



TELECOMMUNICATIONS
HISTORY GROUP

CONNECTIONS *news*

www.telcomhist.org

Fall 2025, Vol. 32, no. 3

303-296-1221

Dave Felice, editor

A message from our director

At several locations, THG volunteers are engaged in an unprecedented flurry of activity, getting ready for major improvements in visitor experience and historic preservation. You'll read progress reports in this edition.

From Oregon, Phil McCarter's collection is being moved to Denver and Seattle. In Arvada, Colorado, design and many other preparation tasks are underway in anticipation of a new museum. In Seattle, a second museum location is being readied for opening next year. And in Santa Cruz California, artifacts from the American Museum of Telephony are being prepared as part of a merger of the JKL Collection and THG's Connections Museums.

We recall award-winning telephone commercials from advertising writer/producer Fred Arthur. There's a link to audio on the THG web site.

This edition also has stories about Code Talking and boats with telephone connections.

THG preserves the documentary and artifact records of telecommunications so we can understand the people, technology, and organizations which built modern communications. This is a home to stories of creativity that led to satellites, the Internet, smart phones, video streaming, and many other modern devices.

Thank you for your continuing support and involvement.

Renee Lang
Managing Director

Legendary radio advertising remembered



Advertising writer-producer Fred Arthur promoted telephone products in a group of commercials from the 1960s. The award-winning advertisements, for several Bell Operating Companies, feature Arthur's trademark humorous banter approach to reinforce the product name.

A few years before his death in 2020 at age 87, Arthur gave a small collection of telephone commercials to *THG Archives* in Denver.

Here is a condensed typical script for Direct Distance Dialing. The 60-second commercial is presented as a fictional interview with a female alligator wrestler in the Okefenokee Swamp.

Fred: ...now I'd like to talk to you about Direct Distance Dialing.

Female: About what?

Fred: ...dialing long distance calls yourself...you ever try it?

Female: Oh, no, I always call person-to-person.

Fred: I'm surprised...

Female: Look, I'll go into the pit with an alligator anytime, boy, but you're not going to get me to dial my own calls

Fred: Alright now, come on, first you dial one, then the Area Code (sound of rotary dial), then...

Female: Boy, you're cool...

Fred: ...and then the number...that's all there is to it...now you try it

Female: Nuh, I don't think I wanna try it...

Fred: Come on, just pretend you're wrestling an alligator

Female: Well...

Fred: (as announcer, over dialing sound) Everyday, thousands of people are discovering the adventure of dialing direct...it's faster and cheaper than calling person-to-person

Female: (grunt and groan over dialing sound) There, I did it...I actually dialed direct

Fred: Good for you...By the way, about that phone...

Female: Yeah...

Fred: ...you can let it up now...

Female: ...ahh...

Fred: (as announcer) D-D-D from C and P Telephone

The final line could be changed to name the appropriate Operating Company. You can hear some of the telephone ads at <https://www.telcomhistory.org/archivesOnlineAdvertising.html>.

Other general commercials are at <https://broadcastpioneersofcolorado.com/fred-arthur-archive/>.

After working in Denver-area radio, Arthur formed Fred Arthur Productions in 1961, operating from an old Safeway store, near downtown Denver. His many awards include nine Clios for excellence in advertising. Arthur was inducted into the Colorado Broadcast Hall of Fame in 2005.

John Nance, a Mountain Bell contract speech writer, was part of Arthur's group of freelance voice actors, writers, and singers. Cast member Ric Jury, is well-known for his comedic voices. The "fabulous" Fay McKay led a talented group of female voice actors.

Commenting on his telephone commercials, Fred Arthur said "The Bell has tolled."

Exclusive Telecommunications History Group story by Dave Felice

Big improvements ahead for THG

The Telecommunications History Group is embarking on a major expansion plan to greatly enhance the visitor experience and to further preserve communications history. The project is made possible in large part by a cooperative venture with the American Museum of Telephony (AMOT), also known as the JKL Telephone Museum, of Santa Cruz California.

