

Sawmill Veterans' Organization

Commander Lenora Dez Vice Commander Tanya Dooline
Secretary Christine Jesus-Begay

Sawmill Chapter
Sawmill, AZ

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday October 1, 2025 (1300 hours)



- I. Meeting Called to Order by Commander Lenora Dez at 1:15 pm
- II. Invocation by: John Tsosie
- III. Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence
- IV. Review and Adopt Agenda: Motion to approve Agenda by Christine Jesus-Begay, 2nd by Selena Peshlakai with a vote of 14-0-1.
- V. Welcome and Opening Remarks:
 - A. Review of meeting objectives- Forms and Budgets
 - a. NNVA For 105, W9 and Registration Forms FY2026, Veterans, Spouses, Gold Star Parent and Non-Veteran Secretary's. FY2026 NNVA Trust Fund Budget Shell \$35,855.00 and Chapter 16 Veterans Fund is \$5,702.45. Budgets are broken down in last meeting minutes dated September 24, 2025.
 - b. Introducing guests-
 - i. One Day at a Time- Roqueeta Jones introduced herself by clan and spoke about what she does for the program, what she does when out in the field helping people with addiction. Works with Larry Foster and he is helping by extension to helping families with addiction. Mentioned the Board of Directors which Alroy Billman is the Vice President. Have received \$1 million in grants to help with recovery service Monday thru Friday AA programs, candle lighting on Fridays, male and female sweat lodges. Partnerships with Native American? program to help people with planting gardens and give out supplies to people that come by. Work with Cholla Behavioral Health and can assist you in getting treatment. NARBAH help with a load of wood, tarps and running sweat lodge for men and women. DAATC is Chinle recovery center and goals are to have recovery centers in Sawmill and Ft. Defiance.
 1. Lenora Dez mentioned that a lot of families in the area do need that type of help.
 - ii. Dr. Andy Nez, NN- \$3 Million gives to 5 agency Veterans NNVA office and each Agency received \$600,00.00 each. Some Veterans were not counted so update with your CVO's. \$5000 will be added to Chapter 16 Veterans' fund and can be used for, catering, gifts, food, supplies, paper, laptop and printers. Food boxes and supplies were added for this year. All Chapter 16 funds are to be used for Veterans only and not for Chapter use. There will be new legislation he will be sponsoring including the increase for Veterans' Trust Fund.

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VI. Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve minutes for September 24, 2025

Motion by: Selena Peshlakai 2nd by: Elvina Carl with a vote of 16-0-1

VII. Officers Reports:

A. Commander:

- a. Will be attending the Ft. defiance Agency Veterans meeting on October 03, 2025, in Kinlichee, AZ and will have more information.
- b. Navajo D.O.T- transportation training before anything could be started, know who owns the road (BIA, Tribal-Navajo DOT, county, state, US, or other) to be repaired or improved. Will need to go to the Chapter House and ask about road repair and have your request in by December. 2 ways to submit a work order for repairs on roads maintenance 1. Submitting a work order form and chapter house resolution to be submitted by Dec of this year, for more information please visit website: navajodot.org.
- c. Day at a time Club- A recovery center focused on peer-to-peer AA meetings, they are a Non-tribal and Non-profit organization located in Fort Defiance Az. Other services they provide on location are sweat lodge for male (Thursdays at 5pm) and female (Wednesdays at 6pm), recovery through gardening, a virtual (telehealth) substance abuse recovery service through Cholla Behavioral Health.
- d. Presentation from IHS waterline project from Farmington area. Their focus is on safe water, wastewater, and solid waste systems. There are applications provided to each chapter for applying for water connections and home site lease is NOT required through them. Open dump areas should be reported with 1/2 acres or less and will be cleaned for free. The dump sites in their scope that were brought up during the meeting were the ones seen on the back road from Sawmill to Navajo. For more information contact LT. Alice Franco (Health Analyst) at Alice.franco@ihs.gov. They are also building a well in Sawmill.
- e. A meeting will be held at a residence in Whiteclay hosted by Larry Foster on October 20th at 0900. for more information, please attend a chapter meeting.
- f. Will invite Navajo Nation Land Department to our Veterans meeting to help answer questions about home site lease etc.
- g. Receipt for Ink, paper and folders in the amount of \$113.65 for reimbursement under Supplies from Chapter 15 Funds at Sawmill Chapter.

