



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., orders flags to half-staff in honor of the late Navajo Code Talker Thomas Claw, 87

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., on Thursday ordered flags on the Navajo Nation to be flown at half-staff from today until sundown May 30 in honor of the late Navajo Code Talker Thomas Claw of Parker, Ariz., who died Tuesday.

“The late Thomas Claw was a renowned Navajo Code Talker who served the United States of America, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the Navajo Nation during World War II with courage, honor and distinction,” the President said in a proclamation issued today. “The Navajo Nation is greatly saddened by the loss of the late Thomas Claw.”

Mr. Claw, who was ill with cancer, died at the Northern Arizona VA Health Care Center in Prescott. He was 87.

His funeral service will held at 9 a.m. Saturday, May 30, at the Poston Community Baptist Church in Poston, Ariz. Funeral arrangements are being handled by the Parker Funeral Home in Parker, Ariz. For information, please contact Harold Claw at 928-662-4205.

Mr. Claw was born on Feb. 23, 1922, in Chinle, Ariz. He attended Fort Wingate High School. From there, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps on March 13, 1943, in Phoenix. He was trained as a Code Talker and served with the 1st Marine Division and was overseas from Sept 20, 1943, until Nov. 6, 1945. He served in the Asiatic Pacific areas of New Caledonia, Australia, New Britain, the Solomon Islands, Palau Islands, and Ryukyu Islands in Japan.

Mr. Claw received two presidential unit citations; the 1st Marine Reinforced for action against the enemy at Peleliu

and Ngesebus from Sept 15-29, 1944, and for heroic action during the invasion and capture of Okinawa, April 1 to June 21, 1945. He also received the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon for service with 11th Marine Regiment in action against the enemy at Cape Gloucester, New Britain, from Dec 26, 1943, until April 30, 1944.

“Thomas Claw was wounded during combat on Okinawa and received a Purple Heart as a result of enemy action on June 24, 1945,” President Shirley said. “In recognition of his honorable service to our country, he was awarded the Congressional Silver Medal in 2001.”

For his service as a Navajo Code Talker, he was awarded the Congressional Silver Medal in 2001.

After his military service, Mr. Claw relocated to Parker with his wife Barbara in 1948. He was employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as a water master for the Colorado River Indian Irrigation Project, retiring after 20 years of service. He was in charge of delivering water to 80,000 acres of irrigated farmland.

Mr. Claw is survived by wife Barbara Claw, and his children Carolyn Hammond of Parker, Reynold Claw of Clearfield, Utah, and Pauline James, Harold Claw and Gloria Claw, all of Parker.

“The Navajo Nation unites and offers prayers and deepest condolences to his family during this time of grief,” the President said.

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