# NAVAJO CODE TALKERS

Philip Johnston and John Claw

[Note: The volume level for this interview is extremely low. Every effort was made to provide an accurate transcript. Where this was not possible, [unclear] is noted in the transcript.]

John Claw: This is the wide canyon. We went east on this wide canyon. See, there's my guide with me. As we went up there, we passed this arch. Inside of this was a couple of small cliff dwellings, here. This one, this was one of them.

I asked this boy, I said, "Will you please get inside so I can take your picture?"

And he said, "[Navajo phrase]." "No, my friend, I'm afraid."

"[Navajo phrase]?" I said. "Why are you afraid?"

"Anazazi [Navajo phrase]." "Anazazi are the ancient people. The evil spirits of the ancient people are dangerous."

And I said, "[Navajo phrase]."

"[Navajo phrase]." "They'll strangle you at night while you're asleep."

So I said, "All right, now I'll set up my camera here, and I'll go inside and you press this button for me." Well, that's all right. Yes, he'd do that, but he wouldn't go inside. So, that's me.

Interviewer: What do you know.

John Claw: And this is Black Mesa at a distance. Along the edge of Black Mesa was this very interesting character. He was 117 years old when I took that picture.

Interviewer: "Grandfather when Kit Carson captured the Navajos in 1863."

John Claw: This girl here was one of the girls that lived with John [unclear]. She was his [unclear]. Now, this was a narrow canyon. You see how narrow it is here? And this must be about 200 feet, and back here you have a cave. On top of Black Mesa there was no good water. It was all heavily mineralized. It was so bad, they had to haul their drinking water up there. So we went back there and we found a good-sized pool, a spring, right in that cave. We tasted it, and it was good, sweet water. This boy said he didn't know that spring was there. He'd never been up there. It was the only good water on Black Mesa.

Interviewer: And they didn't know it was there?

John Claw: He didn't know it was there. So I found the cliff ruin. This map will show you the location. I've got a couple of views of it here. There were over 100 buildings in it, four kevas [phonetic] around ceremonial chambers, and I took some samples of pottery. Now, I found very few pottery fragments, and I could see at glance what had happened there. Probably because of drought, for some reason the whole populace deserted the village gradually. There were three or four buildings with roof timbers on them, and all the rest had the roof timbers removed and they were partly demolished. Now, I don't think anyone had been up there since the people that built it had left. They had just gradually demolished the buildings, deserted, they abandoned it gradually. Well, I was the first one to see it, I think, after the last people had left. So that's the story I wrote. I finally found it thirteen years after I heard of it. So I thought you'd like to know the story.

Interviewer: Well, I'll take these,too. Well, I've got my reading cut out for me tonight.

John Claw: And this, of course.

Interviewer: Yes, the canyon.

John Claw: The Grand Canyon, and this.

Interviewer: All right, and this is the story--all right.

John Claw: Now, I think I've finished everything I wanted to tell you.

Interviewer: First, you have a class, and then you [unclear] instructor from your first class. And then thereafter--

John Claw: Whatever I need, no. I made it a rule to have no more than ten or twelve in a class. The authorities there, the powers-that-be in the Marine Corps, left this entirely in my hands, so I could do it anyway I like.

Interviewer: This is Pendleton? Camp Pendleton?

John Claw: Camp Pendleton, yes. I wanted only a few in the class so that you'd be very closely supervised and be helped. Eight weeks was just barely enough time for them to get it, and they had to work hard to do it. So the smaller the class, the faster they can go, you see.

Interviewer: Did they have any other military drill or anything of that sort before that time?

John Claw: Oh, yes, they had gone through boot camp. I think that was an eight-week course.

Interviewer: It was preceding the code test.

John Claw: To get their basic training. They came in as raw recruits. They got their uniforms and they were taught to march and the different formations and got their basic military training. Then they came over and took

the eight-week course for code talkers, and then I sent in the list of names for warrants for private first class, and then they left. They were assigned to different units for communication.

Interviewer: Then after the end of your first class, you took some of those, you kept some of those to teach the next classes that came in. This was just self-perpetuating then, was it?

John Claw: Yes. The ones that I thought were the most adept, who could handle men best or who were temperamentally suited to teaching, I'd select enough to teach the recruits that were coming in, you see. I had some notices to what to expect. I would get reports on how many were in boot camp.

Interviewer: Oh, I see.

John Claw: And how many were coming up, you see.

Interviewer: Yes. Well, was it pretty steady? I mean, they would just come out of boot camp and come to you? It kept going most of the time?

John Claw: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: Then this went on for two years, and at the end of that time, that the training--

John Claw: Not entirely two years. The dates--I enlisted the first of October 1942, early in October, and I went on recruiting duty, and in November, and late in November I got my first class. Then from that time on I had my Navajo Code Talker Section there, training the recruits as they came in, until about August of 1944. By that time,

we ran out and it took me about a month to get a discharge. So I was discharged in September. So it was about two or three months short of two years.

Interviewer: Now, as I have read all these things, *Navajo Times* and so forth, there is a little discrepancy in the number of men who were code talkers. One place it was 420. Another was 380 or something like that. Do you know?

John Claw: I don't know. I can't give you any information on that.

Interviewer: All right. All right.

John Claw: Your best bet is to contact--well, *The Navajo Times*, I guess, is reliable. I kept no records of numbers.

Interviewer: Well, it's all right. I don't need to have the exact--I just thought maybe if you knew.

John Claw: No, I don't.

Interviewer: Now, here is something that has nothing really with the code, but in my reading I found that Ernie Pyle at one time referred to the fact that the Indians, the Navajos--

John Claw: I have his book and what you mention in it.

Interviewer: Yes, how they had a war dance and so forth.

John Claw: We got a personal letter from Ernie Pyle, too. Somewhere in my book I have that.

Interviewer: Yes. Now, now, I wonder if you know--I have that one incident. Do you know of any other incidents--of course, you weren't in combat with them, of course, but I just wondered if you knew of any time when they carried any of their old Indian customs into the combat area in any way?

John Claw: No, I can't recall any reference to that, except for one program we gave at Camp Elliot. That's before we moved to Camp Pendleton. I got that up. I had seen the whole thing, and we put on a show one night. It was quite an elaborate show, and Martin Link [phonetic] has a picture of some of the boys that participated in that, in their costumes. One of my best instructors, I'd like to tell you about him, Jimmy Tully King [phonetic], and for the occasion he wrote this. Well, here's the way it goes. Look at that first word. [John Craw sings Marine's Hymn of the Republic in Navajo]

Interviewer: That's marvelous.

John Claw: ...wrote up this Navajo Marine Corps Hymn.

Unidentified Male: Jimmy King did this?

John Claw: Yes, Jimmy King [unclear].

Interviewer: Yes, he did it for the shindig that you had at Camp Elliot.

