The beginning of the twentieth century was considered the Gilded Age, everyone knew their place in the world. This was true especially for the leaders of the Imperialist powers and empires. World War I would change all that, it was the end of the age of empire and changed the maps of the world.

World War I has often been described as an “unnecessary war.” Why? Do you agree or disagree?

World War I has been called unnecessary because the original dispute that triggered the conflict was limited, yet it triggered a massive, global war. In short, the conflict stemmed merely from Austria-Hungary and Serbia’s disagreement over how to handle the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand: the Austro-Hungarian government believed that the Serbian government was connected with the assassination and therefore demanded to be involved in the investigation and judicial process within Serbia. No other countries had a direct interest in the matter. Russia and Germany were the next to get involved, not because of animosity toward each other but because of their intentions to protect Serbia and Austria-Hungary, respectively. France, Britain, and the Ottoman Empire had even less interest in the matter. Thus, one could argue that much of the war could have been avoided if Russia and Germany had simply kept out of the matter. Yet the dominos of alliances fell and in 1914 the war to end all wars was declared.

When the war broke out in Europe in 1914, many Americans recoiled from entering a European conflict. President Woodrow Wilson immediately called for neutrality and he was reelected in 1916 with the campaign “He Kept Us Out of War”. It only lasted five months. Wilson and Congress declared war on Germany on April 4, 1917 due to the Zimmerman Telegram and German unrestricted submarine warfare.

Source 1: President Woodrow Wilson-Source Set

Appeal for Neutrality, August 19, 1914

...The effect of the war upon the United States will depend upon what American citizens say and do. Every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality, which is the spirit of impartiality and fairness and friendliness to all concerned. The spirit of the Nation in this critical matter will be determined largely by what individuals and society and those gathered in public meetings do and say, upon what newspapers and magazines contain upon what ministers utter in their pulpits, and men proclaim as their opinions on the street.

The people of the United States are drawn from many nations, and chiefly from the nations now at war…

Great Issues in American History. Richard Hofstadter

Summarize the main ideas of the text:

1. What does Wilson mean by this statement? “The people of the United States are drawn from many nations, and chiefly from the nations now at war…”

2. Who was excluded?
Native Americans in World War I:
**Academic Source:** *American Indians in World War I: At War and at Home.* Thomas A. Britten

In the early 20th century Native Americans were considered a “Vanishing Race”. The Secretary of Interior Carl Shurz publicly announced that American Indians must choose between two alternatives: “extermination or civilization.” Yet, when the United States entered World War I, the vanishing American Indian were called on to enlist or were drafted to fight a war on European soil.

An examination of Native American roles in World War I is essential if one hopes to understand the evolution of Indian societies, cultures, and federal Indian policy in the early decades of the twentieth century.

One should keep in mind that there is no monolithic Indian experience during World War I. The war affected individual Indian people in diverse ways. Some Indian nations sent hundreds of their men to war while others escaped the terrors of trench warfare altogether. Thus, one must be cautious in discussing the “American Indian” experience or the “Indian role” and remember that Native Americans are not a homogenous people but hundreds of separate nations with unique languages, customs, and traditions

**Source 2: American Indian Doughboys… Doughboys…but not Citizens!**

Examine the following photographs and keep in mind these facts.

- Most American Indians were not American citizens.
- The Burke Act 1906 effectively denied American Indians United States citizenship because they were not prepared for American society.
- Native Americans were required to register for the draft.
- American Indian men were registered as white.
- Native American men could volunteer for military service
- Participation varied by tribe.
- U.S. anticipated they would not have to pay veterans benefits to the American Indians.
- The Onondaga and Oneida Nations, part of the Iroquois Confederacy declared war on Germany.
- Joining the military was an opportunity to escape boarding schools.
- Patriotic indoctrination from the boarding schools. Ninety percent of Carlisle Indian men volunteered.
- The Number of American Indian that registered for service: 17,303
- The number that served…Approximately 12,000 which was 20% of the adult male population at that time.
- The number that gave their life: Approximately 600 Native Americans died in service for a country that did not count them as citizens.
Summarize the main ideas:

