



JOE SHIRLEY, JR.
President

FRANK J. DAYISH, JR.
Vice-President

THE NAVAJO NATION

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Lake Valley U.S. Army specialist honored for service upon return by Navajo president, community, family

LAKE VALLEY, N.M. – U.S. Army Specialist Anderson Jim was pleased his family and community threw him a welcome home dinner but he wasn't expecting the special guest who arrived.

Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., came to the Lake Valley Chapter House on Saturday to thank Spc. Jim for his service in Iraq and to present him with a Navajo Nation Plaque of Honor. Taking it a step further, upon the request of Spc. Jim's mother, Susie M. Jim, the President sang the Rainbow Song and placed corn pollen on him.

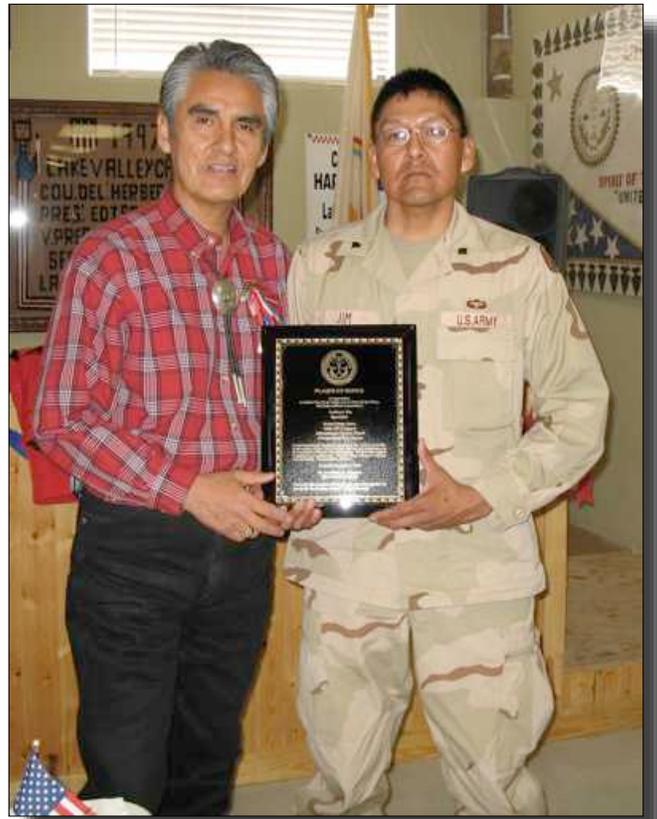
Some 150 family and friends filled the chapter house to share a dinner and good words with Spc. Jim.

"Welcome home, soldier," Dr. Shirley told him. "Your coming home safely makes the heart glad. On behalf of our nation, our government and our land, I want to welcome you and thank you for your service."

The President said it is important to acknowledge the selfless service that Navajo men and women are willing to make in the U.S. military, knowing that they may make the ultimate sacrifice to defend the American and Navajo ways of life and freedoms.

But he added that doesn't come near enough to thanking them "for what you've done, for the commitment you made for defending this ground."

"It's an awesome commitment that soldiers make, that our sons and daughters make who want to be soldiers," he said. "By doing that, they say, 'If it takes the ultimate sacrifice, so be it.'"



Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., presents the Navajo Nation Plaque of Honor to U.S. Army Spc. Anderson Jim at his Welcome Home dinner at the Lake Valley Chapter House.

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"Soldiers are the reason we have freedom in the land, that we can sleep as long as we want, go wherever we want," the President said. "There's no way to pay you back but we want you to know it comes from the heart when we say thank you."

The President noted that the Navajo Nation has lost seven servicemen in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that they had wives and children. So far, 2302 Americans have been killed in Iraq since the war began on March 19, 2003.

Spc. Jim said that when he joined the service, he really didn't know what he was getting into or that he'd be going to Iraq.

"Like the President said, you raise your right arm and then you have to do what they tell you to do," he said.

At first he was a mechanic, he said. Soon, though, he was manning a 50-caliber machine gun style grenade launcher. He said an explosive detector called a Warlock probably saved his life four times.



U.S. Army Spc. Anderson Jim displays mementos of Iraqi money with Saddam Hussein's picture and other items during his Welcome Home dinner at the Lake Valley Chapter House last Saturday.



NAVAJO NATION PLAQUE OF HONOR

For having defended Freedom and the Diné Way of life as a Soldier in the country of Iraq. Your Courage, Service, and Commitment on the Frontlines of War have been Exemplary. We have been vigilant in prayer for your safe return. May the Creator always be with you and your family. Welcome Home, Soldier!

*Presented on March 4, 2006
Dr. Joe Shirley, Jr., President
The Navajo Nation*

*Ask not what America will do for you but what together we can do for the Freedom of man."
- John F. Kennedy*

"I enjoyed my job," he said. "The Iraqi people were good, friendly people."

Daily life involved getting on the move at 4 a.m.

"Every day you never knew if you'll make it out or if you'd be taken out," he said. "I felt I had a force around me. I appreciate everyone's prayers. They did a lot."

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