

**Canadian Indians and the Second World War:  
The Pivotal Event of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century for Canadian Indians  
and Canadian Indian Policy?**

**Roy P. Toomey**

B.A., University of Northern BC, 2002

Thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfillment Of

The Requirements For The Degree Of

Master of Arts

In

History

The University of Northern British Columbia

September 2006

© Roy P. Toomey, 2006



Library and  
Archives Canada

Bibliothèque et  
Archives Canada

Published Heritage  
Branch

Direction du  
Patrimoine de l'édition

395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

*Your file* *Votre référence*  
*ISBN: 978-0-494-28427-8*  
*Our file* *Notre référence*  
*ISBN: 978-0-494-28427-8*

**NOTICE:**

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

**AVIS:**

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

---

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

  
**Canada**

## ABSTRACT

Few Canadian historians have addressed Canadian Native involvement in the Second World War. Historians that have addressed this subject have created narrative histories of Native involvement in the war, with little concern for how Natives' participation in World War II affected Native communities, Native individuals, or Canadian society. American historians Kenneth William Townsend and Alison Bernstein argued that World War II was a very significant event for American Indians and American Indian policy. This thesis argues that the same is true for Canada. By exploring Natives' involvement in combat, their experiences on the home front, and their experiences after the war, this thesis explains that Native involvement in World War II introduced profound changes for Native people, Native communities, and Canadian society and Indian policy. Because Native involvement in World War II was so pivotal for Indians and Indian policy, Canadian historians must explore this topic further.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At long last, my thesis is finally complete. Throughout my five year tenure as a student at the University of Northern British Columbia, I have met and become friends with many positive people who have had an impact on my studies and my life in general. There are too many people to thank, but I would like to extend some special thanks to a few individuals who have really had a lasting impact on my studies and my life, and who have really helped me to complete Masters Thesis.

First off, I'd like to thank the UNBC history department for accepting me into the Masters program and allowing me to realize my hopes of receiving a Masters Degree in history. Dr. Jonathan Swainger was the one who endorsed my application to the program, believing that I could be a good graduate student. Dr. Gordon Martel agreed to conduct an independent study with me regarding my first love: 20<sup>th</sup> Century military history. Dr. Michael Dawson was one of my favourite history professors when I was an undergraduate student, and I always appreciated the way he approached teaching a history course, making history lively, interesting, and fun. I always thought that when I someday taught history, I would try to emulate his teaching style. Most of all, I would like to thank Dr. Ted Binnema for being an excellent (and very patient and understanding) Masters Thesis supervisor. Ted always made himself available anytime I needed help with anything, regardless of how trivial it may have seemed, and it was through his constant pushing and encouragement that I was finally able to finish my thesis. Even when my heart was not into studying or when I felt more like procrastinating, Ted did his very best to keep me on track, and he constantly challenged me to be the best historian I could possibly be.

There are two other academics that shaped my approach to history and to education in general that I would like to acknowledge. Dr. Nicholas Tyrras, international studies, was probably my favourite professor at UNBC. His manner or teaching was always fun and exciting, peppered with interesting stories and personal anecdotes, and he was always available whenever I wanted to talk about anything at all. Unlike many professors, Nick's door was always open and even if he was in the middle of doing something more important, he always made time to invite me into his office with a handshake. I wish more professors approached their students in a similar manner. Again, I always hoped to try and emulate Nick's teaching style in that regard. The other man I would like to acknowledge is my grade twelve history teacher from Timberline High School in Campbell River, BC. Mr. Anthony Arnold was an amazing history teacher, who had a real passion for history, which was evident in his teaching style. He made history fun and exciting (something that all academics should do) in order to keep students interested in learning about history. It was because of his class that I really decided to study history in college and university.

Next, I would like to thank my close friends for their continued support. They all know who they are, but there a few who deserve special mention. Dan and Amanda Tisseur have been two of my best friends from the very beginning of my studies at UNBC. Anytime I need anything or anytime I can't be with family for a holiday the Tisseurs invite me to their home with open arms for dinner. Dan really is like an older brother to me. Bennett has been my best friend since the old Heritage Park Museum days back in Terrace, BC. He is one guy that I can always talk to about anything that is bothering me, and I can always be sure that he will make me laugh and forget about whatever problems I am facing. It was really Ric who helped me maintain my sanity

while studying at UNBC, and kept me from burning out. Again, Ric is a friend who has become more like a brother to me.

Finally, I would like to thank my wonderful and loving family. First, I must thank my Grandpa and Grandma, June and Roy Dunbar (who I was named after). They were always interested in how my studies were going and were always hopeful that I would be able to visit them on Vancouver Island. Unfortunately, my Grandma passed away in 2005, and was unable to see my thesis come to fruition. My Memere and Pepere, Yvonne and George Toomey, have also always cared about my studies and have always encouraged me. My Pepere deserves extra thanks, for it was his participation in the Signals Corps of the Canadian armed forces throughout World War II; his twenty-plus years of Canadian military service, including peacekeeping missions to the Middle East; and his undying desire and ability to march straight and proud in the Remembrance Day ceremony each year that really interested me in 20<sup>th</sup> Century military history to begin with. His participation in the Canadian military has always been a source of pride for me and has created a personal tie to 20<sup>th</sup> Century military history. My brother Alan has constantly been a good friend to me (except when we were kids and used to fight like cats and dogs) and I always enjoy hanging out with him whenever possible, though it has not been as often as I would have liked. Alan and I are, in many ways, exact opposites. I paid attention in school, while he goofed off. I became an academic, while he became a tradesman. I stayed the course, while he strayed from the path numerous times. Even so, we have become closer and closer with each passing year, and I admire him in many ways for his carefree attitude and his rambunctious nature. Finally, I cannot thank my Mom and Dad, Karen and Richard Toomey, for their constant support and encouragement throughout my academic experience. Even when times were hard and I

felt very low my Mom and my Dad could always be counted on to lift my spirits. The odd time I felt like I could not do it or felt that I should quit, they assured me that I could accomplish whatever I wanted to. Their undying confidence in me and their loving support (and Dad's constant nagging) kept me on track and carried me on to this point in my life. I love you Mom and Dad... thank you for everything.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction:	7
Chapter 1: Canadian Indians Go to War:	21
Chapter 2: Canadian Indians on the Home Front	52
Chapter 3: After the War	80
Conclusion:	115
Bibliography:	121

## Introduction

Most historians agree that World War II was one of the pivotal events of the twentieth century. The social, military, and economic legacies of the Second World War are still experienced today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. However, one aspect of World War II has been largely neglected by historians: the significance of World War II for Canadian Native people. It is known that the First World War and the White Paper were pivotal for Native people, but so was World War II. Historians recognize that war changes societies, cultures, and governments. However, how World War II affected Canadian Indians had not been considered. The Second World War brought significant changes to the lives of Canadian Indians, as well as changes to the Indian Act. Because of these changes, World War II was arguably the most important event of the twentieth century for Canadian Indians and Canadian Indian policy.<sup>1</sup>

Even among historians of Native peoples, there have been few specific studies about Canadian Native people and their participation in World War II. For whatever reasons, Canadian historians have largely ignored this topic. Several studies explore Native participation during the First World War, including L. James Dempsey's book, *Warriors of the King: Prairie Indians in World War I* (1999); Fred Gaffen's book *Forgotten Soldiers*, which deals with both World Wars; and Janice Summerby's work for Veterans Affairs, *Native Soldiers, Foreign Battlefields*. Gaffen's and Summerby's works will be explored in the present study, as both works also deal extensively with Canadian Native participation in World War II.

General histories of Canadian Native people demonstrate how little attention has been paid by historians to the effects of World War II on Native people. E. Palmer Patterson's *The Canadian Indian: A History Since 1500* (1972) mentions World War II

briefly, but does not discuss how World War II affected Indians. Patterson argued that racism became “unfashionable” after World War II, and stated that after the war Natives began pushing for more civil rights, becoming proud of their “unique ‘Indianness’,” but he failed to tie these changes to World War II.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps more revealing is Patterson’s comment regarding Native allegiance during the war. He states,

When after World War II the attitude of Canada began to change, Indians were included. They were not always first to profit by the change; in British Columbia, Canadians of Chinese and East Indian descent got the vote earlier than native Indians and Japanese-Canadians on the grounds that the former two peoples had been allies of Canada in WWII.<sup>3</sup>

This statement suggests that political changes came slowly for Canadian Natives, but because they were not allies of Canada during the Second World War, they did not receive the vote sooner. This is false, for numerous Canadian Indians served in the Canadian armed forces throughout World War II. Patterson has missed the point that political changes for Canadian Indians after World War II came about *because* Indians had participated so fully in the war and had proved to be loyal Canadians. In a book of about 200 pages, Patterson dedicates five paragraphs to World War II.

In *Canada’s First Nations*, Olive Dickason also downplayed the importance of Native participation during World War II. In 304 pages, she devoted only 3 paragraphs to the war. She summed up the significance of the World War II by stating that

the Second World War ushered in a change of attitude. Amerindians, despite the fact that they were not citizens, enlisted in proportionately higher numbers than did any other segment of the general population; it has been estimated that they numbered up to 6,000. When they returned to civilian life, the restrictions and inequities... on reserves became so glaringly evident that veterans’ organizations and church groups mounted a campaign that resulted in the establishment of a Joint Senate and House of Commons Committee on the Indian Act.<sup>4</sup>

Dickason did not describe Native peoples’ actual military service, nor did she touch on Native peoples’ efforts on the Canadian home front. She did not discuss how World War

II led to the “change in attitude” mentioned. She also stated that veterans’ organizations and religious organizations began pushing for changes to the Indian Act, but she failed to mention that Natives themselves, led by their war veterans, led the push for civil rights for Native people and the maintenance of their aboriginal rights.

In *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, J. R. Miller’s summary of World War II and its effects on Canadian Indians and Indian policy is better, but still brief. In 285 pages, Miller dedicated four pages to World War II. He argued that as Canadians fought “a war against institutionalized racism and barbarity,” they began to notice that their own society was blatantly racist, and began to feel “discomfited” when “on rare occasion, they looked at the way in which they treated the aboriginal peoples of their country.”<sup>5</sup> He stated that because Natives enlisted and fought in great numbers during the war, they deserved to have more “consideration by the majority of the population.”<sup>6</sup> He then stated that Natives’ “wartime experiences,” and pressure from “government and church circles,” led to the “appointment in 1946 of a special joint committee... to examine and reconsider the Indian Act.”<sup>7</sup> While his summary touched on some of the main points, it is very brief.

Arthur J Ray’s *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began* exemplifies historians’ ignorance of Canadian Indian involvement in World War II. Ray’s book is 368 pages long, but lacks a single significant reference to World War II.<sup>8</sup> World War II appears but briefly in Ray’s work. Considering the importance of World War II for Natives, this is a major weakness of Ray’s book.

In recent years, a few historians have begun to study this previously ignored part of Canadian Native history. In this regard they are following an earlier trend set in the United States. Until the 1990s, the significance of World War II in US Indian history was largely neglected. Since then two monographs have greatly improved our

understanding of how World War II transformed life for American Indians and how the war led to significant changes in US Indian policy. The first of these studies is Alison Bernstein's *American Indians and World War II* (1991). The second study is Kenneth William Townsend's *World War II and the American Indian* (2000).

It appears that prior to Bernstein's study, American historians failed to recognize the tie between Native involvement during World War II and changes made to American Indian policy in the post-war period. In her preface, Bernstein argued that in the majority of studies conducted on the Indian New Deal, "the war experiences of Indians and the policy changes brought about by the war are relegated to a few pages or a chapter at best."<sup>9</sup> Bernstein argued, however, that World War II was the most important event of the twentieth century for American Indians and American Indian policy. She wrote that "World War II had a more profound and lasting effect on the course of Indian affairs in this century than any other single event or period, including the Roosevelt administration or the Eisenhower era."<sup>10</sup> Bernstein defended this argument by presenting evidence that demonstrated that World War II gave American Indians a new outlook on life away from the reserve, presented them with new opportunities, and provided them the tools and skills they would need to fight for civil rights after the war. She explained that the events of the Second World War, as well as Native participation in the war, forced US government officials to realize that the Indian New Deal was not the answer to the Indian question. Before the war, Indians were considered outsiders in their own country, but at the war's end they were "part of the American political process, their economic, social, and cultural status irrevocably altered by the conflict."<sup>11</sup> Because of Native involvement in the American war effort during World War II, (including their enlistment and adherence to the draft, their participation in home-front endeavours, and their

participation in combat during the war) the American government could no longer dismiss Indians as a dying race that required assimilation. Nor could they simply dictate what they thought was best for Native American people. As Bernstein stated,

the post-war years did not live up to white expectation that Indians would happily join the white world and abandon the tribal way of life... these years [also] demonstrated to Indians that winning more control over their own affairs was only a first step towards overcoming genuine economic and social deprivation.<sup>12</sup>

Because of Native involvement during the war years, it eventually occurred to the US government that the termination of Indian Affairs was not feasible. Bernstein showed that the Indians' "argument that no tribe should be terminated against its will became official policy," and legislation was created to protect Indians' cultural identity.<sup>13</sup>

In *World War II and the American Indian* Kenneth Townsend argued that "whether bound for assimilation or retrenchment, World War II was the crossroads for Native Americans and, ultimately, for federal Indian policy."<sup>14</sup> Townsend explained Indians' willingness to participate in the American war effort during World War II, and explained how their involvement gave them the skills and the drive to fight for increased self-determination and civil rights after the war. Townsend argued:

many Native Americans hoped to make a successful transition into mainstream society once peace returned. The prospect seemed dim but possible before the war... but war brightened the prospect and directly offered the opportunity to take the step toward inclusion. For others, pre-war federal Indian policy revitalized traditional Indian cultures; developments during the war affirmed for many Native Americans the value of a renewed, invigorated Indian identity.<sup>15</sup>

Having experienced equality with whites on the battlefield, and in the home front workforce, Native Americans no longer wanted to be dictated to. Instead, they wanted to live as they felt they should. Townsend explained that many whites felt that Indians should have more say in how their reservations were run and how their people lived. When confronted by challenges to their tribal authority, Native Americans resisted the

government's attempts to control them and fought for changes to Indian affairs legislation. By demonstrating this, Townsend showed that American Indians "exercised a degree of self-determination not seen since the government's official closure of Indian-white hostilities in the 1890s."<sup>16</sup> Townsend explained that the

clearest evidence of the Indians' exercise of self-determination that emerged from their World War II experiences was a conscious and spirited reassertion of their ethnic identity within white America. The path so many Indians chose to follow after 1945 was that leading directly toward a renewed pride in Indian culture and history – the forerunner to the Red Power movement that arose in the 1960s.<sup>17</sup>

As Townsend and Bernstein successfully argued, it was Indians' experiences during the Second World War, (including equality with whites, new opportunities for employment and education, and organizational and leadership skills learned in the military) that gave Native Americans the will and ability to fight for better conditions in the United States. They had been fighting to defend the rights that white Americans enjoyed, and believed that they deserved to enjoy those same rights themselves.

Townsend's and Bernstein's arguments raise questions about the significance of World War II in the history of Canada's Native peoples. Could their arguments also apply to Canada? In other words, could one ask, "Was World War II one of the most significant events of the twentieth century for Canadian Native people and Canadian Indian policy?" Most historians in Canada have not considered this possibility. In Canada, focused studies on aboriginal participation in World War II are recent, but Canadian scholars seem to underestimate the significance of World War II in the history of Canada's Native people. In her 1993 Masters thesis on the participation of Native people during World War II, Janet Frances Davison briefly discussed *American Indians and World War II*, acknowledging that "Bernstein argues that [Indian involvement in World War II] is a neglected area of Native history and that 'World War II had a more

profound and lasting effect on the course of Indian affairs in this century than any other event...’.”<sup>18</sup> Davison explored the argument no further, stating, “This much is true for Canada too, but the impact of the war, and some of the changes that occurred [sic] later, often differ between the two countries.”<sup>19</sup>

Davison’s thesis lacks an explicit thesis statement, but her implicit argument is that historians and the Canadian government have ignored the participation of Native people in World War II for too long. Davison wrote, “If nothing else is clear from this study it should be apparent that the history of Indian participation in the nation’s wars deserves far more attention,” and it is “not too late for... Canada to acknowledge and applaud the services of its Indian veterans.”<sup>20</sup> She concluded her study by arguing:

The government of Canada owes a public acknowledgement of the contribution of these Indian communities. All Canadians should be made aware of the sacrifices made by Native people during the war, so that they can share the pride and respect the Native communities have for their warriors... the non-Native people of Canada have forgotten that Indians served in the nation’s wars, including World War II: for the most part, Canadians have never known about Native participation at all. This is a blank spot in our history, one that needs to be remedied now.<sup>21</sup>

Davison’s thesis is important as it demonstrated that Native people contributed significantly to Canada’s war effort. Davison researched her topic extensively. She relied on valuable primary sources, including files in the Library & Archives of Canada; and she conducted personal interviews with Native veterans. Her research showed that Canada owes a great deal of thanks and restitution to Native veterans, and dependents of Native veterans, who are still alive. But, rather than focus on Native participation in World War II as an aspect of Canadian history, as Davison does, this study will focus on the significance of World War II in Canadian aboriginal history.

Another recent exploration of Native participation in World War II is Scott Sheffield’s *The Red Man’s on the Warpath: The Image of the “Indian” and the Second*

*World War* (2004). Sheffield's book is valuable, but it really seeks to understand English Canadians, not Native people. Sheffield stated that his book emerged from two questions: "Why did [Native] participation seem to matter so much to English Canadians, both in the public realm and among Indian administrators, and why did those in both realms seem to view First Nations military service in such different light?" And "what image had English Canadians developed of the 'Indian,' and how had the Second World War affected that image?"<sup>22</sup> Sheffield argued that

societies under strain are often forced to re-examine... themselves, their values, and their wider world. The image of the 'Indian' provides a window onto this process and is... useful therefore not as a means of revealing indigenous peoples, cultures, and experiences but of understanding the desires, anxieties, conceits, and assumptions of [English] Canadians. In defining the 'Indian,' English Canadians were also defining themselves, and when delineating where the First Nations should fit into their society, English Canadians were trying to articulate the kind of society they believed they possessed or hoped to achieve.<sup>23</sup>

He argued that two distinct images of the "Indian" emerged in Canada during World War II: the "public Indian," and the "administrative Indian." The first was seen in magazines, newspapers, and was spoken about by most common Canadians; and the second was seen in government documents, and referred to by government officials. Sheffield briefly touched on the argument that the present study attempts to make. He concluded that "the war, First Nations military service, and evolving socio-cultural norms... produced an environment between 1943 and 1950 that yielded the necessary legal-technocratic tools [for Natives] to begin the long journey to relevance."<sup>24</sup> Yet Sheffield downplayed the significance of World War II in Canadian aboriginal history. Sheffield argued that

there is no doubt that the [Special Joint Committee 1946-1948] marked a new degree of First Nations involvement in Indian policy making. Yet the cavalier use of the war's end to mark the transition to a substantially altered period in relations between the First Nations and the dominant society significantly overstates the extent and immediate impact of these changes. There was far too much continuity

within both the public and administrative images of the “Indian,” even after the war, to support any claims of a paradigm shift.<sup>25</sup>

Even if, as Sheffield argued, Canadian Indian policy exhibited more “continuity” than change after World War II, the conflict still altered Native societies dramatically. In the immediate post-war period, Native communities were led by Native veterans who emerged as outspoken leaders much more capable of advocating for the interests of their peoples than they had been before the war had started. Indeed, the end of World War II did not see an immediate change in Indian policy in Canada. However, Native veterans returned to Canada having experienced equality, respect, and new opportunities. These veterans were no longer willing to settle for the neglectful treatment their people had received from the government before, and even during, the war. While continuity existed between interwar attitudes and post-war attitudes toward Native people among certain circles of society, clearly this continuity was not strong enough to prevent changes to the Indian Act. Canadian Indians were able to effect changes to government policy like never before, and they were able to elicit the support of many other Canadians.

An understanding of the impact of the Second World War on Canadian Native people and Canadian Indian policy requires an examination of the full experience of Indians during World War II. In this study, several major aspects of Natives’ experiences during the Second World War are considered, and numerous primary and secondary sources are consulted. Several of the secondary sources contain much primary evidence, such as interviews with Native veterans. The majority of the primary sources are files from the World War II era and are housed in the Library and Archives of Canada, Record Group 10 (Indian Affairs).

The first chapter explores the soldiering experiences of Native people during the Second World War. Enlisting for duty in World War II was the first time many of these Native recruits had been away from their reserves for an extended period. It was also the first time that many of these men had come into contact with white people for any length of time. This chapter will show that despite the prejudices and stereotypes that existed in Canadian society, the majority of Native veterans stated that during the war, they were treated as equals to their white comrades by their white officers, and also by common white soldiers themselves. For many Native veterans, the self-esteem and self-confidence instilled by the equality and camaraderie they experienced with white soldiers were the most important legacies of all.

The actual combat experiences of Native soldiers will also be examined in this chapter, including the emotions they experienced. While fear was perhaps the most common emotion felt by Canadian Native soldiers, and all soldiers for that matter, very few of these men exhibited cowardice. In fact, many of Canada's Native soldiers were hailed as war heroes, and were awarded various decorations for their bravery. It is important to examine the military exploits of these men, so that we can get a sense of what Native soldiers actually experienced on the battlefield, as well as how they reacted to what they faced. The battlefield experiences were very important, for these experiences transformed soldiers into political leaders after the war. Leadership skills, organizational skills, language skills, and other educational advances for many Native leaders came about because of their soldiering experiences. Feelings of worth, pride, and equality were major factors in Canadian Native veterans' desire to fight for better rights, recognition, and changes to the Indian Act upon their return to Canada. Also, had Natives not fought alongside whites so bravely, it is possible that the Canadian

government would not have made changes to the Indian Act at all, and very few white Canadians would have supported Native peoples in their push for change.

The second chapter explores the home front experiences of Canadian Native people during the Second World War, and how those experiences transformed Native communities and contributed to the alteration of Canadian Indian policy in the post-war period. Many Native people replaced white labourers who had gone overseas to fight; working for the defence industry by making planes, shells, guns, and other wartime necessities. This home front labour affected Native communities, since Natives prospered financially from wartime labour shortages. Finding work equal to whites also contributed to increased self-confidence and self-esteem among Native workers. Native charity work for the Red Cross and other charities, Native enlistment in home defence units, and Natives' monetary donations to various wartime charities also significantly affected Native people. Native people who were unable to fight overseas were able to make important contributions to the Canadian war effort during World War II, despite being among the poorest people in Canada. The home front efforts of Native people in Canada contributed to instilling a more positive image of the Indian in Canadian society. The fact that Canadian Indians were very willing to aid their country in its time of need forced many Canadians to reconsider their beliefs regarding Indians.

The final chapter explores Native veterans' return to Canada after World War II. Although thousands of Canadian Indians had volunteered for military duty during World War II, and many had died for the cause, the government did not show Native veterans the respect they felt they deserved. While the government hailed white veterans as heroes, and created social and economic programs to help them re-establish themselves within Canadian society, the government largely neglected Native veterans, often making

benefits and social programs inaccessible to Native veterans. Instead of being rewarded for their sacrifices, most Native veterans were awarded nothing, were not informed of their rights, and in a few cases, land was taken from Indian bands to provide for white veterans. While the government launched an investigation into the Indian Act in 1946, this did not occur until Native organizations and other activists had begun to push for changes; even then, nothing was done until 1951. Though Aboriginal soldiers had experienced equity and friendship with whites during the war, they were treated like inferiors upon their return home, and were shunned and discriminated against.

Social problems including alcoholism, substance abuse, inferiority complexes, criminality, and suicide, arose among native veterans because of this neglect. While some veterans allowed themselves to be defeated by discrimination, many others would not give up so easily. Many Native veterans decided to gain education or become skilled in certain trades so they could assimilate within mainstream Canadian society. These people were not satisfied with a return to reserve life, considering their wartime experiences. Canadian society was full of opportunities for well educated or highly skilled people, regardless of skin tone. Many other veterans returned to their reserves with discipline and leadership skills that they had learned in the armed forces. Because of the respect bestowed upon them by their communities, as well as their education and leadership skills, many Native veterans would become leaders in their own communities and the Canadian Indian community as a whole. It was their military experiences during the Second World War that had given them useful skills, self-respect, assertiveness, and renewed pride in their Native identity. Thus World War II gave Native veterans the necessary tools to fight for social justice for their people in the post-war period.

World War II also led to changes in attitude toward race and ethnicity, for many

Canadians could no longer consider racism to be acceptable, having fought a war against extreme institutionalized racism in Nazi Germany. This change in attitude, coupled with Indian veterans' leadership in the civil rights movement, led to the rethinking of Canada's Indian policy. From 1946 to 1948, a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons met to examine and discuss potential changes to the Indian Act. In 1951, the Indian Act would be changed significantly for the first time since 1876.

Changes to the Indian Act, as well as changes in Canadian attitudes toward Native people, would likely not have occurred as quickly as they did, if at all, had Canadian Indians not participated so actively and in such large numbers during World War II. Actual wartime experiences, including feelings of equality with white men, leading men in battle, and unwavering dedication to a seemingly impossible cause (the defeat of the Nazi war machine), all provided Native veterans with the skills and mental tools necessary to fight for the rights and recognition that Canadian Indians felt they deserved. They were empowered to fight for Canadian citizenship and all of the rights and privileges that citizenship entailed. By participating in the Second World War, Canadian Indians helped to achieve an Allied victory; but perhaps more importantly, Canadian Indians helped themselves. Was the Second World War a pivotal event in the history of Canadian Indians and Canadian Indian policy? The answer is a resounding yes. World War II was one of the most significant events of the twentieth century for Canadian Indians, just as it was for American Indians. The importance of World War II to the study of the history of Canadian Indians and Canadian Indian policy can no longer be ignored.

## NOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> The terms “Native” and “Indian,” as well as others, will be used interchangeably in this study. This usage is appropriate because these were the terms used by aboriginal people and non-aboriginal people at the time. The term “Indian,” while out of fashion today, is not a disrespectful term to use when referring to Native soldiers and veterans of the Second World War (or WWI or the Korean War, for that matter) because this is how the majority of these warriors viewed themselves, and referred to themselves, as will be shown throughout this study.

<sup>2</sup> E. Palmer Patterson, *The Canadian Indian: A History Since 1500*, (Don Mills, Ontario: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1972), 12-13.

<sup>3</sup> Patterson, 174.

<sup>4</sup> Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), 304.

<sup>5</sup> J. R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 220.

<sup>6</sup> Miller, 220-221.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur J. Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began*, (Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> Alison R. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), xi.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth William Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Janet Frances Davison, “We Shall Remember: Canadian Indians and World War II,” (MA diss.: Trent University, June 1993), 12.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 & 14.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 211-212.

<sup>22</sup> R. Scott Sheffield, *The Red Man's on the Warpath: The Image of the 'Indian' and the Second World War*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 2.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter One: Canadian Indians Go to War

Much of the recent scholarship regarding Canadian Native participation in World War II has focused on Native soldiers' significant contributions to the war effort. Indians enlisted in large numbers and became excellent fighting men. The hundreds of war dead among Canada's Indian population are testament to the fact that they were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for their country. However, historians have not yet explained how the war affected Native people and Native communities in Canada. The present chapter will address this gap, by arguing that soldiering greatly affected Native individuals, Native communities, and Canadian society as a whole.

The number of Canadian Indians involved in every Canadian military campaign hints at the significance of the Second World War for Native communities. When Hong Kong fell to Japan, apparently fourteen to sixteen Indians and Metis were among the allied 2000 soldiers captured.<sup>1</sup> At least five Canadian Indians died at Dieppe.<sup>2</sup> Casualty rates among Canadian Indians in Sicily, Italy, Normandy, and Northwestern Europe were comparable to those of white Canadians in the same campaigns. According to Fred Gaffen, "as the Canadians fought their way up the [Italian] peninsula casualties mounted and the list of those Indians who fell is quite long," and "in the fighting in Normandy between June and August 1944, many Indians and Metis from Canada were killed and wounded."<sup>3</sup> The Native Veterans Association of Northwestern Ontario stated that "Canadians suffered more casualties in Northern Europe than [they] had in the Mediterranean. The fighting in France had the highest casualty rate. This proportion applies equally to the Indians and Metis."<sup>4</sup> Scarcity of evidence makes it difficult to substantiate these claims, but it is clear that Canadian Indians served in all campaigns of the Second World War, and large numbers were killed, wounded, and taken prisoner.

**Figure 1.1 Native Enlistment during WWII by Province and Territory** <sup>5</sup>

Province/Territory	31-Mar-42	24-Jul-42	31-Mar-43	31-Mar-44	15-Jan-45	31-Mar-45	31-Mar-46
British Columbia	162	167	201	243	253	270	334
Alberta	51	53	61	87	95	128	144
Saskatchewan	289	295	317	382	392	400	443
Manitoba	45	63	98	156	157	158	175
Ontario	593	665	732	1,062	1,117	1,137	1,324
Quebec	119	137	144	164	178	181	316
New Brunswick	100	109	139	166	178	188	203
Nova Scotia	70	79	86	92	107	110	117
Prince Edward Island	18	18	21	24	24	24	27
Yukon Territory	1	1	2	7	7	7	7
Northwest Territories	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Enlistment</b>	<b>1,448</b>	<b>1,587</b>	<b>1,801</b>	<b>2,383</b>	<b>2,508</b>	<b>2,603</b>	<b>3,090</b>

**Figure 1.2 Status Indian Population during WWII by Province and Territory** <sup>6</sup>

Province/Territory	31-Mar-39	31-Mar-40	31-Mar-45	% Enlisted	Ranking
British Columbia	24,276	24,276	25,515	1.3	7th
Alberta	12,163	12,163	12,441	1.2	8th
Saskatchewan	13,020	13,020	14,158	3.1	5th
Manitoba	14,536	14,561	15,933	1.1	9th
Ontario	29,907	30,145	32,421	4	4th
Quebec	14,195	14,578	15,194	2	6th
New Brunswick	1,821	1,922	2,047	9.9	2nd
Nova Scotia	2,172	2,165	2,364	4.9	3rd
Prince Edward Island	274	274	266	10	1st
Yukon Territory	1,563	1,550	1,531	0.5	
Northwest Territories	3,724	3,724	3,816	0	
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>117,651</b>	<b>118,378</b>	<b>125,686</b>	<b>2.4</b>	

Throughout World War II, there was a steady increase in Native enlistment, as figure 1.1 demonstrates. There appears to be a lack of evidence regarding the enlistment of Indians from 1939 to Indian Affairs' first enlistment report in March 1942. Even so, it is clear that a higher number of Indians enlisted early in the war. By early 1942, there were already 1,448 Status Indians in the Canadian armed services, which accounts for almost half of the 3,090 that would see combat service in World War II. This trend reflects nationwide enlistment trends. The number of Native participants is much larger since the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB) counted only Status Indians. Canadian Indians were not included if they, like Arthur Eggros, Saanich, joined the US Army.<sup>7</sup> Indian Affairs Director R. A. Hoey estimated in 1945, that forty-six Canadian Indians had joined the US military,

but admitted that “this figure is only approximate as Branch records are not complete.”<sup>8</sup> While the official estimate of Status Indians in the Canadian military remains at 3,090, some have put the number of Canadian soldiers of Native descent as high as 30,000.<sup>9</sup>

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show that certain provinces contributed more Indian soldiers, or had higher rates of Indian enlistment, than others. One explanation for provincial enlistment rates may be due to Indian communities’ proximity to white communities and recruitment centres, as well as traditions of co-existence and acculturation. Thus Ontario, with the largest population of whites and the largest population of Indians, and the largest number of Indians living close to white settlements, contributed the most native soldiers. Not only this, but Indians in Ontario had been allies of the Crown since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and felt strong loyalty to Britain and Canada. The Maritimes contributed the highest percentage of Indian recruits for similar reasons. The Yukon and Northwest Territories contributed very few Status Indian recruits, because of the small numbers of both whites and Indians, and the distances between Indian and white communities in the Territories. According to IAB records, the Northwest Territories did not contribute a single Status Indian soldier, though this statistic is probably wrong.<sup>10</sup> Quebec probably contributed a relatively small number of Indian soldiers due to the lack of support for World War II among many citizens of Quebec. Because the war was unpopular among French-Canadians, including political leaders, the Natives of Quebec, many of whom had French-Canadian blood, probably also viewed the war in a negative light.

Due to the difficulties the government had in keeping accurate statistics regarding the enlistment of Indians, accurate statistics regarding the numbers of Indians killed in action do not exist. The official numbers are incorrect. According to the IAB, of the 3,090 Indians in the Canadian Forces during the Second World War, “213 were killed in action or

died of wounds and 93 others were wounded.”<sup>11</sup> Historians have proven these statistics to be inaccurate. As Davison stated, “Fred Gaffen has raised that total to 220, but even that total may be low. For example, at Cape Croker, the War Memorial lists eight names compared to the five” listed by Gaffen.<sup>12</sup> Regardless of numbers, it is clear that many Canadian Indians enlisted for military service and were involved in overseas combat. This meant that World War II affected not only Native soldiers, but their families back home. The fact that war memorials have been erected on reserves across Canada demonstrates that World War II was a significant event for Native communities, for Native communities still commemorate those who fought for Canada.

Statistics suggest that World War II was significant to Native people, but it was the kinds of experiences they had that made World War II so significant. One significant change that came about due to Canadian Indians’ enlistment in the military during the Second World War was the fact that the military offered well paid jobs, and provided clothing, shelter, and nutritious meals. Prior to World War II, Canada had been affected by the Great Depression. While all of Canada was hurt by the Depression, Native communities were often hit harder than others. When World War II erupted, military service offered an escape from poverty. Arthur Eggros, Saanich, recalled that “jobs for [Indians] were scarce then, and paid poorly, and there simply weren’t many programs in place to aid First Nations people. Going to war was one of the best ways to get fair pay for their work.”<sup>13</sup> Wilfred John Henry, Metis, remembered joining the military to make money: “It was better than fifty cents a day hauling wood into town. \$1.10 a day, free clothes... free board and room... I wanted to help my folks out. Give them half my pay.”<sup>14</sup> By enlisting in the military, many Canadian Indians were able to earn a better wage, and were in a better financial position, than ever before. This led to increased prosperity among

Native soldiers and their families. Native soldiers sent portions of their wages home, and government allowances were also available to the families of Canadian soldiers.

While the Dependents' Allowances aided many Indian families in Canada financially, many Indian soldiers' families were denied some of the benefits that were supposed to be available to them. The distribution of allowances, and pay to some extent, to Status Indian soldiers and dependents became a contested area between the IAB and the Department of National Defence (DND) during the war. Both had reasons for wanting to control the distribution of allowances and pay to Indians, and neither side would compromise. Scott Sheffield argued:

there was no malicious intent to discriminate in the hassles... created for First Nations veterans. Some of them were to be expected given the authoritarian corporate culture of the [IAB] at that time, its purpose of assimilating First Nations people, and the oppressive nature of many Indian Act provisions.<sup>15</sup>

Because of interagency bickering, neither agency was able to make a decision, meaning that Indian soldiers and their dependents suffered.

In 1942, the Dependents' Allowance Board (DAB) listed the allowances for soldiers' dependents as follows: \$35 for a soldier's wife as a separation allowance; \$12 for the first and second children; \$9 for a third child; \$6 for a fourth child; and fifteen days' pay, meaning a minimum \$20. A soldier's wife, then, was entitled to a minimum \$55 per month if there were no children, and a possible \$94 per month if there were four children or more.<sup>16</sup> The DAB was quick to explain that these allowances were not the "right" of a soldier's wife, but were only available to those who needed financial aid to provide the "necessities of life" to their families.<sup>17</sup> The DAB could lessen the amount awarded to those not truly dependent on the allowance.

Early on, the IAB asserted its authority over allowances for Status Indian soldiers'

dependents. In a 1939 letter to Indian Affairs Secretary T.R.L. MacInnes, Inspector of Indian Agencies Thomas Robertson stated that the allowance was “a great deal more than [Indian dependents] actually needed,” and suggested that allowances be paid directly to the IAB, allowing agents to “see that their money is not squandered.”<sup>18</sup> MacInnes argued that Indian soldiers’ pay, as well as the allowance, should be sent to the IAB so that the Branch could redistribute the money to dependents as it saw fit. MacInnes stated, “Some of the dependents could maintain themselves on an amount some cases considerably less... agents could persuade them to leave a portion of their funds” with Indian Affairs.<sup>19</sup> When some Indians discovered that their pay and allowances were being withheld, they employed lawyers. Lawyers found that the IAB had no legal right to withhold soldiers’ pay, but did have the right to withhold allowances.<sup>20</sup> Still, the IAB attempted to persuade the DND to send all monies to them, circumventing the soldier’s legal claim to the full amount. DND did not agree to Indian Affairs’ proposal: “We have no authority to actually pay the money to other than a dependent of the soldier.”<sup>21</sup>

Many Indian agents genuinely cared about the people they were charged with protecting. Some feared that Indians would squander their money, and were afraid that unscrupulous people might take advantage of Indian soldiers' wives if they discovered they were receiving a regular allowance. One Indian agent stated that “Indian women are the prey of... crooks and deadbeats... they are also preyed upon by other Indians who find their homes good places to get free meals.”<sup>22</sup> Agent R. L. MacCutcheon of Fredericton stated that Indian soldiers’ wives were harassed by the “scum of the land,” including “used car dealers [who] were going onto the reserves... and trying to sell 'some old useless car' to women whose husbands were overseas.”<sup>23</sup>

Despite the caring attitude of many Indian agents, the upper levels of the IAB

seemed more concerned with maintaining control over Indians' lives and money. Based on the recommendations of the IAB, the DAB decided arbitrarily to halve the allowances that Indian dependents would receive. Native people and Indian agents alike protested this discrimination. Indian agent J. P. B. Ostrander wrote to Indian Affairs Secretary MacInnes expressing his anger and embarrassment:

I certainly do not think we have any right to say that the allowance of an Indian woman should be any less than that of a white woman dependent. [Giving an Indian less would be] contrary to the principles for which this war is being fought. I hope I never have to quote the figure of \$25.00 to them unless the allowances of the wives of half-breeds and white men who enlist are reduced to the same amounts.<sup>24</sup>

Superintendent M. Christianson of Regina asked of the reduction of allowances to Indian dependents, "Why was this not told to Indian soldiers at the time of their enlistment?"<sup>25</sup>

Well paid jobs were readily available in wartime industries throughout the war, meaning that Indians did not have to join the military to earn a good wage. Those who enlisted for monetary reasons might not have done so if they knew they would earn more working in an arms factory or steel plant. Christianson tried to allay Indian Affairs' concerns over Indians squandering their allowances by explaining that Native women were making

very good use of their money... many of them are improving their homes, buying War Savings Certificates or funding their money with the department in order to have something on hand when the war is over and their husbands return to civilian life.<sup>26</sup>

Because of the protests of Indian agents, as well as Native people themselves, the IAB reversed its stance on the issue, and began paying allowances in full.

The argument over dependents' allowances and soldiers' pay did not end there. The DAB discovered that a few Indian agents were withholding cheques and were not putting money into savings for dependents. With accusations of corruption tainting the IAB, officials worked to stem concerns. Secretary MacInnes suggested "foolproof

administration of the allowance, suggesting Agents document every instance and be prepared for 'government audit'."<sup>27</sup> Davison stated, "The war was nearly three years old at this point; what had happened to all the allowance cheques in the meantime?"<sup>28</sup>

Considering the IAB is a government agency, one would think that officials would have documented "every instance" in the first place. Davison further states that "a great deal of money was squandered by simple poor planning and documentation."<sup>29</sup> Perhaps, but Davison seems to dismiss the idea that some money must have disappeared through embezzlement, which is what the DAB was accusing some Indian agents of to begin with. Native groups are still hopeful today that some of the lost allowance money can be recovered. Gordon Chrisjohn of the Union of Ontario Natives stated, "I believe we have a basis for a claim to recover these funds. Our only obstacle would be in documenting the actions of the Indian Agents."<sup>30</sup> However, Chrisjohn's "only obstacle" is a large one. Documenting the Indian agents' actions is easier said than done, as agents who stole allowance cheques for their own use would not have documented their criminal actions.

Regardless of the disappearance of dependents' allowances and soldiers' wages, it is clear that for the first time since the beginning of the Great Depression money was flowing onto Indian reserves. Canadian Indians were, in many cases, able to look after their own needs and wants without having to rely on the IAB. Indians took an active role in improving their homes and investing for the future based on the wages and allowances they received from their husbands and sons serving in the military. Thus, World War II was significant to Canadian Indians because of the increased prosperity that the war brought to many Native families and their communities.

The Second World War was also significant for Canadian Indians because of the new experiences they faced after enlisting. For many Indian recruits, it was the first time

they had been away from their reserves for an extended period, and also the first time they had had much contact with non-Natives and their cultures. Many Indians truly were outsiders in the white man's world, making adaptation to this new lifestyle difficult, as few Native recruits knew what to expect. Having to leave homes and families could be emotional, but being suddenly immersed in Canadian military culture could be traumatic for Native recruits. The same could be said for other recruits, as the Canadian military became a conglomeration of various cultures under one banner. Poles, Scots, Dutch, Italians, and others, were forced together, and were required to conform to Anglo-Canadian military standards. While this was true, at least these people were of European heritage and were cognizant of European standards, even if their standards varied from the dominant English standards. Most Canadian recruits were fairly fluent in English (or French), and were used to adhering to Euro-Canadian conditions. For Native recruits, this was not always so. Many came from remote areas, did not understand English or French, and were unfamiliar with Euro-Canadian standards. As a result, many Native recruits found this total immersion in Canadian military culture difficult to adapt to. Peter Whitecloud explained his personal culture shock: "Being from a reservation and barely able to speak English... it was a sudden integration. I was stunned for two or three months while in basic training."<sup>31</sup> While many Indians from eastern Canada were used to living and working closely with white people, Indians in northern and western Canada lived on remote reserves where their Native tongue was still spoken by most people, and their lifestyles differed greatly from other Canadians. As Davison stated, "The journey from a distant reserve to an Army camp was... measurable not just in miles but in time and culture."<sup>32</sup>

For some Native recruits, fears of discrimination added to the uncertainty. Captain G.F.G. Stanley wrote that Indians were "always on the alert to take offense. They seem to

anticipate that the ‘whites’ would not like them and would treat them badly.”<sup>33</sup> Indian agent W. Christie wrote that some BC Indians possessed an “inferiority complex [and did not wish] to be placed among a majority of white soldiers where they might be discriminated” against.<sup>34</sup> Even though friendship existed between whites and Natives, many Indians remained suspicious, even after serving with whites for some time. Native veteran Fred Jones had white friends in the Perth Regiment, but felt that some whites were “out to fleece the Indians.”<sup>35</sup> Years of discrimination in Canadian society had created suspicion among some Native recruits. This fear of being mistreated by whites in the military no doubt added to the difficulties experienced by some Natives.

Other Native recruits were not shocked by their experiences, but were curious instead, and approached their integration into the Canadian military optimistically. One Native veteran stated, “I didn’t know what the other half lived like, but when I did get into the army I found out.”<sup>36</sup> In an article in the *Regina Leader-Post*, Private Beaver, from the Hudson Bay district, related his curiosity about being billeted in England, stating, “This is the first time I have ever seen the inside of an English country home. It’s heap different from life on an Indian reservation.”<sup>37</sup> Thus, integration into the military was quite often seen as just another challenge to be faced. As Gaffen stated, “Canadian Indians... experienced everything from British pubs to Brussel sprouts to the Blitz.”<sup>38</sup>

Incidents of Native recruits being absent without leave (AWOL) effectively demonstrate the misunderstanding that existed between Natives and whites. As Davison argued, “incidents of AWOL among Indian soldiers are atypical... and may [have reflected] traditional Indian values.”<sup>39</sup> Captain G.F.G. Stanley described one Native soldier who was “bored with the interminable training and drill” of army life, and went back to his reserve to wait “until he was needed, and was found... in full uniform.”<sup>40</sup> The man was arrested for

being AWOL, but Stanley defended him, stating that “in his culture it was more appropriate to... just go ahead and fight, and that wearing the uniform proved he had no intention to desert.”<sup>41</sup> Another incident occurred when a man from Moose Factory “was listed as AWOL, but returned to his base a week late” having gathered eight other Indians who wished to enlist; he had “missed the once-a-week train to Cochrane” where his base was located.<sup>42</sup> Neither man planned to desert the army, but approached military life in a way consistent with the sensibilities of their communities. They did not realize their actions were criminal, just as the army did not understand that their actions were within the bounds of Native values. For both the Anglo-Canadian-dominated military, as well as for the Native recruits, the integration of Natives into the military was problematic. The Canadian military had experience integrating soldiers from diverse cultures into the military, but integrating Indians into the army was a unique challenge, as many of these people were not familiar with the dominant languages, or the cultural norms of Euro-Canadian life.

Even during training then, Native recruits’ experiences had already begun to change their lives. They were experiencing new lifestyles and cultures, and they had traveled far from their homes. Many Native youths enlisted with friends or brothers, but in most cases, they were split up and sent to separate units. Native recruits realized that to succeed in the military, they had to adapt; and most were able to make the necessary adaptations to their lives. The military gave many Native recruits a peek at what life off of their reserves was like, and gave them an indication as to how other Canadians lived. For a few Indians, constant contact with whites gave them something to emulate. Some Indians would enjoy the Euro-Canadian lifestyle so much, that they would attempt to fully assimilate into mainstream Canadian society following the war, as will be discussed in the third chapter.

Once they had adjusted, Canadian military service during World War II was a

largely positive experience for most Native servicemen. Prior to their induction into the Canadian forces, most Native people had experienced discrimination in Canada. While serving in the military, however, Canadian Indians realized more equality, more freedom, and more opportunities than ever before. Racial barriers were broken down, and lasting and important relationships were created between white people and Indians like never before. In many ways Native and white soldiers became more than just comrades in arms, but brothers.

Most Native veterans who have spoken about their time in the Canadian military have spoken of the equality and camaraderie with white people that they experienced for the first time in their lives. Metis veteran Euclide Boyer explained, “In the army, I found no discrimination. It was the only time the Natives were equal to the whites.”<sup>43</sup> Native veteran Willis Johnson remembered that there was “no difference between Indians and whites --- all brothers... racial equality.”<sup>44</sup> Arthur Eggros, Saanich, stated that while serving in the army he “never felt like an outsider. The camaraderie of all races was as one. All the brothers and sisters who attended were equal.”<sup>45</sup> Eggros also explained that equality became a necessity: “If there was one member of a battalion who was not treated equally, everyone’s lives were endangered.”<sup>46</sup> Eggros makes it seem that whites and Indians became friends out of necessity, and that the camaraderie was not true friendship. However, evidence demonstrates that the friendship and brotherhood that existed was very real. Harold Littlecrow, for example, ignored his lethal stomach wounds, tending to the wounds of his white friends, including D. Charles MacDougall, before worrying about himself. MacDougall recalled the incident: “I never saw my Indian friend again. Part of me was buried with him. I shall always remember him and pray for him.”<sup>47</sup>

By the time Native recruits had completed their training, they had been separated

from most of their Native friends. Often being the only Indian in a unit, Native soldiers sought white friends. Muriland Knott recalled being the “only Indian in his company,” but he made “new friends easily.”<sup>48</sup> Native veteran James Brady recalled an incident in which fallen comrades were honoured: “The colonel begins to read the 36 names of our fallen. Tears are in our eyes. He falters and hands the paper to the adjutant who... puts it in his pocket and [says], ‘It is not necessary. They were comrades. We remember’.”<sup>49</sup> Losing a friend, regardless of race, was always painful, sometimes leading to feelings of guilt among survivors. Native veteran Adolphus Ghostkeeper remembered such an experience: “A friend of mine, he got killed over there... we were sitting there side by side and a sniper got him. I don’t know why they didn’t pick me.”<sup>50</sup>

Native soldiers believed that friendship with white soldiers was based on love and respect, with little concern for race. Native veteran Gordon Ahenakew explained, “Your buddy was your buddy no matter what colour you are.”<sup>51</sup> Instead of being a divisive factor, race played a role in creating friendships. Native soldiers were often called “Chief” or “Geronimo” by their white comrades. Alison Bernstein stated that many Indian soldiers were referred to as “Chief,” but few took these names as racial slurs.<sup>52</sup> Canadian Indians did not take offense either, believing these names were rooted in respect. Murray Whetung was called “‘chief;’ he did not mind the name... and he got quite used to being ‘the lone Indian’.”<sup>53</sup> Leonard Roots “was often called ‘chief’ or ‘Geronimo’ but took no offense.”<sup>54</sup> The teasing went both ways of course, with Native soldiers poking fun at white soldiers in the same jovial manner. Native veteran Adam Cutham explained that

there was never really anybody who made a remark about you, unless it was done in humour of course. We always teased one another, and joked one another humorously about our nationalities. I used to tell them... that one of the greatest armies in the world is the Canadian army, you know why? ‘Cause that’s the only army in the world that’s got Indians in it!<sup>55</sup>

These nicknames were likely based on the stereotypical image of the Indian warrior propagated in western movies and novels, newspaper articles, and radio broadcasts. The image of the Indian warrior was used to praise Native soldiers during World War II. A headline in the *Regina Leader-Post*, for example, states, “Braves, Pale-Faces On Same Warpath.”<sup>56</sup> Also, most youths tend to give their friends nicknames that are not always flattering. Victoria Cross recipient E. A. Smith was called “Smokey,” because of his running speed.<sup>57</sup> Canadian veteran William Worton was nicknamed “The Skull” because he would get drunk and literally butt heads with a goat, the mascot of the 48<sup>th</sup> Highlanders of Canada.<sup>58</sup> Just as a thin youth might be called “slim,” or a heavy youth might be called “big guy,” Native soldiers were nicknamed “Chief” or “Geronimo,” because their ethnicity was the attribute that stood out to others. The nicknaming of Native soldiers is further evidence that white soldiers accepted Natives as comrades.

While the war taught Native soldiers about equality and gave them increased feelings of self worth, the army also taught Indians about Euro-Canadian ideals of leadership and discipline. Throughout World War II, Canadian Indians were not always privates. A number of Natives became non-commissioned officers during the war, and were, for the first time, in positions of authority over white men. Of the 213 Status Indians who died in the Second World War, twenty-eight had become non-commissioned officers “including Corporal [and Acting and Lance Corporal], and Sergeant [and Acting and Sergeant Major], and one other who was a commissioned officer.”<sup>59</sup> Despite the fact that some Indians were promoted, others were offered promotions, but declined for various reasons. Willis Johnson, of the Walpole Island reserve, stated that he “was willing to do the work of Sergeant when needed, but did not want the promotion in spite of higher pay.”<sup>60</sup> Clayton Sands, also from Walpole Island, achieved the rank of Corporal. In one situation,

all of his superiors were killed, and he found himself in command: “he was willing to lead when needed but did not want a higher rank.”<sup>61</sup> Davison explained some Native soldiers’ unwillingness to take a permanent promotion in rank, citing “native preference for situational rather than permanent leadership, in accordance with cultural norms.”<sup>62</sup> Davison is certainly correct, though she does not explain these “cultural norms.” Another explanation also exists: like many other soldiers, some Native men had no desire to endanger their friends’ lives, and did not want to have to live with the guilt they would experience if their friends were killed. Native American veteran Ira Hayes, a hero of the US Marines’ victory at Iwo Jima, stated that he had turned down promotions because he did not want to have to order his friends to “go and get killed.”<sup>63</sup>

A few Canadian Indians managed to receive officers’ commissions during the Second World War. Few Native people were promoted to officer status, though race had little to do with this. Most lacked the education, and knowledge of French or English, to hold a position of command. Furthermore, the experiences of a few Native officers, including Lieutenant David Grey-Eyes of Saskatchewan, and Brigadier-General O. M. Martin of Ontario, support the argument that Indians were able to rise up through the ranks of the Canadian military. Native Veteran Adam Cutham explained that in the army “you are a Canadian. You were promoted on merit, no matter who you were, if you happened to be black or white or yellow. You were promoted on merit; not because you happened to be Anglo-Saxon.”<sup>64</sup> Being placed in positions of power over white soldiers gave Native men a boost to their confidence and self-respect. Receiving officer status, whether non-commissioned or commissioned, also taught Native soldiers discipline, and organizational and leadership skills, based on Euro-Canadian ideals. Their Native values, coupled with their newly learned Euro-Canadian discipline, organizational skills, and leadership skills

would allow these veterans to become important leaders not only in their Native communities in Canada, but also in the broader Canadian society as a whole. These skills would allow Native veterans to create organizations that would begin the struggle for improved civil rights for Native people once the war had ended.

