



**JOE SHIRLEY, JR.**  
*President*

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*Vice-President*

## THE NAVAJO NATION

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### 15 veterans receive Warrior's Medal of Valor during Birdsprings Chapter veteran's appreciation ceremony

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The Birdsprings Chapter honored 15 veterans and presented each with a special Warrior's Medal of Valor during its Christmas Dinner celebration on Saturday.



***President Shirley places the Medal of Valor on Burton Kelly during the ceremony at the Birdsprings Chapter.***

Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., First Lady Vikki Shirley and about 150 people thanked the veterans and their families for their service and dedication to protect the Navajo Nation, the Navajo way of life and the United States.

“We cannot forget the veteran. We cannot forget the soldier,” President Shirley said. “We cannot forget their family. Freedom came at a great cost.”

The Warrior's Medal of Valor was created by Marshall Tall Eagle Serna of Woodburn, Ore. It is the first medal minted specifically for Native American nations to honor all military personnel. It has been presented to veterans and active duty personnel at various events, regardless of the recipient's cultural background. The medal is presented for valorous service while serving the United States in a military capacity.

“This conspicuous performance of duty represents great patriotism and pride in the finest traditions of the United States Armed Forces and reflects great credit upon the recipient and their military service,” reads the proclamation that comes with the medal.

The veterans who received the medal, which was presented to each by President Shirley, were Douglas Gonick, Jim Roscoe, Barry W. Sharp, Ed D. Rocha, Reuben Curley, Don Baldwin, Sr., Phil Crosby, Randy David, Harry K. Yazzie, Chilson McCabe, Eddie Thompson, Burton Kelly, Virgil H. Todecozy, Cassandra Morgan and Patsey Herrera.

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“There’s a war going on right now and we need to be mindful of our soldiers’ service today in Iraq and Afghanistan,” President Shirley said. “The Navajo Nation has lost six soldiers so far. That’s why I ask you to remember the soldiers serving across the big water today. Every day.”

Navajo Nation Council Delegate Thomas Walker of Birdsprings read a proclamation declaring 2005 the Year of the Navajo Veteran. The proclamation was signed June 10, 2005, by President Shirley, Navajo Nation Council Speaker Lawrence Morgan, Navajo Chief Justice Herb Yazzie, BIA Regional Director Elouise Chicharello and IHS Navajo Area Director John Hubbard.



***Servicemen and women assemble to receive the Warrior's Medal of Valor from President Shirley.***



***President Shirley greets WWII Navajo Code Talker Dan Akee from Tuba City at Birdsprings Medal of Honor Ceremony and Appreciation Dinner.***



***Medal recipient Cassandra Morgan, a USMC vet, cradles her new medal in her hands.***



***President Shirley and First Lady Vikki Shirley greet 97-year-old Marie John and give her a bag of Christmas candy at the Birdsprings Chapter Veterans Appreciation Day and Christmas Dinner.***