John Claw: At Camp Elliot. Put on some dances and a little talk about the Navajo code, and then the Marine Corps Hymn, and let' see--I may have one of these. I can't give you any information, very little, as to what

happened after they left me. In that connection, it seems to me that you'd almost need some personal stories from them.

Interviewer: That's what I hope to get. Do you think I'll have any difficulty? Do you think they'll talk to me? I'm sending them letters.

John Claw: I think you'd better work through Martin Link. I think he knows them. [unclear] worked in the trading post, just to show how far they carry that custom, I've seen two women, or a woman would be in the store sitting on the floor. Another woman would come in. She'd go and sit across the room, another spot, squat down on the floor. They'd sit there for ten or fifteen minutes. Then one would go up, and the other'd go to the other, and they'd put their arms around each other and cry because they were so happy to see each other. They hadn't seen each other for years. They'd have to wait five or ten minutes. The Navajo--you've seen pictures of the hogans with the blanket hanging over the door.

Interviewer: Yes. Their houses are usually circular, aren't they?

John Claw: Yes.

Unidentified Male: Like the wigwam.

John Claw: No, the wigwam is conical. Well, some hogans are conical, almost like a wigwam, with the door coming outside. Yes, there's that type.

Interviewer: What kind of a roof do they have? Regular--

John Claw: Dirt. They cover their logs with chips and brush and so on to make them dirt-proof and then they cover them over with dirt. It makes a very snug house. I've slept in--

Interviewer: Do they have dirt floors?

John Claw: Oh, yes, dirt floors.

Interviewer: Well, let's see. Can you think of any questions, Wilson? [Tape recorder turned off.]

John Claw: ...knock on the door before you go in. You just look over the blanket to see who's inside, and if they know someone's there, they see who it is. You look for a little while, maybe ten seconds or so, fifteen, and then you walk in and find a place to sit down and sit down and say nothing. You don't go around and say, "Hello." You don't speak to anybody. You go in and sit down. And after you've sat there five or ten minutes, you get up and go shake hands all the way around.

Interviewer: They still do that?

John Claw: Yes. I know those missionaries cast many an envious eye at me. They only wished they had my vocabulary. Just think of all the souls that have gone to hell because of my stubbornness in not wanting the preach the Gospel to them. Well, I know on several occasions I interpreted for the court. I was a court interpreter, and I interpreted once for the grand jury in Prescott. That's quite a story, too, if we have time for it sometime. Quite a comedy, finally.

Well, now you have certain questions. Let's concentrate on those.

Interviewer: I'm trying to think--see, I brought down the wrong notebook. This is just to write in. I have another one very much like it. [Tape recorder turned off.]

...maybe you won't know, but you were talking about the way these Indians, the Navajos, were afraid if there was a dead person, you know, afraid to get close to them. I wonder what happened to them when they went off to the battlefield and people were killed.

John Claw: These Navajo recruits, I think, were more or less rid of that superstition. I think the educated Navajos and those who have been around in white settlements a long time, they lose that, I think. Of course, you understand this, there is a great deal--or I'll put it this way--my knowledge of that dates back about fifty years, and I haven't kept up with developments out there.

Now, another custom they had that was very [unclear], and this is a custom of which you might approve, after a man was married, he was never supposed to look at his mother-in-law, and vice versa. If they looked at each other again, full in the face, they'd both go blind.

Interviewer: The mother-in-law?

John Claw: Yes. And I have seen, when I worked the trading post, and down there I'd see an Indian woman, she'd catch a glimpse of her son-in-law approaching and she'd let out a scream, she'd throw herself face-down on the ground and cover her head with a blanket like that, so she wouldn't see her son-in-law. [Laughter]

Interviewer: I'll have to tell Jordan about this tomorrow. [unclear].

John Claw: In 1901, when we went back to Washington [unclear] went along, and when we interviewed President Roosevelt, one of the side products of that trip was a $5,000 appropriation to build a dam and irrigation system.

We had, of course, the Navajos digging the ditch and building this dam, and a Navajo died and was buried by my people, our people. My father and uncle went out and buried him.

The next day on the job somehow the word got around that the shovel which had buried this Navajo had been brought back to this job, and one Navajo said to the other, "You're using that shovel that buried that man yesterday." So this man dropped it like it was red hot, and he reached down and picked up sand and rubbed his hands with the sand to get the chemdi off his hands.

Interviewer: What is that word? How do you spell it?

John Claw: C-H-E-M-D-I. Now, I'm spelling it phonetically. We called it chemdi.

Interviewer: And that is the spirit of the dead.

John Claw: Chemdi is evil spirit.

Interviewer: Evil spirit, that's right.

John Claw: Which brings up the subject of Navajo profanity. They don't have profanity that is a counterpart of ours. They don't use the names of divinities, for example. Their profanity consists, the strongest expression that they have is "chi". Then they have "my-i," which is coyote. "Shash." "Shash cha nay." "Shash cha" is grave. "Ay" is from, from the grave. Some evil thing from the grave. "Keesh," snake. That is the sum total of their profanity.

I was making a tour with some of my friends on the reservation many years ago, and I was explaining this profanity to them. We were sitting by a Navajo hogan. They swear at their dogs to drive them away, you know. So there was a dog not far away from us, and I said, "Now, in order of their potency, it would be 'Shash,' would

perhaps be that bear, 'Shash.'" That would be about the least, the most innocuous of all the terms. Shash and my-i is about the same. Keesh is a little stronger. Chi is very strong. When they say that--

Interviewer: What is the second one? The first one means bear. The second one means what?

John Claw: "Shash," bear. "My-i," coyote. "Keesh," snake. And how they can get that out when they're mad. "Keesh! Keesh!"

This dog was lying down not far away, and so I said, "Now, I'll demonstrate." So I said, "My-i." The dog got up. "Shash." He started to walk away. "Keesh!" He started to trot. "Ke-esh!" He started to run right there. He knew each stage of potency. We'd gotten a little higher. Now after "keesh," if he didn't get out of the way, the next would be a rock. [Laughter]

Interviewer: This has been wonderful. [Tape recorder turned off.]

John Claw: [unclear] between our culture and their ancient culture. They will be somewhere in between. All that I'm telling you about the Navajo are the original old-time people, not the educated ones.

Interviewer: I read the other day something about the fact that the Indians, young people who are at the universities and so forth, suffer quite a lot. These people that say, "Hi, squaw," I mean, they're just nasty, you know. Of course, some of these young Indians in the universities are just as bright and alert and as smart as any of our people. That is a disgrace.

Now, look. Here's a question that I have here that makes me think of another. Do they have a good sense of humor, or are they always so quiet and so solemn, I mean, when I see them? Do they ever think things are really funny?

John Claw: Well, their sense of humor is different from ours. They're not so volatile. They don't like smart-alecks. They're very self-contained. They have their own sense of humor, but it isn't the same as ours.

Interviewer: Do they laugh?