Clearly, the experiences of Native soldiers during World War II were pivotal in changing how they viewed themselves and their position in Canadian society. Enlisting in the military was a life-altering experience for Native servicemen, because they experienced freedom and equality as never before, they became acquainted with white Canadians' culture and languages, and they were able to receive better education, training, and wages in the military than they could in Canada. The Euro-Canadian organizational and leadership skills learned in the military would be vital for Native veterans in the post-war years and beyond. For non-Native Canadians, especially the white majority, having Native people serve in the Canadian armed forces brought about changes in attitude toward Native people. New ideas of who Native people were and how they fit into Canadian society would become important following the Second World War, as many white Canadians would join Indians in fighting for better rights for Native people in Canada.

Prior to World War II, Natives were marginalized in Canada. Few whites had had extended contact with Native people, due in large part to the racism that permeated Canadian society, as well as the remoteness of many Indian communities. Few Canadians knew anything about Indians, basing their attitudes on popular depictions in the media. When Canadian Natives enlisted in large numbers during World War II, Native people and white people were suddenly forced to live and work together. Thus, culture shock was not limited to Natives. For many non-Native recruits, being in constant contact with Indians was just as unusual. The difference was that for most white people, contact with Indians

was not a frightening experience, but instead a fascinating one. Metis veteran Euclide Boyer recalled his contact with British people: “Most of our guys got along real well with the womenfolk in England, even the Indian boys. The English weren’t scared... they didn’t know what they were; they thought they were just Canadian, and it was great.”<sup>65</sup> The English treated Indians with respect, admiration, and curiosity. In fact, Native soldiers often enjoyed being honoured as “sought-after guests in private homes.”<sup>66</sup> The British enjoyed having Native visitors, as Native people in Canada had made many generous and widely publicized donations to British wartime charities, and British war victims. British people were also familiar with western movies and novels, and were curious to see if real Indians were anything like the Indians in their favourite westerns. Living and working with Native people, then, allowed non-Natives to learn what Indians were like, and allowed them to put long-held stereotypes of the Indian to the test.

On the battlefield, serving with Native people was often a fascinating experience for white soldiers. According to Townsend, American troops found serving with Indians to be a cultural experience. It is safe to assume that this phenomenon held true among white Canadian soldiers. Indians brought their spirituality into combat with them, which was a source of interest for many soldiers. Some Native soldiers performed purification rituals. They would collect items from fallen enemies, and by honouring their enemies in ceremonies, Indian soldiers were cleansed of hatred, and harmony could be regained.<sup>67</sup> Some native soldiers recited traditional prayers, believing in supernatural protection; and many Indians shared prophetic visions with their white comrades.<sup>68</sup> White soldiers regarded these rituals and visions with curiosity, while others scoffed at what they saw as superstitions at first. However, as fighting worsened, many white soldiers came to respect Native spirituality, and a few began to heed the visions.<sup>69</sup> Combat experiences, then, taught

many white, mostly Christian soldiers to respect Native spirituality.

Because of stereotypes that existed in North America at the time, both the Canadian and American governments believed that Indians made excellent soldiers - perhaps better than whites. American military officials believed that Indians possessed qualities that were best suited for war, including “innate ‘endurance’ and ‘rhythm’ for combat,” excellent sensory skills even in the dark, great co-ordination, they enjoyed bayonet fighting, and perhaps most important, as hunters they made excellent riflemen and snipers.<sup>70</sup> They also believed that “severe discipline and hard duties [did] not deter” Indians, making them “integral [to] numerous American Army units.”<sup>71</sup> While the idea that Indians were inherently good soldiers was a stereotype created by white people, it held true in many cases, which further reinforced the stereotype. Many Indians became snipers because many possessed excellent rifle skills. Hunting and stalking game in the Canadian wilderness provided Native soldiers with years of valuable shooting and scouting experience that could easily transfer to the military. Indians who relied on hunting game before the war were at an advantage over others who were not as experienced with guns. In this way, some traditional Native skills were highly prized by the Canadian military. Native veteran Rufus Prince recalled, “They even tried to make a sniper out of me. I guess [Indians] were handy with guns. They were pretty quick with the rifles; they were good shots.”<sup>72</sup> Corporal Charles Jeremy, a “Micmac in the West Novas,” became an accomplished sniper, and was greatly admired by his comrades for killing around sixty German soldiers on his own.<sup>73</sup> Because of such skills, government leaders and military specialists were glad to accept Indians into combat units, commando and Marine units; and as instructors in the training of new recruits in the art of war.

The language used by the media in Canada reveals that much of the perceived

superiority of the Native soldier was based on the Indian warrior image. An article in the *Brockville Recorder* stated, "Some Canadian Indians... enlisted in the American Air Force and may now be striking down the enemy with winged Tomahawks instead of the tomahawks which their forebears used."<sup>74</sup> A similar article in the *Regina Leader-Post*, described Canadian Indians as riding "motorcycles instead of piebald ponies, armed with... machine guns instead of bows and arrows... and wearing the battle dress of the modern soldier instead of the plume feathers their forefathers wore on the warpath."<sup>75</sup> Native soldiers even attracted the attention of King George VI. Another article from the *Regina Leader-Post* stated that "soldiers of Indian and mixed blood won the special attention of His Majesty;" King George VI noticed "that there were a considerable number of Canadian Indians with the unit, and Maj. Richardson said he believed that at one time nearly a quarter of... the outfit had been Indians or mixed bloods."<sup>76</sup> As Bernstein stated, "the Indians' negative image... as bloodthirsty savages suddenly became a positive image, since they were fighting on the right side. Characteristics, which had been formerly despised, now were celebrated."<sup>77</sup> Townsend argued that it is unfortunate that the stereotype of the Indian warrior was expressed so frequently during the war.<sup>78</sup> Was it really so unfortunate? Because of this image, Indians were able to achieve much positive publicity, meaning that many non-Natives came into contact, though not necessarily direct contact, with Native people. As Native soldiers lived up to the warrior stereotype, the stereotype came to stand for something positive: Indians were no longer villains, but were instead important allies who could consistently be relied on whenever Canada was threatened.

There is no doubt that Natives were excellent soldiers. They proved themselves time and again, but there is no evidence that Indians were better soldiers than whites. While the stereotype of the Indian warrior often held true, Native soldiers were ordinary

men who were placed in extraordinary situations in which they had to do their best or be killed. Native soldiers rose to occasions, just as white soldiers did. They did not have inherent skills, talents, or special powers; they fought to protect their own lives, as well as the men they fought beside.<sup>79</sup> Confusion and fear were the most common feelings among Native soldiers, just as they were among white soldiers. John Amyotte, Metis, recalled, “I didn’t even know where I was going... only the officers knew what was going on.”<sup>80</sup>

Native veteran Harry Lavalle explained that he was frightened in combat:

I prayed, and I prayed, and I prayed. All I knew was ‘Our Father,’ and ‘Hail Mary.’ It seemed like it was all the good guys, all the innocent type guys got killed... that’s what war is all about. I did see some terrible things. I thought I was dreaming. It couldn’t be real. People wouldn’t do this.<sup>81</sup>

John Bradley, another Native veteran, described his fear more succinctly, “If some people say they weren’t scared, they’re lying!”<sup>82</sup> The testimonies of Native veterans demonstrate that they were not super-warriors, but ordinary Canadians who had to deal with fear and pain, just as white men were forced to do. It would be their ability to deal with this fear and pain, and their willingness to fight for their lives and the lives of their comrades, that would cement the bonds that formed between whites and Natives on the battlefield, and not some inherent warrior skills that some may have possessed.

Friendship, trust, and brotherhood existed in their strongest forms between whites and Indians who served together during World War II. D. Charles MacDougall recalled a particularly poignant incident in which Harold Littlecrow, who was fatally wounded, tended to the wounds of his friends without a care as to his own mortal wound:

I never saw my Indian friend again. I learned that he had died of wounds that day. His stomach wound was worse than he had let on. He cared for me before he even thought of himself. If I had not received his attention, I would certainly have bled to death. I owe him my life. But that was Harold’s way. Thinking of others but never of himself. Like the people he sprang from, he had a courageous heart and a gentle spirit. His love for life and fellow men beamed all over when he smiled. He

had a face that you could read and draw courage from. Part of me was buried with him. I shall always remember him and pray for him.<sup>83</sup>

Not only does this passage show that Indian and white soldiers shared love and respect for each other on the battlefield, it also demonstrates that after serving with Native soldiers during the war, many white veterans gained respect for Native people, and tried to educate others about Indians after the war.

The fact that military officials, and the media, believed that Natives were better soldiers than whites was not always a factor in selecting which men would go overseas. In the US, many Indians were denied the right to enlist for health reasons. Townsend stated that in the US, the turn away rate for enlistment was nearly the same for whites as it was for Indians: approximately 38%; though Townsend stated that this statistic is skewed because the turn away rate in some states was higher for Indians than it was for whites.<sup>84</sup> In Arizona, for example, the turn away rate for Indians was almost 49% compared to a 12% turn away rate for whites.<sup>85</sup> The high turn away rate for Indians in some states made some Indians believe that they were being turned away because of their race. Major Garton, the recruiting officer in Winnipeg, was “not anxious [sic] to accept Indians as recruits, the reason being given that a good number of them had been broken down with tuberculosis,” though Doctor Corrigan, the medical officer at Norway House, Manitoba felt that proper medical examinations could eliminate those with tuberculosis, while still allowing the army to take Indians that were fit to serve.<sup>86</sup> While racial discrimination did exist in both the American and Canadian militaries, evidence suggests it was rare.

Most Indians who were denied the right to serve in the military were dismissed because of genuine health concerns. Many white Canadians were also dismissed after having completed their training for being “medically unfit,” which allowed officers to

“discharge any man... considered ‘not likely to become an efficient soldier’.”<sup>87</sup> According to Davison, Kwawkwalth men were “discharged for ‘medical reasons’,” by 1944, despite having completed their training.<sup>88</sup> While Indians may have been better suited for living and fighting outdoors than whites, diseases like pneumonia and tuberculosis, which ran rampant through Native communities, were often aggravated by military training and the hardships of combat. Men who seemed healthy at the start of their training could easily come down with severe symptoms after a few weeks of service, and some even died of disease in training or in combat. Mike John Paul of Stuart Lake, BC; Joe Snake Person, Blackfoot; and Teddy Many Wounds, Sarcee, were Native soldiers who died in the military because of “the accumulation of many years of inadequate health care in Indian communities.”<sup>89</sup>

The belief that Native soldiers were superior to white soldiers was not always the main reason that the Canadian army funneled some Native men into special training programs and special units. Some Indians had prior education from before the war that was attractive to various branches of the military. Native veteran Murray Whetung had electrical expertise that a number of military branches found attractive. Whetung’s “specialization in electricity was scarce, and he could have joined the Army or Air Force; the Army [Signal Corps] snapped him up quickly.”<sup>90</sup> Skill and ability played the most important role in being placed within special units, not ethnicity.

For Indians who served in the Canadian military during World War II, it was not only soldiers who treated them equally, but officers, as well. Most Native veterans remembered their officers fondly, and remembered how white officers treated them the same way they treated white soldiers. Leonard Roots, from Chippewa Hills, Ontario, had good relations with his officers, “including Brigadier General Thompson, whom he was happy to meet again after the war.”<sup>91</sup> Murray Whetung remembered his officers helping

him lay down communication lines. They “were not adverse [sic] to climbing down into the trenches with him and giving him a hand.”<sup>92</sup> Officers’ reports during the war demonstrate that white officers regarded their Native soldiers highly, or at least believed they were on par with others. In one of the least flattering reports on Indians soldiers, the officer stated that “the Indian and Metis soldiers served just as well as others. There were just as many drunks and deadbeats among them and just as many disciplined soldiers.”<sup>93</sup> Most other reports were more complimentary. Lieutenant George Elder described the Natives under his command as “big horse-riding bucks,” and “the best soldiers [he] ever had.”<sup>94</sup> Captain G. F. G. Stanley stated that the Micmac and Maliseet under his command were “well-motivated because they liked and respected the officers under whom they served.”<sup>95</sup> This respect worked both ways, as white officers and Native soldiers were complimentary of one another. White officers’ largely positive opinions of Native troops reflect the fact that they felt the same about Native soldiers as they did white soldiers, and treated them as such. White officers’ respect for Canadian Indians during the war led many to voice their positive opinions of Native people upon returning to Canada after the war. This attitude is reflected in briefs sent by the Royal Canadian Legion to the Special Joint Committee from 1946 to 1948, which will be examined in the final chapter.

The Canadian military also awarded citations for bravery in combat to numerous Indians throughout World War II. Status Indians earned a minimum of seventeen “decorations for bravery in action.”<sup>96</sup> There is no doubt that the number of Native people decorated during World War II is much higher. The list of Canadian Indians who earned decorations during World War II includes Eldon Brant, Mohawk, who earned the Military Medal (MM) in Sicily; Frederick Webster from “the Lytton Agency in BC;” and Sergeant Campion, Metis, who earned the MM at Ortona, but died in action soon after.<sup>97</sup> Corporal

John Robert Spence, Ojibwa, earned the MM near Rouen.<sup>98</sup> Native veteran George

Munroe earned the MM for actions that saved his platoon. According to Gaffen,

Munroe placed himself under heavy machine gun fire and coolly commenced to give covering fire so that his platoon could go forward. Although badly wounded, he refused to be evacuated and went forward... to the objective giving covering fire during the whole consolidation.<sup>99</sup>

Munroe was humble about the incident: "There's my chance to save my buddies from getting killed. That's why I done what I done. I didn't feel like a hero."<sup>100</sup> Native veteran

Charles Henry Byce earned the MM in 1945, when his unit was "fired upon from three German positions" and Byce "personally located two of them and silenced them with grenades."<sup>101</sup> Byce became "the only man in his regiment to earn both the Distinguished

Conduct Medal (DCM) and the MM," as well as being one of only 162 Canadian soldiers who earned the DCM during World War II.<sup>102</sup> Lieutenant David Greyeyes earned the

Greek Military Cross, Third Class, becoming one of only fourteen Canadians to earn that medal.<sup>103</sup> In 1977, because of his wartime efforts and his humanitarian and government

work in the post-war years, David Georges Greyeyes was named to the Order of Canada.<sup>104</sup>

No other Native soldier was as decorated during the Second World War, as Sergeant Thomas Prince. Prince was the most decorated Native soldier in Canadian history, having received eleven decorations by the end of the Korean War: the MM; the US Silver Star; the 1939-45 Star; the Italy Star; the France and Germany Star; the Defence Medal; the War Medal; the Canadian Voluntary Service Medal; the Korea Medal for British Commonwealth Troops; and the United Nations Service Medal.<sup>105</sup> Due to Prince's heroism, he was invited to Buckingham Palace for a special award ceremony, at which George VI personally presented Prince with the MM and the Silver Star.<sup>106</sup> Of only 59 Canadians to receive the Silver Star during World War II, only three, including Prince, also

received the MM.<sup>107</sup> Throughout his career, Prince remained proud of his heritage, always informing other soldiers that he was Native. Prince loved the military, and was proud to serve Canada. He once stated, “As soon as I put on my uniform I felt a better man.”<sup>108</sup> Military service gave him the opportunity to demonstrate that Indians were equal to, if not superior in many ways to, white people. As Davison stated, “To help his people regain pride in themselves and the respect of non-Natives was a goal that drove... Prince throughout the war years and afterward... he strove to be more equal, but not just for himself.”<sup>109</sup> Despite Prince’s exemplary military service, his story ended in tragedy. After the war, Prince served as spokesman for the Indian Association of Manitoba. He became frustrated with his inability to bring about immediate changes for Indians, realizing that the equality he had experienced in the army did not carry over to civilian life. Prince’s life descended into bitterness and alcoholism. Initially proud of earning the MM in Italy, Prince came to regret it, stating that “had he not been an Indian, he would likely have won the” Victoria Cross.<sup>110</sup> Prince would die a lonely, homeless alcoholic, a fate that should not have befallen one of Canada’s greatest war heroes.

The number of Native soldiers that received citations and medals during World War II reflects the fact that in the Canadian army a man was rewarded and recognized because of his feats and accomplishments, not his ethnicity. The Canadian military demonstrated its disregard for race in its willingness to award promotions and citations to Native soldiers. The awarding of citations to Indians gave Canadian soldiers from diverse cultures Native heroes to live up to and try to emulate. The fact that so many Indians were honoured for their military participation during World War II also reflects the fact that Canadians were willing to show respect for Native war heroes.

Canadian Indians would have numerous political allies after the war, including

white soldiers and officers they had served with, because of their exemplary war record and the friendship and respect that existed between them. Natives would have at least one other powerful ally: the Canadian media. An article in the *Regina Leader-Post* described whites and Natives fighting side by side: “the ‘braves’ are in Great Britain’s front line of defence with ‘paleface’ Canadian troops.”<sup>111</sup> Another article, from the *Montreal Gazette*, describes the equality in terms of Canadian Native people being allowed to enter pubs and bars legally in Britain and Europe throughout the conflict, and talks about how whites were proud to serve with Indians during World War II:

Legally, an Indian is not allowed to enter a beverage room, or any other place where liquor is sold while in civilian life. In the army, that is difficult to regulate. In some cases an Indian lad may... [ask] permission from his commanding officer to visit the canteen, but little can be done in the army to prevent a chap from indulging his taste for bitters, if he has one. He works as hard as the other fellows... The red man is playing a real part in the nation’s struggle. His fellow Canadians are proud to serve with him.<sup>112</sup>

The Canadian media extolled the virtues of the Indian as a soldier, and promoted the equality experienced by Natives in the military. By stating that white soldiers were proud to serve with Indians, the media helped to create solidarity among Canadians of various ethnicities. White people did have respect for Native soldiers. Some Canadians remained vocally racist, but support for Indians was increasing due to their participation in the war, as demonstrated by the attitudes reflected in various newspaper articles and government documents from the Second World War. Fighting a war against institutionalized racism in Germany, some Canadians would come to realize that the marginalization of Indians was a form of institutionalized racism itself, and would help Canada’s Native people fight against it in the post-war period, as will be discussed in the third chapter.

Native veterans of the Second World War remember the equality and camaraderie that they experienced with white people for the first time in their lives, as well as the

opportunities available for Native soldiers during the war that were not available back home in Canada. Lasting friendships were created between whites and Indians that likely would not have had any social contact were it not for the war. The men that survived the war returned to Canada with newfound self respect in many cases, and new ideas regarding life in Canada for themselves and other Native people. As we will see in the final chapter, the experiences of the Second World War provided many Indians with the necessary skills to become leaders in their own communities, as well as important figures in Canadian society. Because of the discipline learned in the Armed Forces, as well as leadership skills and self-respect, many Indians began fighting for changes on their reserves and in Canadian society as a whole. In the military, these men had experienced equality, proper health care and education, good pay, and quite simply, respect. They would not allow all they had fought for during the war to disappear.

Other Native veterans, like Tommy Prince, were unable to readjust to life on their reserves, especially after seeing how their fellow Indians had been neglected by the Canadian government while they were overseas fighting for that same government. Some remote reserves were deteriorating due to lack of income and funding, and Indians' education and health was suffering across Canada. Despite the sacrifices of Canadian Indians throughout the worst conflict the world has ever seen, the Canadian government almost totally ignored the needs of the Native population. Despite earning numerous decorations for valour and despite earning various promotions throughout the war, based on merit, bravery, and skill, proving to the world that Native people were just as good as whites not just in combat, but in all fields, Native people were once again marginalized.

Non-Native society also faced numerous changes due to Native participation in the Second World War. White soldiers came to respect and befriend Native soldiers throughout

the war; feelings that they would bring back to Canada after the war. White people, such as Victoria Cross recipient E. A. “Smokey” Smith, who had served with Natives, realized that they were not superior to Indians; that whites and Indians were equal, and should have been treated as such in Canada. White officers and soldiers that had served with Canadian Indians during the war would side with Indians in their fight for better rights and more recognition in the post-war period, as is evident from Royal Canadian Legion briefs sent to the Special Joint Committee between 1946 and 1948, as will be discussed later on. Respect for Native people and cultures began to spread throughout Canada, though it would take time. The media in Canada would continue to report on injustices against Native people, and would often side with Indians in their fight for civil rights.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> “Area History of Conflicts: Dunkirk, Hong Kong, and North Africa,” Native Veterans Association of Northwestern Ontario, <<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/nativeterans/areahistory.htm>>; Fred Gaffen, *Forgotten Soldiers*, (Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, 1985), 40; and Janice Summerby, *Native Soldiers, Foreign Battlefields*, (Ottawa: Communications Division Veterans Affairs Canada, 1993), 31.

<sup>2</sup> Gaffen, 41.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 43 & 47.

<sup>4</sup> “Area History of Conflicts: Dunkirk...”

<sup>5</sup> Dr. H.W. McGill, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs (ARDIA)*, Ottawa: April 1942, 134; Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Record Group 10 (RG-10), v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, T. R. L. MacInnes to Mrs. Chapin, Ottawa: 24 July 1942; McGill, *ARDIA*, Ottawa: April 1943, 147; McGill, *ARDIA*, Ottawa: April 1944, 152; LAC, RG-10, v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, “Canadian Indians Throughout Canada Who Have Enlisted in the Armed Forces,” Ottawa: 15 January 1945; R.A. Hoey, *ARDIA*, Ottawa: April 1945, 161; and Hoey, *ARDIA*, Ottawa: April 1946, 195. <<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/indianaffairs/index-e.html>> All *ARDIA* information was accessed via this link.

<sup>6</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, Ottawa: April 1939, 239; McGill, *ARDIA*, Ottawa: April 1940, 200; and Hoey, *ARDIA*, 1945, 183.

<sup>7</sup> Jolayne Madden-Marsh, “Saluting our Native Veterans,” *The Peak*, Volume 94, Issue 12, (Vancouver: Simon Fraser University, 1996)

<sup>8</sup> Hoey, *ARDIA*, 1945, 161.

<sup>9</sup> Allen Andrews, “Chapter 17: Canada’s Indian Warriors: Volunteers to a Man”, *Brave Soldiers, Proud Regiments: Canada’s Military Heritage*, (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 1997), 326. Allen Andrews wrote, “it has been estimated that 30,000 Natives and persons with some Indian ancestry” served in World War II.

<sup>10</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, “Canadian Indians Throughout Canada Who Have Enlisted...”

<sup>11</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, “213 Indians War Casualties,” *Calgary Albertan*, 21 August 1946; and LAC, RG-10, v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, “3,090 Indians Served in Army,” *Victoria Colonist*, 22 August 1946.

<sup>12</sup> Janet Frances Davison, “We Shall Remember: Canadian Indians and World War II,” (MA diss.: Trent University, June 1993), 102.

<sup>13</sup> Madden-Marsh.

<sup>14</sup> *Remembrances: Metis Veterans: Interviews with Metis Veterans*, Regina: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Metis Studies and Applied Research, Inc., 1997, viii

<sup>15</sup> Dr. R. Scott Sheffield, “A Search for Equity: A Study of the Treatment Accorded to First Nations Veterans and Dependents of the Second World War and the Korean Conflict,” (National Round Table on First Nations Veterans’ Issues, April 2001), Executive Summary, vii.

<sup>16</sup> Davison, 128; and Sheffield, Exec. Summary, iv.

<sup>17</sup> Sheffield, Exec. Summary, iv.

<sup>18</sup> Davison, 129.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 134/135.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 137/138.

