

Francis Pegahmagabow Commemoration 2016
c/o ONECA
37 A Reserve Road
Naughton, Ontario

For Immediate Release – November 10, 2014

FIRST BRONZE STATUE FOR FRANCIS PEGAHMAGABOW, WW I HERO

PARRY SOUND, Ontario – Roger Chum, Chair of Francis Pegahmagabow Commemoration 2016, announces that a life-sized bronze sculpture commemorating Francis Pegahmagabow, the most highly-decorated First Nations soldier of WW I, will be installed in Parry Sound, Ontario, in June 2016. Production of an educational video about Pegahmagabow, and aboriginal people's military service to Canada, is also part of the project.

The sculpture will stand at the Charles W. Stockey Centre for the Performing Arts, overlooking Georgian Bay, with a view of Parry Island, Pegahmagabow's home.

“The Wasauksing First Nation (Parry Island), the Town of Parry Sound, and a very dedicated committee are all working together to honour one of Canada's most valiant heroes,” said Chum. “Our hope is that this monument will be spirit-building, and inspire reflection and remembrance.”

Tyler Fauvelle, a professional artist based in Sudbury, Ontario, will create the sculpture. “Elements of the statue will include a young eagle, symbol of the messenger, and a caribou, symbol of the Deer Clan. I want the work to be noble, to show that the spiritual traditions of his people sustained him through the otherworld of war,” said Fauvelle.

Pegahmagabow was awarded the Military Medal in 1916; the citation speaks of his great bravery, disregard for danger, and faithfulness to duty. Similar acts of valour were recognized by additional bars to that medal, and Pegahmagabow was one of only 39 members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force to receive two bars to the Military Medal. A skilled sniper and scout, he fought overseas for almost the entire war, seeing action in some of its most horrific battles.

Fueled by pride in his Great War accomplishments, and changed in ways that only returning veterans could understand, Pegahmagabow persistently rebelled against barriers and racism, agitating for change. He served as Chief of the Parry Island Band (Wasauksing First Nation), band councillor, and as Supreme Chief of the Native Independent Government.

More...

Members of the commemoration committee include:

Roger Chum - First People's Centre, Canadore College (North Bay), President of ONECA (Ontario Native Education and Counselling Association), a registered charity

James Pegahmagabow - Great-grandson of Francis Pegahmagabow

Roxane Manitowabi - Executive Director of ONECA

Shelagh Rogers - CBC Radio host, and author

Tyler Fauvelle - Professional sculptor; www.tylerfauvelle.ca

Also on the committee is Canadian author Joseph Boyden, whose award-winning novel "Three Day Road" was inspired by Francis Pegahmagabow's military life as scout and sniper.

The project will be funded partly by public sector grants; the committee is also developing a sponsorship package for private sector funding.

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.

For more information, please visit facebook.com/parryislandhero2016, www.oneca.com, or contact the committee at parryislandhero@gmail.com

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Note: Digital photo of artist's maquette available upon request.

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