For Immediate Release
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President Ben Shelly Orders Flags at Half-staff to Honor Code Talker

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.– The Navajo Nation has lost another heroic Code Talker.

Pfc. Keith M. Little, 87, passed away Tuesday night at Tsehootsooi Medical Center in Fort Defiance, Ariz. after battling an illness. Pfc. Little served in the 4th Division of in the United States Marine Corps and fought in the Pacific Theater of World War II.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly has ordered the Navajo Nation flag to be flown at half-staff beginning at tomorrow, Jan. 5 through sundown Jan. 8, to honor Pfc. Little for his service to his country in World War II.

“The Navajo Nation is saddened by the loss of another hero. He was a national treasure, who led the Navajo Code Talkers through the Navajo Code Talkers Association and the Navajo Code Talkers Foundation. He believed in sharing his stories and was fundraising for the National Code Talker Museum and Veterans Center. Myself, the Vice President and First Lady offer our support and prayers to the family during this time,” said President Ben Shelly.

Pfc. Little was born on March 4, 1924 near Tonalea, Ariz. He was 17 years of age, when he enlisted with the USMC and completed boot camp at Camp Pendleton in San Diego, Calif. Afterwards, he entered the USMC Communication Training Center. He eventually would become a Navajo Code Talker and transfer to the 24th Marines, 4th Marine Division. His service took him to communicate the unbroken military voiced code in battles at Saipan, Tinion and Iwo Jima.

Keith M. Little, 87, served as president of the Navajo Code Talkers Association. He passed away Tuesday after battling an illness.
Upon his honorable discharge from the Marines in 1945, Pfc. Little returned to complete his schooling at Chilacco Indian School in Oklahoma. He then attended college at Weber State College in Ogden, Utah. During which time, he worked at the Intermountain Indian School in Brigham City, Utah.

Pfc. Little would eventually work for the Navajo Tribal Sawmill as a logger and advanced to logging manager for the Navajo Forest Products Industry in Navajo, N.M., where he worked until he retired in 1987.

For his service as a Code Talker, President George W. Bush presented Pfc. Little the Congressional Silver Medal in 2001.

At the time of Pfc. Little’s death, he was president of the Board of Directors of the Navajo Code Talkers Foundation and was serving as president of the Navajo Code Talkers Association.

He was an instrumental leader in raising money for the National Navajo Code Talkers Museum and Veterans Center project that would be built near Window Rock.

He understood the museum would serve as the epicenter of information about the Navajo Code Talkers, and since less than 70 Navajo Code Talkers are estimated to still be living, Pfc. Little, wanted to have the museum completed in a timely manner.

When he wasn’t at the forefront of fundraising for the National Navajo Code Talkers Museum and Veteran’s Center, he was home in Crystal tending to his ranch. He loved caring for his livestock and performing work on his ranch.

A public memorial service is scheduled for on Friday at Nakai Hall in Window Rock and a funeral service is scheduled on 10 a.m. on Saturday in Fort Defiance at the Assembly of God Church.

The family plans to have a family meeting at 2 p.m. at the Crystal Chapter House, where donations for his funeral services will be accepted.

The family asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be made in Pfc. Little’s honor to the National Navajo Code Talker Museum and Veterans Center fund at www.navajocodetalkers.org or contact Wynette Arviso at (505) 870-9167 or by email at wynette@navajocodetalkers.org.

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