



## The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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## Navajo Nation honors Diné warriors on Navajo Code Talker Day



**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer honored and paid tribute to all Navajo Code Talkers during a live Navajo Code Talker Day virtual tribute event on Friday, which was hosted by Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish and featured special messages from President Nez, Vice President Lizer, Second Lady Dottie Lizer, the U.S. Marine Corps, and Shelby Vandever on behalf of U.S. Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.).

Due to COVID-19 risks, the annual in-person event was replaced with the online tribute for the safety of the public. President Nez and Vice President Lizer delivered heartfelt messages of appreciation to the Navajo Code Talkers and their families.

“We pay tribute to all of the Navajo Code Talkers for their courageous service in World War II. At the time of their enlistment, they were very young men, but they answered the call of duty and unknowingly built a legacy for the Navajo people that is recognized throughout the world. By using our Navajo language to help win the war and protect the freedom that we have today, they set an example for us all. Although many have gone on to their final resting place, their actions and everything they stood for have lasting impacts on us all. Today, we are blessed to have four Navajo Code Talkers remaining with us including Samuel F. Sandoval, Thomas H. Begay, John Kinsel Sr., and former Chairman of the Navajo Nation Peter MacDonald, Sr.,” said President Nez.

During World War II, the Navajo Code Talkers answered the call to defend the United States of America using the impenetrable code based on the Navajo language that is widely acknowledged as a deciding factor in the war effort. On July 28, 1982, former U.S. President Ronald Reagan designated August 14 as “National Navajo Code Talkers Day.” President Reagan’s proclamation recognized the Navajo Code Talkers decades after their brave service in World War II.

“The Navajo Code Talkers define and exemplify the resiliency of our ancestors. Today, we have the opportunity to carry on their legacy to honor them by setting examples for our young people. We thank each of them, their families, and many others who have supported our warriors throughout the years. As we honor and celebrate our Navajo Code Talkers, please remember that the strength and resilience of our Navajo people is alive and within us to this day. Please also take this time to say a prayer for all of our Navajo Code Talkers, their families, and all of our veterans who have served our country,” stated Vice President Lizer.

Actor Mark Ruffalo, who was part of the 2002 film “Windtalkers” about the Navajo Code Talkers and a supporter and advocate for the “Protect the Sacred” organization, was also a special guest during the online tribute event and offered his words of appreciation for the Navajo Code Talkers and the Navajo people.

The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President thanks Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish, Fort Defiance Veterans Organization Princess Aysha Tsosie for singing the National Anthem, and many others for contributing to the event.

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