The combination of THG and JKL brings together two of the nation's premier collections of telephone and switching equipment along with a strong organizational commitment to preserving and sharing the history and culture of the telecom industry.



JKL Museum main room

"We're enthusiastic about this unprecedented opportunity to build a sustaining legacy," says THG Board President Peter Amstein. "We are carrying on the visionary traditions of history keepers Don Ostrand, Herb Warrick and Herb Hackenburg, who founded THG's museums and archives, and AMOT founder John K. La Rue."

In the plan, THG assumes the assets of the JKL Museum. The extremely impressive collection will be transferred to a new facility under construction in Seattle and the Connections Museum Colorado now being developed in the Denver area.

"This is a transformative moment for our communities," Amstein says. "By joining forces, we honor the individual legacies of both institutions founders, while stepping into a future of broader reach with a deeper collection."

John K. La Rue, founder of the JKL Museum, sees the venture as a way to ensure the long term preservation of the JKL collection. "I am confident THG will carry the JKL mission forward, making the collection accessible to even more visitors."



Wall of phones at JKL Museum

"I'm very happy to see our decades-long project to preserve these artifacts, and their history, will continue in good hands," comments Dianne La Rue, Vice President of American Museum of Telephony.

Passion for preservation

The JKL Museum of Telephony started in 1997 when the first building was constructed in Mountain Ranch, California. A one-room building grew to a huge facility, a world class repository of all things telephone. The museum's complete loss during the 2015 Butte Forest fire was mourned by the La Rue family and the many volunteers who contributed thousands of hours to making it possible.

Once the family decided to rebuild, it took about a year to find a new location, inventory the old museum warehouse, and design the new museum. Hundreds of telephones and other artifacts were acquired to display at the new location.



Autovon 16-button government phones at JKL

THG staff are excited about showing JKL's many unique artifacts, including pre-production and field trial test telephones that somehow managed to survive after their intended short periods of use. Among those are an early concept for a push-button telephone which resembles a Western Electric type 302 telephone set, but with two rows of buttons. The buttons plucked mechanical reeds within the telephone housing to produce brief tones, rather than using electronic oscillators as was done in the final design.

Also, of great interest to museum guests is a "Shmoo", a telephone model that was used in Field Trials in about 1959-60 in New Jersey. This phone earned its nickname from the resemblance to a character in Al Capp's *L'il Abner* comic strip. The dial in the handset was judged successful, but the full size dial made the phone uncomfortable to hold for long periods. The concept was developed into what eventually became the extremely successful and popular Trimline model.

Member involvement crucial

The expansion plan is made possible by strong donor support, prudent financial management, and good timing. THG has successfully raised funds from both large and small contributors to establish the new facilities. Strong commitment from devoted members and other donors indicates continuing financial well-being for the project, and THG's ability to attract and maintain a strong volunteer core means the collection will be well maintained and accessible to museum visitors.

Amstein says the new locations and exhibits are tentatively planned to open in early 2026. THG's existing museums – Connections Museum Seattle and Connections Museum Denver – will continue to operate in their current locations.

Progress at Connections Museum Colorado

A team of recruits is working intensely in a Denver suburb, managing expected and unexpected aspects of setting up a new telecommunications museum. And, true to the management principle of Hofstadter's law, projects always take longer than expected even when Hofstadter's law is taken into account.

In the Summer issue of the Connections News, you read about THG's plans to open a brand-new museum in Arvada, immediately adjacent to Denver. Volunteers have made a lot of progress, but it seems there is more to do now than then.

THG recruited approximately 35 new Denver-based volunteers to assist with the Arvada Museum in all areas, from exhibit construction and preservation, archiving and library operations, and to being docents once the museum is open. Managing Director Renee Lang is quickly developing new skills in facilities management, since THG needed to hire and manage contractors for groundskeeping, roofing repair, and cleaning among the many other tasks that go with owning and maintaining a building.

