Navajo President Shelly Commemorates the Passing of Two Navajo Code Talkers This Week and Orders Lowering of the Navajo Flag

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly commemorated the passing of two Navajo Code Talker who were laid to rest earlier this week. In addition, he ordered the Navajo Nation Flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise June 14 through sundown June 18.

Code Talkers King Fowler and Milton M. Gishal both passed away earlier this week.

“It’s a sad week for our Navajo people knowing that we lost two more of our modern day heroes. The Navajo Nation’s prayers and condolences are with both families. Our Navajo Code Talkers are the sources of great pride for our people. There is a certain pride that our Code Talkers created because they used our language to defeat the Japanese in World War II. We will forever in indebted to the services of our Navajo Code Talkers,” President Shelly said.

Code Talker King Fowler passed away on June 7 at his home in Tonalea, Ariz. He was born on Dec. 12, 1915 in Kaibeto, Ariz.

Code Talker Fowler enlisted with the U.S. Marines on Oct. 27, 1944. After his honorable discharge, he assisted his Tonalea community as a public servant by holding positions in various community organizations and programs.

Code Talker Fowler was preceded in death by his wife Betty S. Fowler.

Code Talker Fowler is survived by his son Bobby Fowler Sr. of Tonalea; Dylon Jacob Fowler, grandson; eight grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

The other Code Talker who passed away was Milton M. Gishal was passed away June 8.
Code Talker Milton M. Gishal was from the Beshbito and Jeddito areas of the Navajo Nation.

Less than 60 Navajo Code Talkers are estimated to still be living with Code Talker Chester Nez being the only one of the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers.

Navajo Code Talkers served in the U.S. Marines in World War II in the Pacific Theater. The Navajo language, which some linguist say is one of the most difficult languages in the world to learn, was encoded and used to communicate during battle. The Navajo code was used in every major engagement in the Pacific Theater from 1942 through 1945.

“If it wasn’t for our language and our Code Talkers, we might not be here right now. Our people have provided a great service to the people of the United States. We are proud of them,” President Shelly said.

In addition, the Navajo Code Talkers Foundation has been raising money to build a museum. For more information visit www.navajocodetalkers.org.

###