



Code Talker

by Joseph Bruchac

Teacher's Guide

Written By Matthew Jewell

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Synopsis

Prologue: Listen, My Grandchildren

The narrator begins the novel by addressing his grandchildren, who have evidently asked him about his military medal. He begins by explaining that the man on the medal is Ira Hayes, with whom he served in the Marines on Iwo Jima. The narrator claims to have been a Navajo code talker, begins to explain what that means, and then notes that one "cannot weave a rug before you set up the loom" and resolves to begin the story of his medal at the beginning.

Chapter One: Sent Away

When the narrator is six years old, he is sent away to be educated at a mission school. On the way there, his uncle recounts some of the bitter history between the Navajo people and the United States and tells him that he must learn English so that the Navajo can speak to the people of the United States to ensure that such misfortunes do not recur. The narrator agrees to "learn for our people and our land."

Chapter Two: Boarding School

At the mission school, the narrator joins a group of other Navajo children, all dressed in traditional garb. They are met by the red-face principal Mr. O'Sullivan, who yells at them in English, which they do not understand. Eventually Mr. Jacob Benally, who works in the stables, explains in Navajo that they are forbidden to speak their language. He teaches them to say "Hello," then departs for the stables.

Chapter Three: To Be Forgotten

The children are then led into a room where their long hair is cut and their traditional clothing and jewelry are taken from them. The stripping of their identity is com-

pleted by being assigned new names by the principal, who names them based on a poor understanding of Navajo. The narrator is renamed Ned Begay.

Chapter Four: Progress

Ned's mouth is washed out with soap when he greets a teacher in Navajo, a common punishment for not speaking English at the school. As the years pass, Ned becomes a good student, excelling in history and geography and becoming fluent in English. He and his friends, however, continue to speak Navajo in secret.

Chapter Five: High School

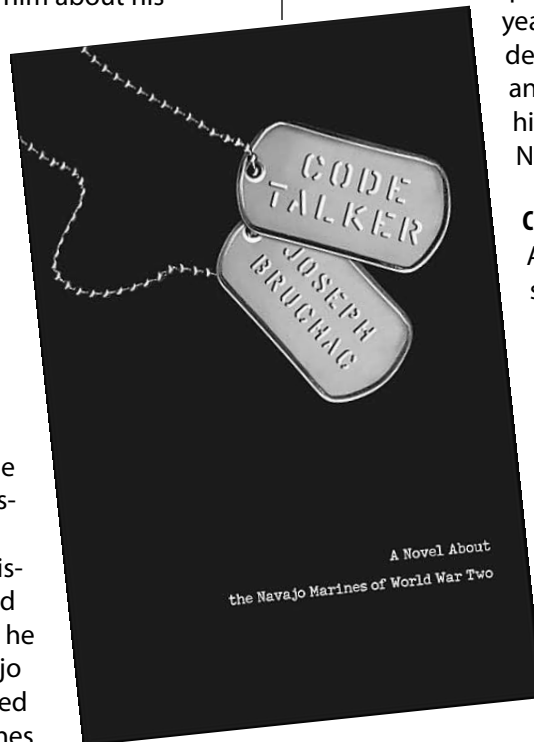
After graduating from the mission school, Ned is selected to attend the high school, where he excels in English and social studies. In his first year, he researches and writes a paper on Japan, discovering a number of social pressures that would eventually lead the Japanese to expand their sphere of influence beyond their islands. Ned and the other students collect canned goods to send to Japan in response to a recent devastating earthquake.

Chapter Six: Sneak Attack

Ned follows current events in newspapers and magazines, learning of Japan's invasions of China and various Pacific islands and Germany's expansion across Europe. In 1940, the Navajo Tribal Council passes a resolution that Ned admires so much that he copies it down and keeps it in his wallet. Among other things, it claims that the "Navajo Indians stand ready as they did in 1918, to aid and defend our government . . ." On December 17, 1941, the Japanese launch a sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, drawing the United States and many Navajos into World War II.

Chapter Seven: Navajos Wanted

By Christmas 1941, Japan has conquered Wake Island, Guam, and Guadalcanal, among other places. The Navajo Tribal Council formally declares war on Germany,



Italy, and Japan. Many Navajo men volunteer for the armed forces, but some are rejected because they lack the necessary English skills. Ned wants to join the military as well, but he is only fourteen and small for his age.

In April 1942, a Marine Corps recruiter appears looking for Navajo men for "special work" that requires fluency in English and Navajo. Ned is deeply impressed by the man's recruiting speech and dress uniform and asks for his parents' permission to enlist. Though he is fifteen and too young, the Navajo have no birth certificates, leaving age verification to the family's word. Ned's parents withdraw to discuss the matter, then tell Ned that he must wait one year before they allow him to enlist.

Chapter Eight: New Recruits

Twenty-nine Navajo men are selected for "special duty" and disappear after boarding a bus at Fort Defiance. Their families are told that they are well but may not communicate with anyone because of the nature of their duties. Months later, one of the men, Johnny Manuelito, reappears at Fort Defiance dressed smartly in a corporal's uniform. He is assigned to recruit among the Navajo and visits Ned's school. Now sixteen, Ned resolves to enlist.

Chapter Nine: The Blessingway

Ned once again asks his parents for permission to join the military. They agree with one caveat: that he must go through the Navajo Blessingway ceremony to protect him during his service. The ceremony is sung by Frank Mitchell, also called Big Schoolboy.

Chapter Ten: Boot Camp

The next day, Ned goes to the nearest Marine Corps office to enlist. He avoids directly lying about his age by saying only "I am old enough to join the Marines," which he considers to be true, regardless of the minimum required age. He is sworn into the service in March 1943. At boot camp, he is once again shorn and quickly tossed into military life. He and his fellow Navajo recruits excel at the physical activities in camp with the one exception of swimming, at which Ned is particularly bad, though he eventually passes the necessary test. At the mess hall, he befriends Georgia Boy, with whom he will eventually fight across the Pacific.

Chapter Eleven: Code School

Ned's all-Navajo 297th Platoon graduates from boot camp with the highest honors. Instead of going on furlough like the other recruits, they are sent to Camp

Elliot, north of San Diego. They are ushered into a secure compound, where they are surprised to find two Navajo men: Johnny Manuelito and John Benally. They are told that they will be learning a top secret code based on the Navajo language and immediately begin on the basics.

Chapter Twelve: Learning the Code

Manuelito and Benally impress upon the recruits the importance of the new code and tell them that they must die before telling the enemy anything about it. Ned explains the basics of the code. Each letter is represented by one or more Navajo words that translate to English words that begin with that letter. Some common military concepts are represented by Navajo words that capture the essence of the idea. The recruits are also trained in communications equipment and engage in impromptu practice bayonet fencing and hand-to-hand combat, often to the consternation of their instructors.

Chapter Thirteen: Shipping Out to Hawaii

Ned is assigned to signal corps, Third Division, Second Regiment, Third Battalion, and shipped to Hawaii, where he meets two Navajo code talkers recently returned from combat: Sam Begay and Bill McCabe. They describe their experiences in Guadalcanal, highlighting their commander's grudging but firm faith in their abilities.

