

Peter LaFarge

"The Ballad Of Ira Hayes"

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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 Indians, a proud and noble
band,
Who farmed the Phoenix Valley in Arizona land.
Down their ditches for a thousand years the waters
grew Ira's people's crops,
Till the white man stole their water rights and their
sparklin' water stopped.
Now Ira's folks grew hungry, and their farms grew
crops of weeds.
When war came, Ira volunteered and forgot the white
man's greed.
CHORUS: Call him drunken Ira Hayes --
He won't answer anymore,
Not the whiskey-drinkin' Indian,
Not the 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;
When the fight was over -- and Old Glory raised
Among the men who held it high was the Indian -- Ira
Hayes.

Ira Hayes 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 home, no
chance;
At home nobody cared what Ira done -- and when do
the Indians dance?

Then Ira started drinkin' hard -- jail was often his home;
They let him raise the flag and lower it -- as you would
throw a dog a bone;
He died drunk early one morning -- alone in the land
he'd fought to save;
Two inches of water in a lonely ditch -- was the grave
for Ira Hayes.

CODA: Yea, call him drunken Ira Hayes,
But his land is just as dry,
And the ghost is lying thirsty
In the ditch where Ira died.

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