John Claw: Oh, yes, sure. Same as anybody else.

But, now, I've got a couple of stories. This story could possibly be apocryphal. I didn't witness this myself, but it came to me on pretty good authority. Some of these Navajos that you see that look like [unclear], that is, illiterate Navajos, just as savvy as all the rest of them, might deceive you. They might be more than they appear to be. This case, which I think was authenticated, some smart-aleck from the outside, some tourist, went into a trading post. He was making a lot of wisecracks around, and there was one Navajo standing there in a very passive way. So he pulled a cigar out of his pocket and went up to him and said, "Heap big chief smoke."

This Navajo said, "Bella conna beech hai-tee." "Bella conna" is American. "Eech heetee," rough translation would be "To hell with the American."

So this man turned around and said to the trader, "What did he say? What did that mean?" Well, there was a Navajo blanket or rug spread out on the counter which this tourist had been examining, and he was considering buying this blanket. He'd alternate between examining that and discussing it and turning around and making some wisecrack. This happened to be a wisecrack right in the course of the deal to buy the blanket.

So the trader didn't want to stir up any hard feelings. He wanted to keep this potential customer in good humor, you know. So he said, "Well, it's just his way of saying, 'Thank you. I appreciate it,' or something like that."

And you can imagine the consternation of both of them when this illiterate Navajo over there said, "I beg your pardon, I said nothing of the kind." He'd been through college. So you can't tell who they are. [Tape recorder turned off.]

Interviewer: Did they have trouble adjusting to discipline of the Marines?

John Claw: Oh, no. They took to it like ducks to water, but only because I used a certain gimmick to have them do it. Now, that's quite a story. Navajos are very independent. They're the type of people whom you would normally expect to--not resist discipline, that's too strong--to be mentally, psychologically unfitted for it. I'll put it that way. So I gave each of my classes several lectures. Now, this could go into the story.

I said, "Now, you are a few Navajos among a great throng of bellaconna." Incidentally, that word "bellaconna" is a corruption of the Spanish word Americano, American. The Navajos can't pronounce the letter "r" and the nearest they can come to it is "l" so it's bellaconna, is American. It's a corruption of a Spanish word. The same with gold. Gold in Spanish is "oro." In Navajo, it's "ola." So they can't pronounce "r."

Well, I would tell them this, "You are a small group of Navajos surrounded by a large number of bellaconna. You call the Hopis in your language the quis-ani, those who live in villages. But the kahuyas [phonetic] in California are vay-asah-e-sai, those who make the big box. The white mountain Apaches, the zechnas [phonetic], those who live on top of the mountains. But Navajo is de-nayh [phonetic], the people, the people. You are the best of all of them, and you can be the best in this camp and demonstrate to these bellaconna that the Navajos are better than they are, and the way to do is to march better than they do, to make up your quarters a little bit cleaner, a little neater, than the bellaconna do. Conform to the rules with more precision. Do things a little more right than the bellaconna does. And you will get credit for it."

You know, it paid off handsomely. In fact, it was so obvious the Navajos were better in every way, that one Saturday after inspection Major Sullivan called me in the office and gave me a memorandum and said, "I want you to read this to your class. It says the commanding officer commends the Navajo school for the neatness of their quarters during the inspection." So I got them in formation and read that to them.

Interviewer: How do you spell bellaconna?

John Claw: Spell it phonetically. Listen to the word and spell it any way you can remember it. Bellaconna. It could be either p or b. It's sort of the thing to do. Bellaconna.

I know a lieutenant stopped me one day and said, "How do you make those Navajos march so well?" He said, "You know, usually most formations here, and Marines are supposed to be the elite, most formations here, as they march, when the heel hits the pavement, there's just a fraction of a second for all heels to get on that pavement. But the fraction of a second with the Navajos is much shorter than the others, and I notice the difference."

You know, they tried harder. That was it. They had more pride, more *esprit de corps*. And it was a great inspiration to work with people like that, who responded and who got all these commendations. They certainly were superior to the white men. Coming from the camps and from the back country, I think was a great achievement on their part.

Interviewer: Did they get along well with the others, the other Americanos?

John Claw: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: They were accepted?

John Claw: Oh, mutually, mutually. Oh, the white Marines just thought they were tops, and vice versa.

Interviewer: Well, that's great. That' great.

John Claw: There wasn't any--there was no race friction, but somehow the white men just marveled at the quality of these Navajos, the quality of everything they did. They admired them.

Interviewer: When you were choosing the men, recruiting them, was there any particular method of recruiting them? I know that there was a proclamation of the Navajo Nation asking the braves to recruit with the Marines for this purpose. Was there any particular gimmick or was there any way that you could screen?

John Claw: Oh, yes, we went out and hunted up all the educated Navajos we could get. They were not too many of them. We had to go out and find them and find out how much schooling they'd had. They couldn't all do it. Those with two or three or four grades of school couldn't make the grade. They had to have a full eight grades, anyhow. I had one or two college graduates. One was a teacher. Well, I made him second in command. He took charge of things. When my father died and I went away for the funeral, he took over and, oh, he was just excellent. Ross Hasky [phonetic].

Interviewer: Did all of them make it, or did some of them drop out after you recruited them?

John Claw: I can't give you any figures on the failures, but they were very low. I don't think over, not over two or three percent maybe. And we had to [unclear] and you have to--one was a--I can only think of three, I guess. Jimmy King, that wrote the Marine Corps Hymn, was one of our problems. He was brilliant. He was capable. He was just ideal in every way, my best instructor. And so earnest that he wrote that Marine Corps Hymn. But he simply couldn't resist the fire water, and we just couldn't do any thing with him. He'd be fine for two or three weeks. Then the next thing we knew, he'd be in the brig. Shore patrol had picked him up down on the street down San Diego. He just had way too much, so they brought him in.

Well, we gave him restrictions. Of course, the top sergeant took care of that. I didn't take care of the discipline problems that way. I turned them over to the top sergeant. I think that's a better way anyhow. I told him, I'd say, "Now, here are the rules and we expect you to follow them." If they didn't, why, they were out of my hands. They went to the authorities then. [Tape recorder turned off.]

...came back, he told me, he said, “I am absolutely through.” He said, “I’ll never touch another drop.” So he went to work, and he was splendid for two weeks. But the first sergeant said, “Now, listen. The next time is the last. The next time, you leave. You go overseas.” So he did. That was it. He came in that last time and everybody accepted it and away he went.

Interviewer: Did they use the code talkers in all of the divisions? I believe there were six divisions, weren’t there?

John Claw: Oh, yes. They used them throughout the whole Pacific, yes.

Interviewer: As I understand it, they used them in teams, didn’t they? Were they trained in teams or were they coupled after they were in the combat area?

John Claw: Were they what?

Interviewer: Coupled. I mean, assigned.

John Claw: Oh, no. They were interchangeable. They had to be. They had to be interchangeable.