Chapter Fourteen: The Enemies

Ned pauses to comment on the Navajo taboos concerning corpses and how encountering dead soldiers was trying for the Navajo troops. Sam and Bill recount the littered corpses on Guadalcanal, made more numerous by the Japanese expectation of fighting to the death. They tell Ned of eventually capturing a few Japanese and realizing that they were "not monsters at all ... just human beings."

Chapter Fifteen: Field Maneuvers

Ned and his platoon take part in two days of training exercises before being deployed to the South Pacific. Stormy, their lieutenant, orders them on a two-day march across the desert with only one canteen of water each. The Navajos delight in secretly cutting pieces from cacti for refreshment, appearing to need little to no water. A few days later they are deployed, taking place in more field maneuvers on the beaches of Guadalcanal.

Chapter Sixteen: Bombardment

On Guadalcanal, Ned is reunited with his friend Georgia

Boy. The Marines are scheduled to assault Bougainville on November 1, 1943. At 6 a.m. the Navy bombards the island, "softening" it for the landing. Their efforts prove futile, since the Japanese have dug reinforced bunkers and await the landing.

Chapter Seventeen: First Landing

The landing force is met with heavy Japanese fire. Training takes over, and Ned finds himself in a foxhole that he's dug and dragged Georgia Boy into. The assault had included twelve landing zones and Ned's, Blue Beach One, had been the worst. Despite the fierce resistance, the Marines' superior numbers eventually force the Japanese to withdraw.

Chapter Eighteen: On Bougainville

The next few days are spent fortifying their positions and sending scouting parties deeper into the island, which is mostly covered by swampy jungle. Recalling the terrain reminds Ned of his dislike for the standard issue anti-malaria pills, which he and the other Navajos generally avoided taking, until Watch Officer Alex Williams, in charge of making sure that they took their pills, wised up to their crafty avoidance. At night, the Japanese defenders launch suicide *Banzai* attacks. One of the Navajo code talkers, Harry Tsosie, is killed at night, mistaken for an enemy. After the fighting subsides, Ned finds time to send home his soiled battle fatigues to stand in for him at a protection ceremony.

Chapter Nineteen: Do You Have a Navajo?

After Bougainville, Ned and the other code talkers are sent back to Hawaii, where they collaborate on expanding their code. Ned notes that the Navajo code talkers have come to be greatly respected, one general writing, "The Navajos have proved to be excellent Marines, intelligent, industrious, easily taught to send and receive by key and excellent in the field." Though they are safe for the moment, many Marines drink heavily to forget their recent combat experiences. Ned finds strength in his people and culture instead.

Chapter Twenty: The Next Targets

In June of 1944, the Marines begin Operation Forager to take Saipan, Tinian, Guam, and Peleliu. Ned finds himself reunited with his friends Smitty and Georgia Boy. Ned is not sent to Saipan, much to his relief, but he hears terrible tales of fierce fighting from his friends. The most horrific tales are about the Japanese civilians, who had been told that the Americans would kill and torture them. Women killed their children before killing themselves.

Chapter Twenty-One: Guam

While his friends are taking Saipan, Ned and his division are tasked with taking Guam. The landing is delayed, though the naval bombardment of the island continues as scheduled, simply extending over the course of the delay. The invasion finally occurs on July 21, contested by 18,000 Japanese troops. The Americans are unable to break from their beachheads until July 27. On August 7, Ned accompanies a patrol inland, where he discovers the corpse of his fellow code talker Charlie Begay. He and his friend Wilsie cover the body in leaves and bark and put his dog tag in his mouth. Weeks later on Guadalcanal, Charlie Begay appears, much to their surprise. He humorously recounts regaining consciousness only to find himself partially buried with dog tags in his mouth.

Chapter Twenty-Two: Fatigue

During his final days on Guam, Ned is shot in the shoulder by a sniper. The bullet passes cleanly through his flesh, and he is able to return to combat after a brief interlude on Hawaii. On the hospital ship, Ned observes soldiers with "battle fatigue," post-traumatic stress disorder. He interprets the illness as a sickness of the spirit and relates a traditional Navajo tale to illustrate the point.

Chapter Twenty-Three: Pavavu

Ned finds himself on the small island of Pavavu on January 1, 1945, a quiet interlude before he is deployed to Iwo Jima. Little happens on the island, leaving Ned free to discuss Japanese battle tactics, specifically *kamikaze* attacks and violations of the Geneva Conventions. Near the end of their stay on the island, Ned and other Native American soldiers have a pow-wow, performing the songs and dances of their respective tribes.

Chapter Twenty-Four: Iwo Jima

In February of 1945, Ned learns that he will be assaulting Iwo Jima in order to establish an emergency airstrip for bombers returning from missions over Japan. The Americans had been bombarding the island for months, but the Japanese had responded by digging deeper bunkers, fortifying positions, and establishing dummy targets. The island's commander, General Kuribayashi, had changed battle tactics, resolving to fire from cover, instead of launching mass suicide attacks.

Chapter Twenty-Five: In Sight of Suribachi

Just before the assault on Iwo Jima, General Howling Mad Smith predicts, "We will catch seven kinds of hell on the beaches and that will be just the beginning." His

comment turns out to be prescient. Nine thousands Marines land with Ned on the assigned beach and find the island eerily quiet. Smitty says to Ned, "this is like a walk in the park" just before the Japanese spring their trap.

Chapter Twenty-Six: The Black Beach

The Marines come under heavy fire on the beach from fortified positions. Ned's memories of the first three days of fighting are fractured images of intense violence. As the battle rages, Ned and the Navajos keep the American elements mutually informed, forming "nets ... [that] kept everything connected like a spider's strands spanning distant branches." The Marines take Mount Suribachi on the fifth day of fighting, raising a small American flag on the north rim of the crater. Two hours later, an American photographer stages the famous flag-raising photo with a larger flag. Three weeks later, Georgia Boy is shot in the neck. Ned calls for a medic, but is then forced to advance towards the front, where he is needed to relay messages.

Chapter Twenty-Seven: Okinawa

Ned is assigned to Operation Iceberg to capture Okinawa. On the way there, Ned encounters Georgia Boy, who has miraculously survived his wounds. They land on the island on April 1, meeting no resistance until April 8. The Japanese had withdrawn to Kakazu Ridge and dug in, resulting in bloody fighting. Capturing the island takes eighty-three days.

Chapter Twenty-Eight: The Bomb

In August, American planes drop atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. After surviving a coup attempt, Emperor Hirohito addresses the Japanese people on the radio for the first time, announcing that Japan is surrendering. Ned receives the news in a coded transmission and begins spreading the news, shouting, "War is over."

