



Honoring Grandpa Blue Bird

BY LOANA HOYLMAN

Painting on fabric, especially about the exploits of warriors, is a tradition in many Native American tribes. The tradition lives.

Lauren Good Day Giago (Arikara/Hidatsa/Blackfeet/Plains Cree) wanted to honor her grandfather, Emery Good Bird, Sr.—or Blue Bird—who served in Vietnam. “My grandfather was a real culture bearer, and he made a big impact on my life,” she said.

Blue Bird’s time in Vietnam is illustrated on the bottom of the dress showing American soldiers with war staffs and

rifles. Chief Drags Wolf had given an eagle plume to Blue Bird before he deployed. The plume was affixed to his helmet, although both were lost in battle.

Above the soldiers are deer running and a bow and arrow, symbolizing the hunt. Above them are a chief’s bonnet, a war axe, flags, rifles, two stars representing Venus, the morning star, and a First Cavalry patch. Giago incorporated such traditional materials as pigments, cotton thread, and brass bells, as well as modern materials of dyed wool, muslin, brass sequins, satin ribbon, and acrylic sinew.

The dress is part of the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. ■