Real *Native* American Heroes

Code Talkers

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Code Talkers

The Code Talkers used their own languages to help the US. Some were soldiers in the Army. Some were Marines. Each of them was a real Native American hero. The story of the Code Talkers begins with WWI.

WWI
(1914-1918)

WWI or World War I is also known as the Great War. This war took place in Europe. It began with an assassination of royalty. But there were already many problems. These problems were the real cause of the war.

The French and the Germans were very unhappy. They felt that their countries should have more land. Fighting over land is often the cause of wars. Also, European countries were fighting over land in China and Africa. This land already belonged to the Chinese and Africans. But the European countries didn't care.

The United States entered this war on April 6, 1917. Germany was using submarines to sink all ships in the Atlantic Ocean. So the US joined the side of Great Britain and France. The US sent troops to Europe. They also fought in the Middle East.

Finally, Germany gave up. They surrendered.

It was a terrible war. Millions of people died.

1.Find these places on a map of the world.

France
Germany
Great Britain
China
Africa
Middle East

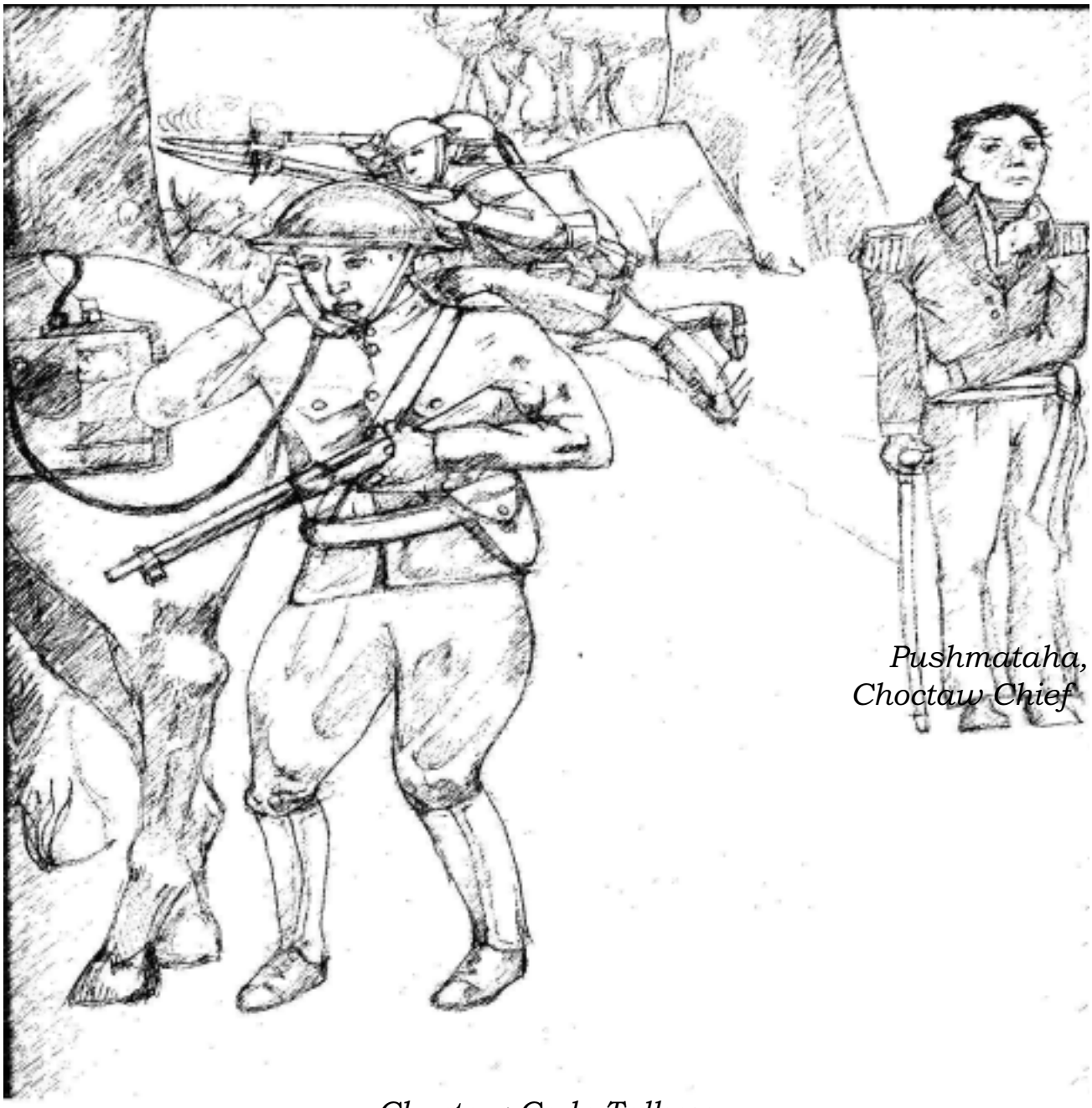
2.Why did the United States enter the war?

