

The First Nations in The Second World War

Canada declared war on Germany on September 10, 1939, and for the second time in just over two decades, the country's indigenous community responded quickly.

Voluntary registration for the war

Thousands served in the armed forces in any conflict, mostly voluntarily. Officially, about 4,000 First Nations soldiers served abroad in World War I, while 4,250 First Nations soldiers served in World War II. Recent research has shown that thousands of other First Nations, Métis and Inuit soldiers (such as Labrador's John Shiwak, who served in World War I) volunteered without identifying themselves as a First Nation.

In total, more than 500 native soldiers died and many more were injured or captured in both World Wars. On the home front, most indigenous communities participated in the national war effort in various ways, by donating money and working for the war industry. Despite their contributions and sacrifices, however, the indigenous peoples remained marginalized, without fundamental civil rights such as the right to vote.

After that, native veterans were largely forgotten until they started organizing and running campaigns for recognition of their sacrifices and return due to grievances about the benefits to veterans from the 1970s to the 2000s. Perseverance paid off, with a consensus report emerging in 2001 was accepted by both the First Nations veteran organizations and the government, followed by a public apology and an offer of compensation in 2003. Traditionally, the grievances of the veterans of Métis and Inuit have not been the same. However, in recent years, native veterans have gained much more recognition in local and national memorials, including Aboriginal Veterans Day on November 8 (inaugurated by Winnipeg City Council in 1994) and a National Aboriginal Veterans Monument in Ottawa (unveiled in 2001). So that they are not forgotten.

National Aboriginal Veterans Monument Ottawa



Francis "Peggy" Pegahmagabow - The deadliest sniper of WWI



Francis Pegahmagabow was born in 1889 on the Parry Island Indian Reserve (now the Wasauksing First Nation), an Ojibwa community near Parry Sound, Ontario. When he is three, his father dies and his mother returns to her home in the Henvey Inlet First Nation. After spending so much of his childhood hunting, Pegahmagabow turns out to be a uniquely skilled sniper. He sneaks into no man's land under darkness, buries himself in cover and waits patiently for a German helmet to fall into his eyes. It is this mix of patience and infallible aim that makes him the deadliest sniper on both sides of the war. By the time of his discharge in 1919, Pegahmagabow is the most decorated First Nations soldier in Canadian history. He received the Military Medal in 1916 and earns two bars, becoming one of only 37 Canadians to win the Military Medal with two bars. He has also been awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Indigenous People in World War II

A veteran returns

Chief Joe Dreaver, of Mistawasis Cree Band in Saskatchewan, served in both world wars. During World War I, he was a sapper and earned the Military Medal, an award for bravery in the field, in Belgium. When war broke out again, he immediately signed up, left his farm, and brought 17 men, including three of his sons. At the age of 48, he was too old for overseas service and stayed with the Veterans' Guard in Canada, watching prisoners of war in Alberta.

An extraordinary family offering

John McLeod, an Ojibwa, served abroad in World War I and was a member of the Veterans' Guard during World War II. Six of his sons and one of his daughters volunteered. Two sons lost their lives and another two were injured. In 1972, John's wife, Mary, became the first native woman to be called the Memorial Cross Mother of Canada, and placed a wreath at the National War Memorial in Ottawa on Remembrance Day on behalf of all Canadian mothers who had lost children to the war.

Bravery in Action

Charles Bryce, Cree. Charles enlisted in the Lake Superior Regiment (motorcycle), received the Military Medal in the Netherlands and the Distinguished Conduct Medal in the Rhineland campaign, and his participation in the fighting around the Rhine was unprecedented. Adequate weapons and with a handful of men against an almost hopeless action will forever remain an excellent example for all ranks of the regiment.

Prince of the Brigade

Thomas George Prince, an Ojibwa from Manitoba, volunteered as a paratrooper. He served with the elite Canadian-American commando unit called the First Special Service Force that became known to the Germans as the Devil's Brigade. He earned the military medal in combat in Italy and the Silver Star, an American award for courage, for his exploration work in France. These high awards were presented to him by King George VI at Buckingham Palace.

A leading career

Brigadier Oliver Milton Martin, a Mohawk from the Six Nations Grand River Reserve, reached the highest military rank ever held by a native. During the First World War he served in the army as well as in the air force. During World War II, he oversaw the training of hundreds of recruits in Canada. For his 20 years of excellent service, he received the Colonial Aid Award.