Interviewer: I suppose so.

John Claw: Yes. They had to be trained according to a certain uniform standard so any code talker could fit in with any other code talker in the service. It had to be that way. Otherwise, the whole system would have broken down.

Interviewer: Oh, I could see that.

John Claw: Now, in this last group of papers I gave to Martin Link, you'll find some information in there about assignments, how they assigned so many to a division or to a brigade. You'll find a lot of correspondence in there. Among those letters, you'll find one written by General Clayton B. Vogel [phonetic]. Right after I took the four Navajos down to Camp Elliot in Los Angeles, and he gave them this trial on translating, he was very enthusiastic about the way they showed up even under those conditions. General Vogel, I think, was more or less instrumental in getting it in service. He used all of his influence to get a favorable decision on trying it out.

Interviewer: I believe there's something about that in the, is it *The Master Key*, in that story?

John Claw: Yes, it's mentioned. It's mentioned but now, about Vogel, you might note this. There's one of those eight envelopes contains clippings and other new media that carried stories about the Navajo code, and there's one clipping about General Vogel with his picture. It was written some time after this--well, it was, I think, after I enlisted. It was about that time. General Vogel gave a statement about the Navajos for communication, and he was very much for it. [Tape recorder turned off.]

...and the post office had struck a special stamp showing Sutter's Mill. It was in the mill [unclear] that the gold was found. It was struck for just that one occasion. They didn't use it. Well, it was sold in the post office for the centennial.

Unidentified Male: What date was that?

Interviewer: This was sent January 24, 1948.

P?: Yes, they postmarked it on the centennial. This consists of three articles I wrote about the mining country up there. These three. Now, this first one was the longest. There was 18,000 words in it and over thirty-two or three photographs.

Interviewer: Gee. The mother lode.

P?: It runs twenty-three pages. And then this is the northern mine, just an extension of the mother lode, north, northward on the Sierras. Then the Trinity mines is over near the coast in another range of mountains.

Interviewer: The second part of this is the northern diggings, and the third the Trinity mines.

P?: Yes, the second part--well, the northern mine--they call them the northern diggings, north of the mother lode.

Interviewer: So the whole book, *Lost and Living Cities of the California Gold Rush*. [Tape recorder turned off.]

P?: Remember I mentioned the [unclear]?

Interviewer: Yes.

P?: Read what it says about him.

Interviewer: "During World War II, perplexed Japanese decoders tried unsuccessfully to break down an American secret code that originated in northern Arizona, but they never found a key to unlock the Navajo language, and nearly a quarter century later the men who served as Navajo code talkers have been honored by the government they served so well. One is Flagstaff's own George Kirk [phonetic], who was among twenty-one Navajo Marine

veterans attending the 4th Marine Division reunion recently in Chicago. Kirk, who has been with the Navajo Army Depot since January 16, 1946, was presented the American Indian Marine Award at the reunion for his services. The Marine veteran served as a Navajo code talker in the Asiatic Pacific area for more than two years and saw action against the Japanese on Bouganville, Guam, Iwo Jima, and the consolidation of the Solomon Islands. His newest award will join others he received during that conflict, including the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, All-American Campaign Medal; Victory Medal; Navy Unit Code Commendation Medal with four Battle Stars. 'I wouldn't exchange this experience with any in the world,' Kirk said at the reunion.

"And his wife is no stranger to serving this country. Mrs. Kirk joined NAD even before Kirk, on June 14, 1944. She worked for many years at the depot hospital serving as an interpreter and later became a nursing assistant. She remembered how astonished many of the Army doctors were over Navajo names like Many Turquoise, Many Goats, and so forth. Currently Mrs. Kirk works as a depot telephone operator. And if that isn't enough, the Kirks are also the proud parents of this Pow Wow Princess. Their nineteen-year-old daughter Gloria was selected for the honor after an afternoon of competitive events in beauty, poise, horsemanship, and talent. All are fluent in the secret code the Japanese found impossible to crack." [Tape recorder turned off.]

John Claw: [unclear] book is the one I told you about that my wife wrote.

Interviewer: Oh, Bernice is your wife.

John Claw: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes. Oh, I see. I see. Her book.

John Claw: What did she say about it?

Interviewer: Well, in her letter she said, "I hope this takes nothing from Bernice's book." Something like that.

John Claw: I don't know how it could. [Tape recorder turned off.]

...our family. I'm more or less the central figure.

Interviewer: I see.

John Claw: Well, I don't know. It's just--my father worked there and--a lot about my life out there.

Interviewer: Well, nobody would know better than she does. I'm glad it's being written up. [Tape recorder turned off.]

Interviewer: Mr. Claw, I noticed on jewelry and in some paintings and so forth a symbol that's shaped a little bit like a horseshoe. Could you tell us if it symbolizes anything in particular?

Mr. Claw: The only thing that it symbolizes are that the symbols more or less are stylized in reference to certain masks or other religious ceremonies that they have in the Navajo way, such as the ten-day or nine-day chant, depending upon what kind of a ceremonial it covers. The nine-day chant has symbols of various masks, and some of them are stylized after that same pattern.

Interviewer: You said something about blessing way.

Mr. Claw: Blessing way is a chant or a Navajo ceremonial to do good. It has psychological meaning of making things good with Mother Nature.

Interviewer: Oh, that's good. All right. Thank you very much.

Unidentified Male: And then that one symbol, what was it called? It's the yetichee [phonetic]?

Mr. Claw: Yebitchase.

Unidentified Male: Yebitchase. How do you spell that?

Interviewer: Tell me how that is spelled. Well, can you approximate it? [Tape recorder turned off.]

Mr. Claw: Those that are in our area there are mostly made by commercial, using commercial dyes. The ones that are in this area right through here are all vegetable dyes, meaning that they boil certain vegetations and wool is dyed from that.

Unidentified Male: The vegetable dyes are much softer colors, aren't they?

Mr. Claw: Right, they're much softer, and they stay--and they're more lasting than the commercial dyes.

Interviewer: They don't fade.

Mr. Claw: They won't fade, right.

Interviewer: Of course, the designs are all definitely Navajo or Indian. [Tape recorder turned off.]

Mr. Claw: In fact, she's finishing up right now with that rug. They start from the bottom and they come up to maybe a couple of inches away from there. Then they start backward from the top on down. Then they leave a small seam through there at a corner. Most rugs are made that way. But there's an outlet symbolizing maybe bad spirits out.

Unidentified Male: Oh, I see.

Interviewer: Oh, wonderful.

Unidentified Male: They do the whole thing with needles?

Mr. Claw: No, they don't do--

Unidentified Male: Just the end.

Mr. Claw: Just at the end at the finished product there. Most of the work is done with that old weaving stick there. [Tape recorder turned off.]

