

"Diverse cultures can make a country richer and stronger." —Chester Nez, Navajo Code Talker



Codes help people talk to one another. Some codes, such as Morse code, are meant to be used by anyone. At one time, Morse code helped people communicate over long distances. Other codes are meant to be secret. All the countries that fought in World War II used secret codes. They coded messages sent by telephone and radio, so enemies would not know their plans. Each country also tried to decipher, or break, the others' codes.

The United States was one of the countries that fought in World War II. The Marines needed a code that other nations couldn't break. The Marines turned to 29 Navajo men to develop this code. Basing a code on the Navajo language was smart. The Navajo did not write their language down. Very few people who were not Navajo could speak it.

Making the code wasn't easy. The Code Talkers, as they were called, had no words in their own language for some of the weapons they had to talk about. For example, they had never seen most of the planes the Marines used. But the planes reminded them of birds. So the Code Talkers used Navajo words for different birds to stand for different kinds of planes.

Several Navajo words were chosen to stand for each letter. Using just one word for each letter, or 26 words, would have been too simple. The Navajo words for ant, apple, and axe stood for the letter A. In Navajo, none of these words begins with an A sound.

About 400 Navajo Code Talkers protected secrets during the war. Their codes were never broken. Their role remained top secret until 1968, more than 20 years after the war ended. In 2000, President Bill Clinton signed a law that awarded the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers the Congressional Gold Medal.

After reading the text above, answer the following:

1. All the countries that fought in World War II didn't use secret codes.

True False

2. They coded messages sent by telephone and radio, so enemies would not know their plans.

True False

3. United States was one of the countries that fought in World War II.

True False

4. 29 Navajos men developed a secret code for Marines.

True False

5. A lot of people from all the world knew to speak Navajo.

True False

6. This 29 men where called "The Code Talkers".

True False

7. The Navajo words for *ant*, *apple* and *axe* stood for the letter **P**.

True False

8. About 600 Navajo Code Talkers protected weapons during the war.

True False

9. Their role remained top secret until 1968.

True False

10. In 2021, President Joe Biden signed a law that awarded the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers the Congressional Gold Metal.

True False