In mid-August, a crew of seven volunteers from both Denver and Seattle traveled to Salem, Oregon to begin boxing up Phil McCarter's extensive telephone collection. The crew spent an intense weekend at Phil's estate, near the town of Jefferson, carefully taking phones from the wall, wrapping them for transport, and loading the boxes onto a rented truck. Two of the new Denver volunteers, Angela and Michael, drove the truck back to Arvada where it was unloaded in the expansive new space.



***Denver volunteers Michi and Michael prepare
telephones for the move from Oregon to Denver***

Four more THG volunteers plan to travel to the Kansas City area, to prepare another very exciting new donation for transport. Look for a story about that in the winter issue. The team has also been working with an architecture firm that specializes in museum design to develop interior plans. Because THG volunteers already have a great deal of experience with giving tours of our existing museums, they want to take advantage of space that is essentially a blank slate to create a dynamic, highly functional museum layout.

Ad becomes enduring image

An idea for a telephone advertisement turns out to be one of artist Norman Rockwell's most well-liked works.

Rockwell painted *The Lineman* in 1948. Through its advertising agency, N.W. Ayer, AT&T commissioned the artwork for New England Telephone.

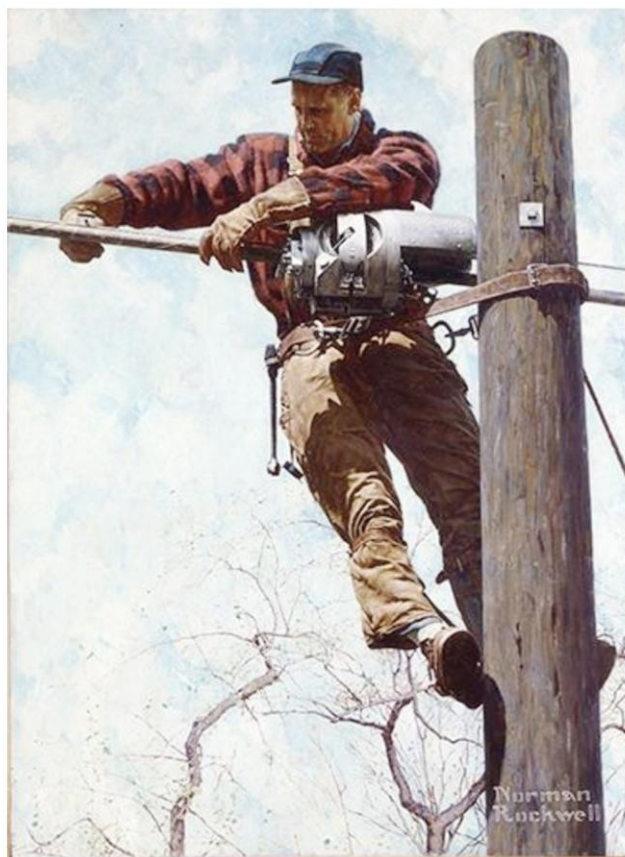
"It's a highly admired painting," comments Rockwell Museum Chief Marketing Officer Margit Hotchkiss. "The image is so realistic we often have to caution visitors who want to touch the painting."

Speaking exclusively for *Connections News*, Hotchkiss says: "(the image) is larger than life. It's a big painting. Guides often speak of the incredible detail. The hard lines and materials of the cable apparatus contrast strongly with the soft folds of the lineman's well-worn clothing. Rockwell was committed to capturing accurate details. He employed a lengthy process of seeking real-life models, props, and clothing, and then utilizing photography, preliminary sketches, and color studies to inform his final paintings.

According to information courtesy of Norman Rockwell Museum (www.NRM.org), an art buyer for the ad agency, "proposed an inspirational painting rather than an advertisement." Gordon Wilbur's letter to Rockwell said: "The work of the linemen for the telephone company is filled with opportunities for personal sacrifices and acts which stem only from devotion to national welfare, so it seems fitting work to honor by such a painting."