...different types of ceremonials. You'll notice that you may have the grinding corn chant, and they have a feather dance chant, and the fire dance Navajo dancers. The yebitchays [phonetic] are at the far end there. These are the various types of ceremonials.

Unidentified Male: So you have one dance for the yebitchays.

Mr. Claw: Right.

Unidentified Male: And that represents one of your primary ceremonials.

Mr. Claw: Right. That's probably one of the longest. Some take up to about fourteen days, depending upon the sickness involved.

Interviewer: Are these held for particular people or for particular occasions? I mean, suppose you were sick and then these are held to ask for your healing? Is that the way it is, or does it take more than one person? Is it for the whole tribe?

Mr. Claw: No, it's individually, depending upon the diagnosis, say, from a person that is in the--they usually get the recommendation either from a stargazer or somebody that takes away the sickness, and he would recommend a certain type of ceremonial. So in case he said that you need the blessing way, then they have a yebitchay.

Interviewer: I see. Mr. Cannon mentioned the fact that--I think it was Mr. Cannon, or maybe it was Mr. Johnston--that when a Navajo leaves the reservation, for instance, to go into battle, when he goes back, there is a ceremony. Can you tell me anything about that? To cleanse the effect of the outside world.

Mr. Claw: Yes, there is such a ceremonial, both when one is parting away from the reservation and then after he associates all types of other people, then maybe there is bad omens, they usually have another ceremony to cleanse all the evil spirits. Psychologically it helps a person to forget what has happened in the past, and it's more or less a way of coming back to normal life here back on the reservation [unclear]. [Tape recorder turned off.]

Mr. Claw: ...about five miles from St. Michael's. They call that the "tea kettle." It just looks like a kettle at a certain angle. You see the [unclear].

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Mr. Claw: [unclear] them. I've got some other paintings that they want, too, but they're not for sale.

Interviewer: Mr. Aaron [phonetic] says that he's painting, too. Did you know that? [Tape recorder turned off.]

Mr. Claw: ..and one is located here, Fort Defiance, Ship Rock. [unclear]. It used to be subagencies, but they did away with the word "subagency." It's strictly agencies now.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

[Side B: John Claw, E.J. Balbos, Martin Link]

?: --if all goes well, in six weeks--our applicants go for a six-week pre-employment community program which is administered by the state of Arizona under the Manpower Development and Training Agency. Through that program they provide free employment training to our criteria. We establish the general curriculum for the course, and, of course, this includes certifications that are necessary for doing our work, certifications for soldering and welding. Basically we are electronically oriented.

As a result of passing, why, of course, they could become eligible for employment here. We would put them on our payroll at full-time employment. They're paid, I believe it's 80 cents an hour while they'll in training. We put them on at a starting rate of $1.60, and then we upgrade up to--well, our top rate is now, it's $3.25 per hour, and then we move them on up into supervisory [unclear] there. We already have had two who have progressed from the hourly level to the supervisory salaried level, and we have three additional trainees in process. We've also, of course--I think we have right now five Navajo supervisors out of a total of twelve supervisors on the floor. As time goes along, we'll be replacing the Anglos with the Navajos.

Interviewer: That would be the ideal. [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: --multiple items. For example, these test units here, they're quite sophisticated. They're used to check out instruments on aircraft while they're on the ground. We make these for our Fort Worth division. The long-line cables are made for the Atlas program for our San Diego division. That's for the deep space probes and so on. [unclear]. Actually, it's not much different than the smaller type vehicles which are fabricated in this area. The principle is the same except that it is dealing with bigger, bulkier items.

This, as you can see, is quite a complex operation. It requires understanding of blueprints and, of course, people are taught blueprint-reading in the pre-employment training program. We have an on-the-job training that continues after they come here, and that goes on for as long as seven to eight weeks. Supervisors instruct people right on the job as they're performing work. [Tape recorder turned off.]

Our minimum age requirement here, or rather, minimum age, of course, is established by state law. It's eighteen years, but minimum education is eighth grade.

Interviewer: I was going to ask that.

?: Our average education is right at ten. We have quite a number who have completed high school. We're dealing with young people. Our median age is twenty-seven. These are young people who have been away to boarding school, who had advanced educational opportunities and who have lived with the Anglo society, so to speak, at the boarding schools. They have observed the customs and the mannerisms and the way of life and they accept them, contrasted possibly to their parents, in some cases, who are strongly traditional still. But these are young kids who want better education and better for their children, better diet for the home, some of the comforts and conveniences they are normally accustomed to. So their motivation is pretty well established before they come here because they have certain personal goals to achieve.

Interviewer: Is this 100 percent Navajo that is your--

?: Employees?

Interviewer: --your employees? Your supervisor are--

?: Yes, we have twenty-two. We have twenty-two non-Navajos out of 230 employees. All Navajo. We only have one Spanish-American and that's all. The rest are all Navajo. Well, there are a few American Indians of other tribes than Navajo, by intermarriage.

Interviewer: Yes.

?: The great majority of our people are-- [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: ...full calibration. The latest in equipment and we hire young technicians who have had schooling in electronics, both-- [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: ...and, well, they have the manual dexterity that makes it less than frustrating.

B: Yes.

Interviewer: And I would believe this is a new concept to us, but it seemed to me that the people are more quiet than those that we associate--and it's a great relief.

?: Oh, yes. I came here from Vandenberg Air Force Base. I was with the San Diego division and Atlas program. I was dealing primarily with engineers, pretty sharp engineers, all pretty strong in their fields, but they were also quite temperamental, and we just had nothing but conversations, it seemed like, all day long, you know, about personal situations, problems, and so on. And here we have very, very little of this work-related types of problems especially. Most discussions I have with people are matters of counseling, counseling in matters of personal finance. It might even be a domestic situation or something that they feel confident in discussing more or less, that is not directly job-related but does have an indirect relationship in that their peace of mind is affected by this problem. And they're very open and willing to discuss these things.

B: Must be very gratifying.

?: It's very satisfying for us to know that we're being accepted. [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: ...they figure, "Well, I'm going to be terminated because I'll be criticized if I tell them that I'm going home and helping my folks [unclear] shearing or raising cattle or something."

Interviewer: Yes, I understand.

?: These things, they can't very well be scheduled for a set time. In other words, the people have to go. They come and say, "Well, I have to go home and help my folks on their ranch," or the farm, with the livestock. [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: Occasionally you have someone who knows they'll be gone for two weeks and they'll be back [unclear]--

Interviewer: So they just get a leave--

?: Most instances they don't know, so they just quit and take off.

Interviewer: And then they come back for rehiring.

?: But then they come back and discuss what the problem was and if it looks like it's reasonable, why, we-- [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: ...and this building is the powerhouse. There are two turbines and two generators and two boilers. So if one of them fail on us, we would be able to use the other one.

Interviewer: I see.

