

The Ballad Of Ira Hayes

Johnny Cash

Ira Hayes, Ira Hayes

R: Call him drunken Ira Hayes
he won't answer anymore
not the whiskey drinkin` Indian
nor the Marine that went to war

1. 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

2. 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

R: Call him drunken Ira Hayes...

3. 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

R: Call him drunken Ira Hayes...

4. Ira returned a hero
celebrated through the land
he was wined and speeched 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

R: Call him drunken Ira Hayes...

5. 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

R: Call him drunken Ira Hayes...

6. 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