3. Why did Indian men enlist for service in such large numbers?
4. Were there cases of draft resistance among Native Americans?
5. What motivated American Indian men to fight in defense of a nation whose Anglo majority failed to recognize Native Americans as citizens and had disenfranchised many of those who were citizens?
Source 3: The Original Codetalkers…The Choctaw Codetalkers


http://vimeo.com/19305917

The Choctaw Telephone Squad set an important precedent for the now famous Navajo “code talkers” of WWII.
Pictured from L to R: Taylor Lewis, Mitchell Bobbs, James Edwards, Calvin Wilson, James Davenport, and Captain E.H. Horner
Code Talker Facts:
- First time Native languages were used for transmitting military intelligence.
- Accidental Discovery…Overheard conversation between two Choctaw soldiers in the 142nd Within 24 hours, 8 Choctaw were talking (telephones) at 8 different company field headquarters.
- Colonel A.W. Bloor stated: “it was hardly possible that Fritz would be able to translate these dialects and the plan to have these Indians translate telephone messages was adopted.”
- The Choctaw developed a code within a code noted as Type 1
- There was a total of 19 Choctaw Code Talkers
- Later other tribal speakers included the Oklahoma Cherokee, Comanche, Cheyenne, Osage, and Yankton Sioux served as Code Talkers.
- Native American children at government boarding schools were severely punished for speaking their native languages…whippings, detention, withdrawal of food, isolation. While these same languages were helping the United States in the war effort.

Summarize the main ideas:

6. What is the meaning of the Code Talkers?
8. What was the United States’ policy regarding American Indian languages?
9. The United States military used Native American languages, would you consider it hypocritical?
10. Did the experience of foreign military service foster a global outlook for American Indians?

“The North American Indian took his place beside every other American in offering his life in the great cause, where as a splendid soldier, he fought with the courage and valor of his ancestors.”

-General John Pershing

SOURCES

American Indian Quarterly.
World War II:
Indian military service during World War I was a catalyst for change. Many of the individuals who returned home from enlistment camps and the battlefields of France came home with a sense of purpose, discipline, and a conviction to prosper as a Native American. This contradicted the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ (BIA) policies aimed at assimilation and acculturation at all costs. Instead the military promoted American Indian cultural practices and traditions, which inspired many Indian tribes to unite to form groups regardless of tribal affiliation. Thus, after World War I Pan-Indian groups flourished in Indian Country to protect and resurrect tribal traditions and customs that were prohibited by the U.S. government for so long. Together with different leadership at the BIA, the 1920s and 1930s generated a diverse direction in federal Indian policy. The passage of the American Indian Citizenship Act (Snyder Act) in 1924 finally gave American citizenship to Native Americans. In 1934 the Indian Reorganization Act (Indian New Deal) was implemented on Indian reservations to assist with jobs, education, infrastructure, and other services that mirrored FDR’s New Deal. However, the drums of war were once again beating in Europe and once again Native American men and women would be called to serve!

Source 4: Heading to War and Propaganda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. The Victory Will Be Ours! (German)</th>
<th>2. Stay Out of the East! (Japanese)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="German Propaganda" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Japanese Propaganda" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. “Jap Trap” (American)

4. “We Beat ‘Em” (American)

Examine the Posters and Summarize:

11. What does the imagery of the posters convey?
12. The U.S. conducted its fair share of propaganda against its enemies. What is the key difference of the imagery used against Germany and Japan?
13. What is the message of these posters and how would U.S. soldiers of different ethnicities view the racial overtones of U.S. propaganda?
Native Americans in WAR!

In 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "This generation has a rendezvous with destiny." When Roosevelt said that he had no idea of how much World War II would make his prophecy ring true. Part of that generation was a neglected minority, American Indians, who flocked to the colors in defense of their country. No group that participated in World War II made a greater per capita contribution, and no group was changed more by the war.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor many Native Americans volunteered to fight for their country. Thousands of young Indians went into the armed forces or to work in the war production plants that abruptly emerged during military and industrial mobilization. A 1942 survey indicated that 40 percent more Native Americans voluntarily enlisted than had been drafted.

At the time of Christopher Columbus ' arrival in the New World, the Native American population living in what is now the United States was estimated at about one million. By 1880, only 250,000 Indians remained and this gave rise to the "Vanishing American" theory. By 1940, this population had risen to about 350,000. The annual enlistment for Native Americans jumped from 7,500 in the summer of 1942 to 22,000 at the beginning of 1945. According to the Selective Service in 1942, at least 99 percent of all eligible Indians, healthy males aged 21 to 44, had registered for the draft. On Pearl Harbor Day, there were 5,000 Indians in the military. By the end of the war, 24,521 reservation Indians, exclusive of officers, and another 20,000 off-reservation Indians had served. The combined figure of 44,500 was more than ten percent of the Native American population during the war years. This represented one-third of all able-bodied Indian men from 18 to 50 years of age. In some tribes, the percentage of men in the military reached as high as 70 percent. They served on all fronts in the conflict and were honored by receiving numerous Purple Hearts, Air Medals, Distinguished Flying Crosses, Bronze Stars, Silver Stars, Distinguished Service Crosses, and three Congressional Medals of Honor. Indian participation in World War II was so extensive that it later became part of American folklore and popular culture.