?: It costs nine dollars a minute to shut those two carriages down. If they break down during the day, when all the men are on time, it costs them nine dollars a minute. If one carriage goes down, it's four and a half a minute. [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: [unclear]. Quite many of the Navajo students have attended. Some have put up hospitals, and indirectly they also [unclear].

Interviewer: Do the Navajos mind? I mean, they are glad for these people to establish the schools, even though they--or do they undermine that the Navajo beliefs, the old beliefs that they have had, the traditional beliefs? Maybe that's not a very good question.

?: In a way, the younger generation are taking more on over to a kind of religion with denominations and so forth. The older ones are still with the old traditions, and it's very in between. [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: [unclear].

Interviewer: For sheep and cattle?

?: For sheep and cattle for every Navajo stockholder, and they usually lay down the rules to how far the grazing rights are, customary use and so forth. Then over here in cases of home site, that's regulated through the advisory committee. That's another committee regulated by the Tribal Council. It has the same power as a Navajo Tribal Council, but it has a committee of eighteen and they're selected throughout the reservation, too. But if something comes up, a big tribal matter, then it's sent to the council. But the advisory committee does have that authority, and they make rules [unclear] for the tribes, and they regulate the area land use and land status.

Interviewer: Just what are the factors involved in your office? What kind of things do you do?

?: What we do in my office, our department is called the Land and Development Section of Economic Development Department. We're concerned with the architectural structure part of buildings and the engineering. We develop these projects, either by negotiation or by contracts. We either do it by utilizing the maintenance department or using the regular tribal labor forces. [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: ...and we are in charge of all the projects on reservations and off reservation, [unclear].

Interviewer: I've heard a little of that--

?: The circuit border area is areas where Navajos are living off-reservation. Certain land are allotted out to individuals, families, and so forth and [unclear]--

Interviewer: But are not actually reservation--

?: But the problem here is this--if they develop any circuit border area, say, like homes, like what's before you here, then they have to pay taxes on them. So they're not developed. They can only use them for grazing and so forth. But if they actually put up a structure, then the tribe would be subject to pay taxes. These homes here, the first nine houses here, are occupied by General Dynamics personnel, and the rest of these here are all purchased houses now, which are paid for and [unclear] ownership, these houses here, and the rest are being rented out.

?: Do they own the land, or is that on long lease?

?: It's on a lease of twenty-five years each. Each home site lease is--

?: Subject to renewal, I presume.

?: Right.

Interviewer: These homes belong to the people, or--

?: They belong to the people of that particular family, and it's been owned by their parents and ancestors all the way down. They have the grazing right or customary user rights for a certain area, or they can go have their livestock graze-- [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: [unclear] the mountain there.

Interviewer: [unclear] or something like that. Do you know what it is? What kind of an event is to be at the civic center on the eighteenth?

?: No, I don't. I haven't been down there for some time. They usually have tournaments down there, basketball tournaments, you know. For the various parts of the reservation, they'd have their tournaments down there. I don't know if they have had them, or-- [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: --movies that they have, they bring outside, ban them--

?: General entertainment.

Interviewer: Entertainment center. [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: ...to the city. It's a little bigger than this one here. They had one over at Ship Rock, so that each of the communities, the bigger communities, they have these large buildings. There's one located at [unclear]. We're still developing one at Kee-anta [phonetic]. That's about two hundred miles northwest of here. We're building one there, and it's about finished.

Interviewer: I see. [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: ...$25,000, and we're still trying to get that thing completed.

Interviewer: [unclear] 125,000.

?: Now, you'll notice in this book I gave you, it'll give you a run-down on how many are being employed, those that are seeking employment. [Tape recorder turned off.]

Interviewer: Going through the museum, Mr. Claw was telling us about the significance of this design, like that that you see at the end, the bottom of the necklace and so forth.

?: [unclear].

Interviewer: How do you spell that?

?: M-A-J-A.

Interviewer: And what does it signify? Anything?

?: It's a long story. It's the evil, it's to ward off the evil eye in [unclear] tradition in religion. This particular symbol is used on the, as a talisman, a good luck symbol, on both a necklace ornament on the individual and also on the cross-piece between the bridle and the horse. It is a Moslem symbol. When they invaded Spain, they brought along with them. The Spaniards picked it up as an ornament. When they invaded Mexico, the Mexicans picked it up as again an ornament. By this time, it'd lost its Moslem religious significance, and it's become an ornament on bridles ever since, and then it's been incorporated into personal adornment as well.

?: Now, I noticed in the museum they have the snake, and this is a part of their religion, isn't it?

Interviewer: I didn't notice that.

?: It was stuffed [unclear]

?: But, of course, and I'm thinking in terms of the naja head and the [unclear] language. Is there any connection between this and the snake?

Interviewer: That's a naga. That's a naga.

?: That's a naga. That's right. That's a naja.

Interviewer: That's in Thailand and in Burma as [unclear].

?: No, it isn't related to the snake here at all then.

Interviewer: No, when we were talking about that, he also mentioned something. I thought he said it was related to the masks that they wore in ceremonies. Now, wait, and the word yebitchay or something like that. Now, what is, what--I didn't get it, and that's the reason--what did that mean?

?: It simple means--ye-eh is god or a holy person. Their religion is so different from ours that you can't really--religion is not even a good word for it because their whole concept is different from our basic thought of religion as a way of life, a spiritual way of life to attain happiness in the next world. They all believe in a next world, and they don't really that anything--well, that happiness in this world is an end in itself, and it's not the obtaining either heaven or hell.

Interviewer: I notice that on the [unclear]--

?: So we used the term religion--actually it's philosophy because of our medicine. It's a medical, both medicinal and both--

Interviewer: Philosophical?

?: --moral. It's a way of life. But they don't isolate it like we do. We put it in some little cubby hole for Sunday mornings and then promptly forget about it and even are embarrassed sometimes to even talk about it unless it's Sunday morning. They don't quite operate that way. Ye-eh, then, is simply--probably more than anything else, it give them, compared to something in our religion, probably our concept of angel. It's less than a god, of the true sense of their god.

Interviewer: But higher than a mortal.

?: But then higher than a mortal, and something that could be, in many places it's immortal, has no death. But they have their weaknesses and everything, pretty much like the Greek gods. They have their jealousies and their problems and sometimes they don't get along and sometimes the god above them even has to set them straight once in a while.

Interviewer: Discipline. Well, I thought that this--I think I got the whole thing wrong mostly, because I thought--

?: I think you're mixing two different terms he talked about, and maybe when you listen to this, it might be different.

Interviewer: Yes, it could be, but I thought it was, that this design was connected with the masks that they wore for certain ceremonies.

?: Well, now, they use the jewelry in either dances and that. If you're thinking of the same thing I am, this so-called squash blossom which is actually pomegranate blossom necklace, what this horse-shoe type--

Interviewer: That, yes, the horse-shoe type thing--

?: --that's the naja.

Interviewer: All right. Well, I [unclear]. That takes care of it.