<sup>31</sup> Summerby, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Davison, 86.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

- 
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., 91.
- <sup>36</sup> *Forgotten Warriors: The story of Canada's Aboriginal war veterans*, Loretta Todd, director; Carol Geddes, Michael Doxtater, Jerry Krepakevich, producers, (National Film Board of Canada, 1996)
- <sup>37</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, Richard D. McMillan, "Braves, Pale-Faces On Same Warpath," *Regina Leader-Post*, 7 October 1940.
- <sup>38</sup> Gaffen, 40.
- <sup>39</sup> Davison, 112/113.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., 113.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>43</sup> *Remembrances: Metis Veterans...*, 21.
- <sup>44</sup> Davison, 90/91.
- <sup>45</sup> Madden-Marsh.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>47</sup> Gaffen, 48.
- <sup>48</sup> Davison, 91.
- <sup>49</sup> Summerby, 41.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>51</sup> Davison, 90.
- <sup>52</sup> Alison R. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 56.
- <sup>53</sup> Davison, 91.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>55</sup> "Native Vets of the Great Wars: Interview with Adam Cutham and Rufus Prince," *Our Native Land*, (CBC Radio: 9 November 1974).
- <sup>56</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, "Braves, Pale-Faces On Same Warpath."
- <sup>57</sup> Royal Canadian Legion: British Columbia/Yukon Command, "Sergeant (Retired) Smokey Smith," <<http://www.pacificlegion.org/smokeysmith.html>>
- <sup>58</sup> Anthony Finn, "William 'The Skull' Worton," (Veterans Affairs Canada, 2004), <[http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=feature/italy2004/italy\\_overseas/jack2](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=feature/italy2004/italy_overseas/jack2)>
- <sup>59</sup> Davison, 101.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid., 102.
- <sup>63</sup> Townsend, 129/130.
- <sup>64</sup> "Native Vets of the Great Wars..."
- <sup>65</sup> *Remembrances: Metis Veterans*, 19.
- <sup>66</sup> Davison, 96/97.
- <sup>67</sup> Townsend, 141.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid., 142.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid., 133.
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>72</sup> "Native Vets of the Great Wars"
- <sup>73</sup> Gaffen, 44.
- <sup>74</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, "Indian Enlistments in the Armed Forces," *Brockville Recorder and Times*, 5 June 1942.
- <sup>75</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, "Braves, Pale-Faces On Same Warpath."
- <sup>76</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, J. A. M. Cook, "Prairie Indian fighters live up to record - King lauds Saskatchewan men in Normandy battles," *Regina Leader-Post*, 18 October 1944.
- <sup>77</sup> Bernstein, 54.
- <sup>78</sup> Townsend, 132.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid., 143.
- <sup>80</sup> *Remembrances: Metis Veterans*, 2.
- <sup>81</sup> *Forgotten Warriors...*

- 
- <sup>82</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>83</sup> Gaffen, 48.
- <sup>84</sup> Townsend, 64.
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid., 64.
- <sup>86</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6769, f. 452-20, pt. 5, T.A. Crerar to Col. J.L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence, Ottawa, 22 May 1942.
- <sup>87</sup> Davison, 30.
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid., 32.
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid., 99.
- <sup>91</sup> Ibid., 95.
- <sup>92</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>93</sup> Ibid., 94.
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>96</sup> Summerby, 31.
- <sup>97</sup> Gaffen, 41-43.
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid., 49/50.
- <sup>99</sup> Ibid., 47.
- <sup>100</sup> *Forgotten Warriors...*
- <sup>101</sup> Summerby, 23.
- <sup>102</sup> Ibid., 24.
- <sup>103</sup> Ibid., 30.
- <sup>104</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>105</sup> *Forgotten Warriors*; and Davison, 106.
- <sup>106</sup> Summerby, 26.
- <sup>107</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>108</sup> Ibid., 25.
- <sup>109</sup> Davison, 106.
- <sup>110</sup> Andrews, 327.
- <sup>111</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, "Braves, Pale-Faces On Same Warpath."
- <sup>112</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, "Indians Again Prove Their Worth."

## Chapter Two: Canadian Indians on the Home Front

World War II was a life-altering experience for Canadian Native soldiers, but the war also transformed life for Indians that did not enlist. Scholars have demonstrated that Indians were fully involved on the home front during World War II, but they have not discussed how Native participation on the home front affected Native individuals and communities. Just as white Canadians faced opportunities, challenges and changes at home due to the war, so too did Natives. The realities of the World War II, and Native responses to these realities, transformed life for Canadian Indians dramatically and permanently. The contributions of Indians on the home front also had a major impact on the way that the public, the media, and the government viewed Native people in Canada.

Perhaps the most significant change Canadian Indians experienced in World War II was unprecedented financial prosperity. As bad as the Great Depression was for many Canadians, Native communities were particularly hard hit. According to T.A. Crerar:

Unemployment, drought in agricultural areas, and inadequate returns from steadily diminishing fur and game resources have contributed to the demoralization and disintegration of [Indians'] economic and social life. It is estimated that during [1936] one-third of the Indian population was dependent, in whole or in part, on relief allowances.<sup>1</sup>

World War II, however, made jobs and good wages available for many Canadians. Many Indians enlisted in the military, and became better off financially than they had ever been. However, numerous jobs were also available on the home front. For many Indians, the shortage of workers meant opportunity. Native people were able to secure well paid jobs in most industries in Canada throughout the war. The ability to find off-reserve jobs led many Native people to leave their reserves for extended periods, and gave them their first prolonged exposure to white society. R. A. Hoey reported in 1945:

Indians throughout Ontario engaged in a type of employment never before offered

them. Practically all able-bodied Indians... worked in the lumber camps, and in war work in industrial centres throughout the province. A group of Indians from the James Bay area were employed, in a tannery near Guelph, this being in the nature of an experiment. These Indians had never before left the James Bay area.<sup>2</sup>

Because of the labour shortage, Indians traveled to and from their reserves more freely. Indians no longer had to ask for permission or inform their Indian agents that they were leaving their reserves, “leaving Agents uninformed and frustrated.”<sup>3</sup> This frustration arose from two things: the agents’ inability to know where all Indians were at all times, and their lack of control over the Indians. Davison argued convincingly that this new “freedom of movement” and the “multitude of jobs available... must have contributed greatly to a new sense of independence and self-reliance.”<sup>4</sup> It also would have allowed Canadian Indians to experience conveniences and lifestyles off the reserve; experiences that would have important social implications later on.

Harold McGill stated in 1941, “Greater opportunities for employment have become available to Indians coincident with the increased demands for labour caused by the war.”<sup>5</sup> McGill recognized the fact that many Indians were ready to take up work in industries in which labour was needed. Native people secured employment in almost every industry imaginable. For most Native people able to take advantage of the wartime labour shortage, it was the beginning of a set of new opportunities. Donald Isaac of the Walpole Island Reserve was able to aid the war effort, and make a good living, at the “Chris-Craft plant... in Michigan, making Landing Craft Barges for the U.S. Navy.”<sup>6</sup> Muriland Knott was able to find work at the General Electric Plant in Peterborough. At fourteen years of age when World War II began, he was too young to enlist in the army, so he worked for the General Electric Company until he was old enough to enlist in 1942.<sup>7</sup> Even in relatively remote regions, Indians prospered. At Skidegate, on the Queen Charlotte Islands, some Indians

earned “as much as \$80-\$100 per day,” and did well “dog-fishing” only two days a week.<sup>8</sup> For the first time in their lives, many Native people earned a decent living, so much so that for many, “pay was not a great incentive” to join the military.<sup>9</sup> Stanley Summers, Oneida, “had been struggling to get enough work before the war, often finding wood-cutting was his only option. Once the war began, he found steady work at the St. Thomas Foundry” and did not enlist in the military until 1943 because the pay was so good.<sup>10</sup>

After 1940, many Indians resisted being called up for military training because they were making good wages in wartime industries. The St. Regis Band sent three representatives to Ottawa to protest the fact that employed members of their band were being called up for military training. This was a problem because “St. Regis men were... having to leave good jobs at the Massena Aluminum plant in New York State; even thirty days absence would likely mean the loss of their jobs, let alone four months.”<sup>11</sup> Such complaints led the Canadian government to begin issuing deferrals to Indians employed in wartime industries. The deferral process was “awkward and time consuming,” and anyone in an “essential industry” could apply for deferral.<sup>12</sup> Since most industries were considered essential to the war effort, the government found it easier to leave Indian employees where they were. Calling Native people up for military training was more difficult than the process was for calling other Canadians up. Communication systems on reserves were inefficient, and calling Status Indians up for active duty was complicated because the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB) had to be involved. Thus, many Indians were granted deferrals if they applied for them. According to Davison,

Nearly all applications for deferral among Indians along the B.C. coast were routinely granted... employment in logging... and... construction of roads and airports meant that most coastal Indians were involved in strategic industries and... served their country best where they were.<sup>13</sup>

Native men were not the only ones to fill the shortage of wartime labour. Native women also migrated to cities to find work. Native girls found work as domestic servants in cities, and were also able to secure work in wartime industries. In 1943 McGill wrote that, “reports indicate that the service tendered [by Native women] has been uniformly satisfactory... the demand for these girls far exceeded the supply.”<sup>14</sup>

Many Indians who remained on their reserves were also able to prosper during the war. Because of the fear of a Japanese invasion on the west coast following the attack on Pearl Harbor, thousands of Japanese Canadians were interned in camps throughout the interior of BC. The government seized Japanese fishing boats, and nullified their fishing licenses. With the Japanese interned and other fishermen serving in the military, there was a shortage of labour in the west coast fishing industry. For coastal Indians, this shortage of labour meant that there were numerous positions to be filled. In 1943, Harold McGill noted that BC Indians had “taken a leading part [in fishing] since the beginning of the war.”<sup>15</sup> Indians found work in all sectors of the fishing industry, from canneries to fish boats. McGill stated, “Halibut fishing was carried on successfully in the Skeena Agency, and other Coast Indians were employed in salmon fishing and clam-digging.”<sup>16</sup> Native farmers and ranchers also prospered, and became important for providing food to the rest of Canada, as well as to soldiers overseas. Native ranchers were gaining more cattle each year, and were able to take up where white ranchers had left off when they went overseas to fight in the military. In 1945, R.A. Hoey reported,

[Prairie Indians’] cattle are equal to any range cattle in the West. The Blackfoot, Blood, and Peigan Agencies now own approximately 10,000 head of cattle. The sale of live stock by Indians during the war period has enabled them to make a notable contribution to the food supply of the Dominion.<sup>17</sup>

Native people also adopted new farming techniques and new scientific methods that made their farms and ranches competitive with white ranchers after the war. In his report for 1947, Hoey stated, “the younger farmers [show] a keen interest in the application of scientific methods in [the] care and feeding” of their livestock.<sup>18</sup>

During the Second World War, the Native handicraft industry flourished, and the demand among non-Natives for Native goods increased. This is evident from the successes of Native craft bazaars, the military’s desire for Native clothing, and the government’s support of the handicraft industry. According to Hoey, the National Parks Branch of Canada gave sixty elk hides to the Indians at the Kootenay Agency, to produce “moccasins, gloves, jackets and other articles” that were in demand in Canada at the time.<sup>19</sup> Other Native handicrafts were in high demand as well, including “Cowichan sweaters that had formerly brought from \$4 to \$5 can now demand a market price of from \$10 to \$15.”<sup>20</sup>

Hoey described the growing market for Native handicrafts:

The demand for Indian craft products throughout [1945] has again far exceeded production. There are great opportunities throughout the country in connection with the production and marketing of Indian craft goods. Tourist bureau, hotels, associations, and summer resorts, as well as large merchandising firms, have shown marked interest in this type of work, realizing its value as a truly Canadian production.<sup>21</sup>

While a shortage of craftsmen usually did not allow Native communities to meet the demands for handicrafts, the efforts of craftsmen that stayed on reserves during the war worked to preserve a strong handicraft market for after the war. Hoey wrote, “To these craft workers should go the credit for holding the market throughout Canada, to which market Indians must look for the provision of employment in home industries during the post-war period.”<sup>22</sup> Indians on reserves were starting the process of creating jobs in the handicraft industry for Indians that would return to their reserves after the war.

Not surprisingly, the standard of living for many Indians improved during the war. McGill stated, "Employment in war industries and lumber camps provided increased income for many Indians which resulted in improved living conditions generally."<sup>23</sup> In 1942, McGill reported that Indians had experienced "a prosperous year and enjoyed increased revenue from their respective vocations."<sup>24</sup> Not only was World War II significant because of the prosperity it introduced to Native people, but also because wartime employment instilled new feelings of self-sufficiency and self-esteem. For the first time in decades, many Indians did not have to rely on government relief. Evidence from the US hints at how significantly the standards of living improved. Bernstein stated that "by 1944 the average Indian's [yearly] income was \$2,500 - two and one-half times that of 1940."<sup>25</sup> Statistics for the average annual income for Native people in Canada do not appear to exist, but the trend may have been similar. Whereas Native hops pickers might have been paid 1 ½ cents per pound before the war, they were paid 4 to 5 cents in 1945.<sup>26</sup> According to Hoey's report for 1945, "individual Indians [in harvest fields] earned as high as \$8 to \$10 a day, and families made as much as \$25 a day. This resulted in a substantial increase in revenue over that of the preceding year."<sup>27</sup>

For many Indians who moved to the cities for work, the wages and the lifestyle of the city had been profitable and interesting. When the war ended, many Canadian Indians decided to stay in the cities, employed in the same industries they had worked in throughout the war. They learned well-paid trades during the war and wanted to continue plying these trades. Hoey's reported in 1946 that "Indians living near large... industrial centres were employed to the same extent as during war years."<sup>28</sup> According to Hoey, Indians in Quebec, for example, remained employed once the war had ended:

This was particularly true of the Caughnawaga Indians, who were noted steel-workers. In the thickly populated section of the Province, Indians who are qualified plasterers, brick-layers, carpenters, and steamfitters were regularly employed at good wages, which was reflected in improvement in their general health and in their homes. These Indians live in well-furnished houses that equal those of their white neighbours.<sup>29</sup>

Not only did they learn certain trades while living in the cities, but they also learned about the lifestyles of white people, and wanted to experience the benefits and conveniences of city life. For some Indians, this meant a full assimilation into white society. Others chose to integrate into mainstream Canadian society, while still maintaining pride in their heritage and connections with their reserve communities. The pay and conditions they experienced, as well as camaraderie with white workers, led Indians to fight for increased civil rights after the war. Many felt that having contributed to the war effort they deserved to share the same rights as other Canadians.

While many reserves experienced financial prosperity during the war, many isolated reserves experienced increased poverty, and deteriorating living conditions. Harold McGill reported in 1944:

There are still... a few districts where relief costs remain practically as high as similar costs during the worst years of the depression. These districts consist in the main of northern agencies such as Abitibi, James Bay, Sioux Lookout, Norway House, Athabaska, and Lesser Slave Lake. It would appear that [these] Indians... have neither the skill, training, nor temperament to take full advantage of employment conditions in agricultural areas or in war industries.<sup>30</sup>

What McGill neglected when blaming the Indians' lack of "skill" and "temperament," was that the poorest reserves were also the most remote. It was difficult for Indians on isolated reserves to move to the cities, no matter how willing they were to learn new trades. Most had to make their own way if they wanted to take jobs in the cities. As for the lack of skill, most Native people who took up trades in the cities were unskilled when they left their reserves, but easily learned new trades once they arrived in the cities. Another explanation

for why some bands faced hardships was because of the many men and women who left the reserve to focus their attention on off-reserve war-related efforts. Those who left included not only the soldiers and industrial workers, but also those who served the home front directly. BC fishermen, many of whom were Native, volunteered to patrol the coast in search of enemy activity, meaning they would leave their reserves for extended periods.<sup>31</sup> Many older Native men, especially those who had served in World War I, left their reserves to serve as home guard soldiers in Canada.

Chief Joe Dreaver, Cree, had earned the Military Medal during World War I, and had lost two brothers at Vimy Ridge.<sup>32</sup> Dreaver had “seen war’s ugliest side” but “did not hesitate to offer assistance when war erupted again,” spending his own resources to drive volunteers from his own reserve to the recruiting office at Saskatoon.<sup>33</sup> After helping volunteers enlist, including five of his own children, Dreaver volunteered for service.<sup>34</sup> Forty-eight years old in 1939, Dreaver was too old for combat duty, but he served throughout the war as a veteran guard, “watching POWs in Medicine Hat, Alberta,” for much of the war, taking this leader away from his reserve.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, John McLeod and Tom Longboat, both Native veterans of the First World War, encouraged their sons to volunteer for combat duty, and then entered the Veteran Guard.<sup>36</sup> Men like Dreaver, McLeod, and Longboat willingly left their reserves to serve Canada, along with many other Native men. While these men received wages serving the war effort, their absence was felt on their reserves. With so many men serving overseas, serving in the military in Canada, and working in cities, some Native communities were left with few male occupants.

Thus, many organizational tasks fell upon Native women, who contributed to the war effort while running reserve affairs. In 1943, McGill praised Native women for relying on their own ingenuity and organizational skills when they could not rely on government

relief. McGill stated that the “Homemakers' Clubs continued to be active,” and that these clubs “proved invaluable in making... garments from discarded military clothing, and provided the Indians with warm winter apparel.”<sup>37</sup> Native women’s clubs and organizations ensured that the needy and sick on their reserves were cared for, and made up care packages to be sent overseas to Canadian soldiers. According to Hoey, “Indian women belonging to the 10 War Service Clubs in Manitoba remade over 1,500 garments. These women have worked for the Red Cross and have sent parcels and cigarettes to Indian soldiers overseas.”<sup>38</sup> When the military became aware of the quality of Native garments, they sometimes commissioned Native women’s organizations to produce clothing for the military. In one instance, the Homemakers’ Club from the Golden Lake Reserve in Ontario produced and presented “twelve windbreakers,” made from “goat and deer skins,” to the “officers of the destroyer H.M.C.S. Iroquois.”<sup>39</sup>

Native women’s clubs were also able to help solve problems on their reserves, as well as discussing strategies for solving social problems and dealing with health and education issues. Often, these organizations were able to help their reserves with little or no assistance from the IAB. Director McGill praised these organizations in 1943:

There has been a steady increase in the number of Homemakers' Clubs. The members of these clubs, with little departmental assistance or supervision, meet regularly for the remodelling of discarded military clothing, the canning of fruits and vegetables, and for the discussion of welfare problems. They have become responsible for the organization and promotion of worthwhile gardening programs, of school attendance, and of school lunches. The existence of these organizations is one of the most encouraging features of the welfare program.<sup>40</sup>

The efforts of Native women on the home front demonstrated that constant supervision by the IAB was not necessary, and that Native people could care for their own needs if given a chance. Just as the roles of non-Native women in Canada changed during World War II, the roles of Native women on reserves also changed.

Native men who were too old or sick to join the military also did their part on their reserves. Older men taught young Indians many of their traditional arts and crafts. Some Indians began organizing training workshops in order to teach others how to produce the much-called-for Native handicrafts. Indian Affairs Director Hoey stated,

with a view to extending the scope of organized craft work, special short courses were arranged in pottery, silver work, lapidary work, and weaving, for a group of interested field workers, and the necessary equipment for cutting and polishing native Canadian stones was set up on one Indian reserve. From this small beginning it is hoped to promote an industry for Indian craftsmen whose forebears were skilled in the use of metals.<sup>41</sup>

The fact that the market for Native handicrafts grew during World War II, and continued to grow in the postwar years suggests the wisdom of Hoey's optimism.

On some reserves, chiefs opposed the enlistment of band members, which meant that these Indians were unable to share in the prosperity that military service provided. While to some this appeared to demonstrate a lack of patriotism, these communities supported the war effort in other ways. Chief William Berens, of the Berens River Ojibwa of Manitoba, "opposed any enlistment of his young men. He asserted that he 'would not send his men overseas to kill people that he did not know'."<sup>42</sup> However, Berens supported the war effort by helping to organize a Native "labour pool to assist with the harvest in the prairies throughout the war."<sup>43</sup> A good harvest was important not only for Canadian society, but also for Canadian soldiers overseas. Much of the grain produced in Canada was transported overseas to feed soldiers. With many farmers having enlisted in the army, much labour was needed on the prairies for the harvest to be successful.

World War II affected Native communities in northern BC, Alberta, and the Yukon, after Pearl Harbour was attacked in 1941, by bringing new development to these areas, along with important opportunities and changes. Canada and the US decided that the

northwest was of strategic value, and required better defences. Across northwestern Canada, the war facilitated the rapid development of infrastructure. Roads, oil pipelines, harbours, airfields, and communication systems sprung up due to the threat of Japanese activity on the coast. The Japanese occupation of the Aleutian Islands brought a number of construction projects to the Canadian north. These included the Alaska Highway, airfields, radio stations, telephone lines, “wharfs at Skagway and Prince Rupert,” railway spurs, weather stations, and the Canol oil pipeline.<sup>44</sup> The Alaska Highway was started in March 1942, and was finished in eight months, employing 10,000 Canadian and American soldiers, and 6,000 civilian workers.<sup>45</sup> The highway between Terrace, BC, and Prince Rupert, BC, was constructed to bring guns and aircraft to defend the port at Prince Rupert. According to Terrace pioneer Floyd Frank, Highway 16 between Prince Rupert and Terrace, little more than a “gravel road,” was opened on Labour Day, 1944.<sup>46</sup> The Canadian Army established the first hospital in the area, in Terrace, “in the eventuality of fighting... the Japanese in the Aleutian Islands or elsewhere on the coast.”<sup>47</sup> As a result, Native people were able to secure employment working on the various strategic projects being completed in their own backyard. Before enlisting in the military, Metis veteran Euclide Boyer recalled going to work on the Alaska Highway: “I worked cutting brush... for 50 cents a day... In the spring of 1942 I wanted to go and work on the Alaska highway. The wages were good, you didn’t need many qualifications.”<sup>48</sup>

In northern Canada, Native hunters and guides profited because of the influx of Canadian and American troops. Indians “provided food for military camps and even did some guiding for hunters from the bases... Indians acting as river pilots for the U.S. forces in northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories were earning \$8-\$10 per day.”<sup>49</sup> Like their Canadian brethren, Alaskan Native people profited from traditional activities. In

Alaska, the US Army decided to have traditional Eskimo articles of clothing for American soldiers stationed in the far north. The US Army asked the Eskimos to provide skin parkas, mukluks, seal skin pants, mittens, snowshoes, caps, and socks for them.<sup>50</sup> The Eskimos produced thousands of items for the Army, and the Army was pleased by the quality and workmanship, as well as the speed of the delivery.<sup>51</sup>

The development of the Canadian north during the war brought not only increased prosperity and further opportunities to the Native people; it also brought Natives into further contact with non-Natives, and allowed them to learn about new people and cultures, things that most northern Indians were largely unaware of even in the 1940s. The military presence in the north was problematic for the Natives. The soldiers who came into the region brought diseases with them that few northern aboriginal communities had experienced. Venereal disease was especially dangerous. McGill reported in 1944, that in “parts of the North where [venereal disease] was hitherto almost unknown, with the influx of population to these areas, it is now a distinct menace.”<sup>52</sup>

Despite bringing increased financial prosperity to Native communities, the cost of fighting World War II diverted government funds away from health and education programs for Indians. Native education suffered not only a decrease in funding, but also a shortage of manpower. In 1943, McGill reported that

An attempt has been made since the outbreak of the war to protect Indian educational institutions from serious impairment of efficiency. This has not been an easy task. A large number of fully qualified Indian day school teachers have joined the Armed Forces. Others have abandoned teaching in favour of work in war industries. [As such] we have few male teachers now in charge of Indian day schools.<sup>53</sup>

Because many of the doctors employed by the Indian Health Service had enlisted in the army during the war, health services available to Native people in Canada decreased.

McGill admitted in 1942, “The staff of the Indian Health Service has been considerably affected by the war, as many of the doctors have enlisted.”<sup>54</sup> By the end of 1941, the situation was already serious. The IAB discovered that “a large section of the Indian population was suffering from dietary deficiencies,” and reported that these health issues were increasingly complex due to “an increasing shortage of nurses and doctors, it being particularly difficult to obtain medical personnel in the outlying districts.”<sup>55</sup>

The lack of medical personnel may have been related to a decrease in funding on Indian reserves. According to McGill, “Indians enjoyed a higher standard of living throughout the year than they have enjoyed at any time in recent years... These conditions are reflected in relief cost[s], which show a reduction of \$175,571.51” when compared to the year before.<sup>56</sup> While he stated that the living conditions improved because of increased wage earnings for Indians during the war, McGill mentions in the same report the worsening health of Native people coupled with decreased health services available to Natives during the war. Perhaps the health of the Indians would not have decreased had the \$175,571.51 the government saved on relief costs gone into the Indian Health Service. Nevertheless, the health of the Native population of Canada continued to worsen throughout the war. In 1943, McGill reported:

There were a number of epidemics reported... measles, whooping cough, diphtheria, chickenpox, and mumps. A serious outbreak of bacillary dysentery occurred at Telegraph Creek... which resulted in 12 deaths. An outbreak of diphtheria occurred in the residential school at Shubenacadie... tuberculosis continued to be the leading cause of death among Indians. The anti-tuberculosis campaign was continued and at December 31, 1943, there were 925 Indians under treatment as compared with 767 being treated on December 31, 1942, an increase of 158. The average annual death rate over the last five years has been 815.<sup>57</sup>

Despite the efforts of the IAB, the lack of funding and shortage of personnel in the Indian Health Service prevented any headway in the matter. Despite the IAB’s anti-tuberculosis

campaign, the number of deaths from tuberculosis increased from 1942 to 1943.

Not only did diseases that had traditionally hurt the Native population continue to run rampant in Canada (especially tuberculosis), but other diseases became prevalent. Venereal disease, as mentioned, became a serious problem. According to Hoey, the fact that “large numbers of the Indian population moved to the more densely populated industrial areas” and other Canadians had “greater contact with the Indian population from isolated areas” was the major reason for the “increase in the incidence of venereal disease among Indians.”<sup>58</sup> Again, a shortage of staff members and a lack of funding prevented the Indian Health Service from solving the problem. Despite attempts to control the spread of venereal disease among Indians, the “wide distribution and isolation of Indians... enormously increase[d] the difficulty of an adequate venereal disease control campaign.”<sup>59</sup> A combination of factors, then, led to the spread of venereal diseases among the Natives of Canada. Only the end of the war, and the return of personnel to the Indian Health Service, would bring a solution to the growing health problems among Canada’s Native population.