Six grandsons of the Reverend Ben Brave, Sioux
Courtesy: Indians at Work. 1945
1. PFC Ira Hayes: Pima—USMC

2. James E. Ponchetti: Diegueño—US Navy Santa Ysabel Indian Reservation

3. Lt. Colonel Gregory “Pappy” Boyington: Coeur d’Alene—USMC

4. Rear Admiral Joseph J. Clark: Cherokee—US Navy

5. M. Spotted Wolf (Blackfoot), C. Mix (Pottawatomi), V. Eastman (Chippewa) USMC


Examine the Photographs and Summarize the Main Ideas:

14. What is the significance of the number of Native American men and women that enlisted in the armed forces during World War II?
Source 6: Navajo (Diné) Code Talkers:

During World War II, the U.S. Marine Corps recruited Navajo Indians for a Top Secret Mission, create an unbreakable code. The Navajo Marines used their language as a battlefield code that the Japanese never broke. The Navajo Code Talkers became the most celebrated and publicized of the radio units.

Navajo Tribal Council, Window Rock, Arizona (1940)
Whereas, the Navajo Tribal Council and the 50,000 people we represent, cannot fail to recognize the crisis now facing the world in the in the threat of foreign invasion and the destruction of the great liberties and benefits which we enjoy on the reservation, and
Whereas, there exists no purer concentration of Americanism than among the First Americans, and
Whereas, it has become common practice to attempt national destruction through the sowing of seeds of treachery among minority groups such as ours, and
Whereas, we hereby serve notice that any un-American movement among our people will be resented and dealt with severely, and
Now, Therefore, we resolve that the Navajo Indians stand ready as they did in 1918, to aid and defend our Government and its institutions against all subversive and armed conflict and pledge our loyalty to the system which recognizes minority rights and a way of life that has placed us among the great people of our race.
Chester Nez. Code Talker

Summarize the main ideas from the text:

16. What was the goal of the Navajo Tribal Council’s 1940 declaration?
17. Who was the audience for the Navajo declaration? Discuss.
Source 7: Code Talkers in Battle

The Marines considered themselves as the "elite" fighters and welcomed Indians because of their warrior reputation. The Navajo marines ended their ceremonial chants by singing the Marine Corps Hymn in Navajo. Their eloquence came naturally to Indians because theirs is an oral culture. Navajos formed special all-Navajo Marine Corps signal units that encoded messages in their native tongue. Taking advantage of the flexibility and range of the Navajo language, they worked out translations of military and naval terms so that orders and instructions could be transmitted by voice over the radio in a code the Japanese were never able to break. They were used first in late 1942 on Guadalcanal. Special Code Talker units were eventually assigned to each of the Marine Corps' six Pacific divisions. By war's end, over 400 Navajo had served as Code Talkers. Untold numbers of Marines owe their lives to the Navajo Code Talkers.

The Code Talkers had to create an unbreakable code based on the Navajo language. Chester Nez remembered; “On the first day, we decided to use an English word—generally an animal, a plant, or an object that was part of our everyday world—to represent each letter of the English alphabet. Those words would then be translated into Navajo, and the Navajo word would represent the English letter…We chose animals and other items from our everyday world that resembled the military equipment. So “fighter pilot” was represented by the quick and maneuverable hummingbird, code word dahe-tih-hi. The huge transport planes were represented as an eagle who carried prey, atsah. A battleship was a whale, code word lo-tso, and a destroyer as a shark, code word ca-lo. A cruiser was a small whale, code word lo-tso-yazzie. In choosing each code word, we talked about how the animal chosen lived and hunted, and we did our best to link it up logically with a piece of military equipment. Sometimes we used non-animal items to represent certain things. A hand grenade was a potato, or nimasi. Bombs were eggs or a-ye-shi. Japan was slant-eye or beh-na-ali-tsosie.

Summarize the main ideas from the text and create an activity:

18. What words would you use to create a code?
During the battles Nez commented that “Facing an enemy who thought so differently from the way we did was scary.” Then he reflected that he was thankful that:

“The boarding schools in the 1920s and ‘30s had—happily-failed in their efforts to erase the language from the minds of their students. We men…were articulate in both Navajo and English.

Review the photographs and text and summarize

19. The boarding school that Chester Nez attended washed his mouth with lye soap when he was caught speaking Diné (Navajo) as were his fellow Navajo Marines. How did the U.S. military reconcile the use of Native languages when the U.S. government considered these languages uncivilized?
Summarize the main ideas from visual media

20. List the reasons why oral histories are important to the study of Native American history!

Sources

Deanne Durrett. Unsung Heroes of WWII. The Story of the Navajo Code Talkers. Facts on File. 1998. (Grades 6-12)
National Archives and Records Administration. www.archives.gov