



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

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Navajo Nation mourns the loss of Navajo Code Talker Joe Vandever Sr.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer offer their heartfelt condolences to the family and loved ones of Navajo Code Talker Joe Vandever, Sr., who passed away on Friday morning at the age of 96 in Haystack, New Mexico.

“The Navajo people have lost another great warrior who sacrificed more than we’ll ever know to defend our country. On behalf of the Navajo Nation, we offer our prayers and heartfelt condolences to his wife, children, and many other loved ones,” said President Nez.

According to his family, Vandever passed away due to health complications. He 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.

“Navajo Code Talker Joe Vandever, Sr. was a great warrior and a compassionate family man. In every aspect of his life, he was a loving person who cared greatly for his people. Today, I ask our



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

Diné people to keep his spirit and his family in your prayers as we give thanks for his life and his legacy,” 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. Services are being arranged with Cope Memorial Chapel in Gallup, NM. Burial will be in Santa Fe National Cemetery. Further details are forthcoming.

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