



Quiet Hero: The Ira Hayes Story

written and illustrated by S. D. Nelson

About the Book

Genre: Nonfiction/Biography

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Reading Level: Grade 4–5

Interest Level: Grades 3–8

Guided Reading Level: V

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:
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*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

Themes: Heroes, Patriotism, Courage, Loyalty, Honor, War, World War II, Veterans, Marines, United States history, Overcoming Obstacles, Dreams and Aspirations, Coping with Death, Discrimination and Prejudice, Leadership, Pride, Persistence and Grit, Respect, Citizenship, Self Esteem and Confidence, Teamwork, Addiction, Biographies, Native American/ Indigenous Interest

Resources on the web:

leeandlow.com/books/quiet-hero

SYNOPSIS

Growing up on the Gila River Indian Reservation in Arizona, Ira Hayes was a quiet, shy boy. He never wanted to be the center of attention, and at school, he felt lonely and out of place.

By the time Ira was in his late teens, World War II was raging. When the United States called its men to arms, Ira answered by joining the Marine Corps. He believed it was his duty to fight honorably for his country, and with his Marine buddies by his side, Ira finally felt as if he belonged. Eventually they were sent to the tiny Japanese island of Iwo Jima, where a chance event and an extraordinary photograph catapulted Ira to national awareness and transformed his life forever.

This is the biography of Native American Ira Hayes, a shy, humble Pima Indian, who fought in World War II as a marine and was one of six soldiers to raise the U.S. flag on Iwo Jima, an event immortalized in Joe Rosenthal's famous photograph.

Filled with all the patriotism and tragedy of wartime and its aftereffects, *Quiet Hero* is the story of one person's courage in the face of both military and personal battles. It is a poignant tribute to Ira Hayes.

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

BACKGROUND

Author's Note from S. D. Nelson

"Had it not been for Joe Rosenthal's photograph, Ira Hayes would have been as unknown as thousands of other soldiers who fought for the United States in World War II. Naturally shy and withdrawn, Ira preferred to be left alone. As fate would have it, Rosenthal's photo turned this quiet man into a reluctant national hero.

Born in 1923, Ira Hayes grew up during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The United States experienced an extreme economic slump, and there was great unemployment and poverty across the country. On the Gila River Indian Reservation where Ira and his family lived, the hardships of daily living were particularly severe. Many families were near starvation. Indian parents, realizing their children would receive food and clothing at government-run schools, reluctantly sent their children away. These schools attempted to assimilate Native American children into the white American way of life.

Ira Hayes attended several schools, the last one being Phoenix Indian School in Phoenix, Arizona. Phoenix Indian School opened in 1891. It housed students from many different tribes from third grade through high school. Initially the school operated with military-style discipline, with the goal of "civilizing" Indian children. Students wore uniforms; marched; and woke up, ate, studied, and went to bed on a strict schedule. Boys and girls were separated at all times. They were punished for speaking their native languages and observing traditional ceremonies. However, during the 1930s the general public began to demand equality for Native Americans. By the time Ira entered the school in 1940, students no longer wore uniforms. Rules and schedules were regularly enforced, but strict punishment was reduced. Boys and girls attended the same classes, and were allowed to eat together and socialize. Most students developed a sense of comfort and felt their schooling provided them with many opportunities. But for some from isolated locations, such as Ira, the boarding school experience was foreign and frightening. Even so, the regimentation he endured prepared Ira for life in the military.

For many decades Indians had been subjected to severe discrimination and injustice at the hands of the United States government. Yet Native Americans were as patriotic as any citizens. When war threatened, young men looked beyond the injustices their people had suffered and did not hesitate to enlist in the military. Like so many other Americans, Native Americans were proud to serve and protect their country.

Toward the end of World War II, the island of Iwo Jima had great strategic importance because of the airfields located there. Under Japanese control, the island could be used as an early warning station and as a base for attacking American bombers on their flights to mainland Japan. Under United States control, the airfields could be used by American fighter planes that escorted the bombers and as emergency landing bases for airplanes damaged in bombing raids.