?: Now, you find that wearing it in their ornament [unclear] really has no religious significance. It's--

Interviewer: Of course, a lot of places that we travel over the world, their personal adornment goes back to a religious thing, and I just want to settle it.

?: --a religious thing, right, but over the centuries this becomes lost and you keep the pattern because this is the same design that my mother, my grandmother, and so forth wore, but why, we don't know anymore.

Interviewer: And it doesn't make too much difference. Of course, the thing that I want to particularly talk to you about is the code talkers. I hardly know what to ask, but I thought we got to our conversation here, well, things would come up. But I think we might go back to the question I asked you this morning as to, and you were telling me then in question that they do, the Indians do retain their feeling of enmity for their old enemies, and--

?: I didn't want to say it [unclear]

Interviewer: Ah, yes.

?: It was interesting to me. Steve was along on the trip, but he and I and the rug weaver and Miss Indian American a couple of years ago went on a ninety-day or a three-month tour of Germany. All during the tour, they were collecting little things that their German hosts had handled and this sort of thing, because my uncle needs some--they have to use something--see, they have use something in the [unclear] ceremony. You have to use something that is, has been part of the enemy--scalp or a piece of clothing, something he has handled, has been a personal belonging, even if it's just a little piece of an afghan or something. All these people were collecting little tidbits that had been handled or had been the property of Germans because their uncle wanted them for, you know,--my uncle needs it for medicine, or the enemy way chant, this sort of thing. This is a heck of a thing. It's been twenty years [unclear]. I mean, it still qualifies. They're not mad at any Germans. No, they thoroughly enjoyed the trip, but the very fact that they could get something from Germany that had been handled, that had been the property of a German, would still be potent back here in the community way chant.

Interviewer: If they just used it in an ordinary way. They didn't have any ceremony or anything when they got back. They just wanted something from the enemy.

?: No, for the enemy way. The enemy way is a ceremony. It's a three-day ceremony, more commonly called the squaw dance because the last part of the ceremony the women ask their warrior of their choice to dance. But we call it a squaw dance. The Navajos called it an enemy way ceremony.

Interviewer: What do they do with these things then? Well, I mean, suppose they have a piece of napkin or a cup or something. What do they do with it?

?: Do they hold it or carry it in the dance?

?: No, it's used in part of the ceremony. There are bundles, medicine bundles and this sort of thing, and, oh, it would take three days pretty much to describe it, but it's just the idea that although there's no animosity with the Germans any more, it's just that they can still can qualify religiously as being enemy.

Interviewer: I see.

?: And I know that kids are still bringing their Marine stuff home now from Vietnam and Korea, souvenirs were brought home, World War II [unclear] for this, but it's a trophy, war trophy.

Interviewer: Yes. Now, I don't know whether to ask you this. I asked somebody, and I got a little information about the ceremonies that they may have after they had been away. I understood, I think it was [unclear] Cannon who said that they would go to a secret mountain and ask to be sort of cleansed of the things--

?: No, well, they wouldn't go to a sacred mountain. They would have what's called a blessing way ceremony, which is a purification--

Interviewer: Blessing way.

?: Most of their rites, the closest term that we can come to in English to describe the particular ceremony is way because it's simply a way of life that's related during the ceremonies, so you'll see the term way--blessing way, enemy way, night way, mountain way--

Interviewer: I see.

?: --red ant way--

Interviewer: It's a rite or something that--. Now, did, I wonder, did the Navajos have any difficulty in leaving the reservation--is there any psychological effects of leaving their way here outside the reservation and going to a strange, strange land like--

?: Oh, fantastic. A very traumatic experience.

Interviewer: Very traumatic experience. Can you tell me anything about how it affected them, or anything--

?: Oh, at that time or now?

Interviewer: Well, either.

?: Oh, it's a world apart. At that time there probably hadn't been ten Navajos in the entire tribe that had ever been to Gallup, or beyond Gallup or Flagstaff. You're talking about a tribe now--all these kids are--

Interviewer: Go to universities?

?: --they'll come from universities. They're all over. My oldest boy, the one who just walked out, two and a half years down at the University of Arizona. The other boy, who finished high school at Fort Sill. So right now it's--at least they know what's ahead of them. In those times, just to get on a train or on an airplane to go to Phoenix was--just be like us going to the moon, really. It was just completely--literally going to a different world.

?: The boys who did join up really were going through a serious--

?: They were Neil Armstrongs, really. I mean, as far--to them, it was the great unknown.

Interviewer: Now, I understand that they're--from what I have read--that their performance under terrific stress was just tremendous.

?: Well, see, in a sense, once they got over there and got it out of their system that they were in a brand new world, this living a rugged life and the active life and a dangerous life--

Interviewer: Is their way, yes.

?: --that was their way of life. So to us that would be rough part of going over there, but to them that was the easiest part. The hardest part was getting there, which is just the opposite of what we would go through. We would think going through basic training, learning English, learning to eat with a fork, this sort of thing, was nothing. It's getting over there and fighting and shooting that's the big problem. For them it was just completely the opposite. To them once they got over they were back among--they were doing things that were in tune with activities, and--

Interviewer: Now, you asked me whether it was traumatic at the time or what the effect is now. Now, as the years have gone by, did it make any difference in their psychology, I think, or karma? I mean, did it affect their lives in a very different way?

?: It's affected the whole tribe. They came back here--I think more than anything else it was the men who were rejected because they couldn't speak English and had no education--in the service, not just code talkers, the service. All of a sudden it dawned on [unclear] for two thousand years Navajos have been able to fight when a war comes along. Now, all of a sudden I find out that I can't fight unless I learn how to speak English and read a book and have an education. So we're going to have an education. The result is that when these veterans came back, I think, more than any one single act, they came back and not asked for an education but demanded it. Whereas before--there's a line right there--1946. Before 1946 the biggest problem with the BIA was to kidnap and round up Navajo children to force them to go to school. In 1946 the problem was holding back the tide. What do you do with them? We built one school. We couldn't fill it. Now all of a sudden there's enough schools to fill ten schools and they want schools right now. It was fantastic. Your whole education program as a result of not just the code talkers, and as a result of these adults who now were saying, "Now, well, my god, my son, if there's ever a fight, he's going to be able to go into the service, and he's, you know, if it takes an education to make him qualified, he is going to get an education."

Interviewer: Now, of course, all of what we're seeing right around, even in East Lansing, are people that have come back from the Vietnamese War and, well, one, for instance the one man just sneaked up and killed a service attendant because although while she was back on the battlefield, you know, and--

?: And after World War II, we [unclear] up to civil war?

Interviewer: Yes, now I just--I know that that's true, and I wonder if since these men had not been away from the reservation, do you think it was more of a mental strain, more psychological [unclear]--

?: Definitely there was. Ira Hayes [phonetic] was a good example.