Canadian Indians were not only active in the labour force during the war, but they also contributed to other wartime projects, including fundraising for various charities and to help Canada fight the Axis. This contribution did not go unnoticed by Canadians, and was one of the factors that changed Canadians’ attitudes towards Indians. One significant contribution of Canadian Indians to the war effort was the monetary contribution Indians made to wartime charities and funds. The IAB put the official recorded amount of Native donations at \$26,493.<sup>60</sup> This sum includes only monetary donations funneled through the IAB to the government and wartime charities, mostly from band funds. It does not include direct individual donations to charities, or individual purchases of Canadian Victory Bonds. Neither does it include other donations, such as clothing for bombing victims in Britain,

and Native produce for Canadian soldiers fighting overseas. As an example of just how much money was contributed by Natives to the war effort, consider that by 1943 Canadian Indians had spent over \$400,000 on war time contributions, according to McGill.<sup>61</sup>

Band donations were usually accompanied by specific instructions as to how the money was to be used. As allies of the British since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, it is not surprising that Ontario Natives were quick to donate money to wartime causes. In December 1939, the Six Nations donated \$1,000 to the Red Cross.<sup>62</sup> In 1940, the Rice Lake Mississauga donated \$1,000 to “the Minister of Finance (to carry on the war),” another \$100 to the Canadian Red Cross, and \$100 to the Salvation Army.<sup>63</sup> In June of 1940, the Mohawk Council of Deseronto, Ontario, desired that “\$100 be taken from Band Funds to be sent to the National Red Cross to help in the prosecution of the War.”<sup>64</sup> Native people in the Maritimes had had peaceful relations with the Crown since the 1760s. Thus, their loyalty to Britain and Canada is not surprising. Perhaps one of the most interesting and touching donations came from the Micmac of the Whycocomagh Reserve, Nova Scotia. In a letter to the Secretary of the IAB, Chief Gabriel Holliboy stated, “having been born and brought up with Scotch people, we ask, that... the above stated amount of our gift [\$2,000] be used to aid the suffering children of Scotland.”<sup>65</sup> The fact that the Micmac wanted to aid Scots specifically speaks to the long and largely peaceful co-existence between Scottish settlers and Indians in the Maritimes. Native people on the prairies had signed treaties with the Crown in the past, and still maintained strong loyalties to the British monarchy during World War II. Thus, the monetary contributions made by prairie Indians are understandable. In June 1940, the Blood band near Cardston, Alberta donated \$2,000 “to purchase a Red Cross ambulance, if our Dominion Government consider[s] that essential at this time, otherwise the money [is] to be used at the sole discretion of our Dominion

Government for assistance in the war effort and Red Cross work.”<sup>66</sup> In April 1941, the Peigan at Brocket, Alberta donated \$250 to the Canadian War Services Fund.<sup>67</sup> The Ochapowace Reserve in Alberta donated \$17.75 to the war effort, a sum “made up of \$5.00 donated by the Ochapowace Homemakers Club, \$5.00 from the Ladies Sewing Circle, and \$7.75 voluntary subscriptions from the men of the Band.”<sup>68</sup>

The contributions of Native people in BC are perhaps more surprising, as the Canadian government had barred Indians from making land claims in 1927, leaving most bands, including the Nisga’a, without treaties. Despite this ban on land claims, BC Indians still donated to the war effort. In October 1940, the Homalco Indians of Church House, BC, donated “Postal Notes amounting to \$40.00... Hoping this will reach here safe and wish the war will win against Germany.”<sup>69</sup> The Nisga’a also sent monetary donations to the government. In March 1941, Peter Calder, president of the Nisga’a Land Commission, based in Greenville, BC, wrote a letter to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, stating, “We... wish to show our Loyalty to our country by contributing \$25.00 ....Dollars in response to your voice regarding the War Fund. To protect our tribal Rights and to strengthen His Majesties [sic] Forces.”<sup>70</sup> There is no doubt that the Nisga’a wanted to help the Allies win the war, but Calder also had political motives for sending the letter. By confirming their loyalty and patriotism to Canada, the Nisga’a obviously wanted the Canadian government to take notice of the band’s loyalty, despite the fact that their land claims had not been settled. Calder hoped it would embarrass the government, and encourage it to settle the land claims with the Nisga’a, and protect the Nisga’a’s aboriginal rights.

The number and value of donations to the war effort are indicative of several things. By donating generously to the Canadian war effort, Indians were able to show other Canadians, particularly government officials, that they wanted to do their part and showed

that despite being among the poorest people in Canada, they were willing to contribute to causes that alleviated the suffering of others. Also, the fact that Native donations were accompanied by specific instructions in many cases shows that Native people were exercising some control over how their money was to be spent.

Government officials were ambivalent about the donations. On the one hand, the IAB argued against bands donating their money to the cause, while on the other hand the federal government and wartime charities welcomed the donations. A strange dichotomy arose because of this situation. As Davison argued, “contributions Indians tried to make to war-effort charities were frequently blocked by Indian Affairs.”<sup>71</sup> The IAB usually tried to obstruct Native donations to protect funds that the Indians needed to live off, whether such protection was merited or not. Early in the war, in a memorandum to the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources dated June 1940, McGill stated that the Native donations were in “fine spirit” and that making donations was

a generous and patriotic action... for which they should receive the greatest credit, but it is not an authorized use of Trust Funds within the meaning of the Indian Act. The practice is... becoming so prevalent, and the amounts voted increasing so substantially in amount, that it is giving us some concern. [I]t might ultimately result in the bands unduly impairing their income that they will need for other purposes vital to their welfare. Even war conditions do not relieve this Branch of its responsibility as trustee of Indian funds.<sup>72</sup>

The Deputy Minister agreed with McGill’s concerns and allowed McGill to introduce policies necessary to protect Indian band funds. Soon after, the IAB created regulations that Status Indians would have to follow to make donations. In July 1940, McGill sent the rules for allowing Native donations to the war effort to all Indian agents:

1. That no contributions be permitted from Capital Funds.
2. That no contributions be made to Consolidated Revenue, or for the direct purchase of war materials or supplies.
3. That the purchase of war savings certificates, war loans, etc., from Band Funds be not permitted; but that the purchase of these by individual Indians, from their

own funds, be encouraged.

4. That contributions be permitted from Interest Funds only and subject to the following conditions:

- a) To institutions engaged in war work of a national character.
- b) That the amounts be governed by --
  - i) The balance in the Trust Accounts, both Capital and Interest
  - ii) The population and requirements of the Band.
  - iii) Previous contributions of a similar nature.<sup>73</sup>

While there was definite concern for the welfare of the Indians, the desire to block Native donations from band funds was not altogether altruistic. In fact, a major reason for imposing such regulations on Native donations was the need to save government money. The IAB feared that if Native people continued to give their band funds to the war effort, the IAB would subsequently be forced to give the Indians relief money.

However, this legislation did not stop Native donations to the war effort. Indians began circumventing Indian Affairs regulations to make donations. Instead of donating money directly, Native people came up with new methods of raising money for the war effort. In October of 1940, the Enoch Cree Band forgave the \$400.00 rent money owed to the band by the Canadian government for the use of a rifle range on their reserve.<sup>74</sup> In July of 1941, the Bella Coola Band purchased a \$2,000.00 Victory Bond by using the excess revenue collected from their logging operations at Ocean Falls.<sup>75</sup>

Indians also made non-monetary donations to the war effort, without contravening Indian Affairs regulations. A Tsimshian church circle at Hartley Bay, BC, hand-knitted thirty-two articles of clothing to be sent overseas to British children displaced by German bombing raids. The hamper included “beautifully made dresses and underclothing for little girls, knitted garments and socks made by an 11-year old member of the Junior Red Cross and babies wooly clothing.”<sup>76</sup> As Davison argues, “each band seemed to come up with a new and unique kind of donation,” citing several examples, including the Island Lake,

Manitoba reserve, which “donated 31 muskrat pelts to be auctioned off for the Red Cross, the Nishga sent money for Bren guns, the Blackfoot for a field ambulance and the Christmas Cheer For British Children Fund.”<sup>77</sup>

The Peigan of Alberta, according to an article in the *Lethbridge Herald*, held their annual Sun Dance ceremony, which anyone could attend for a donation to the Red Cross. The article stated that the Indians “have already given \$150 and they hope, with the help of their friends, to raise... \$1,000. Several have given either a beef or a horse which will be sold and the proceeds deposited in the bank.”<sup>78</sup> This is particularly telling as the Sun Dance was among the Native rituals banned by government legislation at this time. The Peigan hoped to show their loyalty by donating the proceeds of their Sun Dance to the Red Cross, while at the same time defying government legislation by conducting, and blatantly advertising, the Sun Dance. Not only did non-Natives support the Indians in conducting the Sun Dance, but the Indians also received positive media coverage from Canadian newspapers. This coverage would contribute to creating a new image of the Indian, and would contribute to changing Canadians’ attitudes towards Indians.

In another show of patriotism and ingenuity, the Squamish of BC held a craft bazaar and a concert to raise money to purchase a Spitfire fighter airplane for the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). Once again, the Canadian media covered the events, providing positive publicity for the Indians. The *Daily Province* covered the event:

The bazaar and concert conducted by the Squamish... was a complete success, attended by whites and Indians from Vancouver and the neighbouring reserves. The sale of needlework and native handicrafts... was held to raise funds for the B.C. Indians Spitfire Fund, with the hope that the 25,000 Indians in B.C. will raise \$25,000 to purchase a Spitfire during the coming year. Neighbouring and interior tribes sent beautiful totem poles, baskets, buckskin gloves, moccasins, and other native products which were readily purchased by the white people, who materially contributed to the success of the Squamish Spitfire effort... The B.C. Indians want to buy a Spitfire that will carry their compliments to the common enemy.<sup>79</sup>

The attempt of the Squamish is a perfect example of the kind of effort put forth by Indians across Canada. The Squamish raised a significant amount of money without being forced to use band funds. They fostered teamwork and camaraderie among BC Indians, and between whites and Indians, both of whom supported the event to fight the Axis in a monetary fashion. The fact that Natives and whites worked together shows that even by the early 1940s, attitudes in Canada were changing. During the war, Natives and whites frequently associated with one another, whether in wartime charity work or in wartime industries work. This close association during World War II was one of the factors that would lead to the changing attitudes of whites toward Indians.

In an attempt to unify Indians across Canada, the Mohawk of the Caughnawaga reserve near Montreal sought the aid of other Indians in raising money to purchase a bomber for the RCAF. An article in Boston's *Christian Science Monitor* stated: "the Mohawks... ask[ed] the Department of Indian Affairs to forward the appeal for individual contributions to other Indian tribes from Nova Scotia to British Columbia."<sup>80</sup> According to the article, Chief Joseph Delisle, Jr. was "determined that the necessary money shall be forthcoming as soon as possible."<sup>81</sup> The Mohawks proved that band funds were not needed for the war effort, so long as Canadian Indians worked together. Native peoples' ability to cooperate for a common cause foreshadows the pan-Indian activism that emerged in North America after the war. It is noteworthy that the above article is from a US publication. Not only did the Canadian media portray Indians in a positive light, but Native people in Canada were also garnering positive international attention. This also contributed to changing attitudes towards Indians in Canada and the US.

Native craft bazaars and concerts show that Natives contributed significantly to

the Canadian war effort, while demonstrating that Canadian Indians were learning important organizational skills. These skills were necessary not only for organizing fundraising events without the aid of Indian Affairs, but would also be important skills that Native people, especially when led by disciplined veterans, would need to create organizations to fight for civil rights once the war had ended. White Canadians were willing to associate with Natives and were willing to support Natives' fundraising efforts during the war. Perhaps it is not surprising then that Native goods were in higher demand near the end of the war than ever before. White people realized that the crafts were of good quality, and that by purchasing Native goods, they were supporting their countrymen. The attitudes of Canadians were changing, especially because many whites worked beside Native people in factories and in cities during the war. Many non-Natives saw firsthand the efforts of Canadian Indians to help with the war effort and they were grateful.

The language used in newspapers and government reports from the 1940s demonstrates this new attitude. Many publications covered Native peoples' attempts to aid the Canadian war effort. The *Christian Science Monitor* stated, "When one considers the Indians' relatively small income [when compared to whites], a mere pittance so to speak, the magnitude of this undertaking is apparent," referring to the money Canadian Indians were donating to the war effort.<sup>82</sup> According to the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, the Fishing Lake Sioux, of Saskatchewan, donated \$1,000 to the war effort, a sum that was "all the more remarkable since the Fishing Lake Band consists of approximately 165 Indians, which makes the per capita donation a large one."<sup>83</sup> Canadian newspapers and magazines reported Indians' wartime fundraising efforts, not only because they made good stories, but also because they reassured white Canadians that they had help from their Native brethren,

and were not fighting the war alone. It must have been inspiring to see that even the poorest Canadians were doing their part for the war effort.

The grateful attitude of Canadians toward Native people is apparent in Indian Affairs' reports throughout the war. In 1942, McGill wrote that Canadian Indians

have shown a patriotic spirit and... have manifested their loyalty. Generally they have shown a keen desire to assist in the war effort to the extent of their ability. Indian women also have given evidence of patriotism in a manner that reflects greatly to their credit and have taken an active part in local Red Cross activities. The Old Crow Indians in the Yukon Territory sent a contribution of \$432.30 to the London Orphans Fund. Children from South London, who had lost either one or both parents in air raids, thanked the Old Crow Indians for their generosity and told them that their welcome gift had bought boots and clothing for boys and girls who had suffered most cruelly in the air raids on London.<sup>84</sup>

Although McGill was replaced by R.A. Hoey, the attitude of the IAB toward Native involvement in World War II had not changed. In 1945, Hoey reported:

The Indians throughout the Dominion of Canada have displayed a keen interest in the progress of the war, and have, since its outset, given ample evidence of their loyalty by voluntary enlistments in the Armed Forces and generous contributions to the Red Cross and other war funds. Indian women also have rendered valuable service in Red Cross work.<sup>85</sup>

Because of their efforts in fundraising and because of their work in wartime industries, Native people were sometimes honoured in local ceremonies, and were sometimes invited to attend ceremonies. According to McGill, in Sept. 1943

five Indians from the Shubenacadie Indian Agency, in... Nova Scotia, were the special guests of the Halifax Shipyards Limited at the launching of the Tribal Class destroyer, H.M.C.S. Micmac. In their native costume they added colour to the ceremony, and as the destroyer slid down the ways, they sang a hymn to Ste. Anne, in the Micmac tongue, invoking the blessing of God on the new ship.<sup>86</sup>

Perhaps no honour was as special for Canadian Native people as being involved in royal ceremonies when the King and Queen of England visited Canada in 1939.

Although not technically part of World War II, the royal visit to Canada was to ensure Canadian support for Britain as war appeared inevitable. When the monarchs visited in

1939, Native people in various parts of the country showed their commitment and loyalty to the Crown. According to Indian Affairs, when the King and Queen visited Canada, the “Indians... participated officially” in ceremonies surrounding their visit, including a ceremony at Port Arthur, where their “Majesties showed keen interest in the Indian village” and in the Indians who “presented a striking appearance” in traditional garb.<sup>87</sup> When the monarchs visited Calgary, they inspected a Native “camp-site of thirty teepees,” as well as “some thirty-six mounted Indians in full regalia.”<sup>88</sup> As the King and Queen sailed from Vancouver, they were accompanied for a distance by “twenty war canoes manned by 300 Indians [which] formed an escort for the ship.”<sup>89</sup> Finally, upon returning to Eastern Canada, the King and Queen honoured the Indians of the Six Nations by signing “the Queen Anne Bible” at Brantford Station.<sup>90</sup>

Throughout the war, Canadian Indians were honoured by King George VI. The Crown was thankful for the efforts of Natives on the home front and for their donations to wartime charities. George VI presented Native bands with awards for aiding Britain, and British citizens wrote letters of appreciation to Indian bands that had helped them during the war. A group of English orphans, for example, wrote letters to the Old Crow Band of the Yukon Territories. The two groups became “pen pals,” as the orphans thanked the Old Crow people for their donations during the Blitz.<sup>91</sup> In 1943, George VI “showed his appreciation for the leadership and loyalty” of certain bands when he awarded British Empire Medals to the chiefs of the Vuntut Gwitchin (Old Crow) Band, northwestern BC's Kitkatla Band, Manitoba's Norway House Band, and the Red Gut (Nicikousemenecaning) Band of Ontario.<sup>92</sup> Being honoured by the British Monarchy likely had implications for attitudes toward Native people in Canada, as most Canadians maintained a strong sense of loyalty to Britain at this time.

When honoured in these ways, and when Canadians showed their appreciation for their efforts, Indians responded humbly, stating it was their duty to king and country, and that the effort had to be maintained, and even increased, to ensure Allied victory. Chief Joseph Delisle, Jr., of the Caughnawaga Mohawk, demonstrated this attitude:

We have men fighting at the front [and] men working in vital iron and munition industries. But that is not enough. Those of us at home must do all we can to help our King and Queen and to bring about the downfall of the tyrant. We'll not only show the Empire that we can do our bit, but we'll show Hitler too.<sup>93</sup>

For Indians in BC, their efforts throughout the Second World War led to increased political power, as provincial suffrage was granted to BC Indians in 1949. R.A. Hoey stated, "At the last Session of the Legislative Assembly of [BC] the right to vote at provincial elections was extended to Indians of the Province residing outside Indian reserves."<sup>94</sup> While the vote was not yet extended to all Indians in Canada, it was a significant change, and British Columbia's leadership in this direction would serve as an example for other provinces.

For Canadian Indians on the home front, the Second World War brought about significant changes for Native communities and individuals. Some of the effects of the war included better wages for Native labourers; more prosperity on reserves; better living conditions; greater equality in the workforce; opportunities to learn trades and find good jobs; increased self-esteem by not having to rely on the IAB for relief; different lifestyles living and working in cities beside white Canadians; increased freedom of movement; more authority over their own affairs; decreased Indian Affairs' control; and the right to vote in provincial elections in BC. The Second World War also had other effects on Native people in Canada. Funding and manpower to the Native education system was decreased; and decreased health care funding and far less health care services led to appalling health conditions, especially tuberculosis outbreaks, on Indian reserves across the country

throughout the war. Venereal diseases were introduced to isolated Native communities, causing further health problems, which would not be addressed until the post-war period.

Among non-Natives, changes began to manifest themselves due to the home front efforts of Canadian Native people. Because of their efforts and sacrifices at home, Canadian Indians began to earn the respect of large sectors of the Canadian populace. The Canadian media demonstrated the newfound respect for Native Canadians, as did the reports filed by Indian Affairs officials. While the immediate post-war period would see a return to much of the pre-war discrimination against Native people, the seeds for change had been planted. To many Canadians racism was no longer acceptable, having just fought a war against institutionalized racism, and having served with Indians overseas and having worked and lived beside Indians on the home front. For Canadian Native people who did not serve in the military, World War II was still an important event. It ushered in a new era of prosperity and change for Canada's Native people, while also changing the popular attitude of non-Natives toward Natives at home.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> T.A. Crerar, "DOMINION OF CANADA REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND RESOURCES INCLUDING REPORT OF SOLDIER SETTLEMENT OF CANADA FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 1937," (Ottawa: March 1937), 194.

<<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>

<sup>2</sup> Hoey, *ARDIA*, Ottawa: April 1945, 165.

<sup>3</sup> Janet Frances Davison, "We Shall Remember: Canadian Indians and World War II," (MA diss.: Trent University, June 1993), 73.

<sup>4</sup> Davison, 73.

<sup>5</sup> Laurie Meijer Drees, "A History of the Indian Association of Alberta 1939-1959," (Doctoral diss.: University of Calgary, August 1997), 24.

<sup>6</sup> Davison, 27.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>14</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, 1943, 151.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>17</sup> Hoey, *ARDIA*, 1945, 170.

<sup>18</sup> Hoey, *ARDIA*, 1947, 211.

<sup>19</sup> Hoey, *ARDIA*, 1945, 162.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Hoey, *ARDIA*, 1946, 208 & 209.

<sup>22</sup> Hoey, *ARDIA*, 1945, 171.

<sup>23</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, 1942, 134.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>25</sup> Bernstein 59.

<sup>26</sup> Hoey, *ARDIA*, 1945, 162.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>28</sup> Hoey, *ARDIA*, 1947, 205.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 211 & 212.

<sup>30</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, 1944, 156.

<sup>31</sup> Summerby, 31.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 21/22.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, 1943, 146.

<sup>38</sup> Hoey, *ARDIA*, 1945, 165.

<sup>39</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, 1944, 157.

<sup>40</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, 1943, 151.

<sup>41</sup> Hoey, *ARDIA*, 1945, 171.

<sup>42</sup> Davison, 51.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>45</sup> Pierre Berton, "Book Three: The Global War," in *Marching as to War: Canada's Turbulent Years 1899 – 1953*, (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2001), 389; and Reader's Digest, "The changing face of Canada," in *The Canadians at War 1939/45*, vol. 1, (Reader's Digest Association Canada Ltd., 1971), 257 & 258.

<sup>46</sup> Floyd Frank, *My Valley's Yesteryears*, (Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publishers Ltd., 1991), 130.

- 
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid., 121.
- <sup>48</sup> *Remembrances: Metis Veterans: Interviews with Metis Veterans*, (Regina: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Metis Studies and Applied Research, Inc., 1997), 17.
- <sup>49</sup> Davison, 116.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid., 191.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>52</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, 1944, 154.
- <sup>53</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, 1943, 149.
- <sup>54</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, 1942, 165.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid., 135.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid., 136.
- <sup>57</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, 1944, 153.
- <sup>58</sup> Hoey, *ARDIA*, 1946, 205.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>60</sup> Davison 83.
- <sup>61</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, 1943, 157.
- <sup>62</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, D. McLennan, Treasurer, Brantford Red Cross, Brantford, Ontario to Indian Affairs Branch, 20 December 1939.
- <sup>63</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, Harold McGill, Director of Indian Affairs, Ottawa to Deputy Minister, 26 June 1940.
- <sup>64</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, Ontario, H. M. Jones, Indian Agent, Deseronto, Ontario to Secretary of Indian Affairs, 6 June 1940.
- <sup>65</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, Maritimes, Gabriel Holliboy, Chief, and John S. Googas, Councillor, Whycocomagh Reserve, Inverness County, Nova Scotia to Secretary of Indian Affairs, 10 June 1941.
- <sup>66</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, Alberta, Shot-on-Both-Sides, Chief, Frank Red Crow, Criso Child, et al., Blood Indian Reserve, Cardston, Alberta to Minister of Mines and Resources, 27 June 1940.
- <sup>67</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, Alberta, Yellow Horn, Chief, Leo Smith, John Bastien, et al., Peigan Indian Reserve, Brocket, Alberta to Minister of Mines and Resources, 8 April 1941.
- <sup>68</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, D. J. Allen, Superintendent of Reserves and Trusts, Ottawa to Director of Indian Affairs, 29 October 1940.
- <sup>69</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, Tommy Paul, Chief, and Albert Wilson, Secretary, Church House, BC to Minister of Finance, 21 October 1940.
- <sup>70</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, BC, Peter Calder, President, Nishga Land Committee, Greenville, Nass River, BC to Prime Minister King, 6 March 1941.
- <sup>71</sup> Davison 20.
- <sup>72</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, Harold McGill, Director, Ottawa to Deputy Minister, 26 June 1940.
- <sup>73</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, Harold McGill, Director, Ottawa to Inspectors and Indian Agents, 12 June 1940.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>75</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, BC, William Christie, Indian Agent, "Agent's Report for the Month of June, 1941," Bella Coola, BC: 2 July 1941.
- <sup>76</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, "Indian Women Aid Evacuees," Unknown Newspaper, Vancouver: 14 March 1941.
- <sup>77</sup> Davison 82.
- <sup>78</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, "Indians Assist Red Cross Fund," *Lethbridge Herald*, Lethbridge: 18 July 1940.
- <sup>79</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, BC, "Seek \$25,000 Indians Help to Raise Funds for Purchase of Spitfires," *Daily Province*, Vancouver: 19 December 1940.
- <sup>80</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, "Canadian Indians Do Part in War," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Boston: 17 January 1941.
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>82</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>83</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, "Indian Band Donates \$1,000 to War Effort," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, Saskatoon: 26 July 1940.
- <sup>84</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, 1942, 134.

---

<sup>85</sup> Hoey, *ARDIA*, 1945, 160.

<sup>86</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, 1944, 153.

<sup>87</sup> McGill, *ARDIA*, 1940, 183.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Summerby, 31 & 32.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>93</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6763, f. 452-5, part 2, "Canadian Indians Do Part in War."

<sup>94</sup> Hoey, *ARDIA*, 1947, 207.

### Chapter Three: After the War

In the immediate post-war period, a great deal of the equality that Native people had experienced during the war disappeared. During the war, Canadians had put racism aside to maintain solidarity; when the war was over, solidarity was unnecessary, and Natives were largely marginalized. When dealing with Native veterans, the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB) and the Veterans Affairs Department became mired in bureaucracy rather than helping Native veterans. Indian reserves were neglected, as the government had been forced to cut Indian Affairs funding to pay for the war. To Native veterans the government gave the impression that a foreign war was more important than Native Canadians. Indian veterans were often denied veterans' benefits because of their status, while the government confiscated Indian land to give to white veterans. Armed with leadership and discipline learned in the military, many Native veterans of World War II became important leaders, fighting for civil rights for Native people, while also fighting to maintain their aboriginal rights. World War II had introduced the idea that racism was wrong. Canadian society was ready to change, due to the wartime experiences of Native and non-Native Canadians. Pressured by pro-Native activists, the government appointed the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons (1946 to 1948) to reconsider the Indian Act. Thus, changes in attitude toward Native people, and changes to the Indian Act in 1951, were direct results of Native peoples' participation during World War II.