3.What was the war fought over?

4.Why was this called the Great War?

5.How long did the war last?

6. What did the Code Talkers use?



Pushmataha,
Choctaw Chief

Choctaw Code Talkers

Corporal Solomon Lewis
Private Bennington Mitche Bobb
Smithville Ben Carterby
Wright City Robert Taylor
Bokchito Jeff Nelson
Kullitukle Pete Maytubby
Broken Bow James Edwards
Ida Calvin Wilson Goodwater

The war was not going well for the US. The Germans had them pinned down close to Paris, France. They were in mountains with woods. The Germans had broken the American radio codes and tapped the telephone lines. They were capturing 25%, or 1 in every 4, of the messengers who ran between the various companies on the battlefield. The Germans knew everything the US troops were going to do.

One day, Captain Lawrence overheard two of his soldiers talking in a strange language. "What's that you're speaking?" he asked them.

"Choctaw, sir," they responded.

Captain Lawrence found 6 other men who also spoke Choctaw. These 8 men became the first code talkers used by the US Army.

These eight Choctaw were placed in different companies to help the communication. They had to make up new words because Choctaw didn't have words for artillery or machine guns. So artillery became "big guns." Machine gun became "little gun."

The Choctaw could also write own language, so some messages were written. They sent these by messengers. The Germans never did break the code. And the US troops were able to get out of that area safely.

1.Find Paris, France on a map of Europe or France.

2.Why did the US Army need the Choctaw code talkers?

_____

_____

3.Who asked the Choctaw to be code talkers?

_____

4.What were some of the "codes"?

_____

_____

5.Did the Germans ever break the code?

_____

WWII
(1939-1945)

Code Talkers were not needed again until WWII. That was about twenty years later.

WWII or World War II involved every large country in the world. After WWI, most of the world went into an economic depression. WWI left many countries in bad shape. The countries were not able to rebuild. In the US, this time is called the Great Depression.

Germany's solution to this problem was to take over other countries. They sent German troops to fight wars. One by one, Germany took the countries of Europe. They even attacked Russia and the United Kingdom.

Japan is a tiny country. It wanted more land for itself. It sent its troops to take over other countries too. These countries were in Asia and the Pacific Ocean. Finally, some big countries fought back.

On one side were the Germans, Italians, and the Japanese. These were the Axis Powers. On the other side were the United Kingdom. Russia, China, and the US. While Germans occupied France for much of the war, many French also fought with the Allies.

When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, the US entered the war. This was late in 1941. WWII ended when the US dropped two atomic bombs on Japan in 1945. In those four years, the US sent troops to fight the Germans in Europe and Africa. The US also fought against Japan. US troops fought the Japanese in many small islands in the Pacific.

This was truly a world war because it was fought all over the world.

1.Who were the Axis Powers? Find all of these on a map of the world.

2.Who were the Allies? Find all of these on a map of the world.

3.Why were the Allies fighting the Axis Powers?

_____

_____

_____

4.What started this war?

