

FLIGHT JACKET

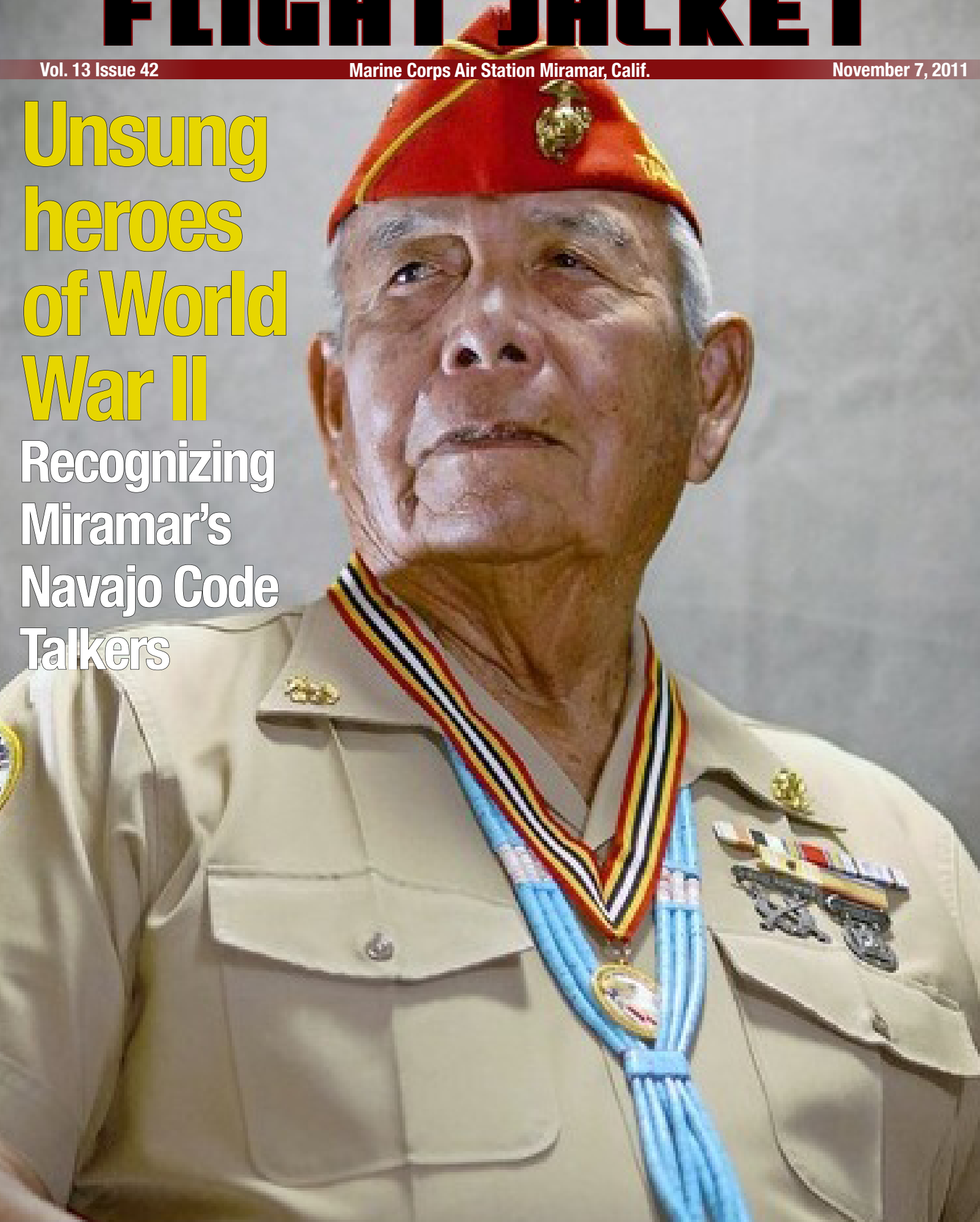
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Unsung heroes of World War II

Recognizing
Miramar's
Navajo Code
Talkers





NAE puts 'Boots on the Ground' at Miramar

Senior leadership from the Naval Aviation Enterprise came to Miramar for a 'Boots on the Ground' event hosted by Marine Aircraft Group 11.

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Miramar's ultimate fighters: Grappling Club looking for talent

Fighters train for hours in the gym to prepare for fights. Fights can end by submission, technical decision, technical knockout and knockout.

