



NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION



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Loyalty Questioned More Than 65 Years Ago: Japanese Americans and American Indians Unite

Navajo Code Talkers to be Honored by National Japanese American Memorial Foundation

Washington, D.C., April 12, 2010 – On Monday, April 26, The **National Japanese American Memorial Foundation** (NJAMF) will be honoring **Navajo Code Talkers** from World War II at **Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian**. Navajo Code Talkers and Japanese Americans are similar in that both, despite injustices, valiantly served their country during a time of international crisis.

The Navajo Code Talkers – who served in all six Marine Divisions from 1942-45 – have been credited with saving countless lives and hastening the end of World War II. Their primary job was to transmit vital military information in their native language, which was understood by fewer than thirty non-Navajos at the time. The language, being unfamiliar to the Axis Powers, was nearly impossible to decode, enabling the Allies to securely convey troop movements and needs.

If not for the Navajo Code Talkers, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima. All the Code Talkers received the U.S. Congressional Silver Medallion for their service as USMC Navajo Code Talkers.

“One of the goals of NJAMF is to continue to spread the word about injustices in our history, so we can learn from them,” said **NJAMF Executive Director Craig Uchida**. “The preservation and expansion of freedom is our principal mission, and we are honored to have such distinguished veterans with us who fought so hard for our nation despite losing freedoms of their own.”

Three Code Talkers will be honored:



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- **Keith Little** served at Saipan and Okinawa with the 4th Marine Division. He was discharged as a Private First Class and awarded the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, the Victory Medal of World War II, the USMC Good Conduct Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. He is currently President of the Navajo Code Talkers Association.

- **Samuel Tso** served in Iwo Jima with the 5th Marine Division. He was discharged as a Private First Class and was awarded the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, the Victory Medal of World War II, the USMC Good Conduct Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. He is the current Vice-President of the Navajo Code Talkers Association.

- **Peter MacDonald, Sr.** served in the South Pacific and North China. He was discharged as a Corporal and was awarded the Navy Achievement Medal, the USMC Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the China Service Medal, the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, the Victory Medal of World War II, the World War II Occupation Medal, and the World War II China War Memorial Medal.

Traveling with the Navajo Code Talkers is retired **Marine Gunnery Sergeant PJ James**, a former POW/MIA of the Vietnam War, and the first Navajo to become a Marine Drill Instructor. A descendant of Navajo Code Talkers, Gunnery Sergeant James is a life-time honorary member of the Navajo Code Talkers Association. Some of the “Gunny’s” military awards include the Navy/Marine Corps Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, the POW Medal, and numerous unit and campaign medals and ribbons.

The National Japanese American Memorial Foundation is focused on increasing public awareness about the plight of Japanese American civilians during the War and the relevance of those experiences today. The experiences of American Indians relate to those of Japanese Americans. Both groups, despite suffering injustices by the American government, rose to the occasion when called upon by their nation. The roles of Navajo Code Talkers stand out as the U.S. government spent millions of dollars and resources by placing American Indians into assimilation schools and discouraging the use of speaking in their native tongue.

About NJAMF

The National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to education and public awareness about the Japanese American experience during World War II. NJAMF raised the private funds to build the Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism during World War II. The Memorial is not only a monument to the Japanese American experience, but also a reminder that we must not allow anything like this to happen to any minority community again. www.njamf.com

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