

November 8, 2020

Welcome to the home of
100 to 1 Faith TV
I'm Larry Jent
And this is the message
for Grace Hartwood UMC
on November 8
Wind Talkers



Our Old Testament scripture this week is from
Deuteronomy 28:49
The Lord will bring a nation against you from far away,
from the ends of the earth,
like an eagle swooping down,
a nation whose language you will not understand.

The Gospel Reading is from John 3:8
The wind blows wherever it pleases.
You hear its sound,
but you cannot tell where it comes from
or where it is going.

It is Veteran's Sunday at Grace Hartwood, and I want to
introduce you to 20 of the most amazing heroes you
have never heard of
It is a story of the Great War

The war to end all wars—a war that, sadly, we soon came to know as World War I.

We begin in good military fashion, with the commanding officer, Colonel Alfred Bloor

He was born in the year 1876 in Pittsburgh, PA, but grew up in Austin, Texas



In 1917 he received an appointment as colonel of the Seventh Texas Infantry Regiment

The War Department merged the Seventh Texas with the First Oklahoma Infantry.

The new organization became the 142nd Infantry Regiment

This regiment soon found itself on the front lines of France, where Col Bloor found he had a problem with communication

It's hard to realize now, but electronic communication was rather new

Then—as now—accurate communication made the difference between life and death

But Col Bloor's problem was that the enemy could intercept and understand every word he spoke

What set him apart as a leader was one unusual skill
He LISTENED to his men

Among those recruits he inherited from the Oklahoma
infantry were some men no one else wanted
They were from Indian territory—Choctaws to be exact
By law, they were not even US citizens
But they were proud to volunteer to fight for their Native
land, and proud to be US soldiers

Well Col. Boor overheard two of those Choctaws
talking to each other—and he listened
And he could not understand a thing they were saying
Then it dawned on him—
If he couldn't understand them, then the enemy couldn't
understand them either

So Col. Boor took another remarkable step
He asked for their help
Together they worked out a code that could translate
military terminology from English to Choctaw

They tested their new skills during a battle in 1918, and
found that—for the first time—the stalemate was
broken
The enemy did not know what they were doing until it
was too late

By placing Choctaw soldiers in every company, the US command was able to communicate freely and openly with no fear of interception

Native American soldiers had become wind talkers

The enemy could hear the wind blowing, but they could not tell what it meant

It was a turning point in the struggle

And hastened the end of the war

We celebrate the armistice that ended that war to this day on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month

The day we call, Veteran's Day

But their influence extended far beyond the field of battle

At the turn of the 20th century Native people were not generally considered to be part of the fabric of America

Dangerous ghosts of the past, most citizens wanted to forget about them or teach them to blend in to the background of the new nation.

But sometimes the fires of war can forge bonds of brotherhood that eclipse even those formed in church.

The men who served shoulder to shoulder with these Choctaw heroes could not accept the idea that original

people of this land were still not citizens of the United States.

Their testimony—their work—their witness—was crucial to the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924—less than 6 years after the armistice was signed



And although there was still much work to be done to level the playing field for all people, that law affirmed what the Choctaw soldiers already knew—That America was big enough to open her doors to people of all nationalities and all colors

And that we are made STRONGER when we welcome those who are from a different background—Those of a different heritage—Those who speak a different language—Than our own.

Over and over in scriptures, God promises to bless people who practice hospitality, and



welcome strangers in their midst.

But not all nations followed that call.

Out of the ashes of defeat, the dark shadow of Hitler and the Nazi party soon plunged the world into another great war.

You might think they would learn from their mistakes of World War I, but instead, they doubled down.

Far from opening up to those who were different, they created death camps and gas chambers for those the Fuhrer considered less than human.

They trusted their war machines and technology to bring the whole world to its knees.

And once again, from far away, God raised up a nation whose language they could not understand, to swoop down on them like an eagle.

To keep their secrets secure, the Germans trusted a technological marvel, the Enigma Machine.

They had no idea that their secret code was



cracked almost immediately by Marian Rejewski, a Polish mathematician. In 1939, as Hitler prepared to invade Poland, Rejewski turned over the secret to England.

