

## Navajo Nation urges renaming military bases with Native American names

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer are urging congressional leaders and the White House to honor Native American people by renaming existing military bases after Native American warriors who sacrificed and contributed to the development and longstanding history of the U. S. through their military service.

Across the country, there is growing debate surrounding the renaming of military bases named after Confederate military figures.

Nez went further than just talking about renaming military bases.

“Not only should the military bases be named in honor of Native Americans, but ... all curriculum taught in schools across the country should accurately reflect the history and contributions of Native Americans in the military and throughout our society,” he said.

“Native Americans have a proud and long history of military service. In fact, our Native American warriors have served in every branch of the military at a higher rate than any other demographic in the United States. Despite our significant contributions to this great country, our military achievements and stories by our Native American warriors are often left untold. History shows us that America chose to focus on the accomplishments of its European citizens. This not only disadvantages Native Americans, but the country as a whole.

“When our stories and accomplishments are acknowledged and included within the national landscape, the United States will begin the path toward building mutual respect and unity

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among all races, religions, and backgrounds,” he added.

“As Navajo people, we have contributed so much to defending this great nation from her enemies. During World War II the United States called upon the Navajo people and our language to develop an unbreakable code for securing allied communications. In response the Navajo people answered that call and thus was born the Navajo Code Talkers. Though the Code Talkers have been honored in many ways, they have yet to be honored with a national monument of their own, nor has a military base been named after one among their ranks.

“Do not let the United States forget her Native American military history. The First Americans of this country should be the first to be recognized and honored through the renaming of the Fort Bragg military installation after a Native Veteran,” Nez said.

“All Navajo people have family, relatives, or friends who are active in every branch of the military. We have an overwhelming number of our Native brothers and sisters who enlist and serve our country proudly, so it’s only right that they have a place in history and in the future of this country. The Navajo Nation calls upon our congressional leaders and federal partners to move forward with the renaming of military bases after Native American Service Members. We also urge Congress to develop landmarks and monuments to help solidify the contributions of Native Americans within the landscape of American history,” Lizer said.