

## Arizona officially recognizes "National Navajo Code Talkers Day" as a state holiday

Written by gallupsun  
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Navajo Nation Vice President Myron Lizer joined Navajo Code Talkers Samuel F. Sandoval, Thomas H. Begay, and former Chairman of the Navajo Nation Peter MacDonald, Sr., Arizona State Sen. Jamescita Peshlakai, and Arizona House of Representatives Speaker Russell Bowers on Thursday, at the Arizona State Capitol, as Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey signed SB 1802 into law, recognizing Aug. 14 as "National Navajo Code Talkers Day" and a state holiday.

During World War II, the Navajo Code Talkers answered the call to defend the United States of America using the impenetrable code based on the Navajo language that is widely acknowledged as a deciding factor in the war effort. On July 28, 1982, former U.S. President Ronald Reagan designated August 14 as "National Navajo Code Talkers Day."

"We pay tribute to the Navajo Code Talkers for their courageous service in World War II," Lizer said. "At the time of their enlistments, they were very young men, but they answered the call of duty and unknowingly built a humble legacy for the Navajo people recognized throughout the world. By using *Diné Bizaad*, our Navajo language, they helped win the war and protect our freedom today. Their service and leadership will forever live on in our hearts and memories. Today, we thank Governor Ducey for signing this historical bill to honor all Navajo and Native American veterans."

Arizona SB 1802 was sponsored by Peshlakai, a member of the Navajo Nation, and received unanimous support from the Arizona Senate and House of Representatives.

"Today, we are blessed to have four Navajo Code Talkers remaining with us, including Samuel F. Sandoval, Thomas H. Begay, John Kinsel Sr., and former Chairman of the Navajo Nation Peter MacDonald, Sr. We honor them and thank their families for all of their sacrifices. They will forever be our legacy and strength," Peshlakai stated.

During the ceremony MacDonald, Begay, and Sandoval thanked Arizona leaders for recognizing and honoring their service to defend the country. Descendants of Navajo Code Talkers who have passed also attended the event.

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"The Navajo Code Talkers define and exemplify the resiliency of our Nation and our people. On behalf of the Office of the President and Vice President, we thank Governor Ducey and Senator Peshlakai for declaring a state holiday for our Navajo warriors," Lizer added.

