

Gathering of Grand Ronde Tilixam

The Gathering of Grand Ronde Tilixam was held Tuesday through Thursday, Sept. 19-21, in the Chachalu Tribal Museum & Cultural Center gymnasium. The event serves as a community gathering to discuss historical and intergenerational trauma, wisdom, culture, identity, healing and more. Approximately 50 people attended the gathering.

From left, Tribal Community Programs Manager Caitlin Zimbrick and Tribal Community Support Specialist Isabell Bobb make beaded necklaces during the Gathering of Grand Ronde Tilixam on Tuesday, Sept. 19.



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From left, Youth Empowerment & Prevention Program Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coordinator Matt Bucknell, Native Connections Grant Coordinator Keri Kimsey and Tribal 477/Employment & Training Specialist Rhonda Leno work on a shield for their clan.

Tribal 477/Employment & Training Specialist Angella Schultz, left, shows Regina Wheeler (Yakama), how to make a prayer tie. The prayer tie supplies were from the generosity table and they were given away at the end of the event.



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Elder represents Iowa Purple Heart recipients

Patrick Burgess honored for his service in Vietnam

By Dean Rhodes
Publications coordinator

SIOUX CITY, IOWA – Tribal Elder Patrick Burgess, 74, was chosen to be one of the nation’s 2023 Purple Heart Patriot Project honorees by the National Purple Heart Honor Mission.

Burgess represented his fellow Purple Heart recipients as Iowa’s representative at the multi-day tribute to the courage and sacrifice of America’s combat wounded during events held Monday through Friday, Sept. 18-22, in Newburgh, N.Y.

“Patrick and his fellow Patriot Project honorees represent the best of the best our country has to offer,” said Richie Lay, a Purple Heart recipient and chairman of the National Purple Heart Honor Mission. “America’s Purple Heart veterans have given so much to defend freedom and that sacrifice must always be remembered. These brave men and women are true American heroes. We are privileged to be able to provide this unique salute to service for our Purple Heart heroes.”

This year’s Patriot Project honorees included Purple Heart recipients from World War II, the

Vietnam War, Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, and other conflicts, as well as representing all branches of the armed services.

Burgess enlisted in the Army in June 1967. Because he was only 17, his father had to sign for him. After basic training at Fort Lewis, Wash., he was sent to Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri, where he received training in demolition and minesweeping.

He was then deployed to Vietnam as a combat engineer with the 25th Infantry Division. In February 1968, he was wounded by a Viet Cong grenade that left one other soldier wounded and killed another.

He returned to Vietnam in June 1969 with the 299th Combat Engineers, where he continued to serve as a demolition expert and did minesweeping, too. He continued to see combat action across the country, finishing his tour of duty in An Khe in July 1970.

Along with a Purple Heart, Burgess received numerous medals and commendations including the Army Commendation Medal, two Vietnam Gallantry Crosses with unit citations, the National Defense Service Medal and the Vietnam Campaign Medal.

“My father, brothers and grandfather all served our country, and it was an honor to do the same,”



Contributed photo

Tribal Elder Patrick Burgess was chosen to be one of the nation’s 2023 Purple Heart Patriot Project honorees by the National Purple Heart Honor Mission. Burgess was Iowa’s representative at the multi-day tribute to the courage and sacrifice of America’s combat wounded during events held Monday through Friday, Sept. 18-22, in Newburgh, N.Y.

Burgess said. “I served with great pride.”

After the war, Burgess married his wife, Jean, and they had two children. He has been involved in the ministry for 46 years, including

serving as a missionary around the world. He holds a Ph.D. in Christian Counseling and is board certified with the National Christian Counselors of America.

The all-expense paid trip included visits to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Gen. George Washington’s headquarters, a tour of the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor and other events and tributes.

“They took them to Manhattan to the restaurant where George Washington said farewell to his troops and we had lunch there,” Jean said in an email to *Smoke Signals*. “We went to the Statue of Liberty and the New York Fire Department salute with water shooting out on four sides. They took them to the Sept. 11 memorial and Vietnam memorial. They went to the Purple Heart Hall of Honor and to West Point where they had lunch with some of the cadets and then they had a welcome home rally with police escorts and a motorcycle club. It was tremendous for all these men and their families.”

Patrick Burgess is the son of Ira Burgess and the grandson of Tina Irene (Jeffers) Burgess, who attended Chemawa Indian School in Salem. Both Patrick and Ira are honored on the West Valley Veterans Memorial on the Tribal campus. ■