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Native Code Talkers To Be Honored With Congressional Gold Medals

Washington, DC – Native American Code Talkers played a significant role in Allied victories during the major campaigns of World War I and World War II. While Navajo Code Talkers have been acknowledged and awarded Congressional Gold Medals for their service, what is not known widely is the extensive participation for these purposes by Native Code Talkers from dozens of tribes.

Today these courageous warriors will be honored with presentation of Congressional Medals for their valor and service to this nation. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) joins the nation in honoring these daring and humble warriors who played a critical role in preserving and protecting this country, our freedoms, and our way of life.

Code Talkers from various tribal nations served as highly classified specialists on dangerous battlegrounds. These soldiers were so valuable to the war effort that their commanding officers were ordered to kill the Code Talkers in the event of imminent or actual capture. The Code Talkers were aware of this added risk to their lives and continued to face that threat every day in action.

The Congressional Gold Medal is awarded as the “highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions” made by an individual or institution. Other recipients include: George Washington, Thomas Edison, Jonas E. Salk, Rosa Parks, and Navajo Code Talkers. Thirty-three tribes will be recognized in today’s ceremony and the families of deceased Code Talkers will be honored with silver medals.

NCAI is extremely proud to have contributed to the effort to recognize these distinguished men and wish to express appreciation to tribal leaders, tribal community veterans, and the congressional sponsors with whom we have worked for many years to accomplish this long overdue recognition for these war heroes.