



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Navajo Nation honors military families on Gold Star Families Day



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer lay a wreath at the Navajo Veterans Memorial Park to honor Gold Star Families in Window Rock, Ariz. on Sept. 26, 2021.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer joined Navajo veterans on Sunday at the Navajo Veterans Memorial Park in Window Rock, Ariz., to honor the lives and sacrifices of all fallen warriors and their families on “Navajo Nation Gold Star Families Day,” held in conjunction with National Gold Star Mother’s and Family Day.

Across the United States, the last Sunday in September is recognized annually as Gold Star Mother’s and Family Day in honor of the mothers, fathers, and families of fallen military service members. Also known as National Gold Star Mother’s Day, the day serves as a reminder of the losses suffered by military families.

“Today is Gold Star Family’s Day, a day set to honor the sacrifices made by families whose military sons and daughters did not return home from military service. Gold Star Families undergo the most difficult and emotional recovery period after their loss. Their loved ones shone light through

bravery and courage, and their contributions to society and the world, including the Navajo Nation, will never be forgotten. Today, we join the Navajo Hopi Honor Riders to recognize these families with our deepest condolences and respect. To all the Gold Star Families, know that your child is always in our Nation's heart. The Navajo Nation stands with you," said President Nez. "We also have many Diné men and women who continue to serve in the Armed Forces around the world. We ask the Creator to watch over them and to bring them home safely."

Bobby Martin, with the Navajo Hopi Honor Riders, spoke on behalf of the veterans in attendance and read the names of fallen warriors who gave their lives in the line of duty since 2003. He joined President Nez and Vice President Lizer as they laid a wreath at a memorial site at Navajo Veterans Memorial Park. The fallen warriors include:

- SPC Lori A. Piestewa, U.S. Army, KIA 3/23/03, Operation Iraqi Freedom
- PFC Harry N. Shondee, U.S. Army, KIA 8/3/03, Operation Iraqi Freedom
- SGT Lee Duane Todacheene, U.S. Army, KIA 4/6/04, Operation Iraqi Freedom
- LCPL Quinn A. Keith, U.S. Marines, KIA 9/6/04, Operation Iraqi Freedom
- LCPL Kevin B. Joyce, U.S. Marines, KIA 6/25/05, Operation Enduring Freedom
- CPL Lyle Cambridge, U.S. Army, KIA 7/5/05, Operation Iraqi Freedom
- SGT Marshall A. Westbrook, U.S. Army, KIA 10/1/05, Operation Iraqi Freedom
- SGT Clifton J. Yazzie, U.S. Army, KIA 1/20/06, Operation Iraqi Freedom
- SGT Christopher N. Gonzalez, U.S. Army, KIA 5/14/07, Operation Iraqi Freedom
- SGT Troy O. Tom, U.S. Army, KIA 8/18/09, Operation Enduring Freedom
- LCPL Alejandro J. Yazzie, U.S. Marines, KIA 2/16/10, Operation Enduring Freedom
- SPC Christopher J. Moon, U.S. Army, KIA 7/13/10, Operation Enduring Freedom
- SGT 1st James E. Thode, U.S. Army, KIA 12/2/10, Operation Enduring Freedom
- SSGT Jonathan D. Davis, U.S. Marines, KIA 2/22/13, Operation Enduring Freedom

"Let us always remember and never forget the Gold Star Families of the brave servicemen and women, who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country. May God bless this great nation!" stated Navajo Hopi Honor Riders co-founder Bobby Martin.

"On Gold Star Family's Day, we honor the memory and bravery of every lost soldier, and we humbly grieve with their families. Gold Star Diné Families deserve our utmost respect, admiration, and support for their resilience and strength. We will never know the extent of their experiences and sacrifices, but shouldering their grief, they find the courage and conviction to move forward and transform their heartache into hope. Please join with us today to offer prayers for our Gold Star Families," said Vice President Lizer.

The Office of the President and Vice President thanks the Navajo Hopi Honor Riders and all veterans for their service and commitment and offers prayers for Gold Star Families and all men and women currently serving in the Armed Forces.

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THE NAVAJO NATION

Proclamation

**IN HONOR AND RECOGNITION OF
NAVAJO NATION GOLD STAR FAMILIES DAY**

WHEREAS, The Navajo Nation, in partnership with Navajo Non-Profit Organizations, honors the Navajo warriors who paid the ultimate sacrifice and their surviving family members; and

WHEREAS, The Navajo Nation is home to these Gold Star Families and we recognize the price their families have paid to secure our nation's safety and freedoms; and


WHEREAS, The Navajo Nation offers prayers and comfort to the Gold Star Families who lost family members serving in the United States Armed Forces who gave their lives in the defense of freedom and democracy; and

WHEREAS, On this day, we offer our sincere condolences and commitment to remember the legacy of our service members as one of valor and honor; and

WHEREAS, The Navajo Nation Gold Star Families Day is held in conjunction with the National Gold Star Mothers Day on the last Sunday in September; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JONATHAN NEZ, President of the Navajo Nation and **I, MYRON LIZER**, Vice President of the Navajo Nation, do hereby proclaim that Sunday, September 26th, 2021 shall be recognized as Navajo Nation Gold Star Families Day to honor the memory of Navajo warriors who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

PROCLAIMED THIS 26th DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2021


Jonathan Nez, *President*
THE NAVAJO NATION


Myron Lizer, *Vice President*
THE NAVAJO NATION