When Native veterans returned home, they were appalled by the state of their reserves. True, many Indians had more personal wealth than ever before, and were able to purchase modern comforts, such as vehicles, refrigerators, and radios. However, it was also evident that reserves had been neglected by the government throughout the war; more so than before the war had started. Reserve houses were often in poor shape, and were

badly overcrowded. John R. MacNicol, MP, stated, “I have been on at least twenty-five reservations... and I have been shocked, over what I have seen [sic];” and Robert A. Hoey, Director of the IAB, corroborated MacNicol’s statement in 1946, stating, “we must think also of the nomadic bands... who still live in tents, dilapidated shacks or tepees.”<sup>1</sup> Deadly diseases, especially tuberculosis, ran rampant on reserves. According to “Appendix ‘B’” of the Special Joint Committee, in 1942, 672.8 Status Indians per 100,000 died of tuberculosis (TB), while only 45.3 non-Indians per 100,000 died of TB; and by 1944, these statistics were worse, as 708.2 Indians per 100,000 died of TB, while only 41.6 non-Indians per 100,000 died of TB.<sup>2</sup> Government policy barred Status Indians from being treated in public hospitals, thus large numbers of tubercular Natives were crowded into inadequate Indian hospitals. Because the war had sent so many people overseas, World War II robbed Indian Affairs of necessary personnel in many fields, including health and education. Health care and education on reserves during the war suffered, and were often carried out by unqualified people.<sup>3</sup> Because the IAB was the “sole provider of services” for the entire Status Indian population of Canada, its resources were stretched far too thin.<sup>4</sup> New hospitals and new schools were not built, meaning most Indians received inadequate health care, and most were unable to receive a decent education. Major D. M. MacKay, Indian Commissioner for BC, stated in 1946 that BC had “close to 1,200 children for whom no education facilities have been provided,” and that many of BC’s Indian schools were “in need of extensive repairs or replacement.”<sup>5</sup>

Returning Native veterans found that parts of their reserves had been confiscated and desecrated by the army, which had used the land for training grounds. In some cases, entire reserves were taken. The Chippewa at Stony Point, Ontario had their entire reserve (2,211 acres) confiscated by the government under the War Measures Act in 1942 to be

used as a military training camp.<sup>6</sup> The Indians “were forced to see their homes burned when they refused to vacate them.”<sup>7</sup> The inhabitants were then forcibly dispersed on to the neighbouring Kettle Point reserve. The land was supposed to be returned to the Chippewa directly after the war ended, but the military continued using Camp Ipperwash until 1995. The Chippewa were appalled that the army had dug practice trenches through their graveyards, and had used gravestones for target practice, as many “were shot up.”<sup>8</sup>

Despite its duty to protect Indian reserve lands, the IAB allowed the Department of Veterans Affairs to expropriate Indian reserve land under the VLA. As early as 1943, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and even the Royal Canadian Legion by 1944, were pressuring Indian Affairs to surrender reserve land for veterans. W. G. Murchison, Director of Soldier Settlement, wrote a letter to Indian Affairs in 1943 stating, “One department... [has] surplus land... from time to time, ie.: the Department of Indian Affairs.”<sup>9</sup> One region Murchison was referring to was the Saddle Lake Region, though this land was hardly surplus, as the Indian band at Saddle Lake was using it. The Minister of Mines and Resources, Thomas Crerar, defended the Saddle Lake Band’s land, stating that the band had “little enough land left, having surrendered 18,720 acres to Soldier Settlement after the first war.”<sup>10</sup> Crerar instead approved the surrender of nearly 8,000 acres of Indian land near Fort St. John, BC, at “less than \$9 per acre.”<sup>11</sup> Indian Reserve 172, seven miles north of Fort St. John, BC, was surrendered by the Beaver Band at the behest of Indian Affairs in order that the Crown could sell this former Indian land to returning World War II veterans. In 1949, “oil and gas deposits” were discovered on the land, but having surrendered their land, the Beaver Band was not able to share in the profits of the newly discovered petroleum.<sup>12</sup> It was not until 1995, fifty years after the original surrender of the reserve, that the Beaver Band was able to receive restitution. The Supreme Court of Canada finally

found that “the Crown breached its fiduciary obligation by selling the band’s mineral rights and making no effort to correct its error,” and the Beaver Band received an “out-of-court” settlement for \$147 million “as restitution for oil and gas royalties.”<sup>13</sup>

The ironic thing about the government’s willingness to give Indian land to veterans was the fact that most Indian veterans were unable to attain any of this former reserve land. The VLA was supposed to provide up to \$6000 to each veteran so he could purchase land, buildings, and equipment to be used for farming, fishing, or investment.<sup>14</sup> However, the VLA was not to apply to Status Indian veterans. When the new VLA came out, there was no mention at all of Status Indians. Indian veterans and Indian Agents were confused by the situation. To stem concerns, the IAB released a circular stating,

It is a matter of regret that no commitment... can be made to Indian returned men at this time as certain amendments to the Veterans’ Land Act with special reference to Indian... soldier[s] have yet to receive consideration by Parliament.<sup>15</sup>

In April 1945, the government altered the VLA to include Status Indians, but these changes did not help. In fact, Section 35 A of the new VLA stated that an Indian veteran could only receive \$2320 if he settled on his reserve, and specifically stated that this loan could not be used to purchase land.<sup>16</sup> The loan could be used to prepare land for agriculture or forestry, or could be used to purchase equipment, to establish a business, or to conduct fishing, farming, or logging. The IAB hoped that by not allowing Indians to use their veterans’ loans to purchase land, they would either enfranchise or return to their reserves. Indian veterans were forced to struggle for what they felt the government owed them. Indian Agents attempted to help Indian veterans receive land, but many were unable to interpret the VLA. In other cases, the IAB withheld information, and Indian veterans were not told what their rights were, and did not realize that they could possibly receive land. Even many of those who were aware of their rights remained unsuccessful in obtaining land.

Native veteran Sam Sinclair recalled his own attempt to apply for land:

I did apply for a block of land... and I was told... that they couldn't sell it to me or lease it, because it was a flood hazard... but while I was turned down... downstream... there was half a section given to a non-Aboriginal veteran. I often wondered why I was treated different as an Aboriginal veteran.<sup>17</sup>

In some cases, the government allowed Indian veterans to own pieces of land, but only on their own reserves. Native veteran John Tootoosis' frustration was clear: "We lost a lot of Indian boys... in two World Wars, and the ones who came back were just given... land that was already theirs before they left."<sup>18</sup> Native Senator Len Marchand stated in 1995, "I'm very sad about the way [Indian veterans] were treated... how some of the reserve lands were cut off and given to white veterans, how some of the veterans were given lands in their own reserves."<sup>19</sup> The Veterans' Land Act was not the only way in which the Canadian government discriminated against Native veterans after the war.

The distribution of veterans' pensions and benefits following World War II was a difficult issue for Native veterans. As with the Dependents' Allowance and the Veterans' Land Act, the distribution of pensions to Indians was a fiasco, due to incompetence and mismanagement in the IAB. Indian Affairs had faced problems administering veterans' benefits to Status Indian veterans following the First World War, yet the government made no changes. Once again, the administering of veterans' benefits to Status Indians came under the jurisdiction of the IAB, which was ill-equipped for the task.

Upon returning to Canada, all veterans were to receive the following benefits after their discharge: Medical and dental examinations, a clothing allowance of \$100, a rehabilitation grant (one month's military pay and one month's dependents' allowance), and a rail ticket to their place of enlistment.<sup>20</sup> Veterans were supposed to be allowed to apply for the War Service Gratuity. This could be broken into two types: Basic Gratuity, which

was \$7.50 per month of voluntary service in the Western Hemisphere, or \$8.15 per month of military service overseas or in the Aleutians; and Supplementary Gratuity, which was seven days' pay and allowances for every six months spent overseas or in the Aleutians.<sup>21</sup> Veterans could also apply for Re-establishment Credit, which was equal to the Basic Gratuity received by the soldier, and could be used to buy or improve a house, buy furniture and appliances, pay for insurance, buy a business, or buy tools required for a job. Training Provisions could be applied for, and would cover a veteran's tuition fees while attending vocational school or university, as well as providing a monthly living allowance of \$60 a month to single men, and \$80 a month to married men.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, if a veteran had served at a job for three years or more prior to his enlistment, he was supposed to be able to get his old job and position back. Veterans eligible for pension were supposed to be favoured over civilians when it came to securing Civil Service jobs. Awaiting>Returns Benefits allowed a veteran to collect an allowance while he waited for his business to pay off; while Out-of-Work Benefits (like Unemployment Insurance) allowed a veteran to collect an allowance if he was unable to find a job within 18 months of his discharge.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the benefits that were supposedly available for veterans, most Indian veterans were unable to capitalize on these opportunities. Many Indian veterans wanted to begin new lives and find employment in mainstream Canadian society, but they were often hindered by Veteran Affairs and Indian Affairs. For most veterans living on reserves, their only contact with Veteran Affairs, and their only access to veterans' benefits, was through the Indian Agents. Many agents maintained a highly paternalistic attitude, and were unsupportive of Indians' attempts to start businesses and new lives. Indian Agents "frequently advised against... veterans' schemes," and were unable to "shake off their pre-war attitudes that Indians were inept wards, and consistently undervalued Indian

capabilities.”<sup>24</sup> R. A. Hoey wrote that Indian veterans were asking for tractors not because they would improve farming endeavours but because Indians had “taken a fancy to this type of equipment or [had] a desire to keep up with his neighbour.”<sup>25</sup> Ironically, it was Indian agents who were “inept,” as many could not interpret the legal terminology involved in applying for veterans’ benefits. Many Indian Agents were poorly educated, and some were almost illiterate. In 1946, Chief Tom Jones of the Cape Croker Reserve complained, “too many of these agents haven’t got the qualifications they should have... I know of... an Indian agent who has never gone beyond the third grade.”<sup>26</sup> This was a major problem for Indian veterans, as the Indian agents were their only link to Veteran Affairs. Part of Indian Affairs’ ineptitude was its infrastructure, which “was not well adapted to circulate detailed and rapidly changing information to a widely scattered population, partly due to the limitations in communications” at the time.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Indian Affairs found it difficult to communicate with all Indian veterans, especially those on isolated reserves. Most Indian veterans recalled feelings of anger toward Veteran Affairs, having been cheated out of benefits they felt they had earned. Len Marchand explained, “When our veterans came home, the Department of Veterans Affairs turned the treatment of Indian veterans over to the [IAB], and they just botched it up.”<sup>28</sup> Indian veteran Adam Cutham explained his own anger more succinctly: “I really and sincerely believe that we got a real bum deal.”<sup>29</sup>

Another problem for Indian veterans was enfranchisement. The government had always hoped to assimilate all Indians into mainstream Canadian society. The government viewed World War II as an opportunity to enfranchise Indian recruits. Part of the government’s desire to enfranchise the Indians was the government’s inability to sufficiently care for all Indians. It hoped to devolve some responsibility to the provinces, “so that Natives could receive provincial services on the same basis as non-Natives and

thus be considered ‘normal’ citizens.”<sup>30</sup> The government also hoped that the abolition of the Indian Act, and special Indian status, could come closer to fruition. To aid the government, some Indian agents made recruits believe that they could only serve if they gave up their Indian status. Because of such lies and unfounded advice, many “unwary Indian men did enfranchise.”<sup>31</sup> Although it was not law, many Canadians, not just Indians, believed that enfranchisement was part of joining the military. An article in the *Montreal Gazette* illustrates the confusion surrounding this issue:

Some changes in the status of an Indian, official or arbitrary, result from his army service. After the last war Indians who served in the forces received... the right to vote. It is believed the same will be the case after this war, and it seems that many more will be enfranchised than were at the last.<sup>32</sup>

The article suggests that there was confusion regarding whether or not enfranchisement of Indian soldiers was voluntary or mandatory. Clearly, the Canadian government was not open regarding this fact, as one can infer from the words “official or arbitrary.” Whatever the case, many Indians voluntarily gave up their status at the behest of their Indian Agents, as they were willing to do whatever they believed was necessary to enlist.

Veterans who had enfranchised found that they were more marginalized than had they retained their status. Native veteran Arthur Eggros recalled the problems that many enfranchised veterans faced. Eggros remembered Native veterans being “removed from their on-reserve homes by RCMP because they were no longer Status Indians,” and being forced to take “farm labour jobs to pay for their new in-town residences.”<sup>33</sup> Gary R. George wrote that his father and uncle faced similar discrimination when they returned home after the war. He wrote that because they had enfranchised in order to serve in the military, they “were denied a reserve to live on and were denied housing... they lost rights to the land they fought for... Aboriginal war veterans were left-out from both non-natives

veteran's benefits and basic [IAB] benefits. Whose freedom did they fight for?"<sup>34</sup> Indian veteran Wilfred Brass was forced to enfranchise for a different reason. Brass had purchased a home off of his reserve and was then told by the RCMP that Status Indians could not own property. Brass angrily asked, "You mean to tell me that fighting for the war for this country that I can't have no rights to own property?"<sup>35</sup> Denied the right to own property, Brass gave up his status to keep the property he had purchased. He remembered being given rights as a first class Canadian, as he could vote and own property, but the government took away his Indian Status and the benefits it entailed.<sup>36</sup> The government forced Indian veterans to choose whether they would remain Status Indians or become enfranchised Canadians. The government would not allow them to be both.

Having faced little discrimination in the military, and having formed friendships with white people in the services, Native veterans expected to be treated equally upon their return to Canada. However, many Native veterans realized that Canadian society was still quite discriminatory. In 1947, Guy Williams, spokesman for the unaffiliated Indians of BC, explained the frustration of returning Native veterans:

Many of the [Indian] boys volunteered in this past war as in the first world war. When they came back... they did not enjoy what other veterans enjoy. Boys whom I personally know after they have been accepted on equal footing in the fighting forces... and accepted on equal grounds in other countries, when they come back to Canada are set back into that segregated group... they are pushed out of the beer parlours... He has fought on equal grounds. He has faced the same dangers. If there are any special grants... which veterans are going to enjoy in this country the Indian veteran must enjoy them in equal amount.<sup>37</sup>

As Native veteran Clarence Silver recalled, "When I served overseas I was Canadian, when I came home, I was just an Indian."<sup>38</sup> Another Native veteran, Al Thomas, remembered the discrimination, even segregation, he experienced upon his return to Canada: "[white people] wouldn't allow us to go curling, they wouldn't allow us to go golfing. When you

went to the show, the Indians had to sit on one side” of the theatre.<sup>39</sup> E.A. “Smokey” Smith recalled the treatment that his Native friend Dick Webster faced back in Canada:

[Webster] served with me in the Seaforth Highlanders. In England he was part of our group socially. Sadly, when he returned to Canada, he was by Canadian law... unable to join us in a cocktail lounge or beer parlour. After serving six years in the Canadian army, he was... again relegated to the status of what could be termed a second class citizen.<sup>40</sup>

This discrimination led to social problems among many Native veterans. Tommy Prince was unable to deal with the discrimination he faced back home in Canada. Prince became spokesman for the Indian Association of Manitoba, and spoke before the Special Joint Committee in 1947. However, “Prince became increasingly frustrated with his inability to bring about change in the immediate post-war years,” spiraling into alcoholism and poverty.<sup>41</sup> He eventually died a broken and forgotten man. Tommy Prince was not the only Native veteran to face such tragedy. While white veterans were forced to come to grips with the horrors they witnessed in combat, Native veterans had this to deal with, as well as having to readjust to the discrimination present in post-war Canadian society.

Native veteran Adam Cutham explained:

I think that we should have been treated equal. If I'm sent out... to infiltrate enemy lines with ten other people and they're white, when I come back to this country I expect to be treated the same way, but I was treated different. In fact, we were all treated differently, as Treaty Indians. They never gave you a proper rehabilitation program. Therefore... you're lost. You end up with nothing.<sup>42</sup>

Not receiving rehabilitation and becoming “lost” was common among Native veterans. While white veterans could seek counseling, Native veterans were forced to deal with combat memories almost entirely on their own. For many, drugs and alcohol became their only escape from the terrible memories of combat and the problems in their lives. Metis veteran Euclide Boyer remembered, “I used to drink a lot to wash out all the sorrows and memories. Every soldier is your buddy in the army, and it's very hard when you see your

buddies dying on both sides of you.”<sup>43</sup> Native veteran Harry Lavalley said he developed an inferiority complex. I couldn't look anybody in the eye. If I did look up, I'd just as soon hit you. That was the rage in me at the time. The only way I could forget that was to get myself stoned, really drunk. As a result of war, a lot of former guys that were in the war got into [drugs and alcohol].<sup>44</sup>

Drunkenness and drug abuse was prevalent among Native veterans, as well as violence and criminality. Being constantly angry, and being provoked by much of Canadian society, some Native veterans saw criminal activity as the only way to support their addictions. For others, suicide became the final option for escaping the harsh realities of their lives.

While some Native veterans were unable to stop their descent into tragedy, many others channeled their discontent into productive projects. These men had served with distinction in the Canadian military, and had experienced equality and opportunities like never before. They were now equipped with new discipline and leadership abilities. When they returned home and discovered the realities of Canadian society, as well as how their people had been neglected by the same government they had been fighting for, many decided to use what they had learned in the military to improve the lives of Native people. Ironically, the white man's military had equipped Indians with the skills to fight against white society. Directly following the war, Native veterans fought to secure rights and equality for their people; recognition could wait. Native veteran George Munroe explained, “I don't have to be called a hero everyday, but I want equal terms as anybody else.”<sup>45</sup> Tommy Prince's daughter explained the rage that Native veterans felt toward the Canadian government: “The irony of Aboriginal soldiers fighting a war against the oppression of fascism, giving their lives for that, and coming home to face oppressive fascism.”<sup>46</sup> Obviously, Canada was not fascist, but to Native veterans, the oppression they faced in Canada after the war must have seemed fascist in nature. Adam Cutham explained feeling

betrayed and oppressed, but also the desire of Native veterans to change things:

To go back to the reserve and see what exists there, then you begin to question. I still feel very let down that going through the hell that I went through, as an individual, and I think that the people that were on the front lines most, Indian and non-Indian, went through hell to accomplish something for the future of your children and your grand-children and yourself, yet to me it hasn't changed. Even though we were under a thumb at the time... we're still under the thumb of the white man. Yet you feel that there is a future somewhere in our society.<sup>47</sup>

Indeed, there would be a future for Native people, thanks to the efforts of Native war veterans, and other activists, who would band together to form organizations and push for rights and equality for aboriginal people in Canada.

One organization that was established as a result of World War II was the Indian Association of Alberta (IAA), officially formed in 1939. The IAA was formed by Malcolm Norris, Metis; and Johnny Callihoo, of Cree and Iroquois descent.<sup>48</sup> Forerunners to the IAA included L'Association des Metis d'Alberta et des Territoires du Nord Ouest and the League of Indians of Alberta, but these organizations were ineffective and unorganized. The IAA had originally concentrated on Treaty rights, but after World War II, their focus “moved away from Treaty rights in favour of seeking social and economic reform for Canadian Indian communities.”<sup>49</sup> This trend of focusing on social necessities and civil rights, such as equality before the law, decent healthcare, and decent education, instead of aboriginal or treaty rights, was common among the Native organizations that either formed or grew stronger and more organized after World War II. As Laurie Drees argued, “all across the Canadian West after WWII Indian leaders... were actively engaged with political unions. Their aim: to make the voices of their communities heard... and [to] forge some sort of collective movement.”<sup>50</sup>

In Drees' thesis about the history of the IAA, she argued that World War II did not play much of a role in the political organization of Native people. She argued that

it is commonly held that overseas experiences of Indian War veterans during World War II contributed to Canadian Indian politicization by directly causing Indian veterans to want to assert their citizenship rights upon their return home from their tours of duty. For Indian peoples in Alberta, local issues and Treaty rights, not liberal-democratic citizenship rights, were of paramount concern. In addition, the issues that concerned the IAA membership predated World War II.<sup>51</sup>

The issues predated the war, but it was Indian veterans' experiences that made them want to strive, and gave them the abilities to strive, for or against said issues. Drees argued,

the World Wars played a minor role in bringing Alberta Indian people together... daily experiences and challenges were enough to encourage their leaders to seek out opportunities and organizations to improve their community life. It did not take a... cataclysmic event such as a World War to prod Indian peoples to political awareness. It is not clear that Indian war veterans formed an identifiable, primary driving force behind any form of political activity in Alberta.<sup>52</sup>

Drees' disproved her own arguments. She stated that Native World War I veterans, like Frederick Ogilvie Loft, founder of the League of Indians of Canada, and Mike Mountain Horse, "organizer in defence of the promises of Treaty 7," were indeed leaders of the Indian political movement, and that most early Native organizations did not form until after World War I.<sup>53</sup> She also explained that the circumstances created by World War II were responsible for Natives' inability to become political until after the war. She stated that "gasoline rationing, and long distances between reserves," as well as an absence of men on reserves and the fact that Native women "did not openly engage in political activity" were partly responsible for Natives' political inaction.<sup>54</sup> She mentioned the fact that the IAA was not taken seriously during World War II because it pushed for the exemption of Indians from conscription.<sup>55</sup> The early embodiment of the IAA caused unwanted problems during a time of national crisis: World War II. She also stated that before World War II, "neither the League [of Indians] nor the other smaller organizations provided enough support to those who were committed to asserting Indian Treaty rights and improving the social and economic conditions of reserve communities."<sup>56</sup> In 1945, Malcolm Norris wrote,

In the past, Treaty Indians of Alberta and Saskatchewan would gather periodically for the purpose of discussing... mutual problems and to seek for ways and means of adjustment of their... grievances. Throughout these years, nothing tangible was accomplished: their meetings became more Pow-Wows, primarily because of their lack of organization and discipline.<sup>57</sup>

Indeed, nothing was accomplished prior to and during the war because Native leaders simply did not have the skills to take on such a task. Norris realized that Indian leaders required knowledge of Euro-Canadian discipline and leadership to achieve enough political organization to fight against a bureaucratic entity like the Canadian government. This is evident from the fact that new organizations arose, and older organizations like the IAA became efficient and successful, following the war. This is also evident from the fact that many Native organizations were led by World War II veterans, like Norris himself.

Native organizations were founded across Canada following World War II. One of the most significant of these organizations was the North American Indian Brotherhood, which was formed in June 1944.<sup>58</sup> At the Special Joint Committee hearings, it would be the North American Indian Brotherhood, more than any other organization, that would present the Indian's point of view to the Committee. The Union of Saskatchewan Indians was created in February, 1945 when three smaller Saskatchewan Indian organizations "amalgamated."<sup>59</sup> The Union of Ontario Indians was formed in 1949 "to replace the Grand General Indian Council. Its objects were openly political and included the election of Indians to Parliament and the full respect of treaty rights."<sup>60</sup> The Indian Association of Manitoba was formed in 1946, and presented a brief to the Special Joint Committee in 1947 stating that "treaties had been violated... the Indian Act should be abolished and tax exemptions should remain for First Nations people."<sup>61</sup> The Native Brotherhood of BC began distributing a monthly newspaper called *The Native Voice* in late 1946, which concentrated on Native issues, and was one of the first fully Native publications in Western

Canada.<sup>62</sup> According to Shannon Avison and Michael Meadows, “The Native Brotherhood of British Columbia produced 7,000 copies of the first edition and sent them to the B.C. tribes and to Indian and non-Indian organizations across Canada.”<sup>63</sup> Smaller organizations were also formed. The War Veterans’ Association of Wikwemikong, based on Manitoulin Island, discussed the needs of their people, and sent a brief to the Special Joint Committee in 1947.<sup>64</sup> Instead of their chief or councilors, the Wikwemikong decided that their war veterans were best suited to speak for them at the Special Joint Committee, most likely because of the education these veterans had received in the military.

Native veterans of the Second World War became important political leaders not only within the Native community, but also Canadian society. Malcolm Norris served in the military during World War II, and along with Metis veteran James Brady, founded the Metis Association of Canada. Norris' son, Willy, was an RCAF pilot during the war, and became involved with the Geological Survey of Canada.<sup>65</sup> Omer Peters, an RCAF pilot during the World War II, became the chief of his band, helped organize the Union of Ontario Indians, and served as vice-president of the National Indian Brotherhood. Walter Deiter, a veteran of World War II, served as the leader of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, leader of the National Indian Brotherhood, and president of the National Indian Veterans Association, and became a member of the Order of Canada. Native veteran Roger Teillet was an RCAF pilot during the Second World War, and became a “prominent politician... in Canada, serving in the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, and as the Federal Minister of Veterans Affairs from 1963 to 1968.”<sup>66</sup> At the Special Joint Committee hearings, a number of Native spokesmen were veterans of World War II. Brigadier O. M. Martin, Mohawk, spoke to the Committee in 1946.<sup>67</sup> Tommy Prince was called before the Committee in 1947.<sup>68</sup> Chief Joe Dreaver of the Mistowasis reserve in Saskatchewan, a

veteran of both World Wars, was called before the committee in 1947.<sup>69</sup>

In the early post-war period, it was not only Native organizations and veterans that began pushing for social improvements for Canada's Native people. Native organizations were able to enlist non-Native supporters. Much of this non-Native support following World War II was due in large part to Natives' involvement in the war. J. R. Miller wrote:

in the midst of a war against institutionalized racism and barbarity, it was impossible not to notice that the bases of Canadian Indian policy lay in assumptions about the... inferiority of particular racial groupings. The horrors of war... discomfited Canadians when, on rare occasion, they looked at the way in which they treated the Aboriginal peoples of their country.<sup>70</sup>

A number of historians cite World War II as the turning point for changing attitudes toward issues of race, as the Second World War played an important role in making racism unacceptable. Jean R. Burner and Howard Palmer stated that World War II, “directed against a highly racist German regime, and post-war concern with human rights led to a new awareness of racism and ethnic discrimination in Canadian... society.”<sup>71</sup> John Boyko agreed: “Since the Second World War, systematic racism has been increasingly under attack. Ideas essential to systematic racism, such as ethnic allegiance and social Darwinism... have fallen into disfavour.”<sup>72</sup> Charles Hirschman wrote that “it took epochal events, such as the specter of Nazi Germany... to weaken the grip of racism as a popular and scientific theory.”<sup>73</sup> He argued that it was the “moral revulsion” with regards to the Holocaust that “unnerved many people with ‘polite’ racial, religious, and ethnic prejudices” and forced Americans, and others, to begin viewing racism negatively.<sup>74</sup>

Canadians had seen, either first-hand or in newsreels, the atrocities that institutionalized racism could lead to. While long established Eurocentric attitudes remained present in Canadian society, Canadians from all walks of life began to rethink ideas of race and ethnicity. For Natives this was a welcome change, as it meant that they

would not fight for civil rights alone, and would receive assistance from various sectors of the Canadian and international populace. Canadian veterans who had served with Native soldiers during the Second World War voiced their opinions regarding the merits of Native people. In 1947, the veterans of Branch 72 of the Canadian Legion sent a brief to the Special Joint Committee. They suggested that because Indians paid taxes off-reserve, were subject to Canadian law, and had “volunteered and served on an equal basis with other Canadians” in two World Wars, the Canadian government owed Indians better education, better health care, more economic freedom, “a suitable system for Indian representation in... Parliament,” and perhaps most telling, “a policy that [would] lead to the transition of power from the Indian Agent to democratic rule by the tribe.”<sup>75</sup> In another Legion brief, from Dominion Command in Ottawa, veterans “request[ed] that the Indian Act be amended to allow Indians full citizenship rights without infringement of... treaty rights.”<sup>76</sup> Nowhere in these Legion briefs is there mention of the assimilation of Native people. The second brief demonstrates that Canadian war veterans did not favour assimilation, but preservation of Indians’ status. This is likely a reflection of the understanding that non-Native veterans had of Canadian Indians, having served with them overseas in two World Wars.

