

When the topic of Rights and Responsibilities was first introduced to us, we knew we wanted to do something unique but memorable. After much discussion, we eventually narrowed it down to several topics about the contributions and tribulations faced by the large Native American and Indigenous population within the United States. We knew we needed to narrow down our topic more, so we began our research process. In due course, we found a topic that spoke to us: The Navajo Code Talkers. The Navajo Code talkers were indispensable to the United States' WWII efforts, yet were essentially erased from history, not receiving recognition until decades after their service. The Navajo Code Talkers fought a constant battle on both sides, not only on the frontlines of the largest and most deadly war in the world, but also facing discrimination from their own side, constantly having to fight for their rights. Despite facing constant inequity and prejudice, at a time where the military was still segregated, the Navajo Code Talkers still carried an immense amount of responsibility, turning tides and securing victories at many monumental battles throughout WWII.

Once our topic was set in stone, we began our research process. Firstly, we focused on gathering as much information as possible to get a good grasp on the Navajo Code Talkers as a general topic. Once all of us felt as though we had a good handle on the basic background knowledge, we dug deeper, asking ourselves who the Navajo Code Talkers truly were? We worked to gather information, quotes, and images that related to the annual theme, focusing on the "who?", "what?", and "why?" We used a combination of primary and secondary sources, blending sources together to form a unique account, and forming our own perspectives.

After our research was conducted and gathered, we chose to create a website for our presentation category. We wanted to challenge ourselves with new technology, as none of us have prior experience with website development. During our website creation process we faced an array of technical difficulties, and a steep learning curve as we learned how to use the website development software.

The Navajo Code Talkers and their efforts had a tremendous impact on the successes of the United States' military efforts in WWII, beginning their essential work before they legally had the right to be in the military. They broke barriers, becoming the first completely Native American and Indigenous squad within the United States' military. Despite facing discrimination, injustice, and bias against them, the Navajo Code Talkers still managed to successfully create and utilize the only unbreakable code in the history of modern warfare. Despite these hardships, The Navajo Code Talkers did not allow the trials and tribulations they faced to impair their ability to shoulder the immense responsibility they had to ensure the preservation, protection, and continuation of American ideals of freedom, liberty, justice, and opportunity, even when they were repeatedly not afforded these same privileges. Their bravery commends them as war-time linguistic pioneers.

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