



# THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 30, 2008

CONTACT: GEORGE HARDEEN  
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR  
OFFICE – 928-871-7917  
CELL – 928-309-8532  
pressoffice@opvp.org

## Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., orders flags to half-staff to honor the late Navajo Code Talker Jerry C. Begay, Sr., 83

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., today ordered flags on the Navajo Nation to fly at half-staff from May 30 to June 3 to honor the late Navajo Code Talker Jerry C. Begay, Sr., who passed away on Memorial Day, May 26, in Albuquerque. He was 83.

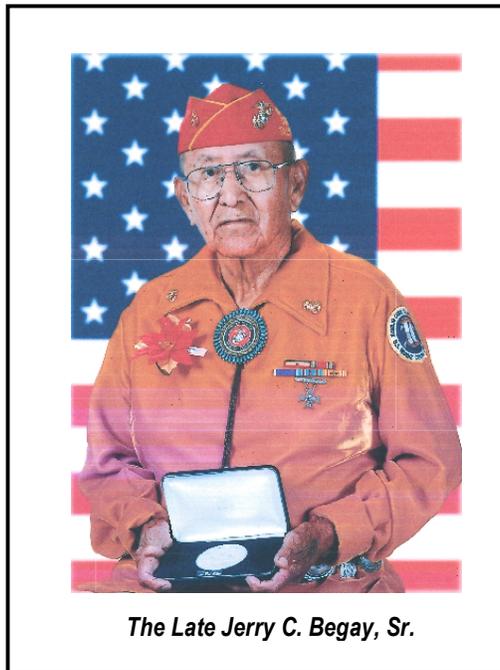
“The late Jerry Claschee Begay, Sr., was a Navajo Code Talker who served the United States of America and the Navajo Nation with courage, honor, and distinction,” President Shirley said in his proclamation.

The President acknowledged Mr. Begay’s honorable and distinguished service to the United States for which he was awarded the Congressional Silver Medal in November 2001 and received the Purple Heart.

“The Navajo Nation unites and offers prayers for his family during this time of grief,” President Shirley said.

Mr. Begay was born in Sheep Springs, N.M. At age 17, as a student at Fort Wingate High School, Mr. Begay enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. He became a Navajo Code Talker in the 2nd Marine Division, 297<sup>th</sup>

Platoon. He participated in the invasion of the Japanese island of Tarawa during World War II.



*The Late Jerry C. Begay, Sr.*

Mr. Begay was honorably discharged in 1945.

Shortly after the war, Mr. Begay worked for Phelps Dodge in Morenci, Ariz., and retired in 1982. He then provided community service in the Navajo communities of Tsaile and Lukachukai.

Mr. Begay was the son of Clauschee Begay and Hasktlishnii Bist’i. He was of the *Kinlichii’nii* people, and born for *Dzil tl’ahnii* people.

Mr. Begay was married to Ella Sorrelman Begay of Lukachukai. He is survived by his children Jerry C.

Begay, Jr., Daniel C. Begay, Priscilla Begay Coutu, and Verna Begay Lopez. He is preceded in death by his daughter Evangeline Begay Alvarez.

He was buried on Friday in Memorial Garden in Farmington, N.M.

###