

Ballad of Ira Hayes

Johnny Cash

Ira Hayes, Ira Hayes
Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey drinkin' Indian
Nor the Marine that went to war
Gather 'round me people there's a story I would tell
About a brave young Indian you should remember well
From the land of the Pima Indian, a proud and noble band
Who farmed the Phoenix Valley in Arizona land
Down the ditches for a thousand years
The water grew Ira's people's crops
Till the white man stole their water rights
And the sparklin' water stopped
Now Ira's folks were hungry
And their land grew crops of weeds
When war came, Ira volunteered
And forgot the white man's greed
Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey drinkin' Indian
Nor the Marine that went to war
There they battled up Iwo Jima's hill
Two hundred and fifty men
But only twenty seven lived
To walk back down again
And when the fight was over
And 'Old Glory' raised
Among the men who held it high
Was the Indian, Ira Hayes
Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey drinkin' Indian
Nor the Marine that went to war
Ira Hayes returned a hero
Celebrated through the land
He was winned and speeched and honored
Everybody shook his hand
But he was just a Pima Indian
No water, no home, no chance
At home nobody cared what Ira'd done
And when did the Indians dance
Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey drinkin' Indian
Nor the Marine that went to war
Then Ira started drinkin' hard
Jail was often his home
They'd let him raise the flag and lower it
Like you'd throw a dog a bone!
He died drunk early one mornin'
Alone in the land he fought to save
Two inches of water in a lonely ditch

Was a grave for Ira Hayes Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey drinkin' Indian
Nor the Marine that went to war Yeah, call him drunken Ira Hayes
But his land is just as dry
And his ghost is lyin' thirsty
In the ditch where Ira died

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