



Eighty six Indian volunteers helped guide General Wolseley and his troops up the Nile River in 1894 as they could relieve British soldiers during the Battle of Abertoun. Along with some 300 other Canadians, these Native warriors were the Nile Voyagers. (Stewart & Sun/NAC/PA 126913)

In all, Great Britain awarded 96 Military General Service Medals to Canadian Indians for their military assistance between 1793 and 1814.²²

Canadian Natives also helped British troops overseas. In 1884, during the Battle of Khartoum in the Sudan, the British put out a call for Canadian volunteers to help guide British soldiers up the Nile River. The soldiers were to provide some relief to the isolated men stationed there. General Lord Garnet Wolseley's group included nearly 400 Canadian boatmen — the Nile Voyagers — 56 of whom were Mohawks,²³ mostly from the Kahnawake band in Quebec, and 30 of whom were Ojibwa from Manitoba and Northern Ontario.²⁴ Chief Louis Jackson of Kahnawake recommended the design for the whale-boats that were used on the voyage and became a river loggerhead. Afterward, he wrote a book about the experiences of the Kahnawake participants. Two Indians lost their lives during the perilous six-month, 19,000-kilometre expedition. This journey turned out to be for naught. The British troops were killed two days before the rescuers arrived.

Many Native recruits of the First World War followed in the footsteps of their veteran ancestors. One example is Cameron Brant, Joseph Brant's great-great-grandson. He commanded a platoon of the 4th Canadian Infantry Battalion. The 28-year-old lieutenant lost his life in 1915 near Ypres, Belgium, while leading a counterattack into the enemy's trenches.

For Cameron Brant and many other participants in the First World War, pride in past family achievements may have attracted them to the service. What these men probably did not realize was that they, in turn, would inspire future generations.

OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SNIPERS AND SCOUTS

When Samuel de Champlain joined a Huron-Algonquin war party in 1609 and killed two Iroquois with the shot from his harquebus, a new era began ... The only protection from the firearms and the greater killing power of the white man was in, dispersion, slipping and ambush.
— Military historian Fred Galton²⁵

Most Canadians, Natives included, served in the infantry with the Canadian Corps in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF). Many Natives became snipers or reconnaissance scouts, drawing upon traditional hunting and military skills to deadly effect.



Like Joseph Brant — his great-great-grandfather — Cameron Brant chose to come to the aid of Great Britain in wartime. The lieutenant was 28 years old when he was killed near Ypres, Belgium, while leading his platoon in a counterattack.