

# The Chippewