

4/7/03

Wabunali Day
Speech to the Horse

Pfc. Lori Ann Piestewa:

I had been following the story of the 507th Maintenance Company since March 23rd when they were ambushed. I was particularly interested when it was known that one of the missing was a 23 year old female Native American soldier of the Hopi tribe. I couldn't help but identify with her and the Hopi community from which she came. When I heard the news of her death on Saturday my heart was very heavy and my thoughts and prayers went to her family and those that knew her and loved her. I couldn't help but think of my experience in Vietnam as a Pfc ^{at age} only 19. I wondered then what I was doing there and I'm sure she must have had those same thoughts.

I wrote a poem about that confusion and although it was written thirty five years ago somehow I think Lori Ann Piestewa would agree. I read this poem in her memory and in honor of her warrior spirit and ultimate sacrifice.

It's titled "The Other World"

(Read poem)

THE OTHER WORLD

*I stepped off the "Freedom Bird" into another world
a world of profound beauty
and yet a world of desolation and despair.*

*Just as a new born babe comes into the world
so came I...*

*into a world I knew nothing of unto a people I knew
nothing of.*

Why was I here?

*I walked down the war torn streets of the village
not knowing the answer.*

*As I walked I looked down and saw the tattered
remains of a newspaper...
and on the front page a picture of a man holding the
lifeless
body of his infant son.*

*There was emptiness in his eyes as tears of a life time
flowed down his face.*

In that instant I knew the answer.

*I was here to help save this country
This other world*

*and in so doing
Save Mine...*

May we never forget the price that is paid for our freedom.