



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:
Jared Touchin, Communications Director
(928) 274-4275
Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 274-2758
Timothy Benally, Public Information Officer
(928) 871-7000

nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 7, 2022

73-year-old Vietnam War veteran Andrew Kelly receives new home through the Navajo Veterans Housing Program



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez joined U.S. Army veteran Andrew Kelly at his new home in Tuba City, Ariz. on June 7, 2022.

TÓ NANEES DIZI, Ariz. – On Tuesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Navajo Nation Veterans Administration Director James Zwierlein had the honor of presenting the key to a new home to 73-year-old Vietnam War veteran, Andrew Kelly, in Tuba City, Ariz. The 1,300 square-foot hogan-style home was built on a solid concrete foundation consisting of two bedrooms, living room, kitchen, bathroom, and new appliances with electricity, plumbing, and sewage system installed. The home is ADA accessible with widened doorways, safety handrails, walk-in shower, outdoor ramp to the doorway, and other handicap features to accommodate the elderly veteran.

Kelly is Honágháahnii (One-Walks-Around clan) and born for Tsé deeshgizhnii (Rock Gap People). His maternal grandfather is Naakai dine'é (The Mexican Clan) and his paternal grandfather is Tł 'ízí lání (Manygoats Clan). He enlisted with the U.S. Army in 1969 and served with the 1st Air Cavalry Division as an Army Medic with the rank of SPC4. He was awarded several medals for his service in the Vietnam War including the Silver Star, Purple Heart, Bronze Star, 2 Air Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Commendation Medal, and Combat Infantry Badge. The Silver Star is the third highest military decoration for valor in combat.

“This is a long-awaited accomplishment and a blessing for our Diné warrior, Andrew Kelly, who is regarded as one of the most decorated veterans in all of the Navajo Nation. He comes from a renowned military family and he fought for our country in the Vietnam War and he continues to be an inspiration for all of our Diné people. May he and his family enjoy many good times together in their new home, for which he sacrificed more than any of us will ever know or experience. We honor Mr. Kelly and we thank him for his service to our country,” said President Nez, who also commended the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration for their dedication and hard work to complete the new home.

The Navajo Veterans Administration, under Director Zwierlein, worked diligently to craft legislation to update the Veterans Housing Program policies that allowed the program to proceed with the construction of new homes for Navajo veterans. The program was established years ago, but internal policies hindered production and resources. With the revised policies in place, quality-built home for veterans are now being built in several communities for veterans.



PHOTO: Vietnam War veteran, Andrew Kelly, inside his new home in Tuba City, Ariz. on June 7, 2022.

“The Navajo Nation Veterans Administration has worked through many policy challenges to reach this point where we are now constructing high-quality homes for our warriors. This is progress and we are producing results as more homes are under construction at this time. This is a great step forward for the Veterans Housing Program and I commend Mr. Zwierlein and his team for fixing many of the deficiencies and policy issues that were previously in place,” said President Nez.

Kelly expressed his appreciation and also acknowledged his father, Andrew Kelly, Sr., who served in the U.S. Army in World War II and his grandfather, Charles Kelly, who served the United States in World War I. “I’m excited for what we all started here. We, Navajo people, have to be an example to the rest of the world as the largest Indigenous nation,” stated Kelly.

In addition to constructing new homes, the Navajo Veterans Administration is also overseeing repairs and improvements to over 100 homes that were previously constructed for Navajo veterans between 2014 and 2017. In 2017, the Office of the Auditor General conducted an audit

of the Veterans Housing Program. The findings indicated that several veteran homes were not in livable and safe conditions. An inspection of randomly completed homes concluded that the homes did not meet safety and quality standards. The homes were constructed by a different contractor. So far, at least 20 renovations have been completed within the last nine months.

The Navajo Veterans Administration will continue constructing more homes for Navajo veterans based on the list of housing applications that have been submitted over the course of many years. More homes for Navajo families will be constructed with the approval of additional funding through the American Rescue Plan Act. The Nez-Lizer Administration is proposing to allocate \$150 million in American Rescue Plan funding specifically for homes for Navajo families and veterans through Legislation No. 0086-22, which awaits approval from the Navajo Nation Council.

###

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.