A man of many talents

David Greyeyes, a member of the Muskeg Lake Cree Band in Saskatchewan, served in many difficult military positions in seven European countries, including commanding a mortar platoon in Italy. During the Italian campaign, he earned the Greek Military Cross (third class) for bravery in supporting the Greek Mountain Brigade. In 1977 he received the Order of Canada. His quote reads: "Athlete, soldier, farmer, former chief of the Muskeg Lake Reserve, Saskatchewan, and ultimately director of First Nation affairs in the Maritime and Alberta regions. Long and devoted service to his people, often under difficult circumstances."

In their own words

- "We are proud of the word volunteer. Nobody forced us. We were good Canadians - patriots - we fought for our country." - Syd Moore, World War II veteran
- "In Cree we say 'Kahgee pohn nuts took' on Remembrance Day. It means 'the fight is over'." - Irene Plante, veteran widow
- The Colonel begins to read the 36 names of our fallen. Tears are in his eyes. He faltered and handed the paper to the adjutant, who folded it gently and put it in his pocket and said softly, "It's not necessary. They were comrades. We remember". - James Brady, World War II veteran.

The Legacy.

The brave native men and women who left their homes during the Second World War to contribute to the struggle for peace were true heroes. The additional challenges they faced and overcome make their performance all the more remarkable.

Tommy and Morris Prince, Sergeant Tommy Prince (R), M.M., 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, with his brother Private Morris Prince,. February 12, 1945.



Both of the brokenhead Band of Ojibwe. .

"In Holland we were Canadians, at Home we were Indians"

The First Nations in the Netherlands.

For many years, many First Nations took part in pilgrimage trips to the Netherlands to celebrate the liberation together with the Netherlands.

Apeldoorn – Groesbeek – Holten – Leeuwarden – Groningen – Bergen op Zoom.



Apeldoorn 2000



Holten Cemetary 1995

Ernest Smokey & Howard Anderson Cree

Visiting Palace “Het Loo”. & Ceremony in Holten at the Canadian cemetery.



Grand Chief Howard Anderson,Cree,Manitoba

Op de parade in Apeldoorn



Ernest Smokey does a ceremony in Holten at the Canadian cemetery.

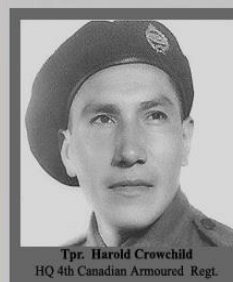
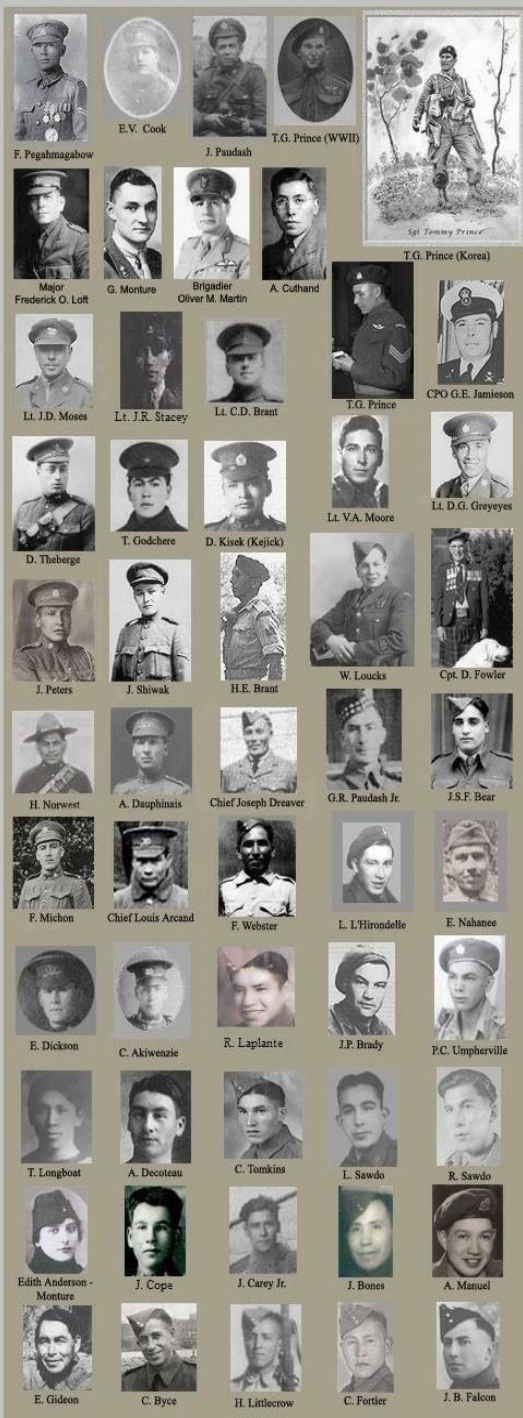