B. Vice Commander: Veterans Day 2025, Future events, tee shirts and caps.

- a. VC-Dooline explained the Request forms and Budgets for Navajo Nation Trust Fund and the Sawmill Chapter 16 funds. Make sure you submit your request forms with W9 Form and 2026 Registration forms in person at the Fort Defiance Agency Navajo Nation Veterans Administration in Window Rock, AZ. The

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estimated times to update files at NNVA is June of every year so that they will be counted as "participants" for the next fiscal year.

- b. Veterans Day 2026 Dinner proposed date is Sunday November 09, 2025. If anyone wants to volunteer to help plan the dinner it would be appreciated. Maybe we can invite the community and our families, so it won't be just us. We need to plan decorations and who to invite, who will our MC be? Etc.
- c. I do have tee shirts and caps here for those who have not received them yet. We also do not have any more visors caps. We can order more if you want.
- d. 2 Display cases- need suggestions as to what we can put in there. I Suggested that we can put in name tags, pictures, patches etc. in the display cases for our community to look and see who have served. I would also like one for the plaque with our Veterans' names

C. Secretary:

- a. Vote in as Sawmill Veterans' Organization Secretary- Christine Jesus-Begay

Motioned by: Tomison Damon 2nd by: Juantina Yazzie Vote is 15-0-1

VIII. Open Floor / Member Feedback

- A. Elvina Carl- Uranium Exposure, spoke about how her niece Maggie Billiman has been advocating and speaking about uranium exposure on the Navajo Nation. The atomic bomb testing in NM has affected a lot of our people who live here on the NN and have died from cancer because it was in our drinking water, and many people have suffered health problems and received no health care. Please go to the hospital and get tested.
- B. Tom Damon- will there be any wood available for Veterans at the Chapter House?
 - a. Lenora (Co) mentioned that Leupp, AZ will have free wood distribution on October 11, 2025. You will need to bring your DD214 and ID to get wood. You also need to bring someone to load your own vehicle. Loren Anthony is the guy heading the free wood for Veterans and Elders.
- C. Selena Peshlakai- Where can you get, order or buy dog tags for Veterans?
 - a. Tanya (V-Co) will check into and will let you know by next meeting.
- D. John Tsosie- Are Zoom meetings possible for veterans who cannot attend meetings? And if we can start at our next meeting?
 - a. Tanya- spoke with Ronald Deschinny, Chapter Coordinator, and they can set up for us when needed.
- E. Leona Laughing- Would like to express her gratitude and thanks to the Officers and Veterans who put work and effort into the meetings, thanks to Mary and Franklin Francisco for bringing the food, it was delicious. She has a daughter who served in the USAF, and she will pass the information on to her and that she registers.
- F. John Tsosie- Are we able to use some of the Chapter 16 Funds to renovate the Native American Church Hogan in Sawmill, AZ?
 - a. NNC Dr. Andy Nez will check into because the question has never been brought up.

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IX. Action Items and Assignments

A. Announcements

- a. Gatherings of Native Americans (GONA) at Fort Defiance Chapter on 22nd and 23rd of October. Also, gourd dancing during one of those days. more to follow once flyers are available. Please see Sawmill Veterans Facebook page once it is shared and bulletin board. Also, please reach out to other Veterans for support in our organization and chapter meetings. Get involved.
- b. Walk/Run on Veterans' Day in Fort Defiance.
- c. Veterans Day Parade in Gallup, NM
- d. Trail Ride going on right now from Oak Springs, AZ to Shiprock, NM for the Yei Bi Cheii ceremony. Some of the riders are Veterans and they accept donations of hay, water or what you can for their ride.
- e. Warrior Firebase in Wide Ruins, AZ October 9-12, 2025, with four days of Veteran resources, Native healing, fun run/ruck/walk. Gourd Society and South Drums and closing with church services on Sunday.
- f. Fort Defiance Veterans Agency Meeting October 03, 2025, in Kinlichee, AZ @ 0900 Chapter House.

X. Closing Remarks and Next Meeting Date

- A. Sawmill Veterans Meetings Every Second Thursday of every month.
- B. Next Sawmill Veteran Meeting November 13, 2025, at 1 pm Chapter House.

Motioned to adjourn by Elvina Carl 2nd by: Juantina Yazzie with a vote of 15-0-1 at 2:51 pm.