

Sawmill Veterans' Organization

Commander Lenora Dez Vice Commander Tanya Dooline
Secretary Christine Jesus-Begay
Sawmill Chapter
Sawmill, AZ



Meeting Minutes

Thursday April 09, 2026, 4 pm

- I. **Meeting Called to Order:** at 4:18 pm by Commander Lenora Dez
- II. **Invocation:** Anslem Damon (new member)
- III. **Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence:** All
- IV. **Review and Adopt Agenda:** Motioned by Floyvin Yazzie 2nd by David Yazzie
Vote: 9-0-1
 - a. Add Guests to A. vii after Secretary's report.
- V. **Welcome and Opening Remarks:** CO Dez and COV Dooline
- VI. **Officers Reports:**
 - i. Commander- NNVA Financial Report and Funding Updates (Zoom meeting with Fallyn Begay, VSO)
 1. - Fund Expenditure: All funds (\$73,000, primarily in stipends) must be expended by August 1, 2026. (3 months)
 2. - Stipends: There will be no stipends in August or September for all CVOs. Sawmill Stipends= \$ 1875.00 as of today April 09, 2026.
 3. - CVO Funding: All CVO funding must be expended by June 1, 2026. Per Fallyn, unused funds will be reallocated to hardship and energy assistance. Sawmill has no funds in hardship, energy or home improvement at this time.
 4. - Proposals for 3rd Quarter: Fallyn suggested holding two meetings in July, moving all stipends to hardship and energy, or forfeiting the remaining funds.
 5. - Home Improvement Requirements: For veterans in rental apartments, the lease agreement must explicitly state that maintenance can be performed by the lessor (the veteran). Applications lacking this documentation will be denied.
 6. - Sawmill CVO Status: There are currently 58 active and 6 inactive participants (64 total), pending up-to-date documentation with NNVA.
 7. - Registration Drive: NNVA has requested a Registration Drive for the second week of May at Sawmill Chapter. Sawmill suggests May 07, 2026, or at the next Sawmill Veterans meeting which will be on May 14, 2026 at 4 pm.
 - ii. Ft. Defiance Agency Meeting Highlights

Sawmill Veterans' Organization

Commander Lenora Dez

Vice Commander Tanya Dooline

Secretary Christine Jesus-Begay

Sawmill Chapter

Sawmill, AZ

1. - Commander Sandoval (Twin Lakes): Discussed "Opinionated Law" regarding the legalization of Peyote for ceremonial use. This topic will be part of the Council's Summer Session. A "Gathering of Tribes" is scheduled for July 7, 2026, at the UNM Gallup campus featuring guest speaker Greg Smith.
2. - Dr. Andy Nez: A reminder that the deadline for the Veteran Agency Plan of Operations is May 6, 2026.
3. - Commander Kyle (Dilkon): The Code of Conduct is currently under legal review. Proposed additions include policies on endangering others, religious beliefs, and a Navajo translation. Note that 3rd Quarter Assistance does not apply to the Fort Defiance Agency unless you are a newly registered member.

iii. Budget and Legislation

- a. - Budget: \$73,000 for Fort Defiance Agency (mostly stipends); \$301 million projected for the 2027 Veterans Trust Fund.
- b. - Legislation: Key focus areas include the VTF increase, opposing the US Senate's proposed disability rating reduction, and advocating for a 2-year housing warranty extension for Veterans homes on the NN. Lots of money is still left in housing. (1%)
- c. - Elections: The Tribal Election is scheduled for July 2, 2026, same as state and federal.
- d. Sawmill Chapter 16 Funds-
 1. Office Supplies= \$500.00
 2. Operating Supplies= \$500.00
 3. Food (Chapter)= \$1306.28
 4. Catering= \$1000.00
 5. Gifts and Awards= \$3,310.48

iv. Resolutions Passed- FDVAO

- a. - Color Guard and Honor Guard funds increase (19/0/1)
 - b. - Chapter 16 Expenditure of funds "Recognition" (15/0/1)
 - c. - 2-year Housing Warranty Extension (15/0/1)
 - d. - Housing Transparency (15/0/1)
 - e. - Opposing the Disability rating reduction (15/0/1)
- v. Donations- NAIIV donated items on April 07, 2026, from Cecelia Sandoval. Items are located inside Veterans Building.

