

## Window Rock honors Navajo Nation Code Talkers

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 23 August 2019 03:08

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### VP Lizer voices desire for code talker museum

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Navajo Code Talkers Day parade Aug. 14 was a show of appreciation, with a procession of the remaining code talkers, memorial walkers for code talkers who have passed, and local native royalty like Tse Ho Tso Native American Princess Rayanne M. Ownes and Window Rock High School Miss Native American Princess Kaitlyn G. Toledo.

The Navajo Nation Code talkers played a pivotal role in World War II by relaying messages in their native language that the Japanese could not decode.

The code talkers received no recognition until the declassification of their operation in 1968. Then in 1982, the code talkers were given a Certificate of Recognition by President Ronald Reagan, who also named Aug. 14 as Navajo Code Talkers Day.

This year, Navajo Code Talkers Day was commemorated when visitors and tribal members gathered at the Veterans Memorial Park in Window Rock.

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Master of Ceremonies James June said it is always a joyous occasion when the Navajo Nation comes together.

Other participants at the event included the Tsozile/Mount Taylor Color and Honor Guard, the 2019 Devil Pups, and enrolled members of the Young Marines.

Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnne Jayne said the code talkers fought for our freedom, so we have to be very thankful for their efforts.

“They fought for our language,” Jayne said. “[Code talkers] also served at school, at home, and at work. You helped us become who we are.”

Jayne said the Navajo Nation has been able to exist as a sovereign nation for as long as it has in large part due to the work of the code talkers.

“I’m thankful we’re here with you, and I am honored,” she added.

Navajo Nation Speaker of the 24th Council Seth Damon said the event marks a great day in history for both the Navajo Nation and the United States.

“Just know in times like this, you’ll always remember you’re blessed to meet one of the Navajo Nation’s global ambassadors,” Damon said. “[Code talkers] bent the arc of history for what they’ve done for this United States. [The commemoration] means honoring the Navajo Nation itself for being a resilient nation that has put forth generations of individuals who’ve fought and bled for this country,” Damon continued.

Damon said it is important that each Navajo person knows they come from a great nation.

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“This is so future generations can know we have a strong culture,” Damon said.

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez said the Navajo language is important, and the legacy of the code talkers and the language they spoke should continue to future generations.

“[Our language] is how we won the war,” Nez said. “It is how we can enjoy life in our community.”

This day is more than just the code talkers’ service to the United States, Nez continued.

“It is about being of service to our Navajo culture and tradition so it can continue,” Nez said. “The war was a historic occurrence that showed [Navajo] resilience, and overcoming the monsters of the time.”

Nez said the history of the code talkers should continue to be taught to help people fight off their own modern-day monsters.

“We need to share our language, our way of life to fight,” he said. “Our language is very powerful, because it can either encourage or discourage someone.”

The tendency to think and say positive things to another person is in the Navajo language, Nez continued. This is why younger generations should be encouraged and told they have the potential to succeed.

“Encouragement should continue to the next generation,” Nez said. “We are resilient.”

Nez pointed to another instance that demonstrated the resilience of the Navajo people, when they were forced to march to Fort Sumner, N.M. and held at camps for several years.

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Working together and helping each other is how people will show that resilience today, Nez continued.

“Let’s help one another out, working alongside each other should be a goal and challenge for us,” he said.

Navajo Nation Vice President Myron Lizer spoke about the recognition the code talkers have received over the years, and emphasized that getting a code talker museum built should be a goal for the Navajo Nation.

“These indigenous people have defended the only land they’ve known,” Lizer said. “We need to remind the United States of what has been achieved here.”

“Let’s build another wall of honor for these, our Navajo Nation Code Talkers, in the hallowed halls of a museum,” he said.

Lizer said getting a code talker museum built would be the nation’s way of being invited into the American Dream.

By Cody Begaye  
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