



November 26, 2019

Dear Member of Congress:

As the nation's first and largest progressive veterans organization -- representing more than 700,000 veterans, military families, and their supporters across all fifty states -- VoteVets firmly supports the Remove the Stain Act to rescind the Medals of Honor from those who perpetrated the Wounded Knee Massacre. We applaud Representatives Heck, Haaland, and Cook and Senators Warren and Merkley for leading this important legislation, and encourage all Members of Congress to join as cosponsors of the bill.

On December 29, 1890, the U.S. military killed hundreds of members of Lakota men, women, and children at Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Following this horrific episode, which became known as the Wounded Knee Massacre, Congress awarded twenty Medals of Honor to soldiers for actions that run counter to everything the United States Armed Forces stands for--and the values that the Medal of Honor represents.

The United States military is the strongest in the world because it holds service members to a higher ethical standard and a moral code. That professionalism is maintained through accountability. As our nation and its military examine past actions, accountability demands that we publicly correct the record when our military acts in contradiction to its own core values.

Rescinding these Medals of Honor -- awarded for actions that embody dishonor -- is essential to maintaining the distinction of our nation's highest military award. Those who have been awarded the Medal of Honor for acts of valor in the course of their military service should not be in the same company as the twenty individuals awarded for participation in the Wounded Knee Massacre. It's long past time for Congress to act and rescind those Medals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Goodwin', written in a cursive style.

Will Goodwin
Director of Government Relations
VoteVets