War veterans were not the only non-Natives concerned about the future of Canada’s Native people. Religious leaders, including Catholic and Protestant clergymen, supported Native political organization, and according to Drees, missionaries helped BC Indians become politically active.<sup>77</sup> Humanitarian organizations sought to aid Native people in their fight against the government, including groups like the Friends of the Indians Society. In January 1947, the Canadian Welfare Council and the Canadian Association of Social Workers presented a brief to the Special Joint Committee. The organizations’ spokespeople suggested that education and health services on par with those for other Canadians, and

“the full assimilation of Indians into Canadian life,” were necessary for the betterment of the Indians of Canada.<sup>78</sup> The suggestion that full assimilation would help the Indians demonstrates the fact that most non-Natives did not understand what the Indians wanted, and simply suggested what they surmised would be best for Natives. While the ignorance as to the wishes of Indians was problematic, it is difficult to question the motives behind these suggestions, misguided as they were: they wanted to help the Indians.

Many individuals also supported Native political activity. Anne Downe, president of the Canadian Authors' Association, sent a short brief to the Committee in October, 1946, suggesting increased civil rights for Native women in Canada.<sup>79</sup> Social activist Alice Ravenhill, then president of the BC Indian Art and Welfare Society, sent a brief to the Committee, suggesting that education was the key to Native success, as well as awareness for white people as to the problems facing Natives. Ravenhill suggested that “a more interested and understanding attitude towards our Indian people among the Canadian population” was necessary; and that “prejudices must be overcome... by fuller information dealing with Indian aspirations and legitimate claims for admission to the... privileges enjoyed” by other Canadians.<sup>80</sup> Two Members of Parliament that spoke for reforms to the Indian Act and improved rights for Canada's Native people were Conservative MP Douglas Harkness, and CCF MP G. H. Castleden. Castleden called for “Indian Affairs reforms... that the basic rights of citizenship should not be denied Canada's Indian citizens,” as well as arguing that Native people should be allowed to govern themselves, thus ensuring “basic standards of living and education.”<sup>81</sup> The Canadian media also supported Native people. An article from the *St. John Telegraph Journal* stated that “the war effort made by these original Canadians should have earned them a right to a hearing.”<sup>82</sup> Native support and sacrifice for Canada throughout World War II is stressed by the journalist. The hearing

being referred to was a hearing to consider amending the Indian Act, which many viewed as archaic and not representative of the needs of the Native population.

Many Natives were happy to recruit white people to their cause. For Malcolm Norris, his own experiences during World War II had shaped his opinions of white people. He believed that in order to fight the Canadian government, the IAA required outside aid. Having fought beside white people, and having lost his son Russel, in the war, he believed that co-operation between whites and Natives was necessary. Norris stated,

Fascism in Europe began with the segregating of small groups and the appeal to the local spirit... no group can live for itself and by itself without being pushed to the wall and left defenceless. The need for co-operation against the growth of Fascist tendencies in Canada is very urgent. This can only be achieved by meeting other groups and merging our objectives with this larger, saner, world movement.<sup>83</sup>

Native organizations readily accepted non-Native support. Norris and the IAA took this to an extreme when they hired John Laurie, a white man, as their secretary. Laurie was influential within the IAA, as well as within Alberta as a whole. It was through Laurie that many non-Native supporters became aware of the plight of Alberta's Natives. Laurie was so beloved by Indians that when he died in 1959, Indians across Alberta mourned him and two funeral services were carried out in his honour – one in Calgary, and one at the Stoney Indian Reserve at Morley. Indian women wept at his graveside when he was buried “overlooking the Bow River, near his adopted Stoney father Enos Hunter.”<sup>84</sup>

Letters and petitions to help Canadian Indians, from Native organizations, and non-Native supporters, continued to arrive in Ottawa. Religious organizations called for a committee to investigate the Indian Act, and to “remedy the deplorable state of Canada's First Nations.”<sup>85</sup> The Alberta Teachers Association petitioned Prime Minister Mackenzie King in 1946, calling for an investigation of the Indian Act, and also “recommended that the Commission include enough Native counsel to ensure an Aboriginal point of view.”<sup>86</sup>

For Native people, support from various sectors of Canadian society likely made the difference in bringing about change, though non-Native support was also problematic. Mostly, Canadian Indians agreed on what they wanted: maintenance of their unique status and the aboriginal rights that went with that status, including land rights, ceremonial freedom, hunting and fishing rights, and exemption from certain taxation and military conscription; and the civil rights and privileges enjoyed by other Canadians, such as the right to an education and decent health care, equality in society and before the law, and the right to control their own finances and properties. Non-Native supporters misinterpreted Indians' needs. Most believed that the best way to help aboriginal people was to assimilate them, so that their unique status would cease to exist, and they would be eligible for all the rights and privileges shared by regular Canadian citizens.

By April 1946, the Canadian government decided to deal with the problems faced by Canadian Indians. The government did not want negative press, especially thinly veiled comparisons between Canada and Nazi Germany, which Canada had played an important role in defeating. How could Canadians feel good about their country when a large portion of the populace was neglected? The government promised to spend money on the welfare of the Indians, but it first had to study the situation so that it could spend money in the most effective manner. This decision, along with pressure from activists, culminated in the appointment of a Special Joint Committee in May 1946 that promised to investigate the Indian Act and suggest necessary changes. *The Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons Appointed to Continue and Complete Examination and Consideration of the Indian Act*, referred to throughout as “the Committee” or “the Special Joint Committee,” held hearings from summer 1946 until 1948.

The Committee believed its purpose was to review the Indian Act and suggest

changes that would advance the government's desire to assimilate the Indians. G. H.

Castleden laid out the mandate of the Committee, stating that it was responsible for

deliberating the matter of the revision of the Indian Act and the welfare of our Indians who heretofore have been considered as wards of the government and are... at the mercy of those who direct their affairs. As a preamble I should like to say that... the amendment of the Act will establish for years to come the type of control which will determine the standards of life training – perhaps the very existence – of these subordinated human beings to whom democracy is denied in Canada; and whereas without democracy there can be no economic or social well-being and no pride or self-respect.<sup>87</sup>

Castleden referred to the “type of control” that the revised Indian Act would establish, which supports the argument that while the Committee wanted to help the Indians, it still felt that the IAB should control the Indians. Castleden recognized that the Native people were “subordinated human beings,” stating that only by conforming to Euro-Canadian standards, such as democracy, Indians would have a chance to rise above their subordinate position. This is particularly interesting, as several bands had no desire to have their members vote in federal elections. Few could question Castleden's humanitarian spirit. However, Castleden's speech reflected the Committee members' ignorance of Indian Affairs and the condition of Indians in Canada. They wanted to help, but they did not know how to do so; nor were they aware of what Native people actually wanted.

As upper class, or upper-middle class, white men, most of the Committee members were unfamiliar with Native people or their issues. According to Drees, the Committee was ignorant of almost all things to do with Natives, including “Treaty signings, or even the history of the Native peoples themselves.”<sup>88</sup> This lack of knowledge wasted valuable time that could have been used to hear testimony and make decisions, instead of trying to extract information that was of no consequence to the Committee. For example:

The Chairman: Chief Crow Eagle, could you give us the derivation or etymology [sic] of your tribal name, the Peigan tribe?

The Witness: May I explain that there is a tribe of Blackfeet. Blood and Peigan are clan names and Blackfeet is the tribal name. Blood and Peigan merely designate the clan, the same as MacDonalDs, MacKenzies, MacNicolS and so on.

Mr. MacNicol: What is the significance of the word "Blood"?

The Witness: That, I am not prepared to answer.<sup>89</sup>

This is just a snippet of one exchange from the transcripts of the Committee, and was one of the shorter tangents that the members of the Committee got lost in. When reading the transcript, one can sense the frustration of Chief Crow Eagle. Obviously, he would rather have discussed the needs of his people, and not inconsequential matters.

The first people to speak before the Committee were high ranking Indian Affairs officials. They were supportive of Native peoples' need for better education and economic opportunities, calling Indians the "poorest people in Canada," a fact that the Committee was apparently unaware of.<sup>90</sup> IAB officials were critical of the Indian Act, stating that it was obsolete and did not reflect the realities of Native communities. They also complained that Indian Affairs did not have enough personnel and did not receive enough funding to properly deal with the Indians' growing problems. Leonard Brown, Junior Departmental Solicitor for the IAB spoke about Native wills and estates, stating, "I wish to impress upon [the Committee] that under the circumstances prevailing we did the best that we could... it meant overtime work in many cases. It is our opinion today that the Indian Act was never intended to limit the jurisdiction of the Minister and the department to this extent."<sup>91</sup>

Although Committee co-chair D. F. Brown stated that the "ultimate aim" of the Committee was to secure for Indians "rights and obligations equal to those of all other Canadians," claiming to believe that Indians and whites were "all Canadians," the nature of the Committee was extremely paternalistic.<sup>92</sup> When Castleden asked that Native people be allowed to sit on the Committee, most of the members rejected his suggestion:

Mr. Castleden: My motion was that we should invite... Indians who are

actually living on reserves to... be present at all our deliberations and give evidence, then I think we could get a better picture of what should be done.

Mr. Reid: I am going to vote against the resolution... because I think it is useless to have Indians sitting around here. I am for active representation coming to this committee later on.

Mr. Harkness: I do not think there is any practical means of getting... representatives... who would properly represent all the Indians of Canada. There would be all sorts of troubles, jealousies, and difficulties. It would probably cause more harm than good to try to get these people to come here. They would... be wasting their time.<sup>93</sup>

Besides O. M. Martin and Andrew Paull, President of the North American Indian

Brotherhood, the Committee members would not invite Natives to speak to them until

1947. For many members, inviting Native leaders to speak to them was an obligation not a

desire. The Committee sent a circular to bands that were unable to send representatives to

the hearings. While this seems like forward thinking, it was really proof that the

Committee was not very interested in what Indians had to say. The circular did not include

specific questions, and used confusing legal language. The Indians went to Indian agents

or missionaries to help them read the circular, but they also had difficulty deciphering the

legal jargon. Some Native responses to the circular were then dismissed by the Committee

members as "questionable because they were most likely written by missionaries, lawyers,

and others."<sup>94</sup> Native leaders would have written to the Committee themselves, but many

had poor literacy skills, and had no choice but to have others write their responses for them.

Even so, a large number of Native responses to the circular were considered by the

Committee and were included as Appendices to the meeting transcripts.

Despite being held back initially, Native people would get a chance to speak to the

Committee. Once Native leaders were allowed to speak, the members were able to get a

clearer picture of the state of Indians in Canada. While the Committee treated Native

representatives paternalistically, it was revolutionary in that, as Carisse argued, it was the

“first systematic effort by government officials to consult with Native peoples.”<sup>95</sup> For the first time since the treaty signings decades earlier, the government at least asked for Natives’ opinions regarding Indian Affairs legislation. Most Indian bands called for “stricter adherence to treaty provisions, for better health and welfare conditions, and sought more control over their own affairs,” while being opposed to “compulsory enfranchisement and taxation.”<sup>96</sup> Better education for their children, and vocational training for adults, were also common desires of Natives who spoke before, or sent briefs to, the Committee. One of the problems with seeing representatives from diverse Indian bands was that it was impossible to create an Indian policy that would suit all bands. Besides the few things that all bands agreed upon, each band had a unique take on each issue. One of the issues that caused the most tension was the issue of enfranchisement. Some bands, like the Islington Lake and Serpent River Bands, wanted the right to vote, so long as it did not affect their Indian status. Other bands, like the Whitefish River and Big Trout Lake Bands, had no desire to vote, wishing to remain “wards of the government,” and preferring to “keep their current treaty rights.”<sup>97</sup>

Many Native leaders criticized the Indian Act, and the Canadian government's attitude toward Natives. A number of chiefs and councilors from various bands in the Prince George-Vanderhoof region met in Vanderhoof to draft a brief for the Committee. They wrote that they wanted to see “that all sections of the Indian Act pertaining to intoxicants be abolished,” so that Indians would be treated exactly as other Canadians in this regard, and “that the Indians be granted representation in the House of Commons, and the right to elect... members.”<sup>98</sup> Other BC Indians took the opposite stance. Chief James Moody, of the Katsey Band, wrote, “We are opposed to enfranchisement for Indians. We are not fit for it. It took learned men... to form the Indian Act. We Indians are not learned

enough to revise it.”<sup>99</sup> He was more concerned with welfare for elderly Indians, and better health and education for children. Many Native leaders, including Chief Yellowfly, spokesman for the Unaffiliated Indians of Alberta, and Reginald Hill, of the Six Nations, spoke harshly of the Indian Act. Chief Yellowfly stated that assimilation

cannot be accomplished by regulation alone, but must be done in a sympathetic, understanding, and qualified manner, treating the Indian as fellow Canadians with a problem, not merely as... savages who must be subjugated and regimented... regimentation and economic frustration tend to create an attitude of dependency on the part of the Indians; this results in feelings of inferiority and inadequacy.<sup>100</sup>

Hill stated that a revised Indian Act should “provide citizenship without loss of lands or rights,” arguing that it was wrong for the government to tax Indians and expect them to comply with conscription laws, while not extending citizenship rights, old-age pensions, or proper healthcare and education to Indians.<sup>101</sup> Well-known Canadian anthropologist Diamond Jenness, Chief of the Inter-Services Topographical Section, Department of National Defence, denounced the entirety of the Indian Act and the IAB, likening Canadian reserves to the concentration camps employed by Nazi Germany. Jenness stated,

What has taken place in Europe is exactly what has happened to our Indians... instead of educating and training them for citizenship and a free life that was just around the corner, we shut them up indefinitely where they would be out of the way of the white man. We have kept them from starving, it is true, but we have made them pariahs and outcasts. In consequence, they have developed the warped mentality of world outcasts just like the occupants of the displaced persons camps in central Europe.<sup>102</sup>

Jenness then suggested that the Indian Act be abolished over twenty-five years, and the Indians be enfranchised and merged gently into Canadian society “on an equal footing.”<sup>103</sup> Full assimilation appeared to Jenness to be the best solution for helping Native people, but assimilation was clearly not what most Indians wanted.

When the Committee had completed its hearings in 1948, it convened to weigh its evidence and make suggestions. The first suggestion of the Committee was that, due to

“many anachronisms, anomalies, contradictions and divergencies... in the Act... all sections of the Act be either repealed or amended.”<sup>104</sup> The Committee then suggested that a “Claims Commission” be set up to deal with “claims and grievances” in a “just and equitable manner.”<sup>105</sup> Next, the Committee suggested that more effort be made in determining who was entitled to band funds and privileges by creating stricter rules for band membership. The Committee then suggested that Indians not have to pay taxes while living on reserves, but did have to pay income tax on money earned off-reserve. The Committee was ambiguous about enfranchisement, stating that the Indian Act should “clarify the... regulations regarding enfranchisement,” but no suggestions on how to do this were made.<sup>106</sup> As for giving Indians the vote, the Committee wanted to see federal “voting privileges... granted to Indians on the same status as electors in urban centres,” and wanted to see “early implementation of the recommendation.”<sup>107</sup> The Committee realized that some Indians did not want to vote, because they feared losing their rights as Status Indians if given that right. Thus, the Committee suggested the Canadian government grant voting rights to Indians without loss of status. Next, the Committee suggested tougher laws against trespassing on reserves for “improper purposes.”<sup>108</sup> The Committee then argued that Indian children should attend school with white children, in order that they receive the same education, and preparation to become Canadian citizens. The Committee also recommended that the government grant “a pension to aged, blind, or infirm Indians.”<sup>109</sup> The Committee wanted to see better organization, and more involvement of Native people, within the IAB itself. The members called for the head of Indian Affairs to be named Deputy Minister, and that he would control all matters with the aid of two Assistant Commissioners “of whom one should be... of Indian descent.”<sup>110</sup> The Committee believed that a special committee, like itself, should convene at least every twenty years to

investigate the Indian Act and the IAB, and to ensure that the Indian Act was being adhered to. Finally, the Committee argued that there were “certain aspects of Indian Affairs administration which... require co-operation between Dominion and Provincial officials.”<sup>111</sup> These issues included education, health and social services, fur-trapping, fish and game laws, liquor legislation, and Native marriages according to “tribal custom and ritual.”<sup>112</sup>

The Committee believed that by devolving power away from the federal government to the provinces, “the barriers provided by reserves and Native special status... would be further broken down and integration made all the easier;” and the federal government would save money, by “phasing out the separate existing system of administering Indian Affairs and integrating Aboriginal people into existing provincial services.”<sup>113</sup> This was problematic, as neither the provinces nor the federal government claimed that they had the resources available to properly institute this new system. The federal government did not want to relinquish control, and the provinces did not want more expenses and responsibilities. The provinces were somewhat satisfied, as they would gain more control over Indian land and the resources on that land. Native leaders were not satisfied. While some viewed the Committee as a “valuable learning experience,” others feared that giving the provinces more control over Indian Affairs would “jeopardize [or] nullify their Aboriginal, treaty, and land resource rights.”<sup>114</sup> These fears were not without merit. As the treaties had been signed with the crown, it appeared that the provinces would not legally have to abide by all of the regulations set out in the federal Indian treaties.

Once the suggestions had been made, Indian Affairs had to re-write the Indian Act. Indian Affairs hoped to have a draft drawn up by the end of 1948, but this was impossible when Prime Minister Mackenzie King was replaced by St. Laurent.<sup>115</sup> Further confusion occurred when the IAB was placed under the Department of Citizenship and Immigration

in 1950. Placing Indian Affairs under the Department of Citizenship made sense, as the aim of the Canadian government was to eventually make Natives full citizens, but the initial change diverted Indian Affairs' attention away from the new Indian Act for a time. From the release of the Committee's suggestions in 1948 to the creation of the new Indian Act in 1951, Native leaders, religious groups, and other interest groups continued to send suggestions to the federal government regarding the fate of the IAB and the Indian Act. In June 1950, *Bill 267, the new Indian Act*, was introduced. *Bill 267* was criticized by Native leaders and Diefenbaker's Conservatives as a continuation of the old assimilation policy, and contrary to the Committee's suggestions.<sup>116</sup> *Bill 267* failed and another year would pass. Finally, in June 1951, *Bill 79, An Act Respecting Indians*, was passed. The new Indian Act took some power away from Indian Affairs, as Indian Affairs could no longer interfere in band matters without the approval of band councils, meaning more self-determination for Natives. The new Indian Act lifted the ban on "traditional dances and ceremonies," such as the potlatch and Sun Dance, allowing Indians more spiritual freedom; and it allowed Indians to pursue "treaty and land claims in court."<sup>117</sup> The new Act provided pensions for elderly Indians, and assistance for handicapped Indians, but it was not entirely beneficial. Traditional aims of assimilation remained intact, though assimilation could no longer be forced, as had been done in the past. A new section of the Indian Act, Section 87, shifted more control of Indian Affairs to the provinces, and "subjected Natives to all provincially enacted laws... except when such laws conflicted with the Indian Act, infringed on rights protected by treaties, or discriminated against Natives."<sup>118</sup>

With new legislation in place, the government was ready to address the problems facing Canadian Indians. In six years since the end of World War II, the government had only succeeded in changing the laws surrounding Indian Affairs. Little had been done to

allay the problems, but it was a start. Native people were soon allowed to vote in provincial, and eventually federal, elections. British Columbia was the first province to allow Native people to vote, in 1949. At this time, Nisga'a leader Frank Calder, CCF, became the first Native person to sit in any legislative assembly in Canada. All non-Status Indians were allowed to vote federally in 1950, as well as all Inuit, as they were not considered "Indians" in the first place. The fact that Native activists had to appeal to the United Nations in 1960 in order to receive federal franchise in Canada is indicative of just how gradually Canadians' attitudes toward Status Indians were changing. However, the fact that Canadian Indians were able to go to the UN to appeal for the right to vote indicates the support that Native people had from various circles, not only within Canada, but also internationally. This shift in attitude toward Native peoples in Canada is also evident in John Diefenbaker's desire to give Native people federal franchise when he became Prime Minister in 1960, something that has been described as a "long-held personal goal" of his.<sup>119</sup> The Ministers of Indian Affairs in the late 1940s and 50s, "emphasized the reconstruction of Indian communities... the creation of community centres on reserves to facilitate local and supervised 'wholesome' recreation... vocational training programmes were recognized as key," and by 1957, an Indian Labour Placement Program was created, to help Indians find work.<sup>120</sup> While the IAB remained committed to assimilating Indians, and they continued to deal with Natives paternalistically, they were willing to consult Indian people when making decisions. Public opinion, especially the opinions of Natives themselves, became increasingly important in making decisions that would affect Native people.

While historians recognize that changes were made to the Indian Act after World War II, few have recognized that changes to the Indian Act in 1951 were direct results of

Native participation in the war. The atrocities committed by the Nazis had shown how deadly institutionalized racism could become, and many Canadians recognized racism in their own society, as explained by historians John Boyko, Charles Hirschman, Jean R. Burner, and Howard Palmer. Native people had made important contributions in two World Wars, sacrificing their resources and risking their lives for Canada. Natives and non-Natives had also cooperated to defeat the Axis. Grateful Canadians believed that Indians deserved the same rights as other Canadians, and supported Indians in their push for civil rights, as is reflected in the various news articles produced during and after the war, as well as the various briefs sent to the Special Joint Committee by interested individuals or organizations between 1946 and 1948. World War II had given Native veterans the leadership, organizational skills, discipline, and education they required to appeal to the Canadian government on their own behalf. Many of the Native representatives who spoke before the Committee were veterans of World War II. Changes made to the Indian Act in 1951 were direct results of Native involvement in the Second World War. Were it not for Native involvement in the war, it is likely that changes to the Indian Act would not have happened as early on, if at all.

While Canada has recognized Native soldiers' efforts during World War II, the government has not been as forthcoming with veterans' benefits for Natives. Despite having erected monuments to Native and Metis soldiers of the World Wars and the Korean War, and having produced documentaries promoting knowledge about the efforts of Native people during these wars, many Native veterans have still not been compensated for their sacrifices. Sixty-one years since the end of World War II, some Native veterans are still fighting for their benefits. One can only hope that all of Canada's war veterans will someday be compensated for their services. However, the fact that many Native and Metis

veterans continue to fight for recognition so long after the end of World War II demonstrates that veterans have always been leaders in Native peoples' fight for justice and civil rights.

Native soldiers fought and died for Canada, but upon their return home, they found that benefits set aside for white veterans were not applicable to them, because of their Indian status. Whether it was because of institutionalized racism, or because of incompetence within the government, Native veterans found that while they had been equal with whites in the military, they were not equal once they returned home. The Veterans' Land Act, veterans' business loans, health and education benefits, and even pensions were denied to Status Indian veterans. Though Native veterans faced injustices in Canada, most viewed their experiences during World War II positively. While they did not receive recognition until recently, and many have still not received veterans' benefits, Native veterans of the Second World War accomplished much. They gained valuable skills and knowledge that they were able to fall back on when they returned to Canada. If it were not for the discipline and organizational skills gained in the Canadian military, many of the Native political organizations that fought for political and social changes would not have come about or been as successful as they were. Without the skills they had learned overseas, Native veterans would likely not have had the wherewithal to fight the Canadian government for better civil rights, culminating in the Special Joint Committee's investigation of the Indian Act from 1946 to 1948. If not for their participation in the Second World War, Native people would likely not have been able to garner much support from non-Natives, and changes to the Indian Act in 1951 would likely not have come as quickly, if at all. By serving in the military during World War II, these men not only served their country, but they also served their Native communities, making "Indian" and "Native"

designations to be proud of, as well as earning the right for Indians to be Canadian citizens, with the rights and privileges that accompanied citizenship. The Second World War, then, was one of the most significant events of the twentieth century for Canadian Indians, as it was the war itself, against institutionalized racism in Nazi Germany, as well as Natives' participation in the war that allowed changes to Canadian society and Canadian Indian policy to take place.

## NOTES

---

- <sup>1</sup> “Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons Appointed to Examine and Consider the Indian Act, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence,” (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1946), 23 & 41.
- <sup>2</sup> “Special Joint Committee..., Appendix ‘B’,” (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1946), 91.
- <sup>3</sup> Laurie Meijer Drees, “A History of the Indian Association of Alberta 1939-1959,” (Doctoral diss.: University of Calgary, August 1997), 192.
- <sup>4</sup> Janet Frances Davison, “We Shall Remember: Canadian Indians and World War II,” (MA diss.: Trent University, June 1993), 17.
- <sup>5</sup> “Special Joint Committee..., Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence,” (1946), 128.
- <sup>6</sup> Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, “Fact Sheet – Camp Ipperwash Negotiations,” updated 27 July 2005, <[http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/info/cin\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/info/cin_e.html)>
- <sup>7</sup> Davison, 78.
- <sup>8</sup> *Forgotten Warriors: The story of Canada’s Aboriginal war veterans*, Loretta Todd, director; Carol Geddes, Michael Doxtater, Jerry Krepakevich, producers, (National Film Board of Canada, 1996).
- <sup>9</sup> Davison, 125.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Steve Roe and students of Northern Lights College, “‘If the Story Could be Heard’: Colonial Discourse and the Surrender of Indian Reserve 172,” *BC Studies*, no. 138/139, (Summer/Autumn 2003), 116.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., 117/118.
- <sup>14</sup> Dr. R. Scott Sheffield, “A Search for Equity: A Study of the Treatment Accorded to First Nations Veterans and Dependents of the Second World War and the Korean Conflict,” (National Round Table on First Nations Veterans’ Issues, April 2001), Executive Summary, v.
- <sup>15</sup> Davison, 125.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., 149.
- <sup>17</sup> *Forgotten Warriors*.
- <sup>18</sup> Davison, 155.
- <sup>19</sup> *Forgotten Warriors*.
- <sup>20</sup> Sheffield, Exec. Summary, iv/v.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., v.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Davison, 139/140.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., 162.
- <sup>26</sup> “Special Joint Committee...,” 1946, 431.
- <sup>27</sup> Sheffield, Exec. Summary, viii.
- <sup>28</sup> *Forgotten Warriors*.
- <sup>29</sup> “Native Vets of the Great Wars: Interview with Adam Cutham and Rufus Prince,” *Our Native Land*, (CBC Radio: 9 November 1974).
- <sup>30</sup> Karl Carisse, “Becoming Canadian: Federal-Provincial Indian Policy and the Integration of Natives 1945-1969: The Case of Ontario,” (MA diss.: University of Ottawa, 2000), 5.
- <sup>31</sup> Davison, pg. 127.
- <sup>32</sup> LAC, RG-10, v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, “Indians Again Prove Their Worth As 1,479 Serve in Canadian Army,” *Montreal Gazette*, 30 June 1942.
- <sup>33</sup> Jolayne Madden-Marsh, “Saluting our Native Veterans”, *The Peak*, Volume 94, Issue 12, (Vancouver: Simon Fraser University, 1996).
- <sup>34</sup> Gary R. George, “Lest we Forget Aboriginal Vets,” *The Interior News*, 12 November 1997, A5.
- <sup>35</sup> *Forgotten Warriors*.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>37</sup> “Special Joint Committee..., Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence,” (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1947), 782.
- <sup>38</sup> Davison, 96.
- <sup>39</sup> *Forgotten Warriors*.