Chapter Twenty-Nine: Going Home

Ned isn't sent home immediately. He is sent to San Francisco, where he decodes transmissions detailing the effects of the atomic bombs, which horrify him. Before his tour of duty ends, he is reminded that the Navajo code must remain secret and that he can't talk about what he did in the war with anyone. His discharge papers do not list his specialty, meaning that he can't claim his training in order to gain similar employment. Once home, he participates in an Enemyway ceremony to heal him of nightmares about the war.

During the following years, Ned works with the tribal

government to reform education. In 1969, computers displace manual codes and the code talkers are granted permission to talk about their wartime service. They form a Code Talkers Association and begin telling their stories. Ned closes by impressing the importance of their language upon his grandchildren, telling them, "Let our language keep you strong and you will never forget what it is to be Navajo. You will never forget what it means to walk in beauty."

Author Sketch

Joseph Bruchac was born in Saratoga Springs, New York, in 1942. Raised by his grandparents, he grew up in nearby Greenfield Center, New York. As a child, he helped his grandparents around their general store, learned to love books from his grandmother, and learned wood-craft from his grandfather, who was of Abenaki descent. He began writing in second grade, penning poems for his teacher. Eventually, older boys became jealous and beat him up after school. It was, he says, his first experience of hostile critics. He went on to earn a B.A. from Cornell University, an M.A. in Literature and Creative Writing from Syracuse University, and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Union Institute of Ohio.



Bruchac published his first book in 1975 and has since written over 70 books for children and adults. His work has garnered many honors, including a Rockefeller Humanities Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts Writing Fellowship for Poetry, the Cherokee Nation Prose Award, the Knickerbocker Award, the Hope S. Dean Award for Notable Achievement in Children's Literature, the 1998 Writer of the Year Award and Storyteller of the Year Award from the Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers Circle of the Americas. He lives with his wife, Carol, in the house in which he was raised.

Critics Corner

Critical reactions to *Code Talker* have been generally positive, with praise for its celebration of oral storytelling and its accurate portrayals of Navajo culture and the experiences of young men at war; the extensive research and low-key writing style are generally appreciated as well. *School Library Journal* praised the book as "nonsensational and accurate," as well as "quietly inspiring, even for those who have seen *Windtalkers*, or who

have read such nonfiction works as Nathan Aaseng's *Navajo Code Talkers* (Walker, 1992), Kenji Kawano's *Warriors: Navajo Code Talkers* (Northland, 1990), or Deanne Durrett's *Unsung Heroes of World War II: The Story of the Navajo Code Talker*"; and *Booklist* had this to say: "Even when facing complex negative forces within his own country, (Ned) is able to reach into his traditional culture to find answers that work for him in a modern context. Readers who choose the book for the attraction of Navajo code talking and the heat of battle will come away with more than they ever expected to find."

Timeline of World War II: Pacific Theater

1941

December 7	Japan bombs Pearl Harbor.
December 8	The United States and Britain declare war on Japan.
December 10	Japan invades the Philippines and take control of Guam
December 16	Japan invades British Borneo
December 18	Japan invades Hong Kong
December 23	Japan takes control of Wake Island

1942

Early 1942	Philip Johnston meets with Major General Clayton B. Vogel to pitch the use of Navajo as the base of a code
February 8	Japan invades Singapore.
February 24	The USS Enterprise attacks Wake Island.
March 4	The USS Enterprise attacks Marcus Island.
May	The first 29 Navajo code talkers enter boot camp.
May 7-8	The Battle of the Coral Sea, the first naval battle between air craft carriers and the first naval battle in which enemy ships never directly sighted one another .
June 4-5	The Battle of Midway
June 7	Japan invades the Aleutian Islands.
August 7	Marines invade Tulagi and Guadalcanal in the first U.S. amphibious landing of the war.
August 24	The Battle of the Eastern Solomons

September 12-14	The Battle of Bloody Ridge
October 11/12	The Battle of Cape Esperance
October 26	The Battle of Santa Cruz
November 30/31	The Battle of Tasafaronga
1943	
January 2	Allied forces capture Buna in New Guinea.
March 2-4	The Battle of Bismarck Sea
August 1/2	Lieutenant John F. Kennedy's PT-109 is sunk.
August 6/7	The Battle of Vella Gulf
September 4	Allied forces capture Lae-Salamaua, new Guinea.
November 1	Marines invade Bougainville in the Solomon Islands
November 2	The Battle of Empress Augusta Bay
November 20	Allied forces invade Makin and Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands.
December 26	Marines invade Cape Gloucester.
1944	
January 31	Allied forces invade Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands.
April 22	Allied forces invade Aitape and Hollandia in New Guinea
May 27	Allied forces invade Biak Island in New Guinea
June 15	Marines invade Saipan in the Mariana Islands.
July 19	Marines invade Guam in the Mariana Islands.
July 24	marines invade Tinian in the Mariana Islands.
October 20	Allied forces invade Leyte in the Philippines.
October 23-26	The Battle of Leyte Gulf
October 25	The first kamikaze attack on allied ships.
November 11	U.S. ships begin bombarding Iwo Jima.
December 15	Allied forces invade Mindoro in the Philippines.
1945	
February 19	Marines invade Iwo Jima.
April 1	Allied forces invade Okinawa, the last amphibious assault of the war.
April 12	President Franklin D. Roosevelt dies; Vice President Harry Truman

	becomes president.
May 8	V-E Day
August 6	An atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima, Japan.
August 9	An atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki, Japan.
August 14	Japan surrenders.
1992	
September 17	Navajo code talkers are honored at the Pentagon for their service in World War II.

Bibliography

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- Witherspoon, Gary. Language and Art in the Navajo Universe. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1977.

Selected Other Works by Joseph Bruchac

Fiction

- Arrow over the Door*, 1998
- Bearwalker*, 2007
- Dawn Land*, 1993
- Dog People: Native Stories*, 1995
- Eagle Song*, 1997
- Geronimo*, 2006
- The Journal of Jesse Smoke*, 2001

- Long River*, 1995
- March Toward the Thunder*, 2008
- The Return of Skeleton Man*, 2006
- Sacagawea*, 2000
- The Waters Between*, 1998
- Whisper in the Dark*, 2005
- The Winter People*, 2002

Poetry

- Above the Line*, 2003
- Ndakinna*, 2003
- No Borders*, 1999
- Translator's Son*, 1980

Nonfiction

- Survival This Way: Interviews with American Indian Poets*, 1988
- Keepers of Life: Discovering Plants Through Native American Stories and Earth Activities for Children*, 1994
- Telling Tales: A Book about Story and Storytelling*, 1997
- Lasting Echoes: An Oral History of Native American People*, 1997
- Jim Thorpe, Original All-American*, 2006

MEDIA VERSIONS

Audiobook

- Code Talker*, Recorded Books, 2006, Unabridged

General Objectives

1. To read a full length work of historical fiction
2. To develop critical reading, writing, and thinking skills
3. To expand vocabulary
4. To prepare for standardized assessment testing
5. To gain an understanding of the South Pacific Theatre of Operations of World War II
6. To develop an understanding and appreciation for Navajo culture and language
7. To evaluate the interplay between culture and language
8. To conduct cultural comparisons
9. To analyze how personal and cultural identities are formulated
10. To contrast the requirements of oral storytelling and the written word

Specific Objectives

1. To explain Ned's decision to enlist in the Marine Corps
2. To compare systems of value described in the novel
3. To discuss Ned's feeling of connection to the land

4. To understand how the Navajo code functioned
5. To analyze Ned's relationship to the Navajo language
6. To contrast Ned's experiences of comradeship and racism with non-Navajos
7. To characterize the narrator's tone and style
8. To read the novel in relation to Native American traditional storytelling
9. To determine how Ned's adherence to Navajo traditions tempered his war experiences
10. To list and analyze examples of irony in the novel

Literary Terms and Application

Dialect: the use of diction to characterize a regional, social, or economic group. Dialect is rooted in oral tradition; writers use it to show how characters speak.

