

Warriors exhibit celebrates

(Handwritten letter from Pte. E.M. Burnham:)
*Somewhere in Germany
Mar. 5, 1945
Dear Folks:*

Whew!! Boy it's swell to get a breather and a grand night's sleep.

You'll probably hear about us on the radio, but as luck would have it, I was sent back for a few days to take out citizenship papers, but I told them I didn't need them so I'm clear again until they ask later.

I managed to take a shower, change my clothes, clean up, see a movie and hear a radio, the first I've heard and done in a hell of a while so that now I don't feel quite as blue as I did just before they called me back and I only hope it lasts for a few days longer...

★ ★ ★

(Note on a handmade Happy Birthday card addressed to Mrs. Edward Burnham, R1 Ohsweken:)

Dearest mother:

You've been everything a son could ever expect of a mother.

So please accept my little sketch as a token of my love and everything that may and does go with it.

Birth day 1945

Your son,

Love

Ted.

★ ★ ★

(Canadian National Telegram message RA3440138 from Washington, D.C.)

MRS. MINA E. BURNHAM=
ROUTE NUMBER ONE OHS-
WEKEN ONT.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE DESIRES ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR SON PVT BURNHAM ELLWOOD M. WAS KILLED IN ACTION IN GERMANY 19 MAR 45. HE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN REPORTED MISSING IN ACTION CONFIRMING LETTER FOLLOWS.

JA ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

Private Burnham's purple heart is now in a glass case, along with the letter to his folks, the birthday card to his mother and the telegram she received shortly after the card arrived.

It's an emotional display, part of the Warriors exhibit which opened on Friday night at the Woodland Indian Cultural Centre.

Emotional as it is, Mrs. Burnham, who still lives in Ohsweken, donated these treasured memories to the museum for more than a sentimental purpose.

As people read the touching letter, the beautiful card, and the tragic telegram, Pte. Burnham becomes more than just another statistic of the Second World War.

Rose
Simone



He was somebody's son. He also happened to be an Indian from Ohsweken; one of many who served this continent in war.

"So often those thoughts are lost," said Tom Hill, the museum director at the Woodland Indian Cultural Centre.

Few people realize how much Indian people contributed to the de-



Garry Wouters (left), regional director-general of the Maracle of the Woodland Indian Cultural Cen

'the forgotten soldier'

fence of this nation's freedom. The Indian soldier is often "the forgotten soldier," said Mr. Hill.

The display includes some 200 artifacts spanning history from the War of 1812 to the World Wars, Korean and Vietnam wars.

There are paintings, weapons, archival photographs, and memorabilia in the collection. Many of the artifacts came from private homes.

"What we're trying to do is to evoke moods and feeling, and maybe trigger a little bit of nostalgia," said Mr. Hill.

But beyond that, the museum is trying to educate the public about "the special kinds of circumstances Indian people faced when they moved into the military."

Mrs. Burnham's son, like many

other Indian men and women, joined the armed forces in the United States because it was difficult to get around the military rules and regulations which prevented many of them from joining here.

"A lot of Indian people served with the American forces because it was easier (to be commissioned) that way," said Mr. Hill.

In the Second World War for example, the Royal Canadian Air Force had regulations preventing people from being commissioned overseas if they weren't of pure European descent or didn't meet certain education standards.

The Royal Canadian Navy also had a prerequisite that an applicant had to be a "British born subject of a white race."

During the war of 1812, Indian people were viewed as allies, said Mr Hill, but after the war, when their services for the protection of North America were no longer required, "a paternalistic attitude developed."

"After being warriors, they became designated as children."

The artifacts on display show how after each war, major social and cultural changes took place.

"Wars are bench-marks, not only for Indian people but for all of society," said Mr. Hill.

The changes can be seen in the Indian head-dress on display. The traditional beadwork and colors merged with the design of Scottish caps as Indians came in contact with people from Scottish regiments.

It's ironic, how so much artistic beauty is found in objects used to cause death. There are intricately carved war clubs from the War of 1812 on display, which show, as Mr. Hill said: "Even in times of war, there was an artistic creativity that cannot be ignored."

Looking closer at the display, the viewer also notices a sharpened object found in a Mohawk Indian village, which would have been embedded in a war club.

"It obviously would have had an absolutely devastating effect," said Mr. Hill.

Another beautiful object is the flag of the 114th Haldimand Rifles Regiment, a battalion in which many area Indian people served.

The flag, made by the Women's Patriotic League, shows the royal crown with the symbols of various Indian clans: the wolf, the eagle hawk and the turtle.

The important role women played in all wars isn't ignored in this exhibition. On one wall is a picture of Edith Anderson Monture, who is thought to have been the first native woman to be commissioned as a nurse in the First World War.

Mrs. Monture, who is now in her 90's, joined the American forces, and served as a nurse "right in the front" of the fighting in France.

In one of the display cases are shell casings which have also been intricately carved, much like the war clubs of an earlier era.

During the war, Mrs. Monture would collect these casings from the trenches and bring them back to the convalescing soldiers who carved the designs.

"I guess you could call it trench art or war art," said Mr. Hill.

There's also a section of the exhibition called "the home front," and Mr. Hill said it's designed to show that "Indian people (at home) also had to adapt to what was taking place on the front."

The exhibition was opened on Friday by Garry Wouters, the regional Director General for Indian Affairs.

"It was put together to show that Indian people did in fact participate in a series of wars since 1812, and they have made a contribution," said Mr. Hill.

Many Indians, like Pve. Burnham, made the ultimate sacrifice.

Mr. Hill said although the exhibition was put together by the Woodland centre, two local Legion organizations donated money to help offset expenses.

The exhibition continues at the Woodland centre until November 30. In connection with the exhibition, a series of public symposiums will be held in November.



Expositor Photo

Department of Indian Affairs and Doug re, look over one of the exhibits.