After a three-day air and naval bombardment, the U.S. Marines launched a massive attack on Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945. The Japanese soldiers defending the island fought from underground

bunkers connected by a network of tunnels. The marines were aboveground, and the loose volcanic ash made it nearly impossible to dig foxholes. The Japanese soldiers vowed to kill as many Americans as possible and to die fighting. It took more than a month of fierce, bloody battle, but the United States finally won control of Iwo Jima on March 26. By then more than 21,000 Japanese were killed or committed suicide. Approximately 6,800 Americans died, and more than 17,000 were wounded.

Joe Rosenthal was an experienced combat photographer who accompanied the marines as they battled their way across the Pacific Ocean toward Japan. He climbed to the top of Mount Suribachi with the soldiers who were sent to put up the second flag. He took just one picture of the flag raising and captured six determined figures in the midst of terrible conflict, united in one forward-moving, pyramid-shaped mass. This inspiring image deeply touched the American people and helped reinforce their commitment to win the war. Joe Rosenthal was later awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his photograph, and it is believed to be the most reproduced photograph in history.

As a result of Rosenthal's photograph, Ira Hayes and the two other survivors of the flag raising, Rene Gagnon and John Bradley, were considered heroes. They were called back from the frontlines and asked to join a bond drive to raise money for the United States war effort. Overwhelmed by the public attention and the sudden loss of belonging and purpose, Ira drank to relieve his loneliness. Alcohol also helped him forget the horrors of war and numbed his feelings of despair over the terrible conditions endured by his family and others living on the Gila River Indian Reservation. Ira struggled to control his drinking for many years, but without treatment, alcoholism consumed him. He died on January 24, 1955, at the age of thirty-two.

The United States Marine Corps War Memorial in Washington, D.C., is the largest bronze statue in the world. Inspired by Joe Rosenthal's photograph, Felix de Weldon directed a team of artisans in the construction of the statue.

First they shaped the six human figures in plaster. Then they formed a segmented mold of the entire mass, and molten bronze was cast into each mold segment. The bronze pieces were bolted and welded together. Completed in 1954, the gigantic statue stands seventy-eight feet high and weighs more than one hundred tons.

Ira Hayes was a humble, modest man who carried on the traditions of his people and fought honorably for his country during World War II. Although his life had a sad ending, he remains a symbol of courage, strength, and patriotism for all Americans. As President Harry Truman said upon Ira Hayes's return home from the Pacific. "You are an American hero."

For S.D. Nelson's Bibliography from *Quiet Hero*, refer to the Backmatter of the book to examine the resources and books consulted during the research process.

Additional Information about Ira Hayes

For additional information about Ira Hayes, please check out "Ira Hayes - Pima Native American and National War Hero" from the Museum of Native American History (<https://www.monah.us/>)

[luminaries/2021/1/5/ira-hayes-national-war-hero](#)).

In an op-ed article for Teen Vogue, Dakota/Lakota Sioux writer Ruth H. Hopkins explains the legacy of Ira Hayes, as well as the complicated background behind Native people/American Indians joining the U.S. military (<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/ira-hayes-and-the-history-behind-the-famous-iwo-jima-flag-raising-photo>).

Pima Indians

For more information about Pima Indians, consult the Partnership with Native Americans' page, "Arizona: Pima" (http://www.nativepartnership.org/site/PageServer?pagename=PWNA_Native_Reservations_Pima). The Pima Indians primarily reside in three reservations in Arizona, including the Gila River Reservation, the Salt River Reservation, and the Ak-Chin Reservation. You can also consult the following websites and organizations for more information about Pima communities (<https://www.gilariver.org/>) (<https://www.srpmic-nsn.gov/>) (<https://www.ncai.org/tribal-vawa/sdvcj-today/gila-river-indian-community>). Explore how the Pima communities today are making an impact in regard to the environment and restoring clean water (<https://www.gilariver.org/index.php/about/water-settlement>).

Veterans and Mental Health

In the Author's Note, S.D. Nelson writes, "Overwhelmed by the public attention and sudden loss of belonging and purpose, Ira drank to relieve his loneliness. Alcohol also helped him forget the horrors of war and numbed his feelings of despair over the terrible conditions endured by his family and others living on the Gila River Indian Reservation. Ira struggled to control his drinking for many years, but without treatment, alcoholism consumed him." Many veterans struggle with mental health and substance abuse issues like Ira. The National Veterans Foundation provides more statistics about veterans who suffer from major depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and more (<https://nvf.org/veteran-mental-health-facts-statistics/>). Additionally, the National Institute of Drug Abuse reports that substance abuse among veterans is strongly related to their exposure to combat. Mental health care is critical for veterans, before and after combat (<https://nvf.org/counseling-mental-health-care-before-deployment-vets-return/>). It is important to acknowledge the need for mental health for veterans, and how Ira's challenges could have been ameliorated with mental health care.

