



**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE!**

GTB Statement to Honor the Navajo Code Talkers

To the Editor:

On behalf of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, I wish to express gratitude to the Navajo Nation's Code Talkers for their service in World War II, and for their recent poise and grace in the face of the President's cultural insensitivity.

In front of a backdrop portrait of Andrew Jackson—an Indian antagonist whose forced removal of Indian Tribes, commonly known as the Trail of Tears,—President Trump attempted to betray the Code Talkers by invoking a political slur against Senator Elizabeth Warren, who like many Americans, claims tribal descendency. America's Indian heritage should be a source of pride for all Americans.

The Navajo Code Talkers signify America's constructive historical experience: Their Navajo/Diné language served as an unbreakable military code without which America would not have won World War II. Rather than praising the Code Talkers for the achievement, Trump debased himself during the ceremony by using an unnecessary slur in the presence of these Elder Navajo War Heroes.

Although the President obscured the message, the point of the ceremony has not been lost: It is to honor the Navajo Code Talkers as unique to America, and to recognize that they represent the pain and promise of American history. As Americans, we should embrace our shared history. For bearing this message, the Grand Traverse Band thanks the Navajo Code Talkers.

Sincerely,

Thurlow "Sam" McClellan
Tribal Chairman

