

PAWNEE NATION OF OKLAHOMA

Tribal Headquarters: Pawnee, OK



A brief history

The Pawnee were among the first North American Indians to encounter Europeans. Francisco de Coronado encountered them in 1541. In more recent times, the Pawnee have migrated from their original homeland in what is now Texas to the Great Plains of Oklahoma up through Nebraska.

The Pawnee have had a long friendly relationship with the US government who they saw as allies against their traditional enemies the Sioux, Cheyenne, Comanche and other tribes. They gained fame as scouts for the US Army.

About the flag

A long association with the US is reflected on the flag of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma. Their blue flag bears a small representation of a US flag near the top faced by a red wolf head, since the Plains Indians referred to the Pawnee as “wolves” for their cunning and courage.

Below the wolf’s head are a crossed tomahawk and calumet representing peace and war. Seven white arrowheads represent the seven wars in which the Pawnee have fought in the service of the US – the Indian Wars, Spanish-American War, WW I, WW II, Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf War.

What is unique to the Pawnee flag are the specifics regarding the pole and spearhead. The main flag of the Pawnee flown at the Tribal Headquarters is to be mounted on an old time Pawnee lance bearing a genuine flint spearhead. The shaft of the lance has a special strip of buckskin bearing intricate beadwork designs down the length of the staff. Attached to the spearhead at the top are four primary eagle feathers.

Educational Activity

The Pawnee flag is unique because of the specifics regarding the pole and spearhead. What do you think is the significance of these details? Why do you think the Pawnee chose to do this?