



Civic engagement is an institutional commitment by NPS to partner with communities in planning, educational programming, and preservation, with the intent of interpreting the fullness of the American experience. Through civic engagement, we tell the stories of the places where we've honored our ideals and the places where we've fallen short. At Rosie the Riveter / World War II Homefront National Historical Park (California), the role of women in the war effort—and the unequal treatment of African American workers—are part of the park's interpretation.



The struggle for women's equality is told at Women's Rights National Historical Park (New York), the site of the landmark 1848 Women's Rights Convention. The park's visitor center is anchored around a life-size replicas of the convention's organizers and supporters.



Every war has stories of both heroism and inhumanity. Here, Girl Scouts place flags at the headstones of thousands of U.S. soldiers who died in the Andersonville Civil War prison camp as part of a commemoration at Andersonville National Historic Site (Georgia).



The astounding bravery of the passengers who — at the cost of their lives — prevented 9/11 terrorists from crashing a fourth airliner into its intended target, the U.S. Capitol, is commemorated by the Wall of Names at Flight 93 National Memorial (Pennsylvania).



Difficult questions surrounding the morality of nuclear war are powerfully present at Minuteman Missile National Historic Site (South Dakota), which preserves an actual (disarmed) missile in a launch silo as well as the underground launch command center, complete with the switch that would have been used to launch a missile (left) and a giant blast-resistant entry door painted with a parody of a pizza delivery guarantee (right).



You can also learn about another aspect of Cold War history by taking a special tour through part of 70-bed bomb shelter complex built by the Rockefeller family in the 1960s at what is now Marsh–Billings–Rockefeller National Historical Park (Vermont).



For many years, the site of the Battle of the Little Bighorn was known as Custer Battlefield National Monument, and the story of the fight told entirely from General Custer's viewpoint. After years of Native protest and activism, park was renamed Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument with an interpretive program based on the perspectives of all combatants. Now, in addition to the original monuments to Army soldiers, there is a memorial to fallen Native warriors too, pictured here.



Another dark chapter of the 19th-century Indian wars was the multiple massacres of Native people, including women and children, by the Army and militia. Among these events memorialized in the national park system are (left) Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site (Colorado), and (right) Washita Battlefield National Historic Site (Oklahoma).



National Park Service civic engagement also encompasses the interpretation of American religious traditions — obviously a subject that has to be handled carefully and respectfully. At San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (Texas), you can learn about the complex relationships between Spanish military and religious figures and Native American communities.