



## The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 3, 2020

## Flags to be flown at half-staff in honor of Navajo Code Talker Joe Vandever Sr.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Monday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer issued a proclamation that calls for flags on the Navajo Nation to be flown at half-staff from Feb. 3 through Feb. 6, in honor and memory of Navajo Code Talker Joe Vandever, Sr., who passed away on Jan. 31 at the age of 96 in Haystack, New Mexico.

“As we mourn the loss of Navajo Code Talker Joe Vandever, Sr., we also honor and remember all his great sacrifices for our Navajo people and the entire country. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends as they lay him to rest this week,” said President Nez.

Vandever was born on Feb. 5, 1923 into the Red Running Into the Water People clan, born for Two Who Came to the Water clan. He was married for 73 years to his wife, Bessie D. Vandever, who passed on Sept. 24, 2019.

Vandever enlisted with the U.S. Marine Corps in Santa Fe, N.M. on March 26, 1943 and was honorably discharged as Corporal on Jan. 22, 1946. He served in northern Solomons, Bougainville, Emirau Islands, Guam, Marianas Islands, Okinawa, Ryukyus Islands, Occupation of Japan, and Occupation of China. In 2001, he received the Congressional Silver Medal for his service as a Navajo Code Talker in World War II.



**PHOTO:** Navajo Code Talker Joe Vandever, Sr. during the annual Navajo Code Talker Day celebration in Window Rock, Ariz. on Aug. 14, 2019.

“We thank God for the life of Navajo Code Talker Joe Vandever, Sr. In every aspect of his life, he was a loving and compassionate person who cared greatly for his people. We ask all of our Navajo people to keep his spirit and his family in your prayers,” said Vice President Lizer.

Survivors include his sister Mary Vandever Delgarito; sons Gary, Tracy, Obie, Joe Jr., and Lester Vandever; daughters Beth Nez, Phegie Vandever Slim, Sheila Vandever Nez; 36 grandchildren, 55 great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild. He was preceded in death by his parents Emma and Walter Vandever; his wife Bessie D. Vandever; son Anthony Vandever; and grandsons Charleston, Antonio, and Travis Vandever.

The viewing for Navajo Code Talker Joe Vandever, Sr. will take place on Tuesday, Feb. 4 at 3:00 p.m. at Cope Memorial in Gallup, N.M. The funeral service will be held on Wednesday Feb. 5 at 10:00 a.m. at Thoreau High School in Thoreau, N.M. The burial will be on Thursday Feb. 6 1:30 p.m. at the Santa Fe National Cemetery in Santa Fe, N.M.

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**THE NAVAJO NATION**

*Proclamation*

**IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF  
NAVAJO CODE TALKER JOE VANDEVER, SR.**

**THE NAVAJO NATION** is greatly saddened by the loss of our Diné Warrior Joe Vandever, Sr., a Navajo Code Talker and National Hero; and

**WHEREAS**, Vandever served in the United States Marine Corps as a Navajo Code Talker beginning in 1943 until his honorable discharge in 1946 during World War II in northern Solomons, Bougainville, Emirau Islands, Guam, Marianas Islands, Okinawa, Ryukyus Islands, Occupation of Japan, and Occupation of China; and

**WHEREAS**, Vandever was awarded the Congressional Silver Medal in 2001 for his honorable service as a Navajo Code Talker with the United States Marine Corps; and

**WHEREAS**, the Navajo Nation honors the late Navajo Code Talker Joe Vandever, Sr. for his service to the Navajo Nation and the United States of America; and

**WHEREAS**, the Navajo Nation offers its prayers and condolences to his family, friends, and community.

**NOW THEREFORE, I, JONATHAN NEZ**, President of the Navajo Nation and **I, MYRON LIZER**, Vice President of the Navajo Nation do hereby proclaim that all flags on the Navajo Nation shall be flown at half-staff to honor the memory and service of the late Joe Vandever, Sr. from February 3, 2020 through February 6, 2020.

**ORDERED THIS 3<sup>rd</sup> DAY OF FEBRUARY 2020**

Handwritten signature of Jonathan Nez in black ink.

Jonathan Nez, *President*  
**THE NAVAJO NATION**

Handwritten signature of Myron Lizer in black ink.

Myron Lizer, *Vice President*  
**THE NAVAJO NATION**