

Pascal Cleatus Poolaw Sr.

A Hero on The Vietnam War Memorial

A full-blooded Kiowa from Anadarko, Sgt. 1st Class Pascal Cleatus Poolaw, who served during three wars, was killed in Vietnam in 1967. He was 45.

A total of 42 awards and medals, including four Silver Stars, five Bronze Stars, one Air Medal and three Purple Hearts, makes Poolaw the most decorated Indian soldier in U.S. history.

Poolaw attended Riverside Indian School and married classmate, Irene Chalepah a beautiful and good Apache woman. He joined the U.S. Army on August 27, 1942. He rose through the ranks to earn a battlefield commission as a second lieutenant, but later relinquished his commission.

While in service to his country, Poolaw was wounded in Germany in September 1944 and in Korea on April 4, 1951.

He earned a Purple Heart with an Oak Leaf Cluster, a Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Clusters and a Silver Star with two Oak Leaf Clusters. He was awarded the Silver Star when he was with the 8th Infantry in Belgium September 8, 1944. His citation to the third Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster to the Bronze Star was awarded for his service in the Korean War during 1950-51. He received his Silver Star in Korea April 4, 1951.

Serving in a long line of military men, Poolaw served in World War II during the time his father, Ralph Poolaw Sr., and his two brothers were also serving. His grandfather, "Kiowa George" Poolaw served as a member of the famed all Indian Cavalry Troop 1 at Fort Sill from 1893-95.

He served a year at Fort Sill before volunteering for duty in Vietnam. He had just completed his 25th year of service when he was killed in action while rescuing his wounded men under fire.

In 1968, Mrs. Irene Poolaw received four medals awarded to her husband posthumously for service in Vietnam.

Besides the Silver Star, Mrs. Poolaw received the Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal and the Purple Heart. He received the Purple heart for wounds he received November 7, 1967.

Poolaw is in The National Hall of Fame for Famous American Indians.

(from the Self-Guiding Tour for The National Hall of Fame for Famous American Indians)



Tewa Naranjo, 2006 Arapaho Tribal Princess, at the Vietnam War Memorial In Washington DC pointing to Sgt. Poolaw's inscription.