

Honoring Navajo Code Talker Fleming Begaye, Sr.



Fleming Begaye, Sr.

All flags at the Navajo Nation were flown at half-staff on May 17 in honor and remembrance of Navajo Code Talker Fleming Begaye, Sr., who passed away on May 10 at the age of 97 in Chinle, AZ.

“The Navajo Nation is saddened by the passing of another brave and selfless Diné warrior. The Nation is truly grateful for Code Talker Begaye’s sacrifices and those of his family, to defend the freedom and liberty of our country,” said

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez. “May the Creator bless his family, friends, and community with strength and comfort.”

Honoring Navajo Code Talker and New Mexico State Senator John Pinto

The Navajo Nation honored the late Navajo Code Talker and New Mexico State Sen. Dr. John Pinto, who passed away at the age of 94 on May 24, by flying all flags on the Navajo Nation at half-staff on May 29-30.

Sen. Pinto was Díbéłzhíní (Black Sheep Clan) and born for the Táchii’nii (Red Running into the Water People Clan). He was born on December 15, 1924, and was originally from Lupton, AZ.

“On behalf of the Navajo people, we continue to offer our condolences and prayers for his children, grandchildren, friends, and colleagues. Senator Pinto devoted his life to public service and helping our communities. There is no doubt that he changed the lives of so many people for the better. We will miss his smile, his humor, and his love and compassion that he shared with us all,” said President Nez.

Honoring Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talker Louis Levi Oakes



Louis Levi Oakes

Louis Levi Oakes was the last remaining Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talker who served during World War II. He touched the lives of everyone who met him and will be missed by many, particularly by his loved ones.

Louis Levi Oakes was born on the Mohawk Territory of Akwesasne in 1922 and, following the onset of World War II, registered for the U.S. Army at the age of 18. He received his formal military training as a code talker while stationed in Louisiana,

along with other Akwesasne Mohawks. He was assigned as a Technician 4th Grade with Company B’s 442nd Signal Battalion in

Begaye was Tódich’ii’nii (Bitter Water Clan) and born for Kinlichii’nii (Red House People Clan). He was born on Aug. 26, 1921, in the community of Red Valley, AZ and resided in Chinle at the time of his passing. He had three children with his late wife, Helen M. Begaye, who passed away in 2008.

Begaye served as a Navajo Code Talker in the Marine Corps from 1943 to 1945, and fought in the Battle of Tarawa and the Battle of Tinian during World War II, and was later awarded the Congressional Silver Medal of Honor.

Following his military service, Begaye returned to the Navajo Nation where he owned and operated “Begaye’s Corner” trading post in the community of Chinle, where he also lived with his wife and children.

A funeral service for Navajo Code Talker Fleming Begaye, Sr. was held on May 17, 2019 at the Potter’s House Christian Center in Chinle, AZ.



John Pinto

Sen. Pinto served in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Navajo Code Talker during World War II. He was a national hero, veteran, and a great Diné leader who made tremendous sacrifices and contributions for the Navajo people.

Following his military service, Senator Pinto returned home and began his duties as a public servant for 42 years as a member of the New Mexico State Senate beginning in 1977, making him the longest-serving legislator in state history. Navajo Technical University honored Sen. Pinto with its very first honorary doctoral degree for public service during a commencement ceremony held on May 17.

A funeral service was held at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Gallup, NM.

the U.S. Army. During his six years of military service, TEC 4 Oakes saw action in the South Pacific, New Guinea and Philippines theatres in World War II. For his exemplary service, he received the third-highest military combat decoration for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States – The Silver Star. Throughout World War II, Louis Levi Oakes’ knowledge and usage of Kanien’keha (Mohawk language) was used to send communications between U.S. forces.

In 2016, Oakes was one of 17 Akwesasne Mohawks to receive the Congressional Silver Medal for his military contributions as a Native American Code Talker. In 2018, Oakes was presented with the New York State Liberty Medal – the highest civilian honor bestowed by New York State upon individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts and achievements. The award followed his induction into the New York State Senate Veteran’s Hall of Fame. ♣