Native Americans and Boarding Schools

Ira Hayes was forced to attend a government-run boarding school for American Indians. The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, a nonprofit under the laws of the Navajo Nation, states that there were over 350 boarding schools across the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries. By 1925, this affected more than 60,000 children and their families (<https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/native-american-boarding-schools/>).

The United States government instituted these schools especially for American Indian children with the idea that they needed to unlearn their "Indian ways" and live as the settlers did. According to

the Library of Congress, the purpose of these schools was to make Indian children patriotic and productive citizens. The motto "Kill the Indian... Save the Man" originated from the army officer who first founded the schools to deal with "the Indian problem" (<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=16516865>). The days in these schools followed military-like schedules and discipline, and children were mostly taught job training like carpentry for boys and housekeeping for girls. Native children were not allowed to speak in their Indian languages, and their long hair was cut short.

For more information about boarding schools for American Indians boarding schools:

- Consult the Library of Congress's (LOC) Teacher's Guide on Assimilation through Education: <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/native-american-boarding-schools/#teachers-guide>
- The blog at the National Museum of the American Indian <https://americanindian.si.edu>
- And the National Indian Education Association flipbook on Native Nations and American Schools at <https://www.niea.org/boarding-school-healing-curriculum>.

For more books and resources about boarding schools for American Indians, see the list divided by age group at the American Indians in Children's Literature blog: <https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2008/02/as-more-resources-and-books-are.html>.

Note About Alcoholism

The story mentions that Ira Hayes suffered from alcoholism. You will want to treat this part of the story with sensitivity as alcoholism is a painful issue for some families and the disease may have personally touched the lives of some of your students.

Note About Native American Boarding Schools

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BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- Take a look at the front and back covers. Take a picture walk. Ask students to make a prediction. Do you think this book will be fiction or nonfiction? What makes you think so?
- What does it mean to be patriotic? How do you show patriotism?
- What does it mean to be a hero? Who are some people you consider heroes?
- Have you ever been away from your family for more than a day? How did you feel? Why did you feel that way?
- Have you ever felt shy? Why do you think people sometimes feel this way?
- How do people show sadness? How might you help someone who is sad?
- What is a biography? Why are biographies of interest to readers? What biographies have you read?
- What kinds of things make up a person's life story? Are people always in control of their life stories?
- Describe a time you felt left out or did not belong. How did you make yourself feel better? Who did you ask for help? What can you do if you see someone alone, feeling left out, or being teased?
- Why do you think I chose this book for us to read today?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1; Craft & Structure, Strand 5; and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

- **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book, *Quiet Hero*. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?
- Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, acknowledgment, quote by S.D. Nelson, quote by Ira Hayes, author/illustrator biography, illustrations, bibliography, and author's note. As you show each of the illustrations, ask students to think about why the illustrator, S.D. Nelson, chooses to create an overall uniform tone and what effect his style has on the mood and setting of the historical story.
- Encourage students to stop and jot/sketch in their reading notebooks during the read-aloud

when they: learn new information, see a powerful image, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or hear new words.

- Have students quickly write a feeling in their notebooks during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote that feeling down and have them to write a journal entry about it.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- who Ira Hayes is
- how joining the marines changed Ira's life
- how surviving the war and reception back home affected him
- why Ira is described as a "Quiet Hero"

Encourage students to consider why the author/illustrator, S.D. Nelson, would want to share this story with young people. Please see the Notes about Alcoholism and Notes about Native American Boarding Schools in the Background section of this guide for potential sensitive and triggering content for students.

VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Content Specific

Gila River Indian Reservation, Sacaton, Arizona, Pima Indians, Sonoran Desert, outhouse, kerosene lantern, the Bible, Phoenix Indian School, World War II, Europe, Asia, Japan, Pearl Harbor, tribal elders, private, San Diego, California, rifles, hand grenades, battalion, transport ships, Pacific Ocean, Iwo Jima, volcanic island, airfields, Mount Suribachi, summit, rubble, Joe Rosenthal, Felix de Weldon, Arlington National Cemetery, United States Marine Corps Memorial

Academic

remote, housekeeping, maids, manual skills, relatively, unnoticed, endured, wounded, spellbound, statue, colossal, despair

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite textual evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. How does the author describe Ira's childhood on the Gila River Indian Reservation?
2. Why does Ira feel out of place at the government boarding school?
3. What kinds of things did Ira have to do at the boarding school?
4. How did Ira communicate with his family?
5. According to the book, what prompted the United States to enter World War II?
6. Why did Ira Hayes join the Marine Corps?
7. Why did Ira like being a part of the Marines? Why was he not shy about being a marine?
8. Author S.D. Nelson writes, "Many people thought of Indians as fierce fighters, so Ira was allowed to train for combat along with the white soldiers. Other men of color were forced to be cooks or carry supplies." What does this reveal about prejudice in the United States in the 1940s?
9. How did Ira set up the flag at Iwo Jima? What did he have to do?
10. Why was Ira Hayes uncomfortable being considered a hero?
11. Why did Felix de Weldon create a statue based on the flag-raising photo? How did the statue become part of the Marine Corps Memorial?
12. What are some of the things that Ira Hayes had to overcome in his life? How did these issues affect him?
13. Why did Ira feel lonely when he returned to the United States after the war?
14. What are some examples of how people made assumptions about Ira based on his background and heritage?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Why do you think Ira Hayes is described as a "Quiet Hero?"
2. How do you think it made Ira feel to communicate with his family through letters? How did his

life at the Native American boarding school impact him physically and emotionally?

3. Read aloud this quotation from author S.D. Nelson: "Real heroes are not perfect, after all. They are human. Let us learn from their mistakes as well as their victories." What does the author mean? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
4. Why were the months of training "the happiest time of Ira's life?"
5. Why was the attack on Pearl Harbor significant? What were the results?
6. Why was Iwo Jima such a key base for Japan? Why was the United States determined to control it?
7. Why did the United States plant a flag on Mount Suribachi?
8. Why did the American people have such a strong response to Joe Rosenthal's photograph?
9. What is this story's definition of hero? What are the major characteristics of a hero?
10. What role did Ira Hayes's heritage play in his life?
11. "Uncommon valor was a common virtue." These words appear on the base of the Marine Corps Memorial and were a tribute from Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz to the men who fought on Iwo Jima. What did Nimitz mean? Why did he pay this tribute?
12. If photographer Joe Rosenthal had not been there to take the photograph, how do you think the American public would have treated him when he returned after the war? What impact did the photograph have on Hayes' life?
13. How does this story help readers learn about events and the time period?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. What is one big thought that you have after reading this book? Think about Ira's journey and what he experiences. What is your takeaway from this book? What would you tell a friend about this book?
2. What do you think author S.D. Nelson's message is to the reader? Think about possible motivations behind S.D. Nelson's intentions to write the book. What do you think he wanted to tell his readers?
3. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What do Ira's experiences, thoughts, and feelings mean to you?
4. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while you read *Quiet Hero*? Why did you make those connections?
5. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world, such as on television or in a newspaper? Why did this book make you think of that?

ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to tell what they learned about one of the spreads. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about duty, patriotism, or the idea of heroes and what it means to work in a team towards a cause.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. Ira Hayes demonstrates bravery and courage during his service. Describe a time that you needed to be brave and courageous. How did you feel? What obstacles and challenges did you need to overcome? What motivated or helped you to be brave?
2. Throughout the book, Ira experiences self-consciousness. Why do you think he felt like he didn't deserve the attention after the flag? What factors do you think played into Ira's feelings of self-doubt?