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Click [HERE](#) for more photos.



(Photo courtesy of the code talkers' website)

America's secret weapon: Navajo Code Talkers

The Navajo Code Talkers were part of a secret program during World War II. The code they created at Camp Elliot - modern MCAS Miramar - remained secret until 1968.

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Maj. Gen. Andrew O'Donnell Jr.
Commanding General
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing



Col. Frank A. Richie
Commanding Officer
MCAS Miramar

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SAN DIEGO - Cpl. Christopher Ramsey, a supervisor and collateral duty inspector with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 and a Houston native, stands with his family and the San Diego State University mascot during a football game at Qualcomm Stadium here Oct. 29. Ramsey attended the game after being recognized as 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Marine of the Quarter. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Scott Murdock)

MALS-11 Marine takes the field

SAN DIEGO - Brandon Davis, a San Diego State University defensive back and an Oakland, Calif., native, returns a kickoff at Qualcomm Stadium Oct. 29. The SDSU Aztecs lost to the University of Wyoming Cowboys 30-27. (2nd Lt. Scott Murdock)



ON THE COVER:

Former Navajo Code Talker Joe Morris Sr. was one of the approximate 400 Navajos who left their home on the reservation to join America's fight in the South Pacific during World War II. Morris died July 17, 2011 at the age of 85. (Photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Times)

NAE puts 'Boots on the Ground' at Miramar

Story by Lance Cpl. Kevin Crist

Senior leadership from the Naval Aviation Enterprise visited here for a "Boots on the Ground" event Oct. 27.

Marine Aircraft Group 11 hosted the event and provided opportunities for Marines and sailors to tell senior leadership about what works and what needs to be fixed in naval aviation.

The NAE is a war-fighting partnership that solves complex, cross-command issues in order to make decisions for the greater good of naval aviation and to support national interests.

At the beginning of the event there were briefs about the success, concerns and cur-

rent initiatives of the host command. These briefs describe the best practices they developed which other commands can adopt. Afterward, NAE leadership toured different facilities aboard Miramar and talked with junior Marines and sailors who man the areas.

"Boots on the Ground" identifies challenges faced locally and gives senior leadership the opportunity to see the Marines, sailors and issues, but also a chance to see what resources are needed to take readiness to the next level, explained Lt. Col. Patrick McDoniel, the commanding officer of Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11.

"The biggest thing is that we are going to save a lot of man hours," said Lt. Gen. Terry Robling, the deputy commandant for aviation. "Most things we do to keep our aircraft in the air is on the backs of our Marines and sailors, so if we find more efficiencies within the enterprise that will both reduce man hours and reduce costs. We can take the limited resources we get and put them in the right places."

At the end of the event they held a "hot wash" debrief, during which leadership had a chance to gain further understanding of the issues that need resolution while offering their experience and guidance.

Click [HERE](#) to view video on page 12



Lt. Col. Joseph Sears, the commanding officer of Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101, speaks at the Naval Aviation Enterprise "Boots on the Ground" event here Oct. 27. The Marines and sailors voiced their concerns and addressed issues directly with Marine Corps aviation decision-makers at the event. (Photo by Lance Cpl. Kevin Crist)

MCEA visits MWSS-373



1st Lt. Timothy J. Harvey, right, the engineer company commander with Marine Wing Support Squadron 373 and a Blackstone, Mass., native, speaks to members of the Marine Corps Engineer Association during a tour of the squadron's facility here Oct. 28. The MCEA awarded MWSS-373 the title Engineer Company of the Year for fiscal year 2010. Thirty members of the association traveled to Miramar to learn how MWSS-373 supports 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. (Photo by Lance Cpl. Erica DiSalvo)



(Above and Left) Cpl. Brandon J. Cain, a generator mechanic with Marine Wing Support Squadron 373 and a Pocomoke, Md., native, conducts a floodlight demonstration for members of the Marine Corps Engineer Association during a tour of the squadron's facility here Oct. 28. MCEA awarded MWSS-373 the title Engineer Company of the Year for fiscal year 2010. (Photo by Lance Cpl. Erica DiSalvo)

ALL secured:

