

Gallup gets cannon for Veterans' Day

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Howitzer 105 dedicated at Courthouse Square

Veterans' Day 2021 was a day of remembrance, with wreaths placed at Hillcrest Cemetery, 960 W. Aztec Ave. #1044, at the graves of unknown veterans and names presented on a pillar at Courthouse Square, 215 W. Aztec.

The day also brought former Mayor Jackie McKinney together with current Mayor Louis Bonaguidi at Courthouse Square for the dedication of a decommissioned cannon and City Councilor Fran Palochak, Dist. 4's reading of the names of veterans newly-appearing on a memorial pillar.

Sixty-three names were added to the pillar thanks to the work of artists Howard Meehan of Silent Wing (Santa Fe), William Freer of Firefly Studios (Santa Fe), Veterans Committee volunteer Bebe Sarmiento of Gallup, and Gallup Parks and Recreation Director Vince Alonzo.

Joe Zecca, a Korean War U.S. Navy veteran is the chair of the Gallup McKinley County Veterans Committee. He told the *Sun* he's been putting on this event for so long he doesn't remember when he started.

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He said the reason for the cannon is that McKinney wanted something patriotic at the time he was mayor. But the cannon only arrived this year. It was dedicated Nov. 11 and McKinney was there for the ceremony.

Also invited to speak at Courthouse Square were Rep. Patty Lundstrom, D-Gallup, Rep. D. Wonda Johnson, D-Rehoboth, and Sen. George Muñoz, D- Gallup.

Dave Cuellar of Veterans Helping Veterans told the *Sun* there would be no parade this year since the COVID-19 regulations kept changing and it was hard to know what to expect.

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services listed numerous ceremonies across the state, including one at Sheep Springs Cemetery on Highway 491 in Sheep Springs, N.M. and a horseback trail ride south of Shiprock, N.M. at Mile Marker 73 on Highway 491.

By Beth Blakeman
Managing Editor