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## President Ben Shelly Commemorates the Life of Navajo Code Talker Samuel Tso



**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The Navajo Nation mourns the loss of another heroic Code Talker.

Code Talker Samuel Tso, 89, passed away Wednesday evening with family members beside him at San Juan Regional Medical Center in Farmington, N.M.

“Samuel Tso lived a life that helped his people and he was a model Navajo citizen. He fought for his country and he returned to help our young people, Samuel Tso was a true Navajo warrior,” said Navajo President Ben Shelly.

Code Talker Tso was born on June 22, 1922, at Black Mountain near Many Farms Ariz.

Code Talker Tso was Zuni Tachiinii and born for Nakai Dine’e.

Enlisting in the USMC in March 1943, Code Talker Tso went through basic training and Navajo Code Talker school. Family members said Code Talker Tso wasn’t one of the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers, though he was commonly mistaken as being one of the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers. He served in the USMC 5th Marine Division.

He signed on with the Recon Company and was sent to the Pacific Theater. He served in Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Pelelui, Guam, and Okinawa.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly has ordered the Navajo Nation flag to be flown at half-staff beginning, May 10, through sundown May 14, to honor Code Talker Tso for his service to the Navajo Nation and his country in World War II.

“The Navajo Nation has lost another Code Talker and that saddens my heart. The Code Talkers have brought great pride to our Nation and the loss of Samuel Tso saddens not only myself, his loss saddens the Navajo Nation. On behalf of the First Lady, the Vice President, and the Navajo people, we offer our prayers, condolences and words of encouragement to the Tso family. Samuel Tso was a true Navajo warrior," said President Shelly.

After his March 1946 discharge, Code Talker Tso continued his education earning a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Utah State University in Logan, Utah. He taught math at Intermountain Indian School in Brigham City, Utah, and transferred to the Bureau of Indian Affairs School in Lukachukai, Arizona, in 1975.

As a teacher and then as a teacher supervisor, Code Talker Tso worked there thirty years. Code Talker Tso remained active in education, serving as a school board member for Many Farms High School in Many Farms, Arizona.

Code Talker Tso traveled throughout most of the U.S. conducting presentations about the Navajo Code Talkers and about his life experiences before and after the war. He holds several relevant documents about the Navajo Code Talkers and contributed to the *Back to the Battlefields* documentary. Code Talker Tso was a member of the Marine Corp League and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1677.

Code Talker Tso was also a leader in the Navajo Code Talkers Association and the Navajo Code Talkers Foundation.

Funeral services for Code Talker Tso are scheduled to start at 10 a.m. Wednesday, May 16 at St. Isabel Catholic Church in Lukachukai, Ariz.

Interment will follow the services at Lukachukai Veteran's Cemetery with a reception to follow at the Lukachukai Boarding School Auditorium.

For more information contact Ronald Tso at (360) 393-2646.

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