

Kinky Friedman, Ballad Of Ira Hayes

(Peter LaFarge)

Gather round me people and a story I will tell
Bout a brave young Indian lad, you should remember well,
From a tribe of Pima Indians, a proud and peaceful band
Who farmed the Phoenix Valley out in Arizona land.

Down their ditches for a thousand years the sparkling water rushed
Till the white man stole the water rights and the running water hushed.
Ira's folks was hungry, their fields grew thick with weeds,
But when war came Ira volunteered and forgot the white man's greed.

Call him drunken Ira Hayes, he won't answer anymore,
Not that whiskey drinking Indian or Marine who went to war.

Well, they battled up Iwo Jima Hill, two hundred and fifty men
But only twenty-seven lived to walk back down again.
And after the fight was over and Old Glory proudly raised,
Among the men who held her high was an Indian, Ira Hayes.

Call him drunken Ira Hayes, he won't answer anymore,
Not that whiskey drinking Indian or Marine who went to war.

Well, Ira Hayes returned a hero, celebrated throughout the land,
He was wined and speeched and honored, everybody shook his hand.
But he's just a Pima Indian, no food, no friend, no chance,
And nobody cared what Ira did and when do the Indians dance.

Well, Ira took to drinking hard, jail often was his home,
They used to let him raise the flag there and lower it just like you'd throw a dog a bone.
And Ira died drunk early one morning all alone in the land he'd fought to save.
Two inches of water in a lonely ditch was the grave for Ira Hayes.

Call him drunken Ira Hayes, he won't answer anymore,
Not that whiskey drinking Indian or Marine who went to war.

Yeah, call him drunken Ira Hayes, but his land is till as dry
And his ghost, well, that's lying thirsty in the ditch where Ira died.

Call him drunken Ira Hayes, he won't answer anymore,
Not that whiskey drinking Indian or Marine who went to war.