

## TEACHERS GUIDE

We recommend the National Museum of the American Indian's **BOARDING SCHOOLS LESSON** - which is one section of their larger Code Talkers Unit.

### **BACKGROUND: Military Importance of Native Languages & Code Talkers**

You can give the students as much background as you wish in the fascinating story of the Code Talkers - see Intro

<http://www.nmai.si.edu/education/codetalkers/html/index.html>



But basically, to understand a few references to Code Talkers in this lesson on Boarding Schools, students need to know this brief background:

During World War I and World War II, hundreds of American Indians joined the United States armed forces and used words from their traditional tribal languages as weapons.

The United States military asked them to develop secret battle communications based on their languages—and America's enemies never deciphered the coded messages they sent. "Code Talkers," as they came to be known after World War II, are twentieth-century American Indian warriors and heroes who significantly aided the victories of the United States and its allies.

Osage soldiers serving in World War I were involved in using the Osage language as secret code in communications.

The great **irony** of the boarding schools and Code Talkers was that the **schools attempted to wipe out native languages, but these languages turned out to be very important in the U.S. war efforts in both world wars.**

### **SEE LESSON - "BOARDING SCHOOLS - STRUGGLING WITH CULTURAL REPRESSION" AT:**

<http://www.nmai.si.edu/education/codetalkers/html/chapter3.html>

It is one lesson in the National Museum of the American Indian Unit on Code Talkers: "Native Words-Native Warriors"

This is an excellent quick introduction to the Boarding Schools philosophy, environment and impact on students, including two brief personal stories, and five good discussion questions.



Navajo student, Tom Torlino, when he entered the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, (left) and then three years later. 2