



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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OPVP SALUTES THE LIVES AND SERVICE OF ALL VETERANS

First and foremost, the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President (OPVP) would like to thank all Navajo Nation Veterans, past and present, for their service in all branches of the United States Armed Forces. Your service has been essential to the protection of our sacred homeland, culture, language and the Navajo people.

Our people had committed to serve and protect the nation long before they were ever given the right to vote in Arizona. In defending the United States, we've selflessly offered one of our most sacred and precious resources, our language.

Our history as warriors and protectors extends back to our great leaders like Narbona, Barboncito and Chief Manuelito and our efforts in protecting this great land were honed by the Navajo Code Talkers and their development of the most complex military code.

The intelligence of the Navajo Code Talkers proved to be far more effective than any bullets or artillery used in the World War II. They were able to use the Navajo language as a tool to defend the United States and they brought victory in the Battle of Iwo Jima and other battles throughout the Pacific Theater.

Today, we would like to honor the memory of those who have died in battle and paid the ultimate sacrifice of giving their life. We also remember those who have recently passed on like Navajo Code Talker Dan Akee and Navajo Code Talker George Paul James. It has been tragic to lose so many Code Talkers and veterans within this past year.

Our Navajo warriors have served courageously throughout history in any military conflict they have been a part of, including: the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the War in Iraq, the War in Afghanistan. The list goes on and our warriors continue to serve proudly.

For this, and on this day, we send our utmost gratitude and our most thoughtful prayers to all our Navajo Veterans and all the Veterans in the United States. We extend the same gratitude to the families

of our fallen soldiers as well as all our Blue and Gold Star mothers. Your child or spouse has brought great honor to our nation.

We will continue in our administration's commitment to prioritizing services and benefits to our Veterans. We will continue to work hard for our Veterans.

In February 2016, we signed into law the Navajo Veterans Act that created the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration and Veterans Advisory Council. The Veterans Advisory Council took their oaths of office in April 2016 and have since passed their Plan of Operations through the 23rd Navajo Nation Council.

In June, the State of Arizona Signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration to train and accredit Navajo Nation Veteran Service Officers beginning in FY 2017. This will give our Veterans Administration access to the State's administrative infrastructure and facilitate better services to our Veterans at a local level. The signing of the MOU was largely based on the Navajo Veterans Act supporting the Veterans Administration.

Recently on October 18, 2016, Navajo Housing Authority received a letter from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development approving the Navajo Nation's implementation plan of the VASH program for homeless Navajo Nation veterans. We are working to provide housing for our veterans.

We will continue to bring many moving parts together to better serve our Navajo Veterans. We hear their demands for greater fiscal accountability and transparency. Through the Navajo Veterans Act and the Navajo Veterans Administration, we are delivering once more on that promise to the people.

Today, we ask all our Navajo people to come together in thought, prayer and reverence for our Navajo Nation Veterans and all Veterans of the United States.

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