Ernest Smokey & Grand Chief Howard Anderson Palace “Het Loo” .



First Nations, Aboriginal, Indigenous Beaded Poppy on Medicine Wheel





De Aborginal tribute lijst.

This list now includes 7000 First Nations names that served in all wars.

In Flanders Fields

On May 3, 1915, Canadian Military Doctor John McCrae wrote the well-known poem in Flanders Fields that became famous around the world, and the poppy he described in the poem became the national memorial symbol.

Dr Lena heavy shield Russel from the Kainai Tribe translated the poem into Blackfoot, which took 15 years.

Our First Nations friend Glenn sent us this poem, He promoted Dr. Lena to do this.



IN FLANDERS FIELDS

Iitstaahpi awahkaotsiiyiiksi I'niiksi apamoohtsi
Iitohkanaikstoihtsiiyaawa.
Pisatssaisskiitsi itawaawattohpapokaii'yi
Sitokohtsi awoysstaakssiiksi.
Iihtsskoi'pi nitsitstsihpinnaani.
Kii spoohtsi, pi'kssiiksi, saakiaawaaksistooyinihkiyi. Aipottaayaawa.
Maatohtoohtowawaiksaawa isskonakssini saainisoohtsi

Niistonnaana anniksao'ki anniiksisska I'nitaikska.
Maatomaisamowa ninoohkattsipaitapiiyihpinnaan.
Ninoohkattoohthoki'pinnaan otao'o'tamisskapssi naato'siwa.
Nimattsini'pinnaan otaiisttahkapssi naato'siwa.
Nitaakomimmihtaahpinnaan. Ninoohkattakomimmotspinnan.
Kiannohka nita'tamitaihtsihpinnaan
I'niiksi itaihstaahpi.

Noohkakohkootsiimoka nitaawaawahkaotsiimannaniksi.
No'tsinnaanistsi aii'sistsikooyi.
Nitsitapaapiksi'pinnaan isstaana'kima'tsisi.
Ma'tsika. Niitoohkspinnika.
Ikkamomatskaohsakkinnaniki, niistonnaanaka nitai'nittspinnanaka.
Nimaataakso'kaahpinnaana.
Kiiwahtao pisatssaisskiitsi itaisaisskiiyi
Awahkaotsiiyiiksi I'niiksi iitstaahpi apamoohtsi.



Translated into the
Blackfoot Language by
Dr. Lena Russell



"We Will Remember Them".

Mary Greyeyes

Mary Greyeyes was born in the Native American Meskeg Lake Cree Nation in Saskatchewan, Canada in 1920. In June 1942, in the footsteps of her brother who had already entered military service, she traveled to Saskatoon to enlist. As the Sergeant told her of her acceptance, she became the first First Nation woman to join the Canadian Armed Forces as a member of the Canadian Women's Army Corps.



The Eagle Staff

The Department of Defense and the Canadian Armed Forces.

The Eagle Staff is the traveling symbol of unity among Aboriginal women and men in defense, a symbol of the strength, pride and honor of Aboriginal heritage, reminding us that Canada will never forget the legacy of its early peoples. The Staff represents the First Nation traditions and reinforces the values of inclusivity and respect for all members of the first peoples, both past and present.

The Eagle Staff is also used and honored in the United States.



One of the fallen First Nations is buried under his own name at the Canadian cemetery in Groesbeek. This does not happen often. Respect “Big Canoe” R.I.P. He was killed on March 8, 1945.

Big Canoe



There are about 55 First Nations buried in the Netherlands, who are known, but there will certainly be more because at the recruitment agency they hardly ever used their native names.

Métis - Inuit's - First Nations
Let us not forget them now after 75 years.

“WE WILL REMEMBER THEM”