



ROY O. HAWTHORNE, a Navajo code talker during World War II, is accompanied by Marines in Window Rock, Ariz., in 2013. Photographer Kenji Kawano has documented the code talkers for half a century.

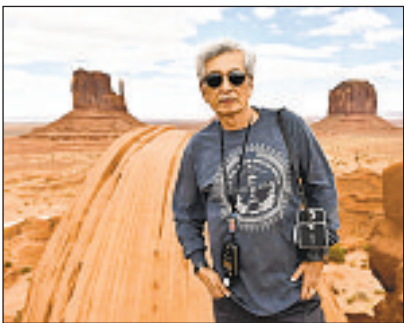
COLUMN ONE

Legacy of the code talkers lives on through his lens

Photographer has chronicled Navajo Marines — America’s secret weapon in WWII — for what became his life’s work

By David Kelly
REPORTING FROM WINDOW ROCK, ARIZ.

Kenji Kawano was hitchhiking on the Navajo Nation when Carl Gorman pulled over to give him a lift. During the drive, Kawano, then 23, explained that he’d arrived in the U.S. two years earlier with plans to travel the country taking pictures, hoping to build a portfolio that could land him a gig as a professional photographer. “Where you from?” Gorman asked. “Japan,” Kawano replied. Then Gorman asked if Kawano had ever heard of the Navajo code talkers.



KAWANO, shown in Monument Valley, learned of the code talkers while hitchhiking on Navajo land.

During World War II, a group of Navajo Marines had created a secret code based on their language to transmit telephone and radio messages in the Pacific. Japanese cryptographers had been breaking U.S. military codes — seemingly at will — and Navajo, a complex, little-known, tonal language, turned out to be a perfect solution to a dire problem. The code was never broken, and on Iwo Jima alone, the code talkers, frequently referred to as America’s secret weapon during the war, sent more than 800 error-free messages in the fierce battle for the island. Before [See **Photographer**, A16]

Could the next LAPD chief be female?

The search to replace Michel Moore shows that few women have the rank to contend for the top job.

BY LIBOR JANY

A ceremony for promotions last July at Los Angeles Police Department headquarters included a rare sight: a female commander. Three of them, in fact. The LAPD didn’t elevate a woman to commander until 1997; it took 13 more years for a woman of color to reach the rank. Now, Chief Michel Moore’s Jan. 12 announcement that he will step down in late February has raised the question of whether the LAPD’s next leader will, for the first time, be a woman. Women make up nearly 20% of the department and are similarly reflected in middle management, working as sergeants and lieutenants. A woman runs the elite Major Crimes Division, and two hold positions of influence in the counterterrorism and transit services bureaus. The Office of Constitutional Policing and Policy is overseen by a civilian who is a woman. But the unfolding search for Moore’s replacement has [See **LAPD**, A8]

In-N-Out closure is leaving a bad taste

Demise of chain’s only restaurant in Oakland due to rising crime has citizens divided.

BY KAREN GARCIA

The demise of Oakland’s only In-N-Out restaurant due to increasing crime could be the last straw for community members — and possibly a blessing in disguise for local leaders who’ve been pleading for help. Last week, In-N-Out announced that the burger joint near Hegenberger Road, a main route to and from the Oakland International Airport, would close in March. “Despite taking repeated steps to create safer conditions, our customers and associates are regularly victimized by car break-ins, property damage, theft and armed robberies,” Denny Warnick, chief operating officer for the company, said in a statement. Some Oakland residents believe the crime problem persists at least in part because of Mayor Sheng Thao. The group Oakland United to Recall Sheng Thao, led by a former Alameda [See **In-N-Out**, A7]

In Israel, Gaza’s human toll is unseen

Media ignore the growing civilian deaths that fuel outrage elsewhere

By KATE LINTHICUM

TEL AVIV — As dawn breaks over the Mediterranean, surfers paddle out, scanning the pink horizon for waves. Forty miles south, war is raging in Gaza, with tens of thousands killed and injured and a third of the enclave crushed to rubble. But here in Tel Aviv, the conflict feels deceptively distant. The sky is cloudless and devoid of warplanes. People commute to work and school. They walk their dogs. Crowd bars. Relax at yoga. Newspapers and television channels feature near-constant coverage of the surprise Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel — the 1,200 people who were killed that day, the scores of hostages who were dragged to Gaza and the army of reservists who have [See **Israel**, A4]



PALESTINIANS carry a girl pulled from the rubble of a building destroyed in an airstrike. After the Oct. 7 attacks, many Israelis have scant empathy for Gazans.

GOP turns against border bill

House speaker says bipartisan measure tying enforcement to Ukraine aid is likely doomed. **NATION**, A6

Mystery around bodies in desert

With few details being made public, a motive for the killing of six people remains unclear. **CALIFORNIA**, B1

Lithium rebirth at Salton Sea

Seen as a win for clean energy, a geothermal project breaks ground in the Imperial Valley. **BUSINESS**, A11

Weather
Sunny and warm.
L.A. Basin: 80/54. **B10**

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