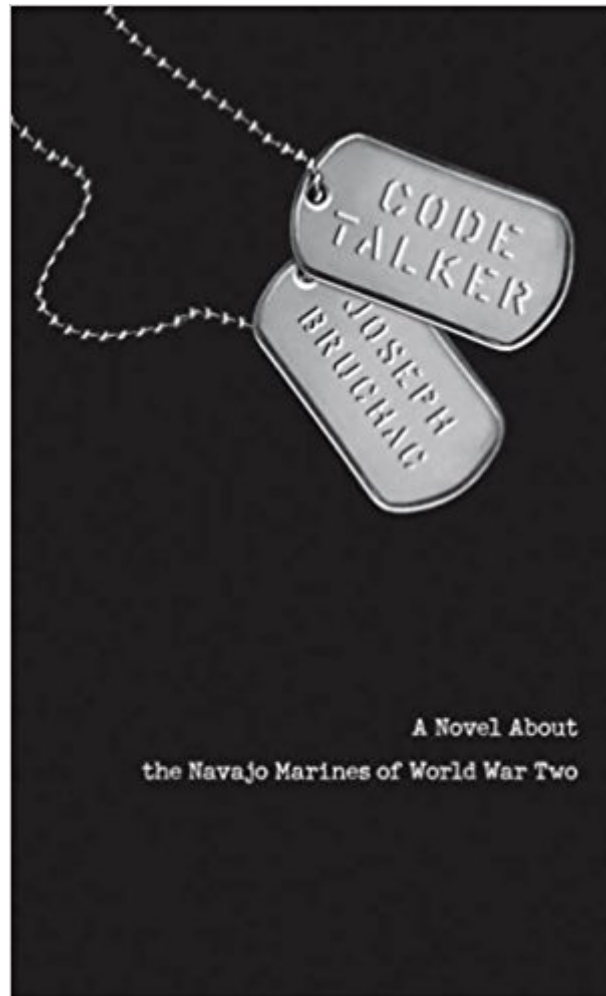




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# **Code Talker: A Novel About The Navajo Marines Of World War Two**



## Synopsis

"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." —Booklist, starred review Throughout World War II, in the conflict fought against Japan, Navajo code talkers were a crucial part of the U.S. effort, sending messages back and forth in an unbreakable code that used their native language. They braved some of the heaviest fighting of the war, and with their code, they saved countless American lives. Yet their story remained classified for more than twenty years. But now Joseph Bruchac brings their stories to life for young adults through the riveting fictional tale of Ned Begay, a sixteen-year-old Navajo boy who becomes a code talker. His grueling journey is eye-opening and inspiring. This deeply affecting novel honors all of those young men, like Ned, who dared to serve, and it honors the culture and language of the Navajo Indians. An ALA Best Book for Young Adults "Nonsensational and accurate, Bruchac's tale is quietly inspiring..." —School Library Journal

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0910 (What's this?)

Paperback: 231 pages

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Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.6 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 245 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #5,422 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #4 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Native North & South Americans #5 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Military #8 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Grade 5 Up — In the measured tones of a Native American storyteller, Bruchac assumes the persona of a Navajo grandfather telling his grandchildren about his World War II experiences. Protagonist Ned Begay starts with his early schooling at an Anglo boarding school, where the

Navajo language is forbidden, and continues through his Marine career as a "code talker," explaining his long silence until "de-classified" in 1969. Begay's lifelong journey honors the Navajos and other Native Americans in the military, and fosters respect for their culture. Bruchac's gentle prose presents a clear historical picture of young men in wartime, island hopping across the Pacific, waging war in the hells of Guadalcanal, Bougainville, and Iwo Jima. Nonsensational and accurate, Bruchac's tale is 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 Talkers* (Facts On File, 1998). For those who've read none of the above, this is an eye-opener.