- <sup>40</sup> Fred Gaffen, *Forgotten Soldiers*, (Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, 1985), 43.
- <sup>41</sup> *Forgotten Warriors*; and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People," Vol. 1, Part 2, Chapter 12: "Veterans," <[http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg48\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg48_e.html)>
- <sup>42</sup> "Native Vets of the Great Wars..."
- <sup>43</sup> *Remembrances: Metis Veterans...*, 22.
- <sup>44</sup> *Forgotten Warriors*.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>47</sup> "Native Vets of the Great Wars..."
- <sup>48</sup> Drees, 15.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., 3.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid., 15.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid., 17/18.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid., 51 & 73/74.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid., 66.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid., 86/87.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid., 184-186.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid., 79.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid., 80.
- <sup>58</sup> "Special Joint Committee..., Appendix EP, The North American Indian Brotherhood of Canada," (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1947), 853.
- <sup>59</sup> "Special Joint Committee..., Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence," (1947), 933.
- <sup>60</sup> Union of Ontario Indians, "UNION OF ONTARIO INDIANS: A History of the Anishinabek Nation," <<http://www.anishinabek.ca/uoi/uoiorghis.htm>>
- <sup>61</sup> Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Report of the Royal Commission..." <[http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg48\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg48_e.html)>; and Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, "Manitoba First Nation Chronology," <<http://www.manitobachiefs.com/culture/chronology.html>>
- <sup>62</sup> The Native Brotherhood of BC, "Native Voice Archives," <<http://www.nativevoice.bc.ca/archives.htm>>
- <sup>63</sup> Shannon Avison and Michael Meadows, "Speaking and Hearing: Aboriginal Newspapers and the Public Sphere in Canada and Australia," *Canadian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 23, No. 3, (2000), < <http://www.cjc-online.ca/viewarticle.php?id=586&layout=html>>
- <sup>64</sup> "Special Joint Committee..., Appendix EZ, Brief of the Veterans' Association of Wikwemikong," (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1947), 1337.
- <sup>65</sup> Gaffen, 73.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid., 74.
- <sup>67</sup> "Special Joint Committee..., Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence," (1946), 744.
- <sup>68</sup> "Special Joint Committee..., Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence," (1947), 1561.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid., 950.
- <sup>70</sup> J. R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian White Relations in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 220.
- <sup>71</sup> Jean R. Burner and Howard Palmer, "Coming Canadians:" *An Introduction to a History of Canada's Peoples*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), 115.
- <sup>72</sup> John Boyko, *Last Steps to Freedom: The Evolution of Canadian Racism*, (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1995), 207.
- <sup>73</sup> Charles Hirschman, "The Rise and Fall of the Concept of Race," (Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology, Dept. of Sociology, University of Washington, 27 May 2003), 3.
- <sup>74</sup> Hirschman, 17.
- <sup>75</sup> "Special Joint Committee..., Appendix BP, The Canadian Legion of the British Service League," (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1947), 162.
- <sup>76</sup> "Special Joint Committee..., Appendix AE, The Canadian Legion of the British Service League," (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1946), 845.
- <sup>77</sup> Drees, 111.
- <sup>78</sup> "Special Joint Committee..., Appendix BO, Joint Submission by the Canadian Welfare Council and the Canadian Association of Social Workers," (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1947), 155.

- 
- <sup>79</sup> “Special Joint Committee..., Appendix CC, Canadian Authors Association,” (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1947), 199.
- <sup>80</sup> “Special Joint Committee..., Appendix CB, Addressed to the Royal Commission of Senetors and Members of the House of Commons... Submitted in the Hope of Contributing to the Rehabilitation of the Indians of British Columbia,” (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1947), 175.
- <sup>81</sup> Drees, 130.
- <sup>82</sup> Ibid., 209.
- <sup>83</sup> Ibid., 81.
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid., 286.
- <sup>85</sup> Carisse, 27
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid., 28.
- <sup>87</sup> “Special Joint Committee..., Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence,” (1946), 29.
- <sup>88</sup> Drees, 211.
- <sup>89</sup> “Special Joint Committee..., Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence,” (1947), 553.
- <sup>90</sup> Carisse, 30.
- <sup>91</sup> “Special Joint Committee..., Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence,” (1946), 553 & 558.
- <sup>92</sup> Carisse, 31.
- <sup>93</sup> “Special Joint Committee..., Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence,” (1946), 485.
- <sup>94</sup> Drees, 215.
- <sup>95</sup> Carisse, 39.
- <sup>96</sup> Ibid., 33.
- <sup>97</sup> Ibid., 35.
- <sup>98</sup> “Special Joint Committee..., Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence,” (1947), 875.
- <sup>99</sup> “Special Joint Committee..., Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence,” (1946), 885.
- <sup>100</sup> Carisse, 39/40.
- <sup>101</sup> Ibid., 41.
- <sup>102</sup> “Special Joint Committee..., Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence,” (1947), 307.
- <sup>103</sup> Carisse, 310.
- <sup>104</sup> LAC, RG-26, v. 70, f. 42, “Information Pertaining to Recommendations of Special Joint Committee on Indian Affairs 1946, 1947 & 1948,” 1.
- <sup>105</sup> Ibid., 2.
- <sup>106</sup> Ibid., 3.
- <sup>107</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>108</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>109</sup> Ibid., 4.
- <sup>110</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>111</sup> Ibid., 5.
- <sup>112</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>113</sup> Carisse, 48.
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid., 49/50.
- <sup>115</sup> Ibid., 51.
- <sup>116</sup> Ibid., 55/56.
- <sup>117</sup> Ibid., 59.
- <sup>118</sup> Ibid., 60.
- <sup>119</sup> Elections Canada, “Aboriginal Voter Participation in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick,” *Electoral Insight*, (November 2003),  
<[http://www.elections.ca/eca/eim/article\\_search/article.asp?id=23&lang=e&frmPageSize=&textonly=false](http://www.elections.ca/eca/eim/article_search/article.asp?id=23&lang=e&frmPageSize=&textonly=false)>
- <sup>120</sup> Drees, 239.

## Conclusion

Townsend and Bernstein argued that the Second World War was a pivotal event in the history of Native American people and US Indian policy. Townsend and Bernstein demonstrated that American Indians were affected in various ways by the Second World War, as large numbers of Indians were involved in the war effort in some manner, whether as soldiers or on the home front. They argued that it was the experiences of American Indians during the Second World War that shaped the political activism of American Indians in the post-war period. They also argued that American Indians' involvement in World War II led to changes in US Indian policy in the postwar period. This thesis has attempted to apply similar arguments to the history of Canadian Indians and Canadian Indian policy. Evidence demonstrates that the arguments hold true in both countries.

For Canadian Native people, the Second World War was a traumatic experience for those who participated, or had family members that participated, in combat. Native people lost friends and loved ones in combat. The fact that large numbers of Indians enlisted suggests that World War II was a significant event for Canadian Indians. World War II brought about increased financial prosperity to many Native families throughout the war as Canadian Indians found military service a way to earn decent wages and provide for their families. The shortage of labour in Canada during the war also enriched Indians, as many were able to provide for themselves and their families by securing well paid jobs in strategic industries during the war. For the first time, many Indians were able to earn a living without being forced to rely on government relief.

The war also changed Natives' outlooks on their position in Canadian society. For many Natives, World War II was the first time they had experienced prolonged contact with an alien culture in the military and in the wartime workforce. Exposure to new cultures and new peoples allowed Native people a glimpse at life off of their reserves.

After the war, many Indians chose to leave their reserves permanently, attempting to find employment in, and/or assimilate into, mainstream Canadian society. The opposite was also true, since the war renewed many Natives' pride in their heritage. Participation in the military and the wartime workforce also allowed Canadian Indians to understand what it meant to be on an equal footing with others. While Canadian had been a racist society prior to World War II, and afterwards, during the war Canadians had put racism aside to maintain solidarity. Newfound equality and camaraderie with non-Natives gave Native people something to hope for once the war was over. Although post-war Canadian society returned to its racist form, the seeds for change had been sewn through Native involvement in the war. Native veterans fought for changes to Canadian society, for the war had given them the desire to be equal to others, as well as the confidence, discipline, leadership, and education to fight for change.

World War II involved Canadian Indians in politics at home, as well as abroad, in a way that Native people were never involved before. Canadian Indians generously donated their money to the war effort and wartime charities, proving their patriotism, their desire to help their fellow Canadians, and their importance to Canadian society. Their willingness to serve in the military demonstrated that Canadian Indians were reliable allies to other Canadians in times of emergency. The fact that Canadian Indians filled positions in wartime industries and learn new skills and trades demonstrated that Indians could also be reliable workers. Whether they did so by donating money or goods to Canadian and British wartime charities, by securing employment in wartime industries in cities, by enlisting in the military, or by fighting and dying on foreign battlefields, Indians demonstrated a desire to be fully involved in Canadian society and politics, while still maintaining a desire to preserve their distinct heritage and status.

After the war, Canadian Indians decided that they would not be ignored or

marginalized, as they had been in the past. Native veterans of the Second World War would organize Canadian Indians politically, and act as leaders in the fight for civil rights and recognition for sacrifices during the worst conflict the world has ever seen. The skills and knowledge that Native veterans had gained while serving in the military allowed Canadian Indians to become well organized in the post-war period. The equality and camaraderie that Native soldiers experienced while fighting alongside white men gave them a taste of the equality and rights that they wanted after the war. Indians were proud to be Indians and proud to be Canadian. When they discovered that the equality they had experienced in the military had disappeared after the war, they rose up against the injustices of Canadian society. With the help of non-Natives who were sympathetic to the Indians' plight, Canadian Native veterans forced the Canadian government to recognize the discrimination of its Indian policy. The government could no longer ignore the problems that plagued the Native population of Canada, and realized that changes to the Indian Act and to the Indian Affairs Branch were necessary. Without Canadian Native participation in the Second World War, there is a possibility that changes to the Indian Act and changes to the Indian Affairs administration may never have been come – or at least, the changes would not have come as quickly as they did. Some changes, including the right to vote in federal elections, came gradually even despite Native involvement in the World Wars.

Prior to the Second World War, Canadian society discriminated against Native people, believing them to be inferior to white people. Many Indians had developed inferiority complexes, due to the racism in Canadian society and the negligence they faced from the Canadian government. The efforts of Native War veterans made it acceptable within Canadian society to respect Native people and cultures. Not only that, the sacrifices and bravery of Native soldiers throughout the Second World War allowed Native people to take pride in their heritage once again. This newfound pride allowed many Native people

to approach their Native heritage nationalistically. Townsend described this phenomenon in the US by stating that after 1945, many Indians chose to follow the path to “renewed pride in Indian culture and history – the forerunner of the Red Power movement” of the 1960s.<sup>1</sup> This argument also can also be extended to Canadian Native peoples. The Second World War helped Canadian Indians regain the pride in their heritage they needed to continue fighting for civil rights and aboriginal rights through the 1960s to the present day. Because of the evidence presented in this study, World War II was clearly one of the most significant events of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century for Canadian Indians and Canadian Indian policy.

Despite being such an important event for Native people, Canadian historians continue to largely ignore World War II in regards to Indians. There are a number of reasons why Canadian historians have largely ignored Native involvement in the Second World War. For one, the Canadian military did not keep separate records regarding Native enlistment and did not usually make specific mention of Native men serving in mostly white units. Instead, the army considered all of its soldiers to be Canadians, and did not keep track of a racial breakdown of their forces. Thus, military records themselves do not make it easy to single Canadian Indian soldiers out of the larger fighting force, meaning that Canadian military historians would be forced to look at RG-10 and others that they are generally unconcerned with in order to find such statistics. The neglect of Native involvement in World War II is also connected with the emergence of social history. Social history is an attempt to move away from the study of “great men” and “big events,” concentrating instead upon ordinary people and minorities and how they shaped history. The study of Native people in Canada has largely been a form of social history, and thus, many social historians tend to avoid talking about World War II (the big event) in regards to Native people. However, ignoring World War II, simply because it is a “big event” creates an incomplete picture when talking about the history of Native people in Canada.

As this thesis has explained, World War II was a very significant event for Native people, and really helped to shape Native politicization in the post-war period, as well as creating the environment and conditions that led to changes for Native people in Canada. In order to fully understand the history of Canadian Native people, historians need to examine how World War II affected Native people throughout the war and in the post-war period.

The year 2006 marked the 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Many veterans have died, still others are not as mentally sharp as they were as young men, and their stories and memories are no longer as clear as they once were. Much of the primary oral evidence has disappeared with the veterans that have died. This is an especially important concern when it comes to Native veterans, because it has only been in recent years that Canadian historians have begun to take an interest in recording the experiences of Native veterans of the Second World War. It is commendable that Canadian historians are finally becoming interested in the contributions of Canadian Native people to the Second World War, as well as becoming interested in how World War II shaped Canadian Native history and the history of Canadian Indian policy. While numerous primary documents exist regarding this topic, and much oral history has been written down by historians like Fred Gaffen and Janet Frances Davison, much more needs to be done in order to understand the full impact of Native participation in World War II.

The present study is significant and unique for that very reason. It has answered questions about a part of Canadian history that has been largely overlooked. While many of the sources and documents that have been examined in this thesis have been studied by other historians in the past, the questions that were asked of the documents are definitely new. It would also appear that a number of the documents that have been examined in this thesis, especially many of those from RG-10 (Indian Affairs) and the Special Joint Committee have not been examined by other historians. Unfortunately, new interviews

were not conducted with Native war veterans in this particular study, but existing transcripts of interviews with Native veterans were consulted and examined in a new way. This thesis will now provide a valuable framework for other historians who wish to study the topic of Native involvement in World War II, and how the war affected Native people in Canada. By considering this research, other historians will be more able to form pertinent questions regarding Native peoples' experiences during the World War II era and the immediate post-war period. Perhaps the present study will also help to spark interest among more historians regarding the participation of Native people in World War II. Even if other historians do not necessarily agree with the conclusions presented in this thesis, hopefully historians will finally be interested in researching and discussing this largely ignored portion of Canadian history.

## NOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth William Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 227.

## WORKS CITED

### Archival Sources:

*Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs (ARDIA).*

<<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/indianaffairs/index-e.html>> (25 August, 2006).

- Hoey, R.A. Ottawa: April 1945.
- Hoey, R.A. Ottawa: April 1946.
- Hoey, R.A. Ottawa: April 1947.
- McGill, H.W. Ottawa: April 1939.
- McGill, H.W. Ottawa: April 1940.
- McGill, H.W. Ottawa: April 1941.
- McGill, H.W. Ottawa: April 1942.
- McGill, H.W. Ottawa: April 1943.
- McGill, H.W. Ottawa: April 1944.

Crerar, T.A. "DOMINION OF CANADA REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND RESOURCES INCLUDING REPORT OF SOLDIER SETTLEMENT OF CANADA FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 1937." Ottawa: March 1937.

<<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/indianaffairs/index-e.html>> (25 August, 2006).

### Library and Archives of Canada, Record Group 10 (Indian Affairs)

- v. 6763, f. 452-5, Alberta, Shot-on-Both-Sides, Chief, Frank Red Crow, Criso Child, et al., Blood Indian Reserve, Cardston, Alberta to Minister of Mines and Resources, 27 June 1940.
- v. 6763, f. 452-5, Alberta, Yellow Horn, Chief, Leo Smith, John Bastien, et al., Peigan Indian Reserve, Brocket, Alberta to Minister of Mines and Resources, 8 April 1941.
- v. 6763, f. 452-5, BC, Peter Calder, President, Nishga Land Committee, Greenville, Nass River, BC to Prime Minister King, 6 March 1941.
- v. 6763, f. 452-5, BC, "Seek \$25,000 Indians Help to Raise Funds for Purchase of Spitfires," *Daily Province*, Vancouver: 19 December 1940.
- v. 6763, f. 452-5, BC, William Christie, Indian Agent, "Agent's Report for the Month of June, 1941," Bella Coola, BC: 2 July 1941.
- v. 6763, f. 452-5, Maritimes, Gabriel Holliboy, Chief, and John S. Googas, Councillor, Whycomomagh Reserve, Inverness County, Nova Scotia to Secretary of Indian Affairs, 10 June 1941.
- v. 6763, f. 452-5, Ontario, H. M. Jones, Indian Agent, Deseronto, Ontario to Secretary of Indian Affairs, 6 June 1940.
- v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, "Canadian Indians Do Part in War," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Boston: 17 January 1941.
- v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, D. J. Allen, Superintendent of Reserves and Trusts, Ottawa to Director of Indian Affairs, 29 October 1940.
- v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, D. McLennan, Treasurer, Brantford Red Cross, Brantford, Ontario to Indian Affairs Branch, 20 December 1939.

- v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, Harold McGill, Director of Indian Affairs, Ottawa to Deputy Minister, 26 June 1940.
- v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, Harold McGill, Director, Ottawa to Inspectors and Indian Agents, 12 June 1940.
- v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, "Indian Band Donates \$1,000 to War Effort," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, Saskatoon: 26 July 1940.
- v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, "Indians Assist Red Cross Fund," *Lethbridge Herald*, Lethbridge: 18 July 1940.
- v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, "Indian Women Aid Evacuees," Unknown Newspaper, Vancouver: 14 March 1941.
- v. 6763, f. 452-5, pt. 2, Tommy Paul, Chief, and Albert Wilson, Secretary, Church House, BC to Minister of Finance, 21 October 1940.
- v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, "213 Indians War Casualties," *Calgary Albertan*, 21 August 1946.
- v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, "3,090 Indians Served in Army," *Victoria Colonist*, 22 August 1946.
- v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, "Canadian Indians Throughout Canada Who Have Enlisted in the Armed Forces," Ottawa: 15 January 1945.
- v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, "Indian Enlistments in the Armed Forces," *Brockville Recorder and Times*, 5 June 1942.
- v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, "Indians Again Prove Their Worth As 1,479 Serve in Canadian Army," *Montreal Gazette*, 30 June 1942.
- v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, J. A. M. Cook, "Prairie Indian fighters live up to record - King lauds Saskatchewan men in Normandy battles," *Regina Leader-Post*, 18 October 1944.
- v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, Richard D. McMillan, "Braves, Pale-Faces On Same Warpath," *Regina Leader-Post*, 7 October 1940.
- v. 6764, f. 452-6, pt. 2, T. R. L. MacInnes to Mrs. Chapin, Ottawa: 24 July 1942.
- v. 6769, f. 452-20, pt. 5, T.A. Crerar to Col. J.L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence, Ottawa, 22 May 1942.

Library and Archives of Canada, Record Group 26 (Citizenship and Immigration)  
 v. 70, f. 42, "Information Pertaining to Recommendations of Special Joint Committee on Indian Affairs 1946, 1947 & 1948."

"Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons Appointed to Examine and Consider the Indian Act." Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1946.

"Appendix 'B'."

"Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence."

"Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons Appointed to Examine and Consider the Indian Act." Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1947.

"Appendix AE, The Canadian Legion of the British Service League."

"Appendix BO, Joint Submission by the Canadian Welfare Council and the Canadian Association of Social Workers."

“Appendix BP, The Canadian Legion of the British Service League.”  
“Appendix CB, Addressed to the Royal Commission of Senetors and Members of the House of Commons... Submitted in the Hope of Contributing to the Rehabilitation of the Indians of British Columbia.”  
“Appendix CC, Canadian Authors Association.”  
“Appendix EP, The North American Indian Brotherhood of Canada.”  
“Appendix EZ, Brief of the Veterans’ Association of Wikwemikong.”  
“Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence.”

Primary Sources:

“Native Vets of the Great Wars: Interview with Adam Cutham and Rufus Prince.” *Our Native Land*. CBC Radio: 9 November 1974.

*Remembrances: Metis Veterans: Interviews with Metis Veterans*. Regina: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Metis Studies and Applied Research, Inc., 1997.

Secondary Sources:

Andrews, Allen. *Brave Soldiers, Proud Regiments: Canada’s Military Heritage*. Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 1997.

Avison, Shannon, and Michael Meadows. “Speaking and Hearing: Aboriginal Newspapers and the Public Sphere in Canada and Australia.” *Canadian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 2000. <<http://www.cjc-online.ca/viewarticle.php?id=586&layout=html>> (25 August, 2006).

Bernstein, Alison R. *American Indians and World War II*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

Berton, Pierre. *Marching as to War: Canada’s Turbulent Years 1899 – 1951*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2001.

Boyko, John. *Last Steps to Freedom: The Evolution of Canadian Racism*. Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1995.

Burner, Jean R., and Howard Palmer. “Coming Canadians:” *An Introduction to a History of Canada’s Peoples*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988.

Carisse, Karl. “Becoming Canadian: Federal-Provincial Indian Policy and the Integration of Natives 1945-1969: The Case of Ontario.” MA diss.: University of Ottawa, 2000.

Davison, Janet Frances. “We Shall Remember: Canadian Indians and World War II.” MA diss.: Trent University, June 1993.

- Dempsey, L. James. *Warriors of the King: Prairie Indians in World War I*. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1999.
- Dickason, Olive Patricia. *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Drees, Laurie Meijer. "A History of the Indian Association of Alberta 1939-1959." Doctoral diss.: University of Calgary, August 1997, 192.
- Frank, Floyd. *My Valley's Yesteryears*. Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publishers Ltd., 1991.
- Forgotten Warriors: The story of Canada's Aboriginal war veterans*. Loretta Todd, director; Carol Geddes, Michael Doxtater, Jerry Krepakevich, producers. National Film Board of Canada, 1996.
- Gaffen, Fred. *Forgotten Soldiers*. Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, 1985.
- George, Gary R. "Lest we Forget Aboriginal Vets." *The Interior News*. 12 November 1997.
- Hirschman, Charles. "The Rise and Fall of the Concept of Race." Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology, Dept. of Sociology, University of Washington, 27 May 2003.
- Madden-Marsh, Jolayne. "Saluting our Native Veterans." *The Peak*, volume 94, issue 12. Vancouver: Simon Fraser University, 1996.
- Miller, J.R. *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989.
- Patterson, E. Palmer. *The Canadian Indian: A History Since 1500*. Don Mills, Ontario: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1972.
- Ray, Arthur J. *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began*. Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1996.
- Reader's Digest. *The Canadians at War 1939/45*, vol. 1. Reader's Digest Association Canada Ltd., 1971.
- Roe, Steve, and students of Northern Lights College. "'If the Story Could be Heard': Colonial Discourse and the Surrender of Indian Reserve 172." *BC Studies*, no. 138/139. Summer/Autumn 2003.
- Sheffield, R. Scott. "A Search for Equity: A Study of the Treatment Accorded to First Nations Veterans and Dependents of the Second World War and the Korean Conflict." National Round Table on First Nations Veterans' Issues, April 2001.

Sheffield, R. Scott. *The Red Man's on the Warpath: The Image of the 'Indian' and the Second World War*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004.

Summerby, Janice. *Native Soldiers, Foreign Battlefields*. Ottawa: Communications Division Veterans Affairs Canada, 1993.

Townsend, Kenneth William. *World War II and the American Indian*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000.

#### Internet Sources:

“Area History of Conflicts: Dunkirk, Hong Kong, and North Africa.” Native Veterans Association of Northwestern Ontario.  
<<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/nativeterans/areahistory.htm>> (25 August, 2006).

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. “Manitoba First Nation Chronology.”  
<<http://www.manitobachiefs.com/culture/chronology.html>> (25 August, 2006).

Elections Canada. “Aboriginal Voter Participation in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.” *Electoral Insight*. November 2003.  
<[http://www.elections.ca/eca/eim/article\\_search/article.asp?id=23&lang=e&frmPageSize=&textonly=false](http://www.elections.ca/eca/eim/article_search/article.asp?id=23&lang=e&frmPageSize=&textonly=false)> (22 November, 2006).

Finn, Anthony. “William ‘The Skull’ Worton.” Veterans Affairs Canada, 2004.  
<[http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=feature/italy2004/italy\\_overseas/jack2](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=feature/italy2004/italy_overseas/jack2)> (25 August, 2006).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. “Fact Sheet – Camp Ipperwash Negotiations.” Updated 27 July 2005. <[http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/info/cin\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/info/cin_e.html)> (25 August, 2006).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. “Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People,” vol. 1, part 2, Chapter 12: “Veterans.” <[http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg48\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg48_e.html)> (25 August, 2006).

The Native Brotherhood of BC. “Native Voice Archives.”  
<<http://www.nativevoice.bc.ca/archives.htm>> (25 August, 2006).

Royal Canadian Legion: British Columbia/Yukon Command. “Sergeant (Retired) Smokey Smith.” <<http://www.pacificlegion.org/smokeysmith.html>> (25 August, 2006).

Union of Ontario Indians. “UNION OF ONTARIO INDIANS: A History of the Anishinabek Nation.” <<http://www.anishinabek.ca/uo/uoiorghis.htm>> (25 August, 2006).