



Isnala Najin hoksila

Airman First Class

Daris Lewis Benally

Sunrise ~ January 11th 2002

Sunset ~ April 9th 2026

Wake Services

*Akicita Mato Tribal Gym, Fort Thompson, SD
Wednesday, April 14, 2026*

Funeral Service

*Akicita Mato Tribal Gym, Fort Thompson, SD
Thursday, April 14, 2026*

Traditional Prayers & Funeral Services by

Kirk Foolbull

Casketbearers

*Ellsworth Air Force Base
341st Missile Wing Maintenance Squadron, Malmstrom Air Force Base*

Military Rites by

Ellsworth Air Force Base Honor Guard

Honorary Bearers

All His Loved Ones

Arrangements By: *Hickey Funeral Home, Chamberlain, SD*

In Loving Memory



Isnala Najin hoksila

Airman First Class

Daris L. Benally

2002 ~ 2026

It is with unimaginable sorrow that we share the passing of our beloved son, brother, grandson, and friend, Daris Lewis Benally (Isnala Najin hoksila), who began his journey home on April 9th, 2026, at the age of 24, after being killed in a motorcycle accident while on active duty in the United States Air Force.

Daris was born on January 11, 2002, in Pierre, SD, to Arvella Pomani and Harries Benally.

The first chapters of his life began as a struggle, as he was raised by a single mother of three. But from that start, he learned how to love unconditionally, how to be hardworking, and that you can still have riches even when you have nothing.

Daris lived in Pierre, South Dakota; Chamberlain, South Dakota; Bismarck, North Dakota; Mandan, North Dakota; and Box Elder, South Dakota, before later moving to Rapid City, South Dakota, and entering the Air Force. He was homeschooled through middle and high school, and he only went after his GED so he could enter the Air Force.

He stepped into the powwow circle around 7 years old. Later on in life when he moved to Rapid City, SD he became part of a dance group Wamblee Ska, which helped him fine tune his dancing skills. At first, he wanted to be a Grass dancer, but as time passed, he found that Northern Traditional was what made his spirit truly soar. That became who he was mind, body, and soul.

He learned beadwork, quillwork, how to make regalia, and really excelling in bustle work, but his quillwork- he learned from his great grandma Clevia and her kids, was breathtaking. Once he learned the stories and history behind his work from many of his teachers- Jerome kills Small, Joseph Marshall III, Kevin Locke, and Steve Tamayo, he started teaching others. By the time he was 14 years old, he was teaching in college classrooms, universities, and Native camps, sharing what he knew to all who wanted to learn.

He earned many feathers throughout his short life. After his hanbleceya and becoming a man, he received two names to replace the one given to him by his grandma Mary Jane Medicine Crow. He was also an eagle bone whistle carrier, something he held with honor and responsibility which guided his everyday walk of life.

Another big chapter of his life came when his dad came back into his life. That's when his love for carpentry really grew. He worked alongside his dad, brothers, and sister doing many home renovations, apartment maintenance, and flipping trailer houses. He went to Thunder Valley Trade School with his brother Carlos and graduated top of his class in 2021. They both went to Colorado to further their training in solar paneling.

A concrete company took a random chance on him. He became one of the hardest workers they had, and they became like family to him. He always found his way back to them every summer and really looked up to the owner like another father figure.

Other than that you could always find him every weekend at a random powwow all over Indian country-USA. His favorite areas were CO, WY, ND, and SD.

He started his journey to becoming an Airman on November 28th, 2023 at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. He graduated on January 18th, 2024 with honors. He then attended the missile and space system maintenance apprentice course at Vandenberg Space Force Base, California from January 19th 2024, to April 14th 2024. He arrived at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana on April 15th, 2024 where he first served as a

missile maintenance technician from April 15th 2024, to May 12th 2024, and then as a missile handling technician from May 13th 2024 until his passing.

Daris served honorably as an Airman First Class Daris L. Benally and will be awarded the Air and Space Achievement Medal for his meritorious service. He died while on active duty, in the line of duty.

He served as a missile maintenance technician and then as a missile handling technician. Daris served honorably as an Airman First Class and will be awarded the Air and Space Achievement Medal for his meritorious service.

“There are no words that can fill the void left by this loss. Beyond the uniform, Daris was a friend, a teammate, and a loved one,” Col. Luke Stover 341st Maintenance Group Commander, and “The loss of Daris Benally weighs heavily on many of us,” Col. Daniel Voorhies, 341st Missile Wing commander, stated in a press release from Malmstrom Air Force Base.

Daris had a big heart. One story that shows who he was—when he was around 10 years old, at a powwow, he saw a man who was hurt, covered in dried blood, and struggling. That man never asked him for anything, but something told my son to go to him. He gave him water and then gave him the shirt right off his back, something we couldn't even afford at the time. That's just who he was.

He was a provider, a protector, and always took care of his family. He gave what he had, even when it wasn't much.

He had wisdom beyond his years. Daris had two loves in life—riding his motorcycle and dancing Men's Northern Traditional, besides those he loved his family. He spent many years in the powwow circle and was known all over for his dancing and “jamming out.”

Beyond his military service, Daris was a champion traditional dancer and a proud Dakota man who carried his culture with strength and pride. He shared his knowledge with others, teaching and guiding both youth and adults, and was known for representing and uplifting powwow culture. He also helped with reconciliation efforts in Rapid City alongside his brother, sister, and their uncle, Whitney Rencountre, leading them. He really enjoyed representing his culture.

He loved riding his bike. That's where he felt free. That's where he found peace.

Daris is survived by his heartbroken parents, Arvella Pomani and Harries Benally, his siblings/best friends, Carlos Benally, Sophia Benally-Spotted Tail, and Antonio Peltier-Benally, his in-laws, Cayla Rodriguez-Benally and Mni Was'te Spotted Tail, his beloved niece and nephews, Valentina Rodriguez-Carvalho, Mato & Koda Spotted Tail, and Angelo Peltier, his hunka grandmother, Melaine Stoneman, and a large extended family who adored him.

Those that proceeded him death were/are his grandma Helen Pomani and grandpa Avery Thompson, his hunka grandpa/teacher Chester Stoneman Sr., Delbert Pomani, Jr., Lorenzo Duane Shields, Silas BigLeftHand, Seryl Leroy Pomani Jr., Linda Pomani, Mary Jane Medicine Crow, his great grandparents Clevia Rose Pomani and Seryl Leroy Pomani Sr., his uncle Christopher Pomani, his cousin Jvan Shields, and many more.

Daris, you will forever remain in our hearts. We wish you a beautiful journey on the Milky Way, a plentiful hunt in the happy hunting grounds, and may you watch over us.

Tokša ake my son. We will love you endlessly.