

The Ballad Of Ira Hayes

Johnny Cash

A **D**
Ira Hayes, Ira Hayes

A
R: Call him drunken Ira Hayes

D
he won't answer anymore

E
not the whiskey drinkin' Indian

A
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