Generally, a dialect is comprised of vocabulary, spelling, and grammar that deviates from "standard" English.

Bruchac uses dialect to capture the diversity of the people Ned serves with and meets during his military service. It is interesting to note that none of the Navajos are marked as using dialect, despite the fact that many of them speak English as a second language.

Foreshadowing: narrative elements that allude to forthcoming events, either directly or indirectly. The narrator's repeated comments about Iwo Jima foreshadow the battle to take the island.

Narrator: the voice of the person telling the story in a work of fiction. The narrator is not the author. The author writes a work of fiction, while the narrator is the voice the author assumes. The narrator of *Code Talker* is Ned Begay. The distinction between author and narrator is built into the structure by the bookend chapters that frame the novel as an orally related history.

Cross-Curricular Sources

DVD/VHS

The Last Comanche Code Talker: Recollections of Charles Chibitty, Hidden Path Productions, 2000

The Linguists, Ironbound Films, 2008

In Search of History: Navajo Code Talkers, A&E Home Video, 1996

Navajo Code Talkers, Native American Public Broadcasting, 1996

Navajo Code Talkers: The Epic Story, Tully Entertainment, 1994

True Whispers: The Story of the Navajo Code Talkers, Berkeley Media LLC, 2002

War Code: Navajo, National Geographic, 1995

Where the Highway Ends: A Journey into Navajo Culture,

Finley-Holiday, 2007

Windtalkers, MGM 2002

Nonfiction

Simon Adams, *Codebreakers: Secret Worlds*

Margaret T. Bixler, *Winds of Freedom: The Story of the Navajo Code Talks of World War II*

Margaret L. Archuleta, Brenda J. Child, and Tsianina Lowawaima, eds., *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences, 1978-2000*

Nathan Aaseng, *Navajo Code Talkers*

Deanne Durrett, *Unsung Heroes of World War II: The Story of the Navajo Code Talkers*

Paul Laneczko, *Top Secret: A Handbook of Codes, Ciphers and Secret Writing*

Catherine Jones, *Navajo Code Talkers: Native American Heroes*

Kenji Kawano, *Warriors: Navajo Code Talkers*

Sally McClain, *Navajo Weapon*

William C. Meadows, *The Comanche Code Talkers of World War II*

Doris Atkinson Paul, *The Navajo Code Talkers*

Karen Price-Hossell, *Ciphers and Codes*

Simon Singh, *The Code Book: The Evolution of Secrecy from Mary, Queen of Scots to Quantum Cryptography*

Language and Linguistics

Dine Bizaad: Speak, Read, Write Navajo, Irvy W. Goossen

The Languages of North America, Marianne Mithun

When Languages Die: The Extinction of the World's

Languages and the Erosion of Human Knowledge, K.

David Harrison

Literature

Louise Erdrich, *Love Medicine*

John Hersey, *Hiroshima*

Michael Krauss, *In Honor of Eyak: The Art of Anna Nelson Harry*

N. Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn*

Greg Sarris, *Grand Avenue*

Luci Tapahonso, *The Women are Singing*

Brady Udall, *The Miracle Life of Edgar Mint*

Gerald Vizenor, *Native American Literature*

James Welch, *Fools Crow*

Online Resources

The Code (guide to the code used by Navajo code talkers)

http://library.thinkquest.org/J002073F/thinkquest/The_code.htm

The National Archives: Teaching with Documents: Memorandum Regarding the Enlistment

of Navajo Indians <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/code-talkers/>

The Navajo Nations: History
<http://www.navajo.org/history.htm>

Themes and Motifs

Themes

- war
- courage
- language
- culture
- identity
- friendship
- family
- loneliness

Motifs

- The narrator reveling in the utility of the Navajo language after witnessing its suppression in the United States
- Wounded soldiers being “repaired” and sent back to combat
- Comparisons between Navajo culture and cultures the narrator encounters during the war
- Contrasts between the Navajo soldiers’ patriotism and the racism that they encounter
- Speculations on the human costs of war

Meaning Study

1. Our Navajo language is sacred and beautiful. Yet all the laws of the United States, those laws that we now have to live by, they are in English. (p. 8)
(In the above lines, Ned’s uncle is explaining to him why it is important that he learn English as he takes him to the mission school. Not only is it important the Ned learn English because American laws are written in English, it is also important that he learn to speak English to maintain communications with those outside the Navajo people. His uncle explains that the “Long Walk” was the result of miscommunication, that Mexican slavers who preyed on the Navajo were able to lie to American troops because they spoke English, while the Navajo were unable to explain because of the linguistic gap. When not all Navajo ceased punitive raids on the Mexicans, the Americans made war on them. The “sacred” description is not idle. If language is the structure of thought, then to think in a language is to take part

in a particular world-view.)

2. Navajo is no good, of no use at all! Only English will help you get ahead in this world! (P. 18)
(Principal O’Sullivan offers an alternate reason to learn English. The contrast between O’Sullivan’s and Ned’s uncle’s reasons is instructive. Both are based in pragmatism. The main difference is that Ned’s uncle assumes that Navajo has an intrinsic worth apart from its practicality, while O’Sullivan assumes that it is “no good.” This attitude towards non-dominant languages is one of the underlying reasons for the mass linguistic extinctions currently happening around the world. Languages like Hindi and Russian are displacing native languages with small bases of speakers as people transition to the dominant language in order to “get ahead in this world,” and to avoid the social stigma associated with non-dominant languages.. Many indigenous American languages are either moribund or extinct because elder generations did not transmit the native tongue to the next generation.)
3. As far as I know, not one Navajo code talker was ever raised above the rank of corporal, just as none of us were ever given any kind of official recognition or honor from the time we enlisted until the surrender of Japan. (p. 87)
(Ned is commenting on the implicit racism he encountered in the military. It is interesting to contrast his experience of the military as an institution and as an aggregate of individuals. As an institution, the military is depicted as a “white man’s world” in which non-whites could not rise above a certain level. Ned’s experience of individuals is more blurry. His friends value his companionship and his commanders recognize and value his skills and contribution to the war.)
4.
 1. Obey without question or hesitation.
 2. Always take the offensive.
 3. Surprise the enemy whenever possible.
 4. Never retreat.
 5. Never surrender. (p. 96)
(The list above is the Japanese warrior’s code of Bushido. Ned encounters the translation from the Imperial Japanese Army Instruction manual years after the war. The Bushido code characterizes Ned’s experience of Japanese military tactics, characterized by banzai and kamikaze suicide attacks, surprise assaults, and an unrelenting will to fight. The strictness of the code appears almost inhuman and

is echoed by the actions of civilians on Saipan, particularly the infanticides. It is, however, also reminiscent of some of the more stoic parts of Ned's training as a Navajo warrior, such as never screaming out in pain when wounded so as not to show one's enemy one's location.)

