



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:

Jared Touchin, Communications Director
(928) 274-4275

Crystalayne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 274-2758

nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 14, 2019

Navajo Nation pays tribute to Diné warriors on Navajo Code Talker Day



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, First Lady Phefelia Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, Second Lady Dottie Lizer, Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne, U.S. Senator Martha McSally (R-AZ), Navajo Code Talkers Joe Vandever, Peter MacDonald, Thomas H. Begay, and John Kinsel during the Navajo Code Talker Day celebration on August 14, 2019 at the Veterans Memorial Park in Window Rock, Ariz.

WINDOW ROCK – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer were joined by Navajo veterans, youth, elders, dignitaries, and many others on Wednesday, to commemorate Navajo Code Talker Day during an honorary event held at the Navajo Nation Veterans Memorial Park in Window Rock — the capital of the Navajo Nation.

During his keynote address, President Nez delivered a heartfelt message of appreciation to the Navajo Code Talkers, as well as their families, several of which were honored guests at the event.

President Nez also highlighted the historic proclamation signed by former U.S. President Ronald Reagan that designated August 14 as the National Navajo Code Talkers Day. President Reagan's proclamation finally allowed the Navajo Code Talkers to be recognized appropriately decades after their brave service.

“Today is a remarkable day for the Navajo Nation as we recognize and honor our great, selfless, and brave Navajo warriors and their families and communities. Many of our Code Talkers have gone on, but we are blessed to have several with us today. Our Navajo Code Talkers deserve a salute for their bravery and courage to defend and protect our country using our sacred Diné language,” said President Nez.

Five surviving Navajo Code Talkers including Thomas H. Begay, John Kinsel, Peter MacDonald, and Joe Vandever were present at the event and each was provided the opportunity to address the audience and share their personal experiences and recollections. Navajo Code Talker Samuel Sandoval was unable to attend.

In 1942, the Navajo Nation answered the call of the United States of America during World War II and sent brave men and boys, known as the Navajo Code Talkers, to defend the Navajo people, Navajo Nation, and the country. The young Navajo

Marines helped to devise an impenetrable code based on Diné Bizaad, the Navajo language, that is widely acknowledged as the deciding factor in the Pacific Theatre of the war effort.

“We ask our people to take time during the week to remember those who have passed on and their families who continue to honor them. Most of us will never experience what the Navajo Code Talkers and their families went through, but we can thank them by honoring their service and our sacred Navajo language,” added Vice President Lizer.

The event included a parade, Post of Colors by the Ira H. Hayes Legion Post 84, 21-gun salute by the U.S. Marine Corps, laying of a wreath at the Veterans Memorial Park, and an address by U.S. Sen. Martha McSally (R-AZ). Many of the families of the late Navajo Code Talkers were also present, and shared photos and stories of their loved ones with the public.

On Monday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, 24th Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon, and Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne signed a proclamation recognizing Aug. 12 to 16, 2019 as “Navajo Nation Code Talkers Week.”



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, First Lady Phefelia Nez, Navajo Code Talkers Joe Vandever, Peter MacDonald, Thomas H. Begay, and John Kinsel during the Navajo Code Talker Day celebration on August 14, 2019 at the Veterans Memorial Park in Window Rock, Ariz.

###

For the latest news from the Office of the President and Vice President, please visit <http://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/> or find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.