done in clay, were smaller, because transportation to the foundry where they are enlarged into bronzes, would otherwise have been impossible, and the originals remain in his living room.

Bobb, a marine Veteran of the Vietnam war, developed an artistic side of his own, but the memorial idea came as a calling — in fact, he said, it was a fellow Vietnam Veteran, Reyn Leno, Tribal Council Vice President, who gave him the call. "He said, we've been talking about a memorial for a few years. You be interested in designing it?" And the rest, come Memorial Day 2003, will be history.