5. We stood there like that for a while feeling each other's hearts beat with love for our sacred homelands. It was one of the best conversations I ever had. (p. 103)

(Ned is describing a silent "conversation" he has with Gene-gene, a native Solomon Islander. This sacred connection to the land is something that Ned learns to appreciate in those he meets during his military service. It is also a component of his respect for the Japanese and their "sacred islands." The only people who appear to be divorced from the land are the white Americans, who seem to simply tread soil without being connected to it.)

6. Truth be told, we Marines were kind of fond of those old used vehicles. We had a lot in common with them. (p. 159)

(Ned and Georgia Boy watch an old, battered vehicle being unloaded, and Ned reflects on the similarity between the Army's hand-me-down vehicles and the soldiers in the Marines. Both are simply "patched up" and "dropped somewhere" and expected to perform as best they can. The unspoken element of the metaphor is that the soldiers are also damaged, often physically, but also psychologically. Ned witnesses Marines struggle with "battle fatigue," post-traumatic stress disorder. After the war he treats similar trauma with the traditional Enemyway ceremony. Its efficacy calls into question the "advances" of mainstream culture, which had no such efficacious treatments for soldiers returning from the war.)

7. Kamikaze, the holy wind. (p. 166)

(Ned places the origin of "Kamikaze" with Kublai Khan's failed invasions of Japan. Approximately 700 years ago, the Khan assembled a huge fleet, which was sunk by a typhoon. A second attempt seven years later was similarly foiled. Kamikaze translates as "holy wind" or "divine wind" and the Japanese kamikaze pilots who flew suicide missions believed that they "were flying with that holy wind." This direct interaction with the divine through nature is another significant similarity with Ned's representation of Navajo culture.)

8. I knew it couldn't last and I was right. (p. 171)

(Ned reflects on his peaceful stay on the small island of Pavavu, where he was stationed before being deployed to Iwo Jima. This is another example of foreshadowing in the novel, alluding to the coming horrors of the intense fighting on Iwo Jima. The multiple references building up to the landing on Iwo Jima raise a certain level of tension and result in a partial anti-climax. While the reader has come to expect catastrophic events on Iwo Jima, Ned loses no close friends and is not injured. He does describe the intense fighting, but the narrative style tends to flatten the emotional tone.)

9. Another friend is another person you might lose at any instant. (p. 191)

(Ned comments that he hasn't spoken enough of his white friends in the Marines, which leads him to reflect on the difficulty of having friends during wartime. During peace, he explains, one's life is made fuller by friends, while during war every friend is an emotional liability. These comments occur amid his descriptions of the fighting on Iwo Jima, thus partially explaining the flatness of the narrative, omissions of necessity.)

10. It didn't matter that I had fought for America. It didn't matter that I had made white friends who would have sacrificed their lives to save me when we were at war. In the eyes of those prejudiced bilagáanaas in that bar, I was just another stupid Navajo. (p. 210)

(After he is discharged from the Marines, Ned is refused service and ejected from a bar where a "NO INDIANS SERVED HERE" sign hangs. Ned realizes that though he has changed during the war, that circumstances at home have not, that the racism confronting him and his people remained common and strong. Instead of submitting to depression at the realization, he instead feels a strengthening of resolve, a determination to dedicate his life to change.)

Comprehension Study

1. How were Navajo recruits unusually prepared for service in the military?

(Ned and the other Navajo recruits excel at basic training, attributing their success to the "everyday Navajo life." They were prepared physically for the demanding tasks of the military, being already used

to hiking long distances bearing burdens, staying out in bad weather, enduring privation, and taking sustenance from the land. Ned also attributes his psychological resiliency to his connection to his family, people, language, and land.)

2. How did the Navajo code work?

(The code was relatively simple. Each letter in the English alphabet was assigned one or more Navajo words that translated to English words that began with that letter. Common letters were assigned multiple words so that the code could not be broken by examining the frequency with which words were repeated. This part of the code was used to spell out words letter by letter. Common military terms and concepts were directly represented by Navajo words that shared some conceptual or physical resemblance.)

3. Explain Ned's understanding of the decision to use atomic weapons and his reaction.

(Ned explains that atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in order to shorten the war and save millions of lives, both American and Japanese. The Japanese had held back millions of combatants on the home islands, many of whom were prepared to fight to the death. The human cost of taking the islands directly would have resulted in millions of casualties. Though Ned understands and accepts the reasoning, he is still appalled by reports of the damage done by the bombs and reverently hopes that such weapons will never be used again.)

4. How are Navajo students stripped of their identity at the mission school?

(Navajo students are stripped of everything linking them to their traditions, culture, and people upon arriving at the mission school. The first and perhaps most drastic measure is forbidding them to speak their language. They are also stripped of their traditional clothing and jewelry, gifts from their families and symbols of their love. They are then shorn of their traditional long hair and then stripped of their Navajo names. That their anglicized names are based on a white man's misunderstanding of their language is symbolic of the relationship overall.)

5. Discuss the patriotism of the Navajo people in the novel.

(The most surprising aspect of the Navajo patriotism is that it exists at all. As the author points out in the afterword, many of the men who volunteered for the Marines were the grandchildren of people who survived aggressive American military action and the

ensuing Long Walk, analogous to the Cherokee's Trail of Tears. Despite this antagonistic history, the Navajo Tribal Council declares war on Germany, Italy, and Japan, and Navajo men volunteer to fight for the United State's armed forces. The exact motives are somewhat opaque. The impulse to volunteer is varied and complex, including a sense of oneness with the land that extends beyond the Navajo lands to encompass the lands around them, worry that the war might eventually extend to their own lands, and pride in traditional warrior culture. There is also a simple selflessness, a desire to help as best they could.)

6. Characterize the relationship between the Navajo characters and their language.

(Ned's relationship to the Navajo language is intense and personal. It appears to be as much of a surrounding context as a landscape or time period. It brings him solace and strength to endure his travails. It also is a source of pride, the basis of his major contribution to the war effort. In the novel's final line, Ned tells his grandchildren that if they retain their traditional language, they "will never forget what it means to walk in beauty." This statement can be read in two non-mutually exclusive ways. Firstly, it could mean that the language itself is beautiful on the surface level, that it sounds and looks beautiful. Secondly, it can be read as referring to a framework understanding of language, that the frame of the Navajo language makes the world beautiful—much like a tinted glass colors the world.)

