



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Fort Defiance recognized as a Purple Heart Community, honoring Navajo veterans and their service



Members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council joined Fort Defiance community members and veterans to commemorate the community's designation as a Purple Heart Community.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Sunday, April 19, members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council joined veterans, community leaders, and families in Fort Defiance to formally recognize the community as a Purple Heart Community, honoring the sacrifices of combat-wounded service members and reaffirming ongoing support for Navajo Nation veterans.

The recognition ceremony brought together local leadership, veteran organizations, and residents to commemorate Purple Heart recipients and acknowledge the enduring legacy of military service across the Navajo Nation. The designation places Fort Defiance among a growing number of Navajo communities committed to recognizing and supporting Purple Heart veterans and their families.

Speakers emphasized the importance of honoring veterans not only for their service, but for their continued contributions to their communities. The ceremony included recognition of local Purple Heart recipients, acknowledgment of Blue Star and Gold Star families, and reflections on the historical and cultural significance of military service among the Diné people.

Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez highlighted the role of advocacy and community engagement in supporting veterans and their families.

“Regardless of how many times I engage and learn from veterans, I will never know what it is like to deploy or be confronted with varying health-related conditions. I won’t know the feeling. But my continuous interactions with you, our veterans, surviving spouses, Gold Star Mothers, Blue Star families, helps me learn and advocate on your behalf. I will continue to absorb the position of veterans and do my best to advocate on their behalf at a tribal, state and federal level,” said Dr. Nez.

He added that continued dialogue with veterans is critical to strengthening policies and services, noting that feedback from the community directly informs legislative efforts aimed at improving veteran support systems.

Speaker Crystalyne Curley also addressed attendees, recognizing the significance of the designation and the collective responsibility to honor veterans.

“By becoming a Purple Heart Community, Fort Defiance is declaring that the sacrifices of our warriors will never be overlooked or forgotten. This designation reflects who we are as Diné people, a Nation that honors its protectors, values their sacrifices, and uplifts them with pride,” said Speaker Crystalyne Curley.

Speaker Curley emphasized that the recognition reflects a broader movement across the Navajo Nation to ensure veterans receive continued respect, support, and visibility within their home communities.

The Purple Heart Community designation signifies a commitment to honoring those wounded or killed in combat and fostering a culture of recognition, remembrance, and service. Community leaders noted that the designation will also serve as a foundation for future initiatives, including annual observances, outreach efforts, and expanded support for veterans and their families.

The event concluded with a presentation of official signage and commemorative materials, formally establishing Fort Defiance as a Purple Heart Community and reinforcing the Navajo Nation’s longstanding tradition of military service and sacrifice.

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