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MEDIA CONTACTS

Jerome Clark | 928.637.5603
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

**22nd Navajo Nation Council honors Vietnam veterans
including Council Delegate Leonard Pete who offers guiding words**

WINDOW ROCK – The 22nd Navajo Nation Council took time on National Vietnam Veterans Day to recognize and thank Vietnam veterans following the Council’s special session on Mar. 29, a date that marks the withdrawal of United States combat troops from Vietnam in 1973.

On the Council’s behalf, Council Delegate LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) presented plaques to Harvey Noble of the United States Air Force Tactical Air Wing and Ernest Frank of the United States Army 11th Combat Aviation Brigade for their diligent service in the Vietnam War.

“This is the first time we’ve been appreciated and recognized. When we first came back we didn’t get any presentations like this, there was no welcome home,” Frank said.

Harvey expressed his appreciation to the Council saying, “You have no idea what it means to us to be recognized as human beings who did their job and came home.”

Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) presented his Resources and Development Committee colleague, Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle), with a token of appreciation for his service as a veteran of the Army during the Vietnam War.

“Today, we have one gentleman who sits with us on the [Council] floor that has made a tremendous sacrifice,” said Delegate Tsosie. “On behalf on the Navajo Nation Council, please accept [our recognition] as a token of our appreciation for your tremendous service to the ideal of freedom, and for protecting America and this great Navajo Nation.”

Having served twelve months as an infantry combat medic in Vietnam, Delegate Pete expressed appreciation for the sentiments of the Council, and provided insight into his wartime experience.

“The only thing that drove me [in Vietnam] was the crying of the wounded,” Delegate Pete disclosed. “When I raised my hand, I said, ‘I’m willing to die,’ and I never took it back.”

Delegate Pete continued, drawing a comparison between his experiences in Vietnam to his years of service as a member of the Council.

When he first stepped into his role as a Council Delegate, Delegate Pete said he took on a similar pledge to fight relentlessly on behalf of Diné citizens and the Nation as a whole.

“I haven’t changed my mind yet, and I’ll never change my mind,” Delegate Pete declared.

Delegate Pete cautioned that if leaders ever ceased to listen to the voice of the people, it would serve as the precursor to the decline of the Navajo Nation.

“If there’s anything that’s going to drive us, it’s the cry of the people,” Delegate Pete noted to fellow Council colleagues. “If we don’t hear that anymore, we’re down the tube.”

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