7. Explain the Japanese reasons for entering the war.

(After becoming interested in Japan while researching a paper for school, Ned follows developments in the nation. According to Ned's perspective, there are two main reasons for Japan's aggression. Firstly, the Japanese islands lacked the natural resources to support the population, so the military leaders advocated aggressive expansion to secure what the nation needed. Secondly, it was a matter of "divine destiny," that the nation was destined to rule the entire Pacific Ocean. Related to this second justification is the idea that the Japanese considered other peoples to be less than human, mentioned later in the novel.)

8. Why does Ned enlist in the Marines?

(Ned enlists in the military because he wants to "fight the enemy," a desire born both of Navajo warrior traditions and a deep-seated wish to help. He joins the Marines in particular because their targeted

recruiting of Navajos plays to his pride in his language and traditions and subverts the suppression of his language that he experienced at the mission school. It is, however, also important to note that he was drawn to the uniform and trappings of the recruiter; the reaction belies his age.)

9. Where did Ned serve in the war? In what order?
(After boot camp and code training, Ned is sent to Hawaii for training exercises. He is then deployed to the South Pacific, where he participates in field maneuvers on Guadalcanal. He then is part of the assault on Bougainville before being sent back to Hawaii, where he helps expand the Navajo code. Next he participates in the taking of Guam, where he is wounded, resulting in another return to Hawaii. Once he heals, he is deployed to Pavavu, where he remains until the taking of Iwo Jima and then Okinawa. After Japan surrenders, he is sent to San Francisco, where he stays until he is discharged and returns home.)

10. Relate the two accounts of Marines raising the American flag on Iwo Jima.
(Ned relates two different stories of Marines raising the flag on Mount Suribachi. At 10:15 AM, Marines crest the crater, taking the mountain. They attach a small flag that one of them had been carrying to a metal pipe that they had found and stuck it into the ground on the north rim of the crater. Shortly after, they were attacked by two hiding Japanese soldiers, repelling the assault.

Two hours later, AP photographer Joe Rosenthal arrived just as the first flag was being taken down. He staged another photograph of six men raising a larger flag, and it became an iconic image of the war in the Pacific. One of the men in the photograph is Ira Hayes, a Pima.)

How Language Works

1. Bruchac underscores the radical differences between Navajo and English simply and effectively early in the novel: "He did not say good-bye. There is no word for good-bye in Navajo." (p. 12)
2. Not only is the Navajo language painted as valuable in itself, it is also the means of transmitting cultural continuity across generations: "our sacred language . . . [was] passed down to us by our elders.

- We kept our elders and our families in mind as we studied. We remembered our sacred land." (p. 82)
3. Though the Navajo characters speak English with no accent, a number of other characters do: "Him fella bomb fall too far to hurt we." (p. 119) Other notable uses of dialect are the drill instructor and Georgia Boy. The range is interesting because the Navajo characters fall precisely in the middle. Gene-gene is a non-native speaker whose pidgin reads like a mangling of the English language, while Georgia Boy and the drill instructor are native English speakers who speak with less acuity than the Navajo characters.
 4. There is a stylistic shift when a character other than the narrator is responsible for the text. A good example is the letter from Ned's sister: "School is so boring. I have the same teachers you had and they are just as bad as you said. I can't wait for you to get home and tell me all about your adventures. Then I will not be bored." (p. 134) The writing reflects the fictional author, his younger sister. It is choppy, reflecting her age and writing experience.
 5. Often the final line of a chapter ties together several of the chapter's thematic threads: "That old truck and I belonged to the Marines and we had to go back into battle." (p. 162)
 6. The novel's final lines equate the Navajo cultural identity with the linguistic identity: "Let our language keep you strong and you will never forget what it is to be Navajo. You will never forget what it means to walk in beauty." (p. 214)

Across the Curriculum

Drama

1. Gathering details from the novel, script and act out: Ned's enlistment, a conversation with Georgia Boy, his conversation with Gene-gene, the raising of the flag at Iwo Jima, or Ned's learning about the Japanese surrender.
2. Choose one scene from the novel, then sketch and design a set for it as if it were going to be performed on stage. Consider how to capture the essence of an outdoor setting on stage.
3. Choose a chapter and perform it as if it were an oral storytelling. Which elements of the novel reflect

speech and which do not?

4. Choose a scene from the novel and script it as a scene from the perspective of a Japanese soldier. Perform it for the class and discuss what elements remained static and which changed with the shift in perspective.

Art

1. Research and give a presentation on Native-American symbols and iconography. Make special note of Navajo symbols.
2. Choose a Navajo myth, research it, and make a poster illustrating the main events, characters, and themes.
3. Choose what you consider to be the most important ten scenes and design or draw illustrations of each. Incorporate text from the scene into the image and justify your drawing with references to the novel.
4. Using media of your choice, translate the final chapter of the novel into a graphic novel. In groups, present your work and discuss how you chose to represent key moments, what you excluded and why, and how the project affected your understanding of the chapter.

Social Studies

1. Make a historical map of the Pacific Theatre of World War Two.
2. Choose a Native-American people other than the Navajo people and research and write a paper on their history, culture, art, language, mythology, or literature.

Science

1. Ned makes mention of the military's extensive use of DDT on Pacific islands during the war. Research and write a paper about the chemical structure of DDT, for what it was used, when, and the ecological effects.
2. Research and deliver an oral report on The Manhattan Project. Include a timeline and profiles of central figures.

Film/Video

1. Watch *The Linguists* (Ironbound Films, 2008). Compare Navajo with other languages documented in the film. Discuss various social and historical pressures on languages and how languages shape speakers' worldviews.
2. Using a digital video recorder, script, stage, and film a scene from the novel. Play the scene for the class and discuss your artistic decisions.

Journalism

1. Write a newspaper article about the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima as if it were a contemporary event.
2. Stage a talk show featuring significant historical figures from the novel, including American, Native-American, Japanese, and Solomon Islander characters.
3. Script and record a television news feature on the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor as if it were a contemporary event.
4. Create a newspaper-style crossword puzzle using only military terms from the novel.

Language

1. Research the Navajo language and choose one element to present to the class. Possible topics include: statives, grammar, morphology, phonology, semantics, syntax, etc.
2. Research and deliver a chalk talk on endangered languages. Explain why languages become endangered and give examples of extinct languages, endangered languages, and languages that have been successfully revitalized.
3. Keep a reading journal as you read. List every phrase that seems important or particularly aesthetically appealing. Discuss your selections with your classmates.
4. Research and write a paper about pidgins and creoles. Be sure to differentiate between the two and provide examples of both. Is the "pidgin" spoken by Gene-gene a pidgin or a creole?

