



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rushmore
National Memorial

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Mount Rushmore National Memorial News Release

Mount Rushmore Honors Navajo Code Talkers

(Keystone, SD) A special ceremony honoring three Navajo Code Talkers will take place during Mount Rushmore National Memorial's annual Independence Day Celebration on July 3. Superintendent Gerard Baker will be joined by the Wild Horse Butte Tokala Color Guard and the Ellsworth Air Force Base Honor Guard in a flag folding ceremony and a presentation of American flags to Arthur J. Hubbard, Sr., Joe Morris and George B. Willie, Sr.

Hubbard, Morris and Willie will be honored for their heroic service as Navajo Code Talkers during World War II. Between 1942 and 1945, over 400 U.S. Marine Corps Navajo code talkers used their native language to develop highly accurate and efficient codes to transmit military information in the Pacific theater. The undecipherable Navajo code took only minutes to transmit compared to the hours it took to translate messages in Morse code. The Navajo code talkers served in all six Marine divisions and were praised for their central role in the United State's victory at Iwo Jima.

Arthur J. Hubbard, Sr. served as an instructor of the code at Camp Elliott during the war. He later served as an Arizona state senator for fourteen years and was the first American Indian voted into the Arizona state senate. Joe Morris served as Corporal in the 22nd Marine Regiment and participated in the battles of Guadalcanal, Guam, Saipan, Okinawa and Tins Tao China. George B. Willie, Sr. served in the 2nd Marine Division during the battle of Okinawa Ryukmu Island and the occupation of Japan from September 23, 1945 until July 1, 1946.

Raised in Indian boarding schools that suppressed the use of native language, these three men became a part of a military institution that depended on American Indian culture to save countless American soldiers. Reflecting on Hubbard, Morris and Willie's military service, Superintendent Baker notes, "The ingenuity and hard work of the Navajo code talkers were instrumental to the United States' success in World War II. It is an honor to have these three

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men with us for Mount Rushmore's Independence Day and to celebrate their contributions to America's fight for universal freedom." A special feature of the ceremony will be the flags that the three men will receive. Three American flags will be inside the B-1 Bomber that will perform the 7:00 pm flyover over the memorial and will be given to the code talkers after the event.

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