The museum provides additional information, stating: "In the spring of 1948, Rockwell went in search of his model. His quest ended with John Toolan, a New England Telephone employee who was setting poles with a crew in Cheshire, Massachusetts, near the Vermont border. Toolan went to Rockwell's studio (then in Vermont) where he posed on a makeshift pole supplied by the telephone company, which was fitted with cables and anchored to nearby trees. Toolan then lashed cables for several hours while photographs were taken. The photos were then sent to AT&T, where engineers checked them for accuracy. Four months later, Rockwell sent his preliminary drawing and color study for approval. Eleven changes were required, most of them technical, before Rockwell could proceed with this final oil painting."

Life, *Collier's*, and *Look* magazines published the painting nationally as an advertisement. The inverted reverse "L" shape of the vertically-oriented image provides ideal space for advertising text to the lower right. The general public and phone company employees sent thousands of requests



Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

The Lineman, 1948

Advertising illustration for New England Telephone
Oil on canvas

Norman Rockwell Museum Collection,
Gift of Verizon, NRM.2007.11

for reprints. AT&T sent over one-hundred-thousand color posters nationwide. The image also has been reproduced on commemorative plates, tankards, and bronze statuettes.

A 1980 article in a New England Telephone magazine quotes Toolan (deceased): "I remember when the ad first appeared. Boy, did I get kidded by friends and co-workers. They said they'd never known such a famous person and thought I was quite a celebrity. Best of all, they thought I was still a regular guy, too."

Art experts say the Rockwell work commands attention because of its almost life size and unadorned message about the dignity of manual work and essential service.

The Bell Telephone System advertising reinforced the notion of the importance of the work and a strong person dedicated to his craft. The text reads, in part: "Along the highways of speech, in every part of the country, thousands of Bell telephone linemen help to keep your telephone service good – and make it better. They are on the job to maintain uninterrupted service over millions of miles of wire and cable. They are the men who push forward the lines of communication to new places and new people. In the everyday doing of the job, as in the dramatic emergencies of fire and storm the telephone linemen help to get the message through."

At Divestiture, ownership of the Rockwell painting passed to Verizon Communications, the Regional Bell Operating Company (RBOC) of which New England Telephone was a part.

In 2006, Verizon loaned the artwork to the museum from the corporate art collection. The next year, Verizon officially donated the painting. Museum Chief Executive Laurie Norton Moffatt said: "Thanks to Verizon's generosity, *The Lineman* joins Norman Rockwell Museum's distinguished collection of work that tells the story of America."

The Lineman is displayed at the museum located on a wooded 36-acre estate, just outside the historic village of Stockbridge, in the Berkshire Hills of Western Massachusetts. The compound, an international center for Rockwell research and scholarship, is home to the world's largest collection of Rockwell's art, archives, and studio. The property which is fully dedicated to art appreciation and the artist's unique contributions to American culture. In addition to the permanent Rockwell art, the museum has presented special exhibitions of other noted American artists ranging from Frederic Remington to Charles Schulz.

Rockwell's work appeared on the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post* from 1916-63, more than any other artist. He has been described as America's favorite illustrator, delighting viewers and frustrating critics with his special and often witty viewpoint. Rockwell referred to himself as only an illustrator and once said "Right from the beginning, I always strived to capture everything I saw as completely as possible." Over 4,000 original works include *Look* magazine paintings depicting his interests in civil rights poverty, and space exploration.

The Norman Rockwell Museum galleries are open daily except Wednesday, from 10:00 to 4:00, or 5:00 from May through October, weekends, and holidays. Disability access is very good and the museum provides wheelchairs. Call 413-298-4100 or see <https://www.NRM.org>.

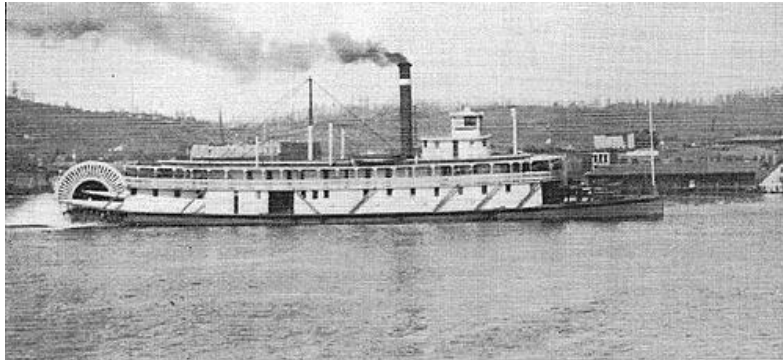


Story by Dave Felice. Artwork reprinted with permission.