Composition

1. Write a short story set from Georgia Boy's perspective. What are his thoughts on the war, the Navajo code talkers, Ned, Japanese military tactics, mortality, etc?
2. Choose a language that you do not know and create a code based on that language. Create a cipher key and practice coding and decoding messages.
3. Write a series of journal entries from the perspective of Ned's sister. Does she worry about Ned? Does she feel the same way that he does about the Navajo land, culture, and language? What is her daily life like?
4. Compose a series of letters between a Japanese soldier deployed in the South Pacific and his fiancé in Japan.

Literature

1. Research and write a paper about the tradition of Native American storytelling. How does storytelling fit into conventional ideas of literature?
2. Read a novel set in Europe during World War II and contrast it with Code Talker. How did the European Theatre differ from the Pacific Theatre? How were the Germans and Japanese similar and different as enemy combatants?
3. Choose what you consider to be the novel's most important line or paragraph and write an essay explaining its significance.
4. Identify a significant theme from the novel and compose an essay tracking its development throughout the novel. Include specific examples and cite passages from the text.

Alternate Assessment

1. Read *The Miracle Life of Edgar Mint* by Brady Udall and compose a paper comparing or contrasting one significant literary element of the novel with *Code Talker*. Possible terms of comparison include style, tone, plot, characters, culture, diction, syntax, themes, etc.
2. Read *Hiroshima* by John Hersey. Does Hersey's depiction of the aftermath of Hiroshima's bombing match Ned's brief second-hand account? Evaluate the decision to use atomic weapons in relation to

Hersey's account of the destruction of Hiroshima and Ned's account of the predicted casualties an invasion of Japan would incur.

3. As a group, outline a novel about the events in *Code Talker* from a different perspective. Assign each chapter to one or more students and collate the resulting writing into a chapbook.
4. Research and write a biography of a historical Native American of your choice.

Standardized Test Preparation

Vocabulary

1. Explain the differences between these pairs of commonly confused words:

- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| • accept | except |
| • affect | effect |
| • adverse | averse |
| • advice | advise |
| • all ready | already |
| • all together | altogether |
| • allot | a lot |
| • allusion | illusion |
| • bad | badly |
| • buy | by |
| • can | may |
| • capital | capitol |
| • censure | ensor |
| • choose | chose |
| • cite | site |
| • complement | compliment |
| • discreet | discrete |
| • draft | draught |
| • emigrate | immigrate |
| • imply | infer |
| • insure | ensure |
| • it's | its |
| • lay | lie |
| • loose | lose |
| • may | might |
| • miner | minor |
| • past | passed |
| • precede | proceed |
| • principal | principle |
| • sit | set |
| • stationary | stationery |
| • than | then |
| • threw | through |
| • to | too |
| • vociferous | voracious |

- weather whether
- your you're

Make a glossary, choosing twenty of these words:

- abide
- amphibious
- avert
- cadence
- calisthenics
- complement
- decline
- defiance
- dispense
- drawl
- embarkation
- emplacement
- fitful
- flounder
- furlough
- gratitude
- hogan
- impend
- industrious
- insubordination
- ironic
- martyr
- mesa
- mutton
- ominous
- optimistic
- parable
- pidgin
- propaganda
- pulverize
- resent
- semaphore
- splice
- strafe
- subversion
- unanimous

Grammar and Mechanics

1. Research and compose a list of the rules of capitalization in English. Include examples of correct and incorrect usage.
2. Research and compose a list of the rules of punctuation in English. Include: periods, ellipsis marks, commas, semicolons, colons, question marks, exclamation points, quotation marks, parentheses, apostrophes, hyphens, and dashes.

Writing

1. Compose an essay about the relationship between language and identity. You should have an introduction with a thesis statement, at least three body paragraphs with a main idea each, and a conclusion. Use MLA documentation when citing quotes.
2. As a class, collaborate on the outline for a short essay about the Navajo values and traditions discussed in the novel. Each student should then write their own essay from the outline. Compare the essays and discuss successful writing tactics.

Vocabulary Test

Circle the definition that *best* fits the word.

1. Hogan
 - a) school where Navajo children learned English
 - b) traditional Navajo song
 - c) traditional Navajo dwelling
 - d) style of wrestling

2. Mesa
 - a) natural elevation with a flat top
 - b) table
 - c) traditional Navajo song
 - d) military dining hall

3. Mutton
 - a) fish flesh
 - b) goat flesh
 - c) rabbit flesh
 - d) sheep flesh

4. Semaphore
 - a) system of or apparatus for visual signaling
 - b) system of encryption
 - c) system of or apparatus for vocal communication
 - d) machine used for decoding encrypted messages

5. Furlough
 - a) trench or bunker designed to protect soldiers from bombardment
 - b) approved absence from duty for a soldier
 - c) celebration at the end of basic training
 - d) line of tilled soil

6. Resent
 - a) to order a second military assault after the initial one failed
 - b) to taunt or tease
 - c) to be annoyed or angry in reaction to an event or situation
 - d) to follow orders

7. Pidgin
 - a) language that has evolved in isolation
 - b) broken English
 - c) language formed from borrowed elements of multiple languages
 - d) simplified form of a language used for communication between people who have no common language

8. Ominous
 - a) portentous
 - b) evil
 - c) dangerous
 - d) hopeless

9. Industrious

- a) wealthy
- b) busy
- c) diligent
- d) inclined towards manual labor

10. Unanimous

- a) having the consent of a majority of involved parties
- b) having the consent of a plurality of involved parties
- c) having the consent of all involved parties
- d) having the consent of a minority of involved parties

11. Propaganda

- a) dissemination of untruths in service to a group
- b) dissemination of ideas, facts, and/or allegations in service to a group
- c) dissemination of information in order to subdue an opponent
- d) dissemination of instructional material

12. Abide

- a) to hide
- b) to protect
- c) to dislike
- d) to endure

13. Avert

- a) to distract
- b) to approach
- c) to turn away from
- d) to focus

14. Dispense

- a) to deal out
- b) to receive
- c) to demand
- d) to eradicate

15. Subversion

- a) act of burrowing under
- b) efforts to undermine a system
- c) attempt to collapse a structure
- d) act of displacing, usurping

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

Name the character(s) who fits these descriptions.

- _____ 1. is taught to read by the narrator
- _____ 2. man who pitched Navajo as the basis of a code
- _____ 3. Navajo code talker killed by friendly fire
- _____ 4. the last man in his platoon to learn to swim
- _____ 5. Pima Native-American in the photograph of Marines raising the flag over Iwo Jima
- _____ 6. in charge of ensuring the Navajo Marines took their malaria pills
- _____ 7. sends his dirty clothes home from the war
- _____ 8. authorized the recruitment of Navajo code talkers
- _____ 9. assigned to watch over and protect the narrator
- _____ 10. photographer who staged the famous photo of Marines raising the flag over Iwo Jima
- _____ 11. avid Yankees fan
- _____ 12. Navajo code talker who is mistaken for dead
- _____ 13. the most famous man the narrator almost met
- _____ 14. the narrator's instructors in code talking
- _____ 15. narrates the events of the novel

Part II: Fact or Opinion (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true, F for false or O for opinion.

