



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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President Shelly negotiates return of Code Talker uniform



Cpl. Henry Bahe, Jr. and Pfc George H. Kirk transmitting a radio message from Bougainville in Dec. 1943. (Courtesy photo)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—The uniform of a Navajo hero is coming home.

After more than 15 years of limbo, the uniform of George H. Kirk, Sr. will be returning home and will be unveiled on August 14, during a ceremony at the Navajo Nation Museum in honor of Navajo Code Talkers Day.

Kirk was a Navajo Code Talker. Born on May 25, 1917, he passed on Oct. 28, 1999. He served in the 3rd Marine Division and saw combat in Bougainville, Enewetak Atoll, Guadalcanal, Guam, Iwo Jima, Johnston Islands, Mariana Islands, Marshall Islands, New Guinea, and Solomon Islands.

Kirk's Navajo Code Talker uniform and associated items were lost since 1999, until they appeared on the open market for auction in late Jan. 2014. The uniform was previously in a storage unit that went up for auction after he passed and no longer made payments.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly immediately contacted Craig Gottlieb, a military historian that owned the online auction house that was prepared to sell the uniform. In his letter to Gottlieb, President Shelly stated the importance of its return to the Nation.

"We respectfully asked for the return of the uniform to the Navajo Nation and agreed that it be an exhibit at the Navajo Nation Museum for display to our future generations," President Shelly said. "Thankfully, Mr. Gottlieb was very gracious and cooperative in the matter.

"Our Navajo Code Talkers not only put their lives on the line but they also preserved and showcased the strength of Dine' bizaad, the Navajo language," he added.

Craig Gottlieb Military Antiques, located in Solana Beach, Calif. was the business that had the uniform ready for auction. Major Gottlieb served in the U.S. Marine Corps and is a subject matter expert for History Channel's television show, Pawn Stars.

"It's been a long journey to get where we are and I'm excited," Gottlieb said. "As a Marine officer who grew up with words like 'ink stick' and 'go faster,' making this donation has special meaning for me."

President Shelly will be traveling to Reno, Nev. on Aug. 13 to pickup Gottlieb and the uniform for its return to the Navajo Nation.

The unveiling will begin on Aug. 14, at 8 a.m. at the Navajo Nation Museum, followed by the parade from the museum to Veterans Memorial Park at 9 a.m.

Information: 928-871-6675

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