

Abbreviated Biography, Peter MacDonald, Sr.:

Navajo Code Talker and Former Leader of the Navajo Nation

At the age of 15, Peter MacDonald, a Navajo from Teecnospos, AZ, enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. He went through boot camp at U.S. Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD), San Diego, CA. Following regular combat and communication training at USMCB in Camp Pendleton, CA, MacDonald, along with other Navajo Marines, was secluded from other Marines for top secret Navajo Code School. During the final phase of World War II (1944-46) MacDonald served in South Pacific as Navajo Code Talker and North China with the Sixth Marine Division.

He was honorably discharged with a rank of Corporal. He went back to his home community of Teecnospos, Arizona. After graduation from High School and Junior College in Muskogee, Oklahoma, MacDonald went on to University of Oklahoma and graduated with an Electrical Engineering degree (BSEE). He pursued graduate studies at UCLA while working as a Project Engineer on the Polaris Missile project for (Howard) Hughes Aircraft Company. MacDonald served as Project Manager for the manufacture of the Polaris Missile Guidance System and was a member of the elite Hughes Technical Staff (MTS).

MacDonald has a long list of entrepreneurial endeavors attached to his name. Prominent among his work experience is his service as Chairman of the Navajo Nation from 1971 to 1983 and 1987-91. MacDonald was re-elected to the Office of the Chairman four times—unprecedented in Navajo history. MacDonald is co-founder of the Council of Energy Resource Tribes (CERT), the National Tribal Chairman Association, the American Indian National Bank and the Native American Prep School. MacDonald also worked as Sales and Marketing Director for Cataract Engineering Company, providing engineering service for start-ups of Nuclear Power Plants and overhaul of coal-fired power plants.

Among his many honors are: Recipient of Congressional Silver Medal for heroic service to the nation as a USMC Navajo Code Talker; University of Oklahoma Engineering Hall of Fame and Special Commendation by U.S. President Richard M. Nixon for “exceptional services to others”. Chairman MacDonald also served as a civilian member of USMC Education and Training Board of Directors appointed by the Secretary of Navy. In addition, MacDonald was featured in TIME magazine as one of 200 “Rising Leaders of America” in 1974. He received Honorary Doctorate degrees from the University of Southern Utah in Cedar City and the College of Ganado (AZ). In 1978 he also received the Distinguished Service Citation from the University of Oklahoma--the institution's highest honor where he also served on the University of Oklahoma Board of Visitors and Bacone College Board of Regents.

MacDonald served on several national task forces and commissions (appointments by Presidents of the United States and Governors of Arizona and New Mexico). He now lectures at schools, colleges and universities, clubs, political organizations, government agencies and businesses. He is married--has five children and nine grandchildren. Currently he lives with his wife, Wanda, on the Navajo reservation at Tuba City, AZ. MacDonald is presently President of the Navajo Code Talkers Association--raising funds to build National Navajo Code Talkers Museum and Veteran Center to honor Heroes of WWII; whose unique legacy, from 1942 thru 1945, helped win the war; transmitting top secret messages in every major battle in the Pacific theatre. Navajo Code was the only military code, in modern history, never broken by an enemy.