- _____ 1. The narrator enlisted in the Marines on his eighteenth birthday.
- _____ 2. Navajo code talkers rose high within the military hierarchy.
- _____ 3. Navajo recruits excelled in almost all tasks in basic training.
- _____ 4. Navajo code talkers were the most brave soldiers in the Marines.
- _____ 5. Japan was accused of violating the Geneva Conventions.
- _____ 6. Japan was a signatory to the Geneva Conventions.
- _____ 7. Only native Navajo speakers became Navajo code talkers.
- _____ 8. Japanese soldiers regularly surrendered when faced with a tactically impossible situation.
- _____ 9. Dropping atomic bombs was the best way to end the war in the Pacific.
- _____ 10. Navajo code talkers carried code books in the field.

Part III: Chronology (20 points)

Order the events in correct chronological order by writing numbers in the spaces provided.

- _____ 1. The Navajo code talkers are recruited by the Marines.
- _____ 2. The narrator learns to swim.
- _____ 3. The assault on Guam is launched.
- _____ 4. The assault on Bougainville is launched.
- _____ 5. Principal O'Sullivan demands that the narrator refrain from speaking Navajo.
- _____ 6. Assault on Iwo Jima is launched.
- _____ 7. The narrator's platoon hikes across a desert on Hawaii.
- _____ 8. Japan attacks Pearl Harbor.
- _____ 9. The narrator is refused service at a bar.
- _____ 10. The narrator practices amphibious landings in Guadalcanal.

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

1. Describe Native Americans' contributions to the war effort.
2. How did the Navajo code work?
3. What skills did Navajo recruits bring to military service?
4. Characterize Japanese attitudes on combat and military service.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Identification (30 points)

Identify speakers of quotations.

- _____ 1. The Marines are the best of the best. We are always the first to a fight. Our motto is *Semper Fidelis*, always faithful.
- _____ 2. What about them Yankees?
- _____ 3. Begay, hands at your side and open wide.
- _____ 4. Because of you, I have lost my temper, my health, and my faith in my fellow man, some men in particular.
- _____ 5. Are yew eyeballing me, bo-wah?
- _____ 6. Then when I rolled over I realized some helpful person had stuck my dog tag into my mouth!
- _____ 7. Enjoy your last meal, leatherneck.
- _____ 8. I'm gonna be with yew on this here Cartwheel. And I won't let nothin' happen to my little Indian buddy.
- _____ 9. Now I want to go and be a warrior for our people. I ask your blessings to become a Marine.
- _____ 10. We got so many darn chiefs, there's no room for any Indians.
- _____ 11. We'll catch seven kinds of hell on the beaches and that will be just the beginning.
- _____ 12. Chiefs, do you suppose you guys could go all the way in to camp? I'm going to write a letter for you to take to Colonel Wood asking him to send us out some water.
- _____ 13. Bigger guys make bigger targets.
- _____ 14. Him fella bomb fall too far to hurt we.
- _____ 15. The lives of many men will depend on your messages.

Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

Provide an answer to each of these questions:

- _____ 1. What were the cotton waistbands worn by Japanese soldiers to fend off bullets and bayonets called?
- _____ 2. Name one of the nicknames for American Marines used in the novel.
- _____ 3. What did grumbling soldiers call Operation Cartwheel?
- _____ 4. What do the Navajo call themselves?
- _____ 5. With whom did the narrator have an intense, meaningful conversation using no words?
- _____ 6. What does "Iwo Jima" mean?
- _____ 7. In what year were code talkers told that they could talk about what they did in World War II?
- _____ 8. What did Japanese infantry yell during suicide attacks?
- _____ 9. What was the rickety Japanese bomber that flew nightly missions over Guadalcanal nicknamed?
- _____ 10. How many Navajo recruits developed the first draft of the code?

Part III: Fill-in (20 points)

Fill in the words that complete each statement.

1. The narrator enlists in the Marine Corps at age _____, one year younger than the minimum age of _____.
2. After being issued new _____, the Navajo recruits began practicing _____ instead of fencing.
3. A team of Navajo code talkers consisted of one man using a _____ and another with _____.
4. In order to let other radio operators know that they weren't the enemy, every Navajo code transmission began with _____ or _____.
5. "Kamikaze" refers to the sacred _____ that destroyed the fleets of _____.

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

1. Explain the narrator's decision to enlist in the Marine Corps.
2. Discuss the significance of the Navajo language to the Navajo people.
3. Why and by whom were Navajos discouraged from speaking Navajo?
4. Analyze the narrative structure of the novel.
5. Discuss the author's use of dialect and provide examples.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY TEST

1. C
2. A
3. D
4. A
5. B
6. C
7. D
8. A
9. C
10. C
11. B
12. D
13. C
14. A
15. B

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

1. Georgia Boy
2. Philip Johnston
3. Harry Tsosie
4. Ned Begay
5. Ira Hayes
6. Watch Officer Alex Williams
7. Ned Begay
8. Major General Clinton Vogel
9. Smitty
10. Joe Rosenthal
11. Georgia Boy
12. Charlie Begay
13. John F. Kennedy
14. Johnny Manuelito and John Benally
15. Ned Begay

Part II: Fact or Opinion (20 points)

1. F
2. F
3. T
4. O
5. T
6. F
7. T
8. F
9. O
10. F

Part III: Chronology (20 points)

1. 3
2. 4
3. 8
4. 7
5. 1

6. 9
7. 5
8. 2
9. 10
10. 6

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Identification (30 points)

Identify speakers of quotations.

1. Johnny Manuelito
2. Georgia Boy
3. Watch Officer Alex Williams
4. Corporal Radant
5. Ned Begay's drill instructor
6. Charlie Begay
7. a cook
8. Georgia Boy
9. Ned Begay
10. Sam Little Fingernail
11. General Howling Mad Smith
12. Lieutenant Stormy
13. Ned Begay
14. native Solomon Islander
15. Johnny Manuelito

Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

Provide an answer to each of these questions:

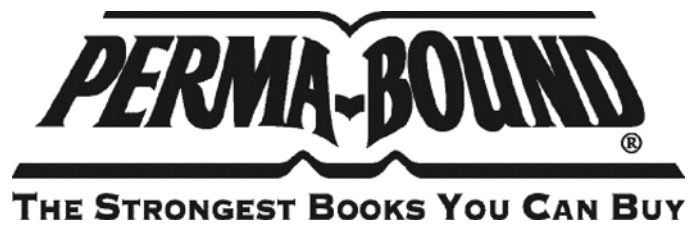
1. sennimbari or "Cloth of a Thousand Stitches"
2. jarhead or leatherneck
3. Operation Shoestring Number Two
4. Diné
5. Gene-gene
6. "Sulphur Island"
7. 1969
8. *Banzai!*
9. Washing Machine Charlie
10. 29

Part III: Fill-in (20 points)

1. sixteen, seventeen
2. rifles, hand-to-hand combat
3. radio, pen and paper
4. "Arizona" or "New Mexico"
5. wind, Kublai Khan

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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