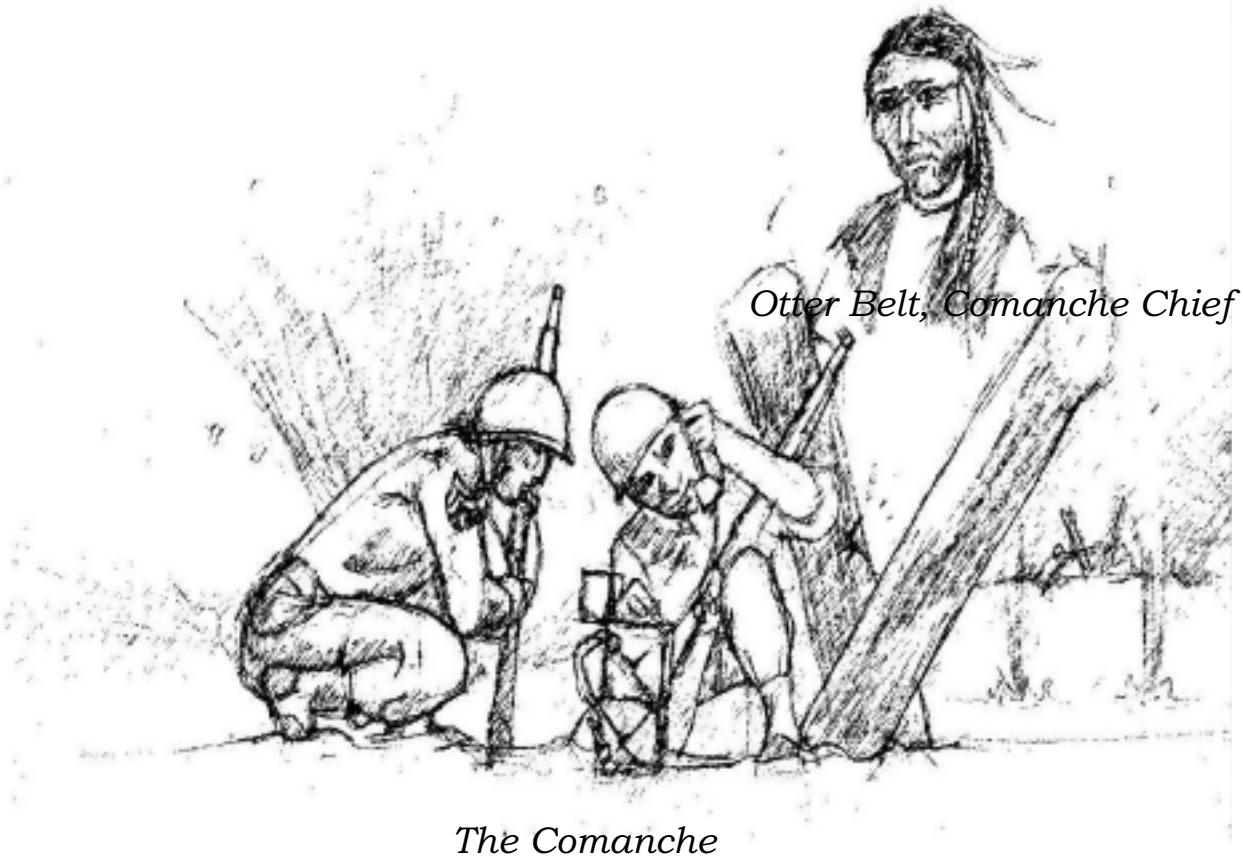
_____

`

_____

5.Why was this truly a world war?

Code Talkers in Europe



Otter Belt, Comanche Chief

The Comanche

Roderick RedElk	*Simmons Parker*
Larry Saupitty	*Melvin Permansu*
Willie Yackeshi	*Charles Chibitty*
Willington Mihecoby	*Morris Sunrise*
Perry Noyebad	*Ralph Wahnee*
Haddon Codynah	*Robert Holder*
Albert Nahquaddy	*Clifford Ototivo*
Charles Chibitty	*Elgin RedElk*
Anthony Tabbytite	*Forrest Kassanavoid*

It was 1941. The US was scrambling to train troops to send to war. Seventeen Comanche were training at Fort Benning, Georgia. They were all fluent in Comanche. Because they were all trained to operate radios, they made a code from their Comanche language.

They used the Comanche word for "turtle" to mean "tank. "Machine gun" became "sewing machine" because the sound reminded one Comanche soldier of his mother's sewing machine. They used "pregnant airplane" for "bomber," and Hitler was "posah-tai-vo" (crazy white man). They made a code of 100 words.

They finally got to use this code on D Day. This was June 6, 1944. They allies landed on the coast of France. This was Normandy Beach. They wanted to drive the Germans out of France. The code helped the Allies win WWII. It saved thousands of lives.

The Germans never broke the code. In fact, they sent spies to Fort Benning to try to learn the code. In 1998, France honored the Comanche code talkers because they had helped to liberate France.

1.How many Comanche code talkers were there?

_____

2.What was the Comanche word for Hitler?

_____

3.When did the Comanche code talkers get to use their code?

