



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

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Navajo Nation honors and recognizes Diné warriors on Veterans Day



**PHOTO:** Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, First Lady Phefelia Nez, U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly, Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne, 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council Delegates Raymond Smith, Jr. and Jimmy Yellowhair, and Miss Navajo Nation Niagara Rockbridge during the Navajo Nation Veterans Day Celebration on Nov. 11, 2021, at the Navajo Nation Veterans Memorial Park in Window Rock, AZ.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Thursday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and First Lady Phefelia Nez were joined by Tuba City Agency Commander Billy Goodman, Jr., U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly (D-AZ), Office of U.S. Sen. Ben Ray Luján’s field representative Brian Lee, Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne, 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. and Jimmy Yellowhair, Navajo Nation Veterans Administration Director James Zwierlein, and Miss Navajo Nation Niagara Rockbridge to commemorate Veterans Day during a live-streamed event at the Navajo Nation Veterans Memorial Park in Window Rock, Ariz., the capital of the Navajo Nation.

During his address, President Nez delivered a message of appreciation to all Navajo veterans, their families, and their communities. He also acknowledged Gold Star Mothers and Families who have lost their loved ones during military service.

"It is my honor to recognize the thousands of Navajo veterans who have served our country in every branch of the Armed Services. Upon their service to the country, many returned home to provide for their families, and many became community leaders and professionals who continue to contribute to our society. Many of our warriors also helped respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we appreciate their bravery and courage for always lending a helping hand. Today, we also have to remember, pray, and support veterans and their families who carry their service's mental, emotional, and physical scars. We also honor and show appreciation for all Diné warriors who are currently serving in the Armed Forces to ensure our country remains strong, resilient, and united," said President Nez.

President Nez added, "Today, we also pray for those who have passed on and pray for all of the Gold Star Mothers and Families. Most importantly, we cannot celebrate this special day without acknowledging our Navajo Code Talkers, who used our sacred language, the words of our ancestors, to help win World War II. We pray for them and all of their loved ones. Today is a time to be proud of who we are as Diné people, to pay tribute to all of the men and women who serve our country, and to honor and remember those who gave their lives for our freedom and our country."

U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly stated that he wanted to be on the Navajo Nation on Veterans Day because he understands the long and proud history of military service that the Navajo people have provided for so many years. He also spoke about the need for the federal government to provide more support and services for all veterans.

"We commemorate the service, sacrifice, and contributions of our Navajo veterans who defended and preserved our life, liberty, and freedom. We are forever thankful for the many Diné warriors who have bravely fought worldwide to protect our homeland. Every Navajo Veteran is a hero to the American people. We take pride in our Navajo Code Talkers, who have been nationally recognized for their unbreakable code that assisted in the country's win during World War II. We love our Navajo veterans. Today, we pledge to support those who have fought for us. They deserve our prayers, support, and gratitude," said Vice President Lizer.

Tuba City Agency Commander Billy Goodman, Jr., who serves on the Navajo Nation Veterans Advisory Council, also spoke and recognized his fellow veterans for their service and spoke about the need to work together to continue improving services and benefits for Navajo veterans.

Navajo comedian and motivational speaker Pax Harvey served as the Master of Ceremony for the event. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Navajo Nation Veterans Administration Deputy Director Hubert Smith. The Office of the President and Vice President thanks all veterans for their service and everyone who coordinated and assisted with the veterans event. To watch the virtual event, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQPi4qliKuA>.

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