

Francis Pegahmagabow Commemoration 2016
c/o ONECA
37 A Reserve Road
Naughton, Ontario
www.oneca.com

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Shawanaga First Nation Honours Heroic Son

NAUGHTON, Ontario – The Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA) has received a \$10,000 donation from the Shawanaga First Nation in support of a bronze monument commemorating Chief Francis Pegahmagabow, First Nation hero of the Great War. The life-sized bronze will be unveiled during a public celebration on National Aboriginal Day, June 21, 2016, at the Charles W. Stockey Centre for the Performing Arts, Parry Sound, Ontario.

Francis Pegahmagabow was born and raised in Shawanaga First Nation. Enlisting early, he served overseas for virtually all of the First World War. A superior scout and sniper, he was one of very few to be awarded a Military Medal and two bars. In Canada's history, no other Indigenous soldier has ever received as many battle awards.

After the war, he settled at Wasauksing First Nation, where he twice served as Chief.

The Chief of Shawanaga First Nation, Wayne Pamajewon, said: "It takes a community to raise a child. In this case, two communities – Shawanaga and Wasauksing – played an important role in the rearing of a warrior, chief, and strong advocate for First Nations. Today, both Shawanaga and Wasauksing share the legacy of Francis Pegahmagabow. We have a great relationship, and very strong ties, because of the bond that our people have created over history. We support each other in times of need, and in times of celebration."

"When you share a love for your people, there are no boundaries."

Francis Pegahmagabow spent much of his early years receiving original teachings from the Elders in Shawanaga. "This wisdom would prepare him for his life journey, teaching him how to connect with the world around him, with humans, animals, and the spirit world," said Chief Pamajewon. "When Francis left to serve overseas, he had all the gifts he needed to do the job that the Creator had sent him to do."

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Shawanaga First Nation also plans to dedicate one side of a new four-lane highway bridge, to be built in the area, to Sgt. Francis Pegahmagabow. The other side will be dedicated to the memory of Cpl. Charles Nanibush of Shawanaga First Nation, who died in action on March 8, 1945, as the Algonquin Regiment fought its way toward the Rhine River in Germany. “They were so young, so brave, they were our sons. We are proud to contribute to the monument honouring Francis, and to offer the bridge dedication with gratitude and deep respect,” said Chief Pamajewon.

Roger Chum, President of ONECA, the project lead, said: “We are so grateful for this gift, offered in the spirit of honouring our people, of celebrating one of Shawanaga’s own.”

“All of our donors have been so generous. We still need to raise about \$30,000, and we hope people will continue to support this spirit-building commemoration. We’d like more Canadians to hear Pegahmagabow’s story, and to learn about Indigenous people’s military service to Canada.”

Tyler Fauvelle, a professional sculptor based in Sudbury, Ontario, created the monumental sculpture. (www.tylerfauvelle.ca)

Donations can be made by cheque payable to “Parry Island Hero”, and sent to ONECA, P.O. Box 220, 37 A Reserve Road, Naughton, Ontario, P0M 2M0, or online (via Pay Pal) at www.oneca.com.

Contact parryislandhero@gmail.com, and visit facebook.com/parryislandhero2016

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Note: Submitted Digital Photo, attached. Left: Chief Warren Tabobondung (Wasauksing First Nation) and Right: Chief Wayne Pamajewon (Shawanaga First Nation), with model of the bronze to be unveiled on June 21st.

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