

An Honor Long Overdue: The 2013 Congressional Gold and Silver Medal Ceremonies in Honor of Native American Code Talkers

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The 2000 Honoring the Navajo Code Talkers Act (Public Law 106-554) provided Congressional gold and silver medals to the Navajo Code Talkers. The 2008 Code Talker Recognition Act that followed (Public Law 110-420) gave Congressional recognition to *all* Native Americans who served as Native language communicators, or code talkers, in the United States Armed Forces during World Wars I and II. This article documents and discusses the 2013 Congressional Gold and Silver Medal ceremonies on November 20, 2013, in which Congressional Silver medals were presented to 212 individuals and Gold medals presented to thirty-three tribes. Native American veterans have received many notable individual military awards and have been awarded by states, tribal organizations, and other countries. Nonetheless, these Congressional Medals represent landmark events in the Native American community as concrete steps in recent federal efforts to recognize Native contributions in the United States that have been long overlooked due to issues of race. Although most of these men are now deceased, the event holds great importance for their families and tribal communities.

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