PMO handcuff training at Miramar



(Left Top) Jose Maldonado, right, the lead instructor of defensive tactics and handcuff training and a Houston native, demonstrates defensive techniques on Cpl. Michael Davis, left, a military working dog handler with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron and a Klamath Falls, Ore., native, here Nov. 1. Maldonado taught different take-down maneuvers and how to properly handcuff and remove handcuffs from compliant and non-compliant detainees. (Photo by Lance Cpl. Kevin Crist)

(Left Bottom) Jose Maldonado, left, the lead instructor of defensive tactics and handcuff training and a Houston native, demonstrates the proper procedure to handcuff a non-compliant detainee on Cpl. Michael Davis, a military working dog handler with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron and a Klamath Falls, Ore., native, here Nov. 1. Maldonado rehearsed various take-down maneuvers and handcuffing a detainee in different situations with Miramar military police officers. (Photo by Lance Cpl. Kevin Crist)



(Right Top) Military police with the provost marshal's office conduct defensive tactics and handcuff training here Nov. 1. The training helps in safely apprehending anyone who poses a threat to military police. (Photo by Lance Cpl. Kevin Crist)

(Right Bottom) Cpl. Michael Davis, right, a military working dog handler and a Klamath Falls, Ore., native, and Lance Cpl. Kyle Martin, left, a military police officer and a St. Louis native, both with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, practice handcuffing a compliant detainee during defensive tactics and handcuff training here Nov. 1. The Marines rehearsed properly handcuffing and removing handcuffs from compliant and non-compliant detainees. (Photo by Lance Cpl. Kevin Crist)



Miramar's ultimate fighters:

Grappling Club looking for talent

Story and photo by
Pfc. Max S. Pennington

Fighters train for hours in the gym to prepare for their fights, but only minutes count when they step in the cage and fight until one reigns victorious.

A mixed martial arts fight can end by submission, technical decision, technical knockout and knockout, in which the referee stops the fight. If the fight goes on without a referee stoppage, three judges use a point scoring system to determine the winner. The match could then result in a draw, unanimous decision, split decision or majority decision.

The Miramar Grappling Club has mixed martial artists who specialize in boxing, kickboxing, wrestling, Judo, Muay-Thai and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

"As coaches, we help you prepare to fight; we do whatever it takes for the fighter to peak when they get to the cage, then it is all up to him to win the fight," said Sgt. Christopher Riedel, a supply warehouse noncommissioned officer with Marine Aircraft Group 16, boxing coach at the club and a Hanover, Pa., native.

Unlike many sports, MMA is one of the few where only two opponents compete against each other.

"I've played every type of sport growing up and this is completely different," said Sgt. Ryan Reed, a KC-130J mechanic with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352, MMA instructor at the club and a Bandera, Texas, na-

tive. "If you love competition, this is the most pure competition you could ever find. It's you against someone else and the best man walks out of the cage."

Fighters spend hours before fights training in the different styles of MMA and doing repetitious drills to be physically prepared, but many fighters believe there is more to the game.

"You can be well conditioned, you could be a good striker or a good wrestler, but if your mind isn't focused you've lost before you've stepped in the cage," said Riedel.

The club provides Muay-Thai bags and pads, heavy bags, kettle bells, an uppercut bag, boxing gloves, focus mitts, shin pads, gi's, a practice dummy and a large mat area for grappling. The club also provides high intensity training stations where members can flip tractor tires and work out on other conditioning equipment.

"Anyone who wants to train to get better, gain confidence or whatever it is can come up," said Riedel. "Not everyone up here competes, and I like it that way, it is like a family."

The Miramar Grappling Club is open from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. every day in the back of building 2525 next to the Marine Mart, and can be reached by contacting Paul Woo at (210) 240-9283 or email at mcthaidevil@yahoo.com.

(Left) Lance Cpl. Mark Martinez, an aviation mechanic with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352, a kickboxer with the Miramar Grappling Club and a Honolulu native, strikes a heavy bag during practice here Nov. 1.





Harry Benally, a Navajo Code Talker during the end of World War II, poses for a photo at the age of 21 in 1946. Benally died in 2000. (Photo courtesy of the Benally family)

America's secret weapon: Navajo Code Talkers

Story by Cpl. Alexandra M. Vazquez

Despite punishment for speaking their own language in government boarding schools and not having voting rights in their own states, approximately 400 Americans became their nation's secret weapon during World War II – the Navajo Code Talkers.

Today, most people in the United States have heard about code talkers in passing conversations, but few have looked into the history of the code talkers.