_____

_____

4.Why did France honor the Comanche code talkers?

_____

_____

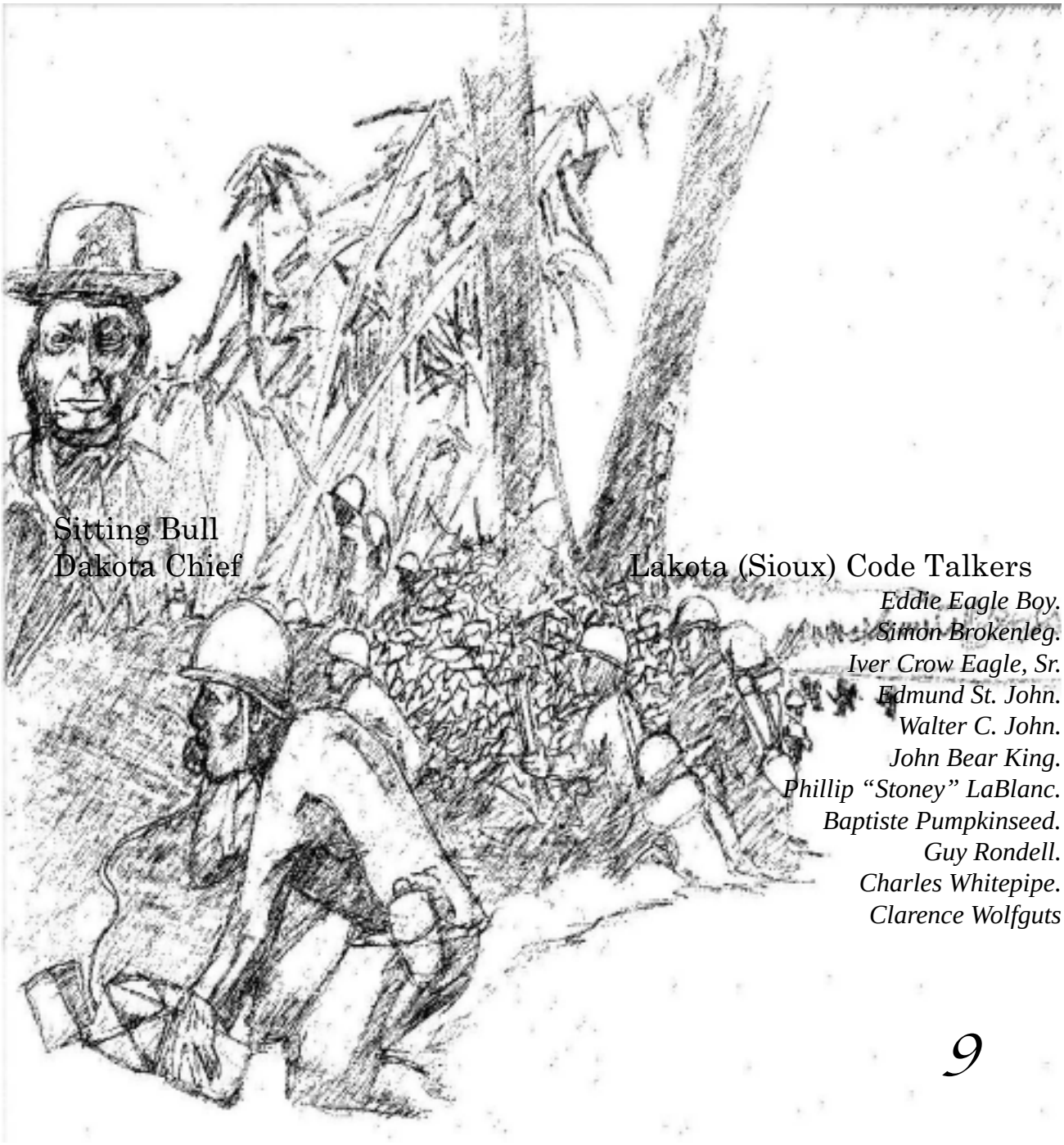
5.Who never broke the code?

_____

Hopi Code Talkers
Franklin Shupla
Travis Yaiva
Floyd Dunn
8 other Hopis

The war against Japan was fought in many islands in the Pacific. One of these was the Marshall Islands. This is where the Hopi code talkers first used their Hopi language in combat. In 1943, in Dateland, Arizona, the eleven Hopi had worked hard to use Hopi words to make terms for battle. They used the Hopi word for eggs, “nu-hu”, for bombs. “Bahki”, a house on water, meant “ship”. They used different kinds of birds for the planes. “Pah-we-waka” (ducks) meant “sea planes.”

