



2005

Code Talker: a novel about the Navajo Marines of World War Two

Pat Frade

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Bruchac, Joseph. *Code Talker: a novel about the Navajo Marines of World War Two*. Dial Books, 2005. ISBN 0803729219. \$16.99. 231 pp.

Reviewer: Pat Frade

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Historical fiction;

Subject: World War, 1939-1945--Juvenile fiction; Navajo language--Juvenile fiction;

Cryptography--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Six-year-old Ned Begay is a scared little boy who leaves his Navajo home for boarding school where he learns the English language. Ned, along with the other Navajo boys, struggles at first in his new environment. His love for learning fuels his studies and he becomes a very good student. After Pearl Harbor is attacked, Ned enlists in the U.S. Marines and is trained as a Code Talker. He uses his native language to radio battlefield information and commands in code. The book, addressed to Ned's grandchildren, tells of his experiences in Hawaii, Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Guam, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. Bruchac's writing presents a clear historical picture of young men in wartime, digging fox holes, sending radio messages amidst bombs exploding, and watching friends die. Straightforward and accurate, Bruchac's tale is inspiring. It reads like an autobiography instead of a novel. The reader is propelled into the world of WWII as the scenes, impressions, and feelings build to create a memorable portrayal of Ned Begay, a Navajo code talker.