Steamship has curious name

A telephone can be a sternwheel steamboat as well as a communications device.

In 1884, Captain Uriah Bonser Scott and partners built the *Telephone* steamboat in East Portland, Oregon. There doesn't appear to be any record of why Scott gave that name to the large, powerful river vessel. He had another boat named *Telegraph*, built in Everett, Washington.



1. G. DAVIDSON, PHOTO. 135 FIRST STREET, PORTLAND, OR.
Columbia Transportation Co's Steamer "Telephone."
Length 170 Feet. Beam 28 Feet.
TIME FROM PORTLAND TO ASTORIA, OREGON, JULY 2ND, 1887—105 MILES—4 HOURS, 34 MINUTES
Capt. U. B. SCOTT, President. E. A. ASHLEY, Agent, Portland. C. E. BARNARD, Owner. C. E. DUNDON, Agent, Astoria. E. W. CRONIN, Secretary.

Telephone was said to be the fastest steamboat in the world at the time. The boat sailed on the Columbia River, between Washington and Oregon, and in San Francisco Bay. Newspaper accounts said *Telephone* was intended to travel 110 miles from Astoria, Oregon to Portland in five hours.

The steamer was rebuilt at least twice, each time using components from the previous boat. When the first boat caught fire near Astoria,

Scott is credited with saving the lives of the passengers by speeding to port. The third generation *Telephone* operated in San Francisco as late as 1913.

Born in Ohio, Scott was known as an expert designer of shallow-draft watercraft. He gained valuable experience as a master of Ohio River vessels, before building several boats in the Pacific Northwest. The *Telegraph* made numerous Columbia River excursions during the Lewis and Clark Exposition in 1905.

Telephone No. 1 traveled on three-and-a-half feet of water. The 172-foot long boat had 17 staterooms, was licensed for 300 passengers, and was the first Columbia River boat to carry a piano. When the boat sank in January 1892, it was re-floated, repaired, and back in service three months later.

The huge boilers on *Telephone* were designed with tubes which increased steam production. When running full speed, the boilers used three cords of wood per hour.

In 1907, *Telephone #3* won a race against *Telegraph*, just before being replaced on the river by a new stern-wheel steamship.



Original story by Dave Felice, with material from internet sources
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telephone_\(sternwheeler\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telephone_(sternwheeler))

Memorabilia marks mobile milestone



At the Telecommunication History Group archives in Denver, a one-of-a-kind artifact commemorates the first public cellular calling capability.

The wooden model of a Washington State ferry boat marks the inaugural pay phone wireless offering in the nation. U S WEST subsidiary NewVector provided the service, beginning in September 1985.

NewVector Public Relations Director Gary Lundberg described the new product in a letter to John Felt of USW Public Relations: "Developed in conjunction with U S WEST's cellular subsidiary and Oki Telecom of Hackensack, N.J., the cellular pay phone will allow commuters to place credit card phone calls to anywhere in the world. The pay phone will be installed on both the Seattle/Winslow and Seattle/Bremerton ferry runs."

Lundberg added a handwritten note, saying he knew Felt couldn't be at the inaugural call ceremony. But Lundberg told Felt "you might like the (model) boat for your bathtub."

In the Bell System Divestiture of 1984, each Regional Bell Operating Company got part of the Advanced Mobile Phone System (AMPS). NewVector, a wholly owned U S WEST subsidiary, operated in the former service areas of Pacific

Northwest Bell, Mountain Bell, and Northwestern Bell.