"It's important to know this piece of history because it had such a profound impact on World War II and it's something we can all be proud of," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 John Hawthorne III, who has researched the Navajo Code Talkers' training at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. "[American Indians] are just one of those pieces that make up the American

mosaic. It's not just their history – it's my history – it's American history."

The Navajo Code Talkers were part of a classified program that began with Philip Johnston. The son of a Presbyterian missionary to the Navajos, he was one of the few outsiders at the time who spoke the unwritten Navajo language. Johnston, a veteran, was familiar with the military's small-scale use of American Indian languages during World War I.

In early 1942, Johnston met with Maj. James E. Jones, the force communications officer at Camp Elliot - modern MCAS Miramar - and proposed using the Navajo language as a military code because it was difficult to learn without exposure at a young age and incomprehensible to non-Navajo speakers.

On Feb. 28, 1942, four Navajos demonstrated their capabilities to encode, transmit and decode a message in 20 seconds during a field test at Camp Elliot. Maj. Gen. Clayton B. Vogel, the commanding general of Amphibious Corps, Pacific Fleet, was impressed by the demonstration and asked the commandant of the Marine Corps to approve the program.

"The demonstration was interesting and successful," wrote Vogel in his letter to the commandant March 6, 1942. "Mr. Johnston stated that the Navaho* is the only tribe in the United States that has not been infested with German students during the past twenty years. These Germans, studying the various tribal dialects under the guise of art students, anthropologists, etc., have undoubtedly attained a good working knowledge of all tribal dialects except Navaho. For this reason the Navaho is the only tribe available offering complete security for the type of

Continued next page



(Opposite left) A platoon of Navajo Code Talkers stand in formation at Camp Elliott under the supervision of Staff Sgt. Philip Johnston. The Navajo created the first version of their code at Camp Elliot. (Courtesy Photo)



(Right) A Navajo Code Talker relays a message on a field radio. The code talkers served in the South Pacific during World War II and were kept a secret until 1968 when the Navajo code was finally declassified. (Courtesy Photo)

(Below) Pfc. Preston Toledo and Frank Toledo, both Navajo Code Talkers and cousins, relay orders in the Navajo language on a field radio. They were attached to a Marine artillery regiment in the South Pacific. This photo was taken July 7, 1943. (Courtesy Photo)

work under consideration ... It should also be noted the Navaho tribal dialect is completely unintelligible to all other tribes and all other people, with the possible exception of as many as 28 Americans who have made a study of the dialect. This dialect is thus equivalent to a secret code to the enemy, and admirably suited for rapid, secure communication.”

The Marine Corps recruited 29 Navajo men during the next two months and on May 4, 1942 the recruits left Fort Defiance, Ariz., for basic training in San Diego. All 29 Navajos, who made up their own platoon, graduated basic training.

Following their graduation, the Marines marched directly to Fleet Marine Force Training Center at Camp Elliot where they received courses on transmitting messages and radio operations.

During their time at Camp Elliot, the 29 Navajo Marines constructed the code, which consisted of an alphabet and accurate replacement phrases for military terms. The alphabet used words to represent letters, such as “wol-la-chee,” or ant, for the letter A, and “dzeh,” or elk, for the letter E. For military terms, they used replacements such as “da-ha-tih-hi,” or humming bird, for a fighter plane, and “gini,” or chicken hawk, for dive bomber. The Navajos’ creation contained 211 replacement terms and phrases. Any military phrases that didn’t have replacements were spelled out.

The Navajo Code Talkers had their first field test in July 1942. The Coast Guard mistakenly picked up on a transmission and reported it as strange and possibly hostile.

After completing their training, the original 29 code talkers were assigned to several divisions bound for the South Pacific. A few remained at the school, which was later moved to Camp Pendleton, to train incoming Navajo Marines.

After reporting to their units, the code talkers saw action on several South Pacific islands including Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Saipan, Guam, Palau and Okinawa. One of the most important and bloodiest battles of the South Pacific, Iwo Jima, was one of the code talkers’ finest examples of proficiency. During the battle, six Navajo Code Talkers sent more than 800 messages without error.

“Were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima,” said Maj. Howard Connor, the 5th Marine Division signal officer for whom the six Navajo Code Talkers worked

during the first 48 hours of battle.

