



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 20, 2015

President Shelly orders flags at half-staff to honor officer Alex Yazzie



Navajo Police mourn the loss of one of their own. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—The flags across the Navajo Nation will be at half-staff to commemorate the service of a Navajo Police officer killed on duty.

On March 20, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly issued a proclamation in honor of the late Alex Yazzie, a 14-year veteran of the Navajo Police and former U.S. Marine Corps veteran.

“The Navajo Nation mourns the loss of Alex Yazzie, a dedicated Navajo Police officer that gave his life in the line of duty to protect the lives of others,” President Shelly said. “We are deeply saddened over his sudden departure.”

The president condemned

domestic violence and said the family disputes need to end, so tragedies like this are not repeated.

“We must continue to watch for the warning signs and report them before the violence escalates. Take care of one another,” President Shelly said.

Flags will be at half-staff from March 20 through 23, 2015.

On March 19, at 2:15 p.m., Jordon Fowler called the Shiprock Police District and reported his brother Justin Fowler for domestic violence.

Justin Fowler was pistol-whipping his wife Rayana Ramone and his mother Cecelia Begay.

The police dispatcher heard shots fired while on the phone with Jordon Fowler.

With his brother on the phone with the police, Justin Fowler subsequently fled the scene of the crime and Navajo Police officer Anderson Dez responded to the call.

About 200 yards south of the Littlewater store, Dez was directed toward U.S. Route 491, where the suspect, Justin Fowler, was parked. Justin Fowler began firing an AR-15 semiautomatic rifle at Dez.

Officer Dez took cover behind his police unit, which received damage from the gunplay. Justin Fowler then fled the scene.

The suspect returned to Littlewater at 8:20 p.m., near the location of the mobile police command center. He reportedly made a U-turn in an apparent taunt to police officers and led police on a car chase.

Navajo Police followed in pursuit, including Lieutenant Phillip Joe. While traveling on Navajo Route 13, five miles south of the Red Valley Trading Post, the suspect began firing upon approaching police vehicles.

Lt. Joe’s unit was hit and was disabled.

From that point, the suspect fled toward Lukachukai, Ariz. Approximately 11 miles south of Red Valley Trading Post, the responding officers came upon the suspect parked alongside the roadway.

He began shooting at the officers and they returned fire and subsequently killed the shooter, identified as Justin Fowler.

During the gunfight, officer Herbert Frazier was shot in the shin. Officer James Hale was shot in

the right leg. They were both transported to nearby medical facilities. Hale was eventually airlifted to University of New Mexico Hospital in Albuquerque.

Officer Alex Yazzie, a member of the Shiprock Police District, was shot and killed by the suspect.

Four Navajo Police vehicles were damaged, two of them are non-operational.

More than 30 Navajo police officers responded from the time of the initial call.

They were from the districts of Shiprock, Crownpoint, Window Rock, Chinle, and Kayenta. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is conducting the investigation with the Navajo Department of Criminal Investigation.

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