First they trained in Hawaii and then went to Guadalcanal. Later they went to the Marshall Islands. In 1944, the used their code talking in New Caledonia. The Hopi code confused the Japanese. This saved many lives.



Sitting Bull
Dakota Chief

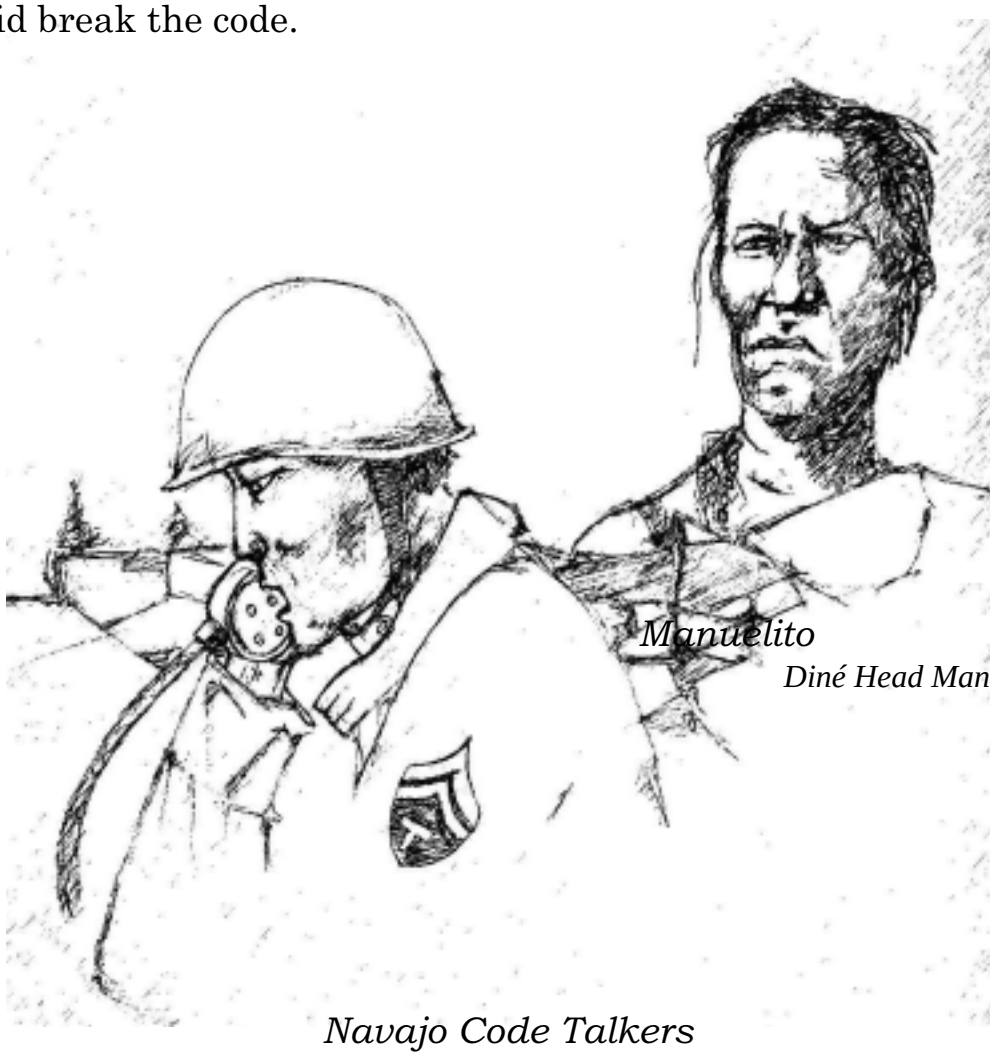
Lakota (Sioux) Code Talkers

Eddie Eagle Boy.
Simon Brokenleg.
Iver Crow Eagle, Sr.
Edmund St. John.
Walter C. John.
John Bear King.
Phillip “Stoney” LaBlanc.
Baptiste Pumpkinseed.
Guy Rondell.
Charles Whitepipe.
Clarence Wolfguts

Some Sioux fought in the Pacific also. They were radio operators. They used their languages to confuse the Japanese. They used all three of the Sioux languages. They used Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota.