Interviewer: What happened to Ira Hayes? I know about him.

?: Drowned. Became an alcoholic. Drowned. And for no other reason than that everybody idolized him when he came back. You're the man that raised the flag at Iwo Jima, and this sort of thing. He couldn't take it. Very traumatic. There have been Navajos that to some extent had very mental problems. I think that took on probably alcohol more than anything else rather than going out and shooting other people, because that part they could contain. Actually the biggest problem was coming back and readjusting to a nonviolent life, which is true. I've seen [unclear] the war to cases of shell shock and [unclear]--

Interviewer: Oh, yes, it's general.

?: I remember one bad case of a Navajo, Chinn-Lee, in the early--the late 1950s, '58, '59, with very Asiatic features and could show you the bayonet scars on his stomach and his legs and the finger nails that still haven't grown up because of they were pulled out. He was in Korea and captured by the Chinese, not the North Koreans, but the Chinese. Because of his Asiatic features, they came to the conclusion that he was a turncoat, that he was actually of Chinese ancestry--because some of the Navajos can look pretty oriental--and the more that he tried to convince them that he was American Indian and not a Chinese, the less they believed him, the more they tortured him to make him confess that he was a China--and they put him through hell. And he came back and took to drink. I really don't blame him.

Interviewer: You can't blame him. You can't blame him. [unclear].

?: I mean, this was a situation where a lot of veterans who are obviously American, Caucasian, and he just had the misfortune--

Interviewer: [unclear] Well, now, I just wanted ask you if you know of any instances where--of course, you didn't serve in World War II.

?: No.

Interviewer: You're too young, but I just wondered if you knew of any situation in which they had any more [unclear] or other than the one [unclear] wrote about, and I thought if I knew of anything like that, it would make a very good [unclear] children.

?: I don't really know. That really doesn't sound even Navajo. That sounds more like a group of plains Indians. [unclear]

Interviewer: I thought that he said this was Navajo.

?: [unclear] I do remember, recall reading or hearing that the, there were a group of plains Indians with this--oh, the division that work with that as the Indian chief under Campbell?

Interviewer: The Thunderbirds, you mean? Or, no.

?: No.

Interviewer: Oh, I don't know.

?: [unclear] from Oklahoma [unclear]. Anyway, almost the whole division went over, you know,--

?: From Oklahoma.

?: Yes, and they went over, not the D-Day, the Normandy invasion, and they were transported over in gliders. They were one of the units that went over in gliders and so forth, and the day or so before they all gave each other the Mohawks, and they dressed up war paint, and they just--they probably scared the Germans to death more than anything else. They started piling out of those gliders in their--and I've seen World War II film footage showing them, all of the war paint and the--of course, they trimmed their hair to just the Mohawk, and they put on some dances and that sort of thing. But it was more just to, not only build up their morale, but to build up all the other units' moral around, too, just a moral-booster--

?: They weren't Mohawks, though, were they?

?: They weren't, no. God, I can't think of what the name of that unit is. Not the Thunderbirds. [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: ...the code talkers they weren't--none of them ever actually went into combat as a unit.

Interviewer: No, I know that's true. I know that's true.

?: This idea of the two-man assigned to a unit and this sort of thing. [unclear]

Interviewer: One would be on the ship. One would be on, with the landing party and so forth. Yes, I understand that. Well, it was--

?: --and it wasn't really that much out. I wouldn't discredit it. Now, it might not with the code talkers. Now, you have Navajo units that were in the army and other branches where you had whole platoons of Indians, maybe not entirely Navajo, but Indians.

Interviewer: Well, we'll just forget about that then.

?: If you had some sources, I think it would bear looking into it.

Interviewer: Then you probably could authenticate it. Yes.

?: Yes, and look into it. I wouldn't ever say it couldn't have happened. [unclear].

Interviewer: Oh, [unclear]. It had to do with the Navajo here. A professional soldier is under no circumstances afraid. They're never afraid.

?: Everybody's afraid.

Interviewer: Well, that's, I mean, that's--this was the code. I mean, that was just the code they were to live up to. Under no circumstances should they be afraid. I just wonder if--well, I did read one fabulous--you can turn this off now. [Tape recorder turned off.]

?: [unclear] the story, but, no, I shouldn't. [unclear] the night, but you were recording all this, too. But it was basically that this concept of walking artillery would turn behind you. They're shooting over your head, and they're increasing their range as your unit is supposed to be advancing.

Interviewer: I think I know this one.

?: Somehow the artillery got behind them, or they got into their-- [Tape recorder turned off.]

Interviewer: This looks just like him [unclear] can acquire while I'm here for the [unclear] the happier I will be, and, now, I think Mr. Claw, I know Mr. Claw said that Mr. Hobson to round up the men so that I'll have a chance to talk to them all while I'm here.

?: If you want to do it right here, I'd be willing--in fact, I'd like to get some more down on tape myself for our [unclear]

Interviewer: Oh, that would be beautiful. I would love to do it right here. I think this would be actually the best place. I think they'd be, they'd rather do that than to come to the hotel or anything.

?: I don't like to just--if you don't mind taping the--

Interviewer: Oh, listen, you can have anything that I can get.

?: Because I kick myself, too, that now I've gotten this material from him that I haven't followed it up sooner, you know, done little tape of--because Johnson's stuff just goes right up the treaty session and there's a blank [unclear]--

Interviewer: Yes, that's right. That's what he has. Now, see, that's what I want to fill in because, now, I saw his stuff. Of course, I don't have copies of it, and I must have copies of it. But that is as far, and then these-- [Tape recorder turned off.]

Interviewer: --[unclear] right to the end. Then I read today that they also were in Germany and Sicily and Africa and so forth. Now, do you know whether or not they stayed through the end of the war? Were they utilized till the end of the war?

?: I really think so. In almost all your cases, these were less casualties and a lack of replacements eliminated. But they really didn't need them so much in Germany, maybe because the Germans couldn't break our standard codes.

Interviewer: I see.

?: It wasn't the fact that the Germans knew Navajo. It was that we could come up with codes fairly easily that the Germans could not break the codes. Those Japanese were just a wizard at breaking codes.

Interviewer: Oh, they are wizards. They're just wizards anyway. They--

?: At breaking our codes. So there was more--this was really the ulterior, or the ultimate situation to get this program. It was the only one that the Japanese never did break. We had quite a few codes going on the Germans. By the time they finally got around to breaking it, we changed the code and we could keep one step ahead of them. But--Johnson may have shown it to you--an article in the paper just a couple of weeks ago--

Interviewer: Yes, he did.

?: --in Vietnam? Where we overran the Vietnam position, found 1400 of our coded messages? And they said, boy, this would have never happened if they had a couple of Navajos out there.

Interviewer: That is going to be in my book. Lee was so shocked by it, and he talked to me about it and he actually gave a copy. [Tape recorder turned off.]

[End of recording]