Sawmill Veterans' Organization

Commander Lenora Dez

Vice Commander Tanya Dooline

Secretary Christine Jesus-Begay

Sawmill Chapter

Sawmill, AZ

- a. Will need to secure the building better because there was an item stolen, 1 glass display case is missing. There should be 2. I did tell Ronald Deschinny back in February 2026.
- vi. Vice- Commander- updates and announcements
 - a. Talking Circle April 16, 2026, 10am – 12pm. NNVA Conference room Window Rock, AZ.
 - b. Navajo Nation Veterans Loan Program
 - c. NNVA Veterans Mental Health and Counseling Survey
 - d. 2027 Registration Forms
 - e. Veterans Building- requesting shelves, storage and cleaning supplies. Suggest taking out tub and toilet to use for storage room.
 - f. Purchase Order for sub sandwiches, chips and tea from T&R Market for \$80.92.
- vii. Secretary- No reports
- viii. Guests-
 - a. Dr. Andy Nez-
 - 1. Plan of Operations for FDVAO deadline is May 06, 2026
 - 2. Emergency Non declaration fund for Sawmill \$48K
 - 3. Food Tax money can be spent on community activities, i.e. workshops, training, cleaning up such as earth day etc. \$62K
 - 4. Having issues with NNVA updates from Director Baldwin. We have not received any yet.
 - 5. Opposing Disability Rating Reduction, Federal VA. They did back out of the bill, but they are thinking of ways to move forward in taking away money from Veterans.
 - 6. Purple Heart Community
 - 7. \$38 Million in Veteran Housing, suggest 3% for hardship etc. and 1% for housing. There is a lot of money left.
 - 8. Homesite lease is holding up people and need to work better with them. Dr, Nez said he has a meeting with them on Tuesday April 14, 2026. Will provide updates.
 - 9. Submit comments to Navajo-nsn.gov for legislation 0071-26.
 - b. Wilburt Smith- Apache County Grader Operator. Commander from Cornfields, Az and works for the Apache County Roads

Sawmill Veterans' Organization

Commander Lenora Dez

Vice Commander Tanya Dooline

Secretary Christine Jesus-Begay

Sawmill Chapter

Sawmill, AZ

Department from Ganado, AZ. Was grading roads in the Sawmill area for the past week and wanted us to see the grader dedicated to NN Veterans. We were allowed to take pictures.

VII. Open for discussion:

- i. Code of Conduct: NN Veterans, Surviving Spouses, and Gold Star Parents. Code of Conduct and prepare any opinions or suggestions to be forwarded to Klye.
 - a. Penalties- People do stuff and take advantage and still get away with it.
 - b. Is at the NN Lawyers office right now for legal advice. This is only a draft right now and we are seeking suggestions and comments for the code of conduct.
 1. Add religious beliefs, penalties and nondiscrimination clauses.
 2. Still open for opinions.

VIII. Announcements:

- a. - April 19, 10:30 AM: Fort Defiance Chapter House - Celebration of Fort Defiance CVO becoming a Purple Heart Community.
- b. - April 26, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM: Coyote Canyon Chapter House - Chili Cookoff.
- c. Alroy Billiman- Sweat Lodge for Veterans and people who struggle with substance abuse. Buell Park, AZ Call for information.

IX. Closing Remarks and Next Meeting Date:

- X. Next Sawmill Veterans Meeting: May 14, 2026, at 4pm.

XI. Ft. Defiance Agency Veterans' Meetings:

- XII. July 10, 2026, 9 AM Tohatchi Chapter House

- XIII. October 02, 2026, 9 AM Houck Chapter House

- XIV. **Motion for Adjournment** by Alroy Billiman 2nd by Juantina Yazzie

- i. Vote: 11-0-1