They created a phonetic alphabet for their language. They made up letters for each sound. They used this code to send messages. Only another code talker knew what the message was. This code was very important. It kept the Japanese from knowing what the US was doing. This kept the Japanese confused.

This code helped the US win WWII and saved hundreds of lives. The Japanese never did break the code.



Manuelito
Diné Head Man

Navajo Code Talkers

Charlie Begay Samuel *Hosteen Nez Begay* *John Ashi Benally*
Wilsie H. Bitsie *Cosey Stanley Brown* *J ohn Brown Jr.*
John Chee *Benjamin H. Cleveland* *Eugene Roanhorse Crawford*
David Curley *Lowell Smith Damon* *George H. Dennison*
James Dixon *Carl Nelson Gorman* *Oscar B. Ithma*
Allen Dale June *Alfred Leonard* *Johnny R. Manuelito*
William McCabe *Chester Nez* *Jack Nez*
Lloyd Oliver *Balmer Slowtalker* *Frank Danny Pete*
Nelson Thompson *Harry Tsosie Bougainville* *John W. Willie Jr.* *William Yazzie*

The Marines had their own code talkers. They were the Navajo code talkers. From 375 to 420 Navajo were trained to be code talkers. But only 29 used this code. At that time, almost no one knew the Navajo language. Only the Navajo did.

This made it an ideal language for a code. The Navajo marines worked hard to make a code. Only the code talkers knew what the words meant. This is how the code worked.

The code talker translated each Navajo word into its English equivalent. Then, he used only the first letter of the English equivalent. So the Navajo word "wol-la-chee" (ant) stood for the letter "a." But many other Navajo words could be used for "a". This is one way to say "Navy" in this code.

tsah	**n**eedle
wol-la-chee	**a**nt
ah-keh-di- glini	**v**ictor
tsah-ah-dzoh	**y**ucca.

Now take the first letter of each English word. What do you spell?

They also used 450 Navajo words for military terms. Here are just a few.

besh- lo (iron fish)	submarine
dah-he- tih-hi" (hummingbird)	fighter plane
debeh-li-zine (black street)	squad

The Navajo code talkers helped at some important battles. They helped at Guadalcanal and at Iwo Jima. This code was kept secret until recently. For that whole time, the code talkers could not tell anyone about it.

Today, they have been honored by Congress and had one movie made about them.

1. Find these on a map.

Marshall Islands (southwest of the Hawaiian Islands)

New Caledonia (west of Australia)

Gaudalcanal (Solomon Islands)

Iwo Jima (volcano/sulphur islands of Japan about halfway between Marianna Islands and Japan)

The Phillipines

2.Match the Code Talkers to the location. Fill in the name of the Code Talkers.

Location	Code Talkers
Iwo Jima	
New Caledonia	
Also in the Pacific	

3.Which Code Talkers had a movie made about them?

_____

4.Who used a phonetic alphabet?

_____

5.Who used “nu-hu” to mean “bomber”?

_____

Other Code Talkers

World War I
Cheyenne
Comanche
Cherokee
Osage
Yankton Sioux

World War II
Chippewa
Choctaw
Creek
Kiowa
Menominee
Muscogee-Seminole
Oneida
Pawnee
Sac & Fox

There were more code talkers in both wars. But they are not all remembered. More than 400 Indians used their Indian languages in WWII. Being able to speak their own languages made these soldiers heroes. Using Indian languages helped to win two world wars.

What would be a good way to remember all the Code Talkers? Tell why. Write your answer here.

More Activities

1.The radio was invented in 1901. What difference did the radio make? Write a short report about the use of radios and code talkers.

2.Break into groups in your class. Let each group choose one group of code talkers. (For example, one class group can choose Navajo. Another class group can choose Chippewa, and so on.) Find out more about the group that you chose. Make a presentation to the class. Find or make pictures to go with your presentation.

3.Take your own language. With your group, make a code for your classroom. Use this code to send messages to each other. Use the examples in the stories to give you some ideas. Try to figure out another group's code.

4.Make a book about one group of code talkers. Find or draw pictures and write your own story.

5.Very few people know about the code talkers. They don't know how many there really were. What would you like for them to know. Make a video presentation about code talkers.

6.Make a play about code talkers. Write it and act it out. You can choose one group or you can do a play about all the code talkers.