3. How do you think the way Ira was treated at the Phoenix Indian School impacted him for the rest of his life? How do you think being forced to attend a school away from his family made him feel, and affect the way that he acted and thought?
4. Ira loved the marine training and felt companionship with the other soldiers. Why do you think he felt this way? Why do you think Ira liked being a soldier? Providing evidence from the text, demonstrate how Ira's feelings changed when he became a soldier.
5. Why do you think Ira experienced loneliness when he returned home from the war? What does it feel like when you're lonely?
6. Examine the statement, "His loneliness deepened and turned to despair." What do you think this means? If this is triggering to students, leave out the following question about alcohol: Why do you think Ira turned to alcohol to cope with his feelings?
7. Analyze the statement from the Teen Vogue article, "Ira Hayes and the History Behind the Famous Iwo Jima Flag-Raising Photo": "After the bond tour, he returned to the reservation and worked a series of menial jobs, including picking cotton. Like many veterans, he had difficulty adjusting, with ostensibly no real support system, and no mental health care. Ira, nicknamed "Chief Falling Cloud," seemed to have suffered from survivor's guilt and Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. He often lamented about his best friends who had died." Unpack this information about Ira Hayes: what did you learn about veterans and mental health from reading this article? How can veterans be better supported with mental health access? Why is mental health critical to address for veterans? Consult various organizations online about veterans and mental health to learn more (<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/>).

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Read the interview with author S.D. Nelson** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/quiet-hero/interviews>) **from Lee & Low Books.** Encourage students to write a letter to S.D. Nelson with additional questions. Brainstorm questions including about S.D. art process, research, and motivations for this book. Why do you think he chose Ira Hayes to write about? What does Ira Hayes mean to S.D. Nelson?

- **Read additional stories about U.S. military and veterans, including *Heroes*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/heroes>) and ***The School the Aztec Eagles Built*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-school-the-aztec-eagles-built>). Have students reflect on the following questions: what did they learn from reading these stories? How are veterans of color and Native veterans treated in this country? How did the people featured in the books feel about being a soldier? Did they like it, or not like it? Why? What did they have to do as part of their training? What was their life like when the war was over?
- **Joe Rosenthal's photo of the Marines raising the American flag won a Pulitzer Prize and is thought to be one of the most reproduced photographs in history** (<https://iphf.org/inductees/joe-rosenthal/>). Write a paragraph describing your response to the photo of Ira Hayes and the other flag-raisers. Do you think this image still resonates with Americans today? Why or why not? Why was it important that Ira was the one to raise the flag? How do you think he should be honored today?
- **Have students conduct a Lee & Low biography study featuring other Native people, including: *Crazy Horse's Vision*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/crazy-horse-s-vision>), ***Louis Sockalexis*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/louis-sockalexis>), and ***Jim Thorpe's Bright Path*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/jim-thorpe-s-bright-path>). Afterwards, have students answer the following questions in an essay: who was the biography about? What was their childhood like? What tribal nation were they from? How did they make an impact throughout their life? What are they known for? What is their legacy today? Afterwards, using inspiration from the biographies they just read, have students select a famous Native figure and create their own biography featuring the person they selected. Make sure students use reputable sources, especially from Native-owned and written articles and books.
- **How was reading a picture book different from reading a newspaper article about Ira Hayes?** Have students read the article "Pima Indian Helped Raise American Flag on Iwo Jima During World War II" (<https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/Story/Article/2787030/pima-indian-helped-raise-american-flag-on-iwo-jima-during-world-war-ii/>). After reading, students can create a Venn Diagram with the headings "Picture Book: *Quiet Hero*" and "Expository Nonfiction: 'Pima Indian Helped Raise American Flag on Iwo Jima During World War II.'" Students can compare and contrast the different formats of the texts and the information they learned in each. Why do you think reading a picture book about Ira Hayes as well as news articles are both important when conducting research and learning about something?

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Have students read about the National Native American Veterans Memorial, created by the National Museum of the American Indian** (<https://americanindian.si.edu/visit/washington/nnavm>). Students can answer the following questions: who created

the memorial? How was it designed? What did the designer want to create? How does the memorial honor Native veterans? Why is this memorial important? Have students research if any memorials are dedicated to Ira Hayes. Where are they? Who created them? If students were to create a memorial for Ira Hayes, what would they write?

