

## Navajo Police Department welcomes new officers from the Navajo Police Training Academy

Written by Staff Reports

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CHINLE, Ariz. — The Navajo Police Department started the new year by welcoming eight newly-commissioned officers from the Navajo Police Training Academy on Jan 2, during a graduation ceremony in Chinle, Ariz.

The new officers took their oath of office before Honorable Judge William Platero after a pinning ceremony Saturday afternoon. The department's new officers are Aaron C. Brown, Klyton Belone, Ryan Draper, Vanecia Valenzuela, Arrow Dosela, Henry Antonio, Jr., Nathaniel K. Watson, and Jasmine Peaches.

Following their training at the academy, the officers will be assigned a field training officer who will provide guidance and further training in the field during their first three months on patrol. The new officers will be assigned to either the Window Rock, Chinle, Crownpoint, or Kayenta police district.

Despite the onset of challenges in the midst of a global pandemic, Class 55 persevered in becoming a new generation of police officers with the Navajo Police Department, demonstrating dedication and determination to serve their communities.

Navajo Police Chief Phillip Francisco reminded officers to reflect on the symbolic meaning of the police badge and encouraged the officers to lead with character and professionalism.

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“Although the badge is a powerful symbol and it is an honor to wear, of even greater importance is the change to who you are inside, that no one can see. Even with your badge and uniform off, you now embody the ideals of duty, protection, selfless service, and warrior spirit. The badge does not give power, all the great things that you will accomplish will come from within you from now on.” Chief Francisco said. “Always wear your badge with honor and pride, but my challenge to you is to let your character and professionalism be what people see and respect.”

Due to COVID-19, the graduation ceremony was closed to the public with family and friends witnessing the graduates’ milestone online via live stream, with congratulatory remarks provided by Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Navajo Nation Vice-President Myron Lizer, Division Director Jesse Delmar, 24th Navajo Nation Council Delegate Eugene Tso, Honorable Judge William Platero, and Navajo Nation Chief Prosecutor Jennifer Henry.

Class 55 of the Navajo Police Training Academy is the fourth law enforcement class to graduate from the academy since reopening in 2018. The academy will be hosting a recruit drive on Jan. 11 by appointment only. The new class of recruits is slated to begin training in March.

**For more information regarding Navajo Police Training Academy recruitment, please call Officer Wallace Billie at (928) 674-2520.**