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Navajo Nation Council honors veterans on Navajo Code Talkers Day



PHOTO: Speaker LoRenzo Bates speaks in honor of Navajo Code Talkers at the annual Navajo Code Talker Day celebration at the Veterans Memorial Park in Window Rock, Arizona on Aug. 14, 2017.

WINDOW ROCK – Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) along with several members of the Navajo Nation Council honored the Navajo Code Talkers on Monday during the annual recognition event, which also commemorated the 75th Anniversary of the Navajo Code Talkers Association. The event was held at the Veterans Memorial Park in Window Rock.

“Most of us will never experience what the Code Talkers went through in the battlefield, but we can thank them for doing their duty, for protecting our Nation, and for showing how important language can be in our lives and even in times of conflict and war,” stated Speaker Bates. “Each year, we continue to lose our Navajo Code Talkers as they age and move on from this world,

however, we remember and take pride in their honorable service for this country and the Navajo Nation.”

Speaker Bates, who was invited to speak, said the Council continues to work to provide services for the Code Talkers, while also acknowledging all Navajo men and women currently serving in the Armed Forces.

“At this very moment, many of our sons and daughters continue to serve our people proudly in the Marines, Army, Navy, and Air Force and we are deeply grateful for their sacrifice. I ask the Navajo People to join me in giving thanks for our loved ones and to ask for protection for our military men and women,” Speaker Bates added.

On Sunday, Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water, Aneth, Tecnospos, Tóíkan, Red Mesa), who served in the U.S. Marine Corps and fought in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm during the Gulf War, also hosted a gourd dance at Veterans Memorial Park in honor of the Navajo Code Talkers.

“Through this gourd dance we recognize the sacrifices and we give thanks to our Navajo Code Talkers for protecting our country and our homelands,” Delegate Filfred said.

At Monday’s event, the U.S. Marine Corps also laid a wreath at the Veterans Memorial Park and conducted a 21-gun salute to honor the Navajo Code Talkers who have passed on. Many of the families of the late Code Talkers were also present and shared photos and stories of their loved ones with the public.

The event also celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of the Navajo Code Talkers Association, which is currently led by former Navajo Chairman Peter MacDonald, who also spoke at the event. President Russell Begaye provided the welcome address at the start of the celebration, which began after the annual Navajo Code Talkers Day parade.

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