NewVector, headquartered in Bellevue, Washington, was created from AMPS. The company started offering cellular calling in mid-1984, describing itself as "a diversified cellular telephone and mobile communication company (which included paging, radio, and other non-cellular services)." U S WEST Cellular was a subsidiary of NewVector Group, along with USW Paging and Advanced Paging Systems. At the time of NewVector's initial public stock offering in 1988, USW retained 80 percent of shares.

Pacific Telesis, the RBOC formerly known as Pacific Bell (California and Nevada), set up wireless services as AirTouch Communications in 1994. USW Cellular began talks about eventually merging with AirTouch. Regulatory matters held up the merger until 1998. Some overlapping coverage areas had to be sold to other providers, most notably GTE Wireless.

Post-Divestiture corporate shuffling then got even more complicated. AirTouch merged with Vodafone of Britain. Bell Atlantic formed a joint operating agreement, known as Verizon Wireless, which included Vodafone AirTouch. Through additional purchases and mergers, Verizon, T-Mobile, and AT&T eventually became the largest cellular companies.

Gary F. Lundberg
Public Relations

NewVector Communications, Inc.
2300 West Avenue South
Bellevue, Washington 98003
(206) 464-2888

NEWVECTOR
Personal Communications
In the Information Age

August 30, 1985

Mr. John Felt
U S WEST, Inc.
7800 East Orchard Rd.
Englewood, CO 80111

Dear Mr. Felt:

As of September 5, it will be possible to phone home while out in the middle of Puget Sound. On that date, the nation's first cellular pay phone will be installed on a Washington State Ferry.

Developed in conjunction with U S WEST's cellular subsidiary, NewVector Communications, Inc. of Bellevue, Wash., and Oki Telecom, of Hackensack, N.J., the cellular pay phone will allow commuters to place credit card phone calls to anywhere in the world. The pay phone will be installed on both the Seattle/Winslow and Seattle/Bremerton ferry runs.

You are invited to the inauguration of this new communications system where NewVector and the Washington State Ferries will conduct a "first call" ceremony on the 9:25 a.m. Seattle/Winslow ferry (pier 32) returning to Seattle at 10:40 a.m..

Please arrive in plenty of time if you plan on attending.

Sincerely,

Gary —

John — know you can't make it
but thought you might like the
boat for your bathtub —
Gary

Unbroken code brings wartime success

Using their own language, a group of Native Americans demonstrate accuracy and speed of code communications, especially during combat. The highly effective code devised by Navajo Indians in the South Pacific campaign of World War II was never broken by Japanese forces.

Chester Nez, a sheepherder from just outside the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico, was one of the very first code talkers. His autobiography, *Code Talker*, is co-written by cultural scholar Julia Schiess Avila. The Department of Defense kept the unbroken code secret until 1968.

Nez describes how Navajo is effective for code because it is a spoken, not written, language. In Navajo, tonal inflection can give two different meanings to the same spelling. In addition, the sophisticated native language had no equivalent words for military terms. "We chose animals and other items from our everyday world that resembled the military equipment, so 'fighter plane' was represented by the quick and maneuverable hummingbird, code word *da-he-tih-hi*."

Nez and his companions enlisted in the Marines shortly after the attack at Pearl Harbor. The men left training at Camp Elliott in San Diego in September 1942. They had the Marine Corps Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) #642 and the rank of Private First Class. They were involved in several major battles of the South Pacific for over two years, without a significant break. Often they had to disembark from landing transport boats and wade onto island beaches. Nez describes the landings and battles at Guadalcanal and Peleliu as particularly difficult and ferocious.

Navajo code talkers worked in pairs at the battle lines. One person operated the magneto cranked TBX radio and one person transmitted and received messages. The team had to move after each short message to keep the Japanese from determining the location of the transmission.