—Patricia Manning, formerly at Eastchester Public Library, NY  
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**\*Starred Review\*** Gr. 6-9. Six-year-old Ned Begay leaves his Navajo home for boarding school, where he learns the English language and American ways. At 16, he enlists in the U.S. Marines during World War II and is trained as a code talker, using his native language to radio battlefield information and commands in a code that was kept secret until 1969. Rooted in his Navajo consciousness and traditions even in dealing with fear, loneliness, and the horrors of the battlefield, Ned tells of his experiences in Hawaii, Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Guam, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. The book, addressed to Ned's grandchildren, ends with an author's note about the code talkers as well as lengthy acknowledgments and a bibliography. The narrative pulls no punches about war's brutality and never adopts an avuncular tone. Not every section of the book is riveting, but slowly the succession of scenes, impressions, and remarks build to create a solid, memorable portrayal of Ned Begay. Even when facing complex negative forces within his own country, he 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. Carolyn Phelan  
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A heart and mind-opening must read for children and adults alike. Powerful and well-written, experience the world of a people who, despite sorrowful experiences, stand tall and strong in answering the call to duty. The Diné rise above petty prejudice to serve as proud marines creating a code that could not be broken and prove to be indispensable in the Pacific Theater. The

author carefully treats the combat zone so that you get the idea of the horrors without the gore. This makes it a valuable resource in the classroom. So many themes to capitalize upon--integrity, pride and appreciation for the DinĀfĀ© and other Native American cultures, friendship, dealing with prejudice--against the enemy and against others, locus of control, family, etc. As a teacher and a parent, I highly recommend Code Talker. In fact, I will be investing in a class set; my own money, of course, because Code Talkers is so powerful in creating a space for awareness--the kind of awareness that can change paradigms forever.AUDIO VERSION REVIEW:Code Talker is poignant to read, but Derrick Henry's recording transforms the novel into a spellbinding fireside evening at "grandfather's" knee. Thankfully, Henry must be DinĀfĀ© or can speak the language well enough to cause my friend, a fellow DinĀfĀ© to say, "He is Navajo." The authentic pronunciation of Navajo words and phrases increases appreciation for why this was America's best hope to create an unbreakable code.If there is any book one should listen to rather than read, this is it. Actually hearing the sacred language elevates the experience of Code Talker, for it is no longer just a novel, it is now an oral history.

I had a hard time putting this book down. It's an easy read about a fictional Navajo man who was chosen to be a code talker in WW II but is based on actual events. Well researched & well written, it will keep your interest from beginning to end ... and you'll learn a lot about the value of what the real Navajo code talkers offered to a country that had historically treated the Indian people poorly. I highly recommend this book.

The book moved me to find out more about Indian culture.To embrace difference and to cherish tradition. I will forever look at someone who is different than I as an adventure worth knowing.

This was a good fictional treatment of a really interesting part of history. I liked that it emphasized the cultural importance and these brave code talkers probably helped save their language. Very much worth the read especially for a tween or teen. My kids really enjoyed it and it sparked lots of good conversation.

This book is very well written and gives an interesting view of the WWII through the eyes of a Native American. Although I do not believe this to be autobiographical in nature the reader is able to experience and understand first hand the difficulties faced by the main character. We purchased this to use for homeschooling while we were working on a unit about WWII. My son was able to give a

great report using this text and he walked away with a greater understanding of the sacrifice of the Native American Code Talkers and our soldiers in general during this war. Love this book!

Bruchac is a brilliant storyteller. This is an accurate piece of historical fiction about the Code Talkers and their valuable service to their country during WW2 in spite of systemic racism against Native Americans. These first Americans served their country bravely and well.

Needed this book for school assignment it was perfect loved reading it thank you highly recommended it!

I got this book for my middle school grandson to read, but started reading it myself and could not put it down. Joseph Bruchac has taken an historical event that I was never taught about in school, brought it to life through the eyes of the young man in the story and woven it through and through with fascinating information about the Navajo culture. I help homeschool my grandchildren and am now looking for other books by the author that I can fit into this next school year. I highly recommend this book and this author.

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