



– JOINT PRESS RELEASE –

The life of Navajo Code Talker Samuel Sandoval remembered
and honored by the Navajo People

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 30, 2022

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Speaker Seth Damon, and Vice President Myron Lizer offer their heartfelt condolences to the family and loved ones of Navajo Code Talker Samuel Sandoval, who passed away on Friday evening. As one of the 418 Code Talkers who served during World War II, Sandoval used the 813-word Navajo code to send and receive military communications in the South Pacific Theater.

Born in 1922 in Nageezi, New Mexico, Sandoval was Naasht'ézhi Dine'é (Zuni Clan) and born for Tł'ááshchíí (Red Cheek People). His maternal grandfather was Tsenabahiłnii (Sleep-Rock People), and his paternal grandfather was Taneeszahnii (Badlands People).

“Navajo Code Talker Samuel Sandoval will always be remembered as a loving and courageous person who sacrificed more than we will ever know to defend our homelands using our sacred Navajo language. We are saddened by his passing, but his legacy will always live on in our hearts and minds. On behalf of the Navajo Nation, we offer our prayers and heartfelt condolences to his wife, Malula Sandoval, his children, and many loved ones,” said President Jonathan Nez.

After graduating, Sandoval enlisted in the Marine Corps on March 26, 1943. He completed basic training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, CA, where the 29 original Code Talkers had arrived in September 1942.

Sandoval served in five combat tours, including Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Guam, Peleliu, and Okinawa, and was honorably discharged on Jan. 26, 1946. The Navajo Code Talkers could not talk about the code they created for over 20 years that defeated the Empire of Japan.



PHOTO: Navajo Code Talker Samuel Sandoval.

“The Navajo people mourn the loss of a grandfather, father, brother and uncle who dedicated his life to uplift communities. Navajo Code Talker Sam Sandoval lived a life where character, courage, honor, and integrity guided his journey. His impact on history will forever be remembered and we sincerely share our love with his family during this time. May he rest among our most resilient warriors,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh).

Following his service with the Marine Corps, Sandoval returned home and enrolled into college to earn a certificate in substance abuse counseling. He worked in Farmington, N.M. as a counselor for many years. In the 1970’s, he opened his own clinic, named To-Tah Alcohol Counseling, to assist Navajo individuals experiencing substance abuse. The facility served the region for more than a decade assisting many families.

“Navajo Code Talker Samuel Sandoval was a great warrior and a compassionate family man. In every aspect of his life, he was a loving person who cared greatly for his people. Today, I ask our Diné people to keep his spirit and his family in your prayers as we give thanks for his life and his legacy,” said Vice President Lizer.

Sandoval earned a Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, a Combat Action Ribbon, a China Service Medal, a World War II Victory Medal, a Navy Occupation Service Medal with Asia Clasp and an Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with a silver star, in lieu of five bronze stars. Earlier this year, Sandoval also received the 2022 American Spirit Award for Bravery by the National WWII Museum.

Details for the funeral services for Navajo Code Talker Samuel Sandoval are pending and will be shared via social media this week.

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