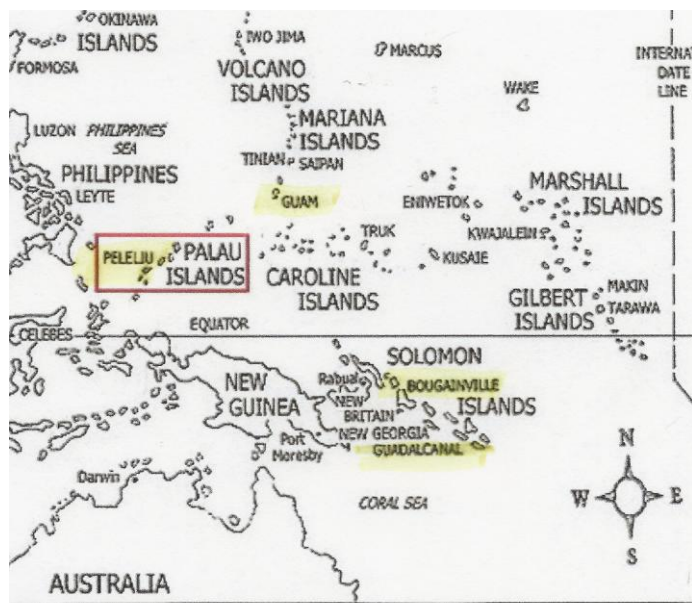
After devising the code, the men practiced intensively and often. Nez writes the code talkers also relied on native skills: "Navajo children in a traditional environment were exposed to the exacting and complex thought processes required the language. This helped contribute to their abilities and complexities (including) the abilities to be a code talker (such as) learning quickly, memorizing and working under extreme pressure."

Command officers were skeptical, until the code talkers quickly demonstrated their method used a mere fraction of the time of other systems. After success in several front line battles, Signal Corps Commanding Officer G.R. Lockard wrote: "As general duty Marines, the Navajos are without peers...and I should be very proud to command a unit composed entirely of these people." According to Nez, another marine officer said: "The Navajos were extremely dependable...the kind of guys you wanted in your foxhole...when something had to be done."

"The code words were never written when we transmitted messages," recalls Chester Nez. "That made us men living walking code machines. And even if the enemy somehow managed to link our Navajo language to the new code, there was nothing written to help them learn unfamiliar words."



An example of TBX Code Talker radio



Nez says other Marines did not know of the secret communication process and did not use the term code talker. The Navajos got the respectful nickname "chief." Towards the end of the war, code talkers actually got companions who served as bodyguards. An estimated 100 men were trained as Navajo code talkers by the time the war was over.

In January 1945, as there was speculation about an American assault on Iwo Jima, Nez learned he could return to San Francisco. Discharged in October 1945, Nez was forbidden to say anything about his code talker experience.

Nez describes a childhood when he and his family lived outdoors while herding

sheep in north-central New Mexico. He tells of the hardships of attending boarding school in Fort Defiance, where students were punished if they did not speak English. After his discharge, he made his way back to his home near Chichiltah. Neighbors from miles around staged a traditional homecoming. It is not Navajo culture to honor a single individual.

Nez says he had trouble getting a government identification card upon his return. Native Americans could not vote in New Mexico until 1948. He was called up in Korean Conflict, but did not go overseas and was discharged as a Corporal. Nez never had a birth certificate.

Nez used Navajo "Good Way" traditions to overcome post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He attended an all-Indian high school in Lawrence, Kansas, and studied art at the University of Kansas but did not graduate. Kansas University College gave him an honorary degree. Nez married his Navajo wife, Ethel, in 1952. A baby girl died in childbirth. His two-year-old son died in a train accident. The family later adopted a baby Navajo boy. The oldest of six Nez children was killed in a car accident at age 21.

In 2001, President George W. Bush awarded a Congressional Gold Medal to Nez and four other surviving code talkers. Nez was asked to do interviews and speeches. He was accompanied by his son Mike. After giving a Navajo blessing in Boston, the Red Sox won the baseball World Series for the first time since 1918. Chester Nez, the last survivor of the "Original 29" Navajo code talkers, died at age 93, in 2014. New Mexico state flags were flown half mast.

The book contains a Navajo Code Talkers' Dictionary. While comprehensive, the dictionary is really only a guide because of the language complexity.

Code Talker was first published in 2011 by Dutton Caliber, an imprint of Penguin Random House; re-published in paperback in 2018.



Story by Dave Felice



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