While serving overseas, the Navajos had to constantly update their code to prevent repetitiveness and frequently used words from being discovered by the Japanese. Commonly used letters, such as E, T, A, O, I, N, S, H, R, D, L and U, had several alternative words. Overall, the code grew to more than 400 phrases and words for the code talkers to memorize.

“My weapon was my language,” said the late former Navajo Code Talker Joe Morris Sr. in a San Bernardino park on Veterans Day in 2004. “We saved a lot of lives.”

*“Were it not for the Navajos,
the Marines would never have
taken Iwo Jima.”*

*————— Maj. Howard Connor
5th Marine Division signal officer*

Following WWII’s end, the code talkers were ordered to keep the code a secret in case America needed to use the code again – which it did on a small scale in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts.

The code talkers remained silent about their time as Marines until 1968 when the code was declassified. Recognition came later when former President Ronald Reagan signed a proclamation of the first National Navajo Code Talkers Day on Aug. 14, 1982.

“The Navaho Nation, when called upon to serve the United States, contributed a precious commodity never before used in this way. In the midst of the fighting in the Pacific during World War II, a gallant group of men from the Navaho Nation utilized their language in coded form to help speed the Allied victory,” said Reagan in his proclamation. “Equipped with the only fool-proof, unbreakable code in the history of warfare, the code talkers confused the enemy with an earful of sounds never before heard by code experts. The dedication and unswerving devotion to duty shown by the men of the Navaho Nation in serving as radio code

Continued on page 11





talkers in the Marine Corps during World War II should serve as a fine example for all Americans.”

On July 26, 2001, four of the five living 29 code talkers received the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation’s highest civilian award, from former President George W. Bush. The other 25 code talkers’ families received the medals in their places. Navajos who became code talkers later in the war received the Congressional Silver Medal. The medals featured two Navajo Code Talkers speaking on a radio to reflect their achievement.

“It is indeed an honor to be here today before you representing my fellow distinguished Navajo Code Talkers,” said the late John Brown Jr. during the Congressional Gold Medal presentation at the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. “We must never forget that these such events are made possible only by the ultimate sacrifice of thousands of American men and women who, I am certain, are watching us now ... [Of] the original 29 code talkers, there are just five of us that live today: Chester Nez, Lloyd Oliver, Allen Dale June, Joe Palmer and myself. We have seen much in our lives. We have experienced war and peace. We know the value of freedom and democracy that this great nation embodies. But our experience has also shown us how fragile these things can be and how we must stay ever vigilant to protect them, as code talkers, as Marines. We did our part to protect these values.”

Today, only 90-year-old Chester Nez remains of the original code talkers. Overall, it is estimated that less than 70 code talkers are still alive.

The Navajo Code Talkers honorably served their country during a time when they did not even have the right to participate in Arizona or New Mexico state elections. They stood for honor, courage, commitment and the American dream that all men have the right to live free.

**Navaho is a common spelling for the tribe in historic documents*



Navajo Code Talkers stand and salute as the colors are posted during Code Talkers Day event in Window Rock, Ariz., Aug. 14, 2008. (Photo Courtesy of Morris Bitsie)



Bill Toledo, Frank G. Willetto and Keith Little, Navajo Code Talkers, were among the Iwo Jima veterans honored Feb. 19, 2010, at a ceremony commemorating the 65th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va. (Photo courtesy of Cpl. Scott Schmidt)

NAE puts 'Boots on the Ground' at Miramar

Video by Lance Cpl. Kevin Crist



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THE WHITE HOUSE

October 7, 2011

Dear Friend:

I hope you will help us honor our American heroes this holiday season by adding the final touches to the White House decorations.

We are asking kids like you, from military installations around the world, to create a holiday card that represents your parent who is serving our Nation. I encourage you to use your imagination, and include words, pictures, and drawings to create a holiday card that honors your brave mom or dad.

Thank you for helping with this fun project, and most of all for your family's courageous service to our Nation. I look forward to seeing the results of your creativity!

Sincerely,

Michelle Obama

Guidelines

Children can submit 5x8" handmade holiday cards with words of appreciation to honor their parents. The First Lady encourages children to use their imagination by including words, pictures and drawings. The White House will display as many of the cards as possible.

Participants are asked to mail holiday cards to the following address along with information from where they are sending it by November 16, 2011:

Reservation 1
Attn: Social Office
PO Box 8070
Washington DC, 20032