



The Navajo Nation
Yideeskáadi Nitsáhákees

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Oct. 19, 2024

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Navajo President Buu Nygren expresses sincerest condolences to family of the late Navajo Code Talker John Kinsel, Sr., 107

Navajo Nation flags to be lowered to half-staff for one week in his honor

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren today offered his sincere condolences to the family of the late Navajo Code Talker John Kinsel, Sr., who died Saturday. He was 107.

“On behalf of the entire Navajo Nation, our Navajo veterans and service men and women, First Lady Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren and me, we extend our sincerest condolences and prayers to the family of Mr. Kinsel,” President Nygren said. “Mr. Kinsel was a Marine who bravely and selflessly fought for all of us in the most terrifying circumstances with the greatest responsibility as a Navajo Code Talker. He fought alongside his brothers in arms, for the U.S. Marine Corps, for the United States and to protect the Navajo Nation in a time of war.”

In Mr. Kinsel’s honor, President Nygren has ordered all flags on the Navajo Nation to be lowered to half-staff from sunrise Sunday, Oct. 20, until sunset Sunday, Oct. 27.

“It is appropriate for us to acknowledge, recognize and honor this distinguished man’s life, bravery and steadfast dedication to his family, community of Lukachukai and to the entire Navajo Nation as a model Navajo citizen and warrior,” President Nygren said.

Mr. Kinsel’s son Ronald Kinsel shared the news of his father’s passing with President Nygren.

“*Cheii* passed early this morning in his sleep,” he said. “The howling wind brought his parents and relatives that came for him early dawn today. He used to keep asking if it snowed yet. He was waiting for the first snow to take his spiritual journey. Moisture lifted his footprints this

morning. He lived a very long, full and accomplished life. What he and the other Code Talkers accomplished changed the course of history, and will always be remembered, and I will continue to tell his legend and greatness.”

Navajo Nation Veterans Administration Executive Director Bobbie Ann Baldwin acknowledged Mr. Kinsel’s courage and dedication to his Navajo culture.



The late Navajo Code Talker John Kinsel, Sr.

"We honor the life of our brave Navajo Code Talker John Kinsel, Sr.," Director Baldwin said. "His heroism, courage and love for our Diné way life is beyond measure. We salute you Corporal Kinsel. Semper Fi."

Veterans Administration Interim Deputy Director Olin Kieyoomia, who worked to ensure Mr. Kinsel received his long-awaited home renovations and knew him well, said the Navajo Nation has lost someone precious.

"The Navajo Nation has lost a treasure, a hero, a man who shaped history by saving countless lives with our Navajo language and instilled pride within the Navajo Nation and the world," Deputy Director Kieyoomia said. "He is an example of the title United States Marine. He will be forever missed and remembered. Condolences to the family of the late Honorable John Kinsel, Sr."

As a young man, Mr. Kinsel was of a cadre of young Navajos who answered the call of duty in the 1940s to join the Marine Corps at a time of war. He, like hundreds of others, left the safety and peace of

their Navajo homeland to defend the country not knowing where they would go but knowing they may not return.



Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren met with Navajo Code Talker John Kinsel at his home in August 2024.

"He used our Navajo language to protect us and keep us alive through a war, and to this day in his most senior years," President Nygren said. "He lived an honorable and happy life for 107 years. I'm glad we were able to improve the home he built himself that he didn't want to leave, and that he was able to enjoy for a few months. But I'm sad it couldn't have been for longer. He earned it and he deserved it."

It was last August that Mr. Kinsel and his family celebrated the turnover of keys to his newly renovated home from the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration.

Mr. Kinsel was *Kintichii'nii* and born for *Tábqghá*. His maternal grandfather was *Naakaii Dine'é* and his paternal grandfather was *Bit'ahnii*. Mr. Kinsel was born in 1917 in Cove, Ariz., and resided in Lukachukai, Ariz.

Funeral arrangements are pending.

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