



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., offers condolences to family of the late Navajo Code Talker Willie K. Begay, 88, of Pinon, Ariz.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – For the third time in two weeks, Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., has conveyed his condolences to the family of a Navajo Code Talker who died Monday.

Willie K. Begay, who was ill with cancer, died Monday, said his daughter Kristy Kescoli Begay. He was 88.

“It is with greater sadness that we bid farewell to our honored Code Talkers,” President Shirley said. “It is with deep regret that we learned of the passing of Navajo Code Talker Willie K. Begay, yet another of our distinguished warriors from World War II who passed away on Monday. As a young man, he answered the call of the country, joined the Marines and left his home to defend the United States at great personal risk.”

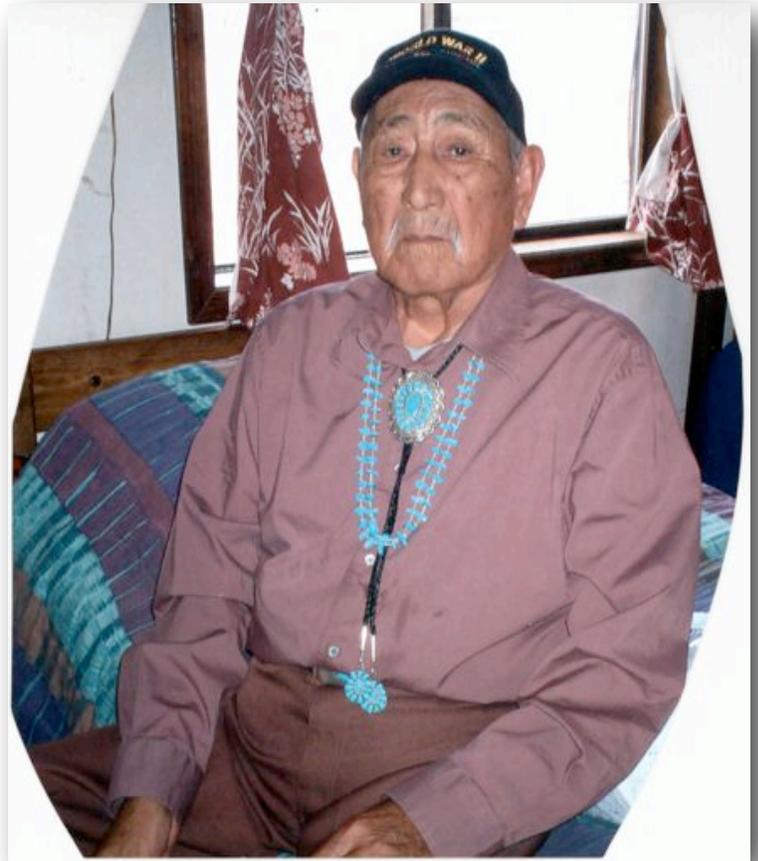
Mr. Begay was born on March 21, 1921, in Forest Lake, Ariz. He attended Keams Canyon Boarding School and Fort Wingate High School through the 11th grade. From there, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps on Aug. 10, 1944, in Santa Fe, N.M. He was discharged on July 5, 1946.

He was sent to Camp Pendleton for special military qualification and training as a code talker.

He served with the 3rd Marine Division and was overseas for 11 months. In 2001, he received a Congressional Silver Medal in recognition of his service as a Navajo Code Talker.

After his military service, Mr. Begay work for the Pinon Trading Post from 1946 until his retirement in 1984.

Mr. Begay is survived by wife Alice Natonie Begay, and his children Irene Nez, Darlene Chee, Nelson K. Begay, Dennison K. Begay of Phoenix, Kristy Kescoli Begay, his brother Ned Kescoli of Flagstaff, his sisters Maxine Kescoli, Mae Pulino, Mary Gilmore, Julia Russell, Alice Jane Begay, Irene Crank and Mary Ann Sherloc, all of Forest Lake, eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren.



The late Navajo Code Talker Willie K. Begay

Funeral arrangements are being handled by the Tse Bonito Mortuary of Tse Bonito, N.M. A gravesite funeral service will be at 10 a.m. Friday, June 5, at the Teresa Little residence in Forest Lake and officiated by the Forest Lake Bible Church. Burial will be at the family cemetery.

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