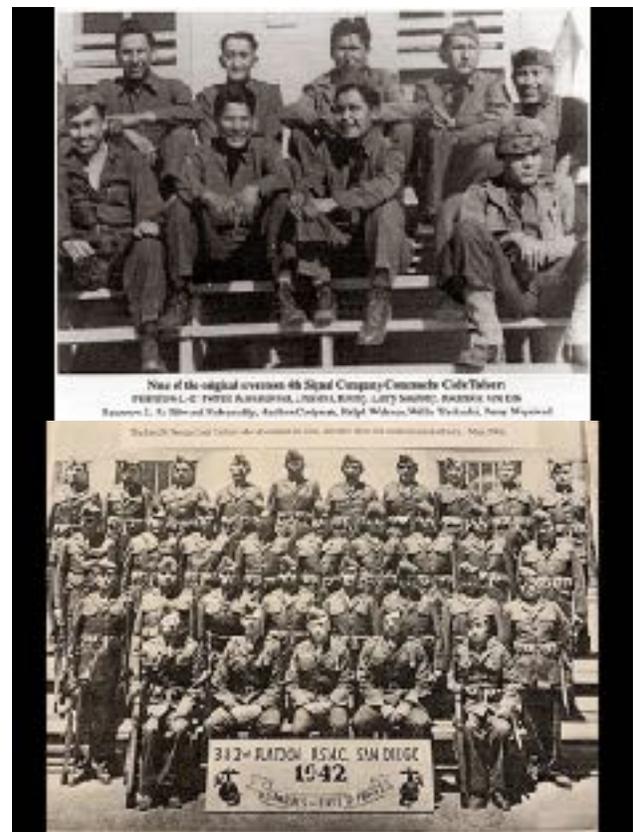


Meanwhile in America, our battlefield secrets were also turned over—this time to Comanche and Navajo code talkers.

Soon the wind was blowing with Native languages once more. The greatest German minds could never crack that code, because it came from the land, not from the lab.

It came from people the Fuhrer would never accept.

It came from the soul of America.



It came from a land that has always known—
We are stronger together than the sum of our parts.
We are more with each other than we are by ourselves.

Let the tyrants rage about blitzkriegs and their master race.

They cannot break us, so long as we have hearts that love the winds of freedom.

On this day of sacred remembrance we cannot forget our true source of strength.

We dare not discount those words that welcomed so many of our forebears—

*Not like the brazen giant
of Greek fame,*

*With conquering limbs
astride from land to land;*

*Here at our sea-washed,
sunset gates shall stand*

*A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning,
and her name Mother of Exiles.*



*From her beacon-hand Glows world-wide welcome;
her mild eyes command*

The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

*“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!”
cries she With silent lips.*

*“Give me your tired, your
poor,
Your huddled masses
yearning to breathe free,*

*The wretched refuse of
your teeming shore.
Send these, the
homeless, tempest-tost to
me,
I lift my lamp beside the
golden door!”*

That spirit of welcome and
brotherhood is still the true
strength of this land.

That bedrock of truth cannot be broken by enemies
from beyond our shores
It can only be shattered when WE fail to stand shoulder
to shoulder and arm in arm
with ALL who love this land

So today I invite you to remember those who dreamed
of the days of peace and freedom you and I now enjoy

Those who let their voices carry the sweet winds of
freedom into the fires of battle—



Those who came out of that furnace with a bond of brotherhood that could not be broken.

I invite you to call the names of these Choctaw heroes with me, one by one:

Albert Billy	Mitchell Bobb	Victor Brown
Ben Carterby	Benjamin Colbert	George Davenport
Joseph Davenport	James Edwards	Tobias Frazier
Benjamin Hampton	Otis Leader	Pete Maytubby
Jeff Nelson	Joseph Oklahombi	Robert Taylor
Charles Veach	Calvin Wilson	

In their honor, we lift our voices upon the wind today.
There will be those who cannot understand—
But we lift voices of welcome,
sisterhood and brotherhood,
that the world cannot give and the world cannot take
away.

In their honor we resolve to always be stronger
together than we could ever be by ourselves.
In their honor we pledge that America will be all she
was meant to be.

Many peoples, but One nation,
Under God,
with liberty and justice for all.