



THE NAVAJO NATION

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PRESIDENT BEGAYE AND VICE PRESIDENT NEZ MOURN THE PASSING OF NAVAJO CODE TALKER GEORGE PAUL JAMES

WINDOW ROCK, ARIZ-President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez were saddened today to learn of the passing of Navajo Code Talker George Paul James.

Code Talker James passed away on the morning of Wednesday, November 9, at 6:51 a.m., at Lovelace Hospital in Albuquerque, NM.

"With the passing of Navajo Code Talker George Paul James, we are witnessing the tragic loss of a historical icon to the Navajo people and the citizens of the United States. James was selfless in his service to our country and to the Navajo Nation. He defended our great land as a Code Talker by using the Navajo language to encode military messages and ultimately contributed to protecting our freedom. For this, we are forever grateful," President Begaye said.

James was Tótsohnii (Big Water Clan) born for Ma'ii deeshgiizhinii (Coyote Pass Clan).

He graduated high school from Chilocco Indian School in Newkirk, OK. He enlisted into the Marine Corps at 17 years of age and went to boot camp at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, CA. He reached the rank of Corporal in the 5th Marine Division.

Corporal James saw action the Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II. He later returned to Iwo Jima for the 60th Anniversary of the raising of the flag on Mt. Suribachi. James' grandchildren said their grandfather spoke to them later in life about his experiences and that he kept everything clear in his memory.

"Many of our Navajo Code Talkers came back from their service having been told that they could not talk about their experiences. Many of them suffered nightmares, flashbacks and post-traumatic stress disorder from what they had seen," Vice President Nez said. "Yet their service as Navajo Code Talkers is what has ensured our freedom beyond any artillery or weaponry. OPVP salutes Code Talker James for his sacrifice in protecting the Navajo Nation and the U.S."

Navajo Code Talker George Paul James is preceded in death by his wife Mary James, his son Alva Kirk James, his daughter Linda James, and his grandson Derrick Lewis. He is survived by his sons George James Jr., Melvin James, and Gerald James and also by his daughters Shirley Barry, Loretta Danzuka, Ernestine James, and Lynnann Charley.

Funeral services for Code Talker James will be held at the Catholic Church in Lukachukai, Ariz., on Saturday, Nov. 12 at 10 a.m. Desert View Funeral Home is handling funeral services. He will be buried on a family plot in Tsaille, Ariz. Following his burial, a reception will take place at the Wheatfields/Tsaille Chapter.

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