

The Ballad of Boot Hill

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 peoples' crops
'Till the white man stole the 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

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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 when Old Glory raised
Among the men who held it high
Was the Indian, Ira Hayes

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Ira returned a hero
Celebrated through the land
He was wine and speech and honored
Everybody shook his hand

But he was just a Pima Indian
No water, no crops, no chance
At home nobody cared what Ira'd done
And when did the Indians dance

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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 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
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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