- **Visit the online exhibition created by the National Museum of the American Indian, "Why We Serve: Native Americans in the United States Armed Forces"** (<https://americanindian.si.edu/why-we-serve/>). Have students explore the online exhibit and with a partner or small groups connect what they learned to *Quiet Hero*. What information did they learn from this online exhibit that they hadn't known before? Why is it important to learn about veterans, particularly Native veterans?
- **Have students research about the complex history behind Native people serving in the military, using the article from *Smithsonian Magazine*, "The Remarkable and Complex Legacy of Native American Military Service"** (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/remarkable-and-complex-legacy-native-american-military-service-180976264/>). What did students learn from reading this article? Why is it important to learn about Native people who serve in the military, and what does this act signify to them?
- **Explore the Gila River Indian Community website** (<http://www.gilariver.org/>). Where is the Gila River Indian Reservation? Who lives there? What kinds of community programming is offered? How is Ira Hayes still meaningful in the Gila River Indian Community? (<https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/pinal/2020/02/22/ira-hayes-inspires-gila-river-indian-community-75-years-after-iwo-jima/4843217002/>). Have students display the information they find in an essay or in an informational poster.
- **Have students learn about different ways Ira Hayes' legacy is remembered, through various memorials, statues and libraries.** What did students learn in their research? How is Ira Hayes remembered? What kinds of memorials, libraries, and statues are dedicated to him? Where are they located? Why do you think these types of places are important for Ira's legacy? If you were to create a memorial or statue for Ira, what would you want to write about him and tell people about his life?

Art & Media

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Have students conduct an illustrator study on S. D. Nelson.** His other books at Lee & Low include, *Jim Thorpe's Bright Path* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/jim-thorpe-s-bright-path>), *Crazy Horse's Vision* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/crazy-horse-s-vision>), and a poem in *I Remember* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/i-remember>). Have students answer the following questions: how do his illustrations compare across books? How do the topics in the books compare? What did you learn from S. D. Nelson's books that he illustrated?
- **Encourage students to select an illustration from *Quiet Hero* that resonated with**

them the most. Have students write a reflection about the illustration. What stood out to them? How did the image make them feel? What did it make them think about?

- **Have students study the photograph from Joe Rosenthal** (<https://www.pulitzer.org/article/joe-rosenthal-and-flag-raising-iwo-jima>). What stands out to them? What do they observe in the photograph? How do they think that art and photography can affect people? How does this photograph make you feel?

School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Students might try designing their own memorials.** Their subject might be national or local. Provide pictures of various kinds of memorials for students to observe beforehand, and let them do additional research online to see a variety of memorials that have been built worldwide. Have students draw sketches and decide on the materials they might use. Students can either create small models or draw detailed pictures to show what their memorials would look like. Create an exhibit of students' work complete with labels describing each work and what it honors.
- **If a student has a family member who has a connection to World War II and feels comfortable sharing, invite the person to discuss her or his experiences with the class.** Help students prepare a list of questions for the guest. Students should write a reflection on what they learned after the guest speaker's visit. Have students write thank-you letters following the guest's visit.



Ordering Information

General Order Information:

leeandlow.com/contact/ordering

Secure Online Ordering:

leeandlow.com/books/quiet-hero

By Phone: 212-779-4400 ext. 25

By Fax: 212-683-1894

By Mail:

Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue,
New York, NY 10016

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

S. D. Nelson is a full-time author and illustrator who lives in Flagstaff, Arizona. He is of Lakota descent and a member of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe. Nelson attended Moorhead State University in Minnesota. His lifelong interest in Ira Hayes inspired him to tell the story of this American hero for children. In addition to *Quiet Hero: The Ira Hayes Story*, Nelson has illustrated two award-winning books for Lee & Low Books—*Crazy Horse's Vision*, an ALA Notable Children's Book, and *Jim Thorpe's Bright Path*, winner of the Carter G. Woodson Award. Nelson is also the author and illustrator of several stories inspired by his Lakota heritage, among them *Gift Horse* and *The Star People*.

REVIEWS

"The text, primarily a chronological telling, acknowledges the idealism that led Hayes to enlist and to fight for the greater good, but doesn't shy away from discussing the alcoholism that destroyed him. An author's note, illustrated with photographs, adds detailed and focused historical information; a bibliography of adult sources concludes the book." —*The Horn Book Magazine*

"Hailed as a hero upon his return, Hayes found it difficult to adjust to civilian life, sinking into despair and alcoholism, a disease which killed him 10 years later... several spreads dynamically capture the fury of war, and the text is readable and informative. The author's note provides a bit more information about this well-known military moment.." —*Booklist*

"The book served two purposes: It sparked a wonderful discussion about World War II and its significance and it introduced my kids to the important role Native Americans had in our history. Any time I can read a book, impart a history lesson and teach about diversity is a win-win for me." —*Global Advocate Jr.*

ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at leeandlow.com.