



Private Marion Miller Hill
Six Nations Reserve

ABORIGINAL VETERANS

As we begin November and Remembrance Day approaches, Canadians prepare to honor the fallen soldiers who fought for our country. We would be remiss to forget the thousands of aboriginal people who voluntarily joined the military and served in the Canadian units during World War I, World War II and the Korean War. Approximately 3,000 aboriginal people classified as Status Indians, Inuit and Metis, both male and female served in the Canadian armed forces throughout World War I and World War II. A total of 72 Aboriginal women also served as military personnel.

During these wars, indigenous people were sent all around Canada and stationed with different units. Just imagine packing only one bag that contains your whole life in it, and then having to leave your loved ones behind, not knowing the next time you ever might see them again.

All peoples, Black, Caucasian, and Aboriginal etc. joined the military for different reasons. For many, the reasons were based on the economic state of the family and their need to address the financial hardships of their families. This was especially true for many aboriginal soldiers, though some were also motivated by a wish to stay loyal, to honor the

country and to help in its time of need, some also saw this as a chance to prove themselves as equals to the "white" Canadians and to push for better treatment and recognition.

But sadly these events also caused hardship on the Aboriginal population that did not participate in the war, because the cherished land that they had lived on for decades was being given to the soldiers as Soldier Settlement. The Aboriginals were then just dispersed and impoverished.

"Federal policy extended many post-war benefits to aboriginal veterans, but not as many as those accorded non-aboriginals." (www.warmuseum

[.ca](http://www.warmuseum)) It wasn't until 1992 when the Aboriginals finally got financial compensation for their time served. Like in Australia, the Canadian government felt that they should 'take every opportunity' to give the aboriginals the chance in helping their country 'either in the fighting services or in auxiliaries to these services in factories' (www.ww2australia.gov.au/allin/indigenous.html), but never in political aspects. Like Edward Wadie Said once said, "You cannot continue to victimize someone else just because you yourself were a victim once- there has to be a limit." The future to come is our limit. Which he stated in his novel "Orientalism".

For more information on Aboriginals in the military, visit the following sites:

www.warmuseum.ca

"Marion Miller Hill: Memories of an Aboriginal WWII Service Woman." MediaINDIGENA. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Oct. 2014. <http://www.mediaindigena.com/martha-troian/issues-and-politics/marion-miller-hill-memories-of-a-wwii-aboriginal-servicewoman>

"CAV – INTRODUCTION." Canadian Aboriginal Veterans and Serving Members Association Canadian Aboriginal Veterans Serving Members Association. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Oct. 2014 <http://canadianaboriginalveterans.ca/introduction/>

"Aboriginal Veterans: Stories of Honor and Heroism." Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Oct. 2014 <http://www.aadncaandc.gc.ca/eng/1303129235933/1303130595693>

"Indigenous Australian Servicemen." Home. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Nov. 2014. <http://www.ww2australia.gov.au/allin/indigenous.html>

"Indigenous People." Different Perspectives of the War, Australia and World War I, History Year 9, NSW. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Nov. 2014. <https://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/indigenous>

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