

## Navajo Nation Insulin Dependent Diabetic Veterans

Here's an article from Bill Ward, Vietnam Veteran, President, Community Health Advocate and Motivational Speaker, Men's Cancer & Health Issues

A partnership between Corporate and Non-Profit for the benefit of insulin dependent diabetic Veterans on Navajo Nation is a notable example for others to follow. The partnership objective is to prolong the life of diabetic Veterans who do not have electricity in their home. This is done by providing a solar unit with a refrigerator/freezer unit to keep the Veteran's insulin cool during hot summers and allow for food storage in the freezer and dual-purpose unit at no cost to the Veteran on behalf of USAA and [Veterans Medical Leadership Council](#) (VMLC) & VMLC Charities.

VMLC selected their council member Bill Ward, who was raised on the White Mountain Apache Indian Reservation just south of the Navajo Nation, to be the lead for the project. He played high school sports against schools on the Navajo Nation and was familiar with Navajo Nation.

Bill traveled to Tuba City, met with the Western Agency Chapter Commanders, and shared the concept of wanting to provide support for diabetic Veterans at no cost. He asked the chapter commanders to identify Veterans in their respective chapter and provide the names and locations of the individuals that were interested in our project. The Western Agency Chapter Commander submitted 11 names and their contact information and location, and each commander agreed to meet Bill and guide him to the locations of the Veterans that agreed to participate in the program. Chinle provided two Veterans and a community facility equipped with the solar unit which would allow the community to charge cell phones. There was a total of fourteen units contracted for installation.



*Harry Clauschee, left, Vietnam War Veteran and recipient of Solar unit and refrigerator/freezer unit from VMLC/USAA. Bill Ward, right, Vietnam War Veteran-VMLC Council Member and Solar project Leader for Navajo Nation Diabetic Veterans.*

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VMLC signed a contract with a solar company NUE (New Use Energy) to provide a complete package of solar system, Refrigerator/Freezer unit completely installed and operational at the Veteran's homes. These Veterans lived in areas a long way from the main highway, and it was somewhat of a surprise for the solar company to see how vast the Navajo Nation is and how isolated the Veterans are from services.

Bill accompanied the contractor to every location as he had contacted them to notify them that the solar team was coming to install the system. He was the primary contact with all the veterans and Navajo Nation on a Government-to-Government basis to secure permission to work on Navajo Nation, a Sovereign Nation.

The project started in Chinle and moved to the Western Agency in distinct locations, Leupp, Cameron, Kayenta, Tuba City, AZ, Navajo Mountain, UT and Dennehotsoh, AZ. As of January 24th, there are nine installed units with the final five being installed before the end of January.

We are grateful for the generosity of USAA supporting our Veteran brothers and sisters living in conditions that parallel conditions we saw while fighting in Vietnam.



*Harry Clauschee, Vietnam Veteran from Chinle sitting in front of his Hogan prior to the installation of his solar refrigerator/freezer at no cost to him.*