

26 June 1944.

Mr. Carl I. Wheat,
Attorney at Law,
Shoreham Building,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Wheat:

Further in connection with the Navajos, I regret to have to report that Army Ground Forces have decided not to go into a training program along the lines we discussed. They have given the matter thorough consideration and have reached definite conclusions. As yet no answer has been received from the Army Air Forces, but I will communicate with you as soon as I hear anything.

With cordial greetings, I am,

Sincerely yours,

William F. Friedman,
Director of Communications
Research.

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May 11, 1944William F. Friedman
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Washington, D. C.

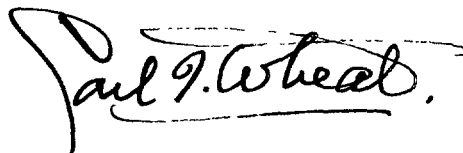
Dear Colonel Friedman:

In response to my brief note to Sgt. Johnston at Camp Pendleton, California, I have received a letter from him in which the matter I mentioned to you is referred to as follows:

"Thanks for your letter of May second. My work here is going better than ever. The Navajos, without exception, are eager to excel their white comrades in the speed of transmitting messages -- and when I turn them over to the field school they succeed in doing it by at least a two-to-one ratio. All the officers think they're tops."

I thought you might be interested in this comment.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul I. Wheat". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Sincerely yours,".

Wheat

ROUTING AND WORK SHEET

SUBJECT Use of Navajo Indians for Communications.

Number each action	To—	Memorandum	Name, Division or Branch, and Date
1.	Director of Communications Research	<p>1. In reply to your informal request of 7 June 1944 regarding the attitudes expressed by the Army Ground Forces and Army Air Forces on the use of Navajo Indians for use in radio telephony transmissions, the following information has been obtained:</p> <p><u>Army Ground Forces:</u> Lieutenant Colonel James M. Kimbrough, Jr. of the Signal Section of Army Ground Forces informed the writer that Colonel G. B. Rogers and Colonel O. K. Sadtler took this matter up with G-2 and obtained their feelings and opinions on it. Apparently, G-2 was dead set against the adoption of the plan to use Indians, since it was felt that the security features inherent in the Navajo tongue were not sufficient enough to warrant development for general radio telephony transmissions. It was further objected to that the enemy could obtain translators and after the recordations of sufficient plain text had been obtained, the entire language be subject to successful analysis and compromise.</p> <p>Therefore, the Army Ground Forces did not feel justified in screening the entire army in search of Navajo linguists.</p> <p><u>Army Air Forces:</u> As yet no answer has been received to our request of 13 June 1944 directed to the Army Air Forces on the same subject and we are therefore unable to express to you their feelings on this matter. Upon receipt of this information, it will be immediately forwarded to your attention.</p>	<p><i>Charles E. Henshall</i></p> <p>Chas. E. Henshall 1st Lt., SPSIS-4 17 June 1944 Ext. 307</p>

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May 2, 1944

William F. Friedman
3932 Military Road, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Colonel Friedman:

Thank you for your letter of the 1st with respect to the possible use of Navajo Indians in Army communications. Pursuant to your suggestion, I shall of course merely advise Sgt. Johnston that the matter is still under consideration here, without further details.

Possibly Johnston's success in connection with the Marines has been due to the fact that he lived for some years in the Navajo country and understands these Indians probably as well as does any white man. It is unquestionably necessary to afford to the selected Indians a sufficient and properly developed course of training in order to enable them properly to handle this type of assignment. Anything less would doom such a project to failure from the start.

It is probably true that the reservoir of Navajos who are qualified by education to handle this type of work is, as you say, "exhausted." However, one of Johnston's difficulties, as I understand it, seems to have been that the Army had already drafted most of the more qualified Navajos before the Marines initiated this particular effort. Doubtless, if the Army so desired, it could find plenty of well-qualified young Navajos in various branches of the service who could be assigned to such a task and who could probably render greater service through such assignment than by merely being left in ordinary, run-of-the-mill military jobs.

In any event, I keenly appreciate your thoughtfulness in writing me. I feel sure that you understand that my sole intent in drawing this matter to your attention was to further the war effort. Please call on me if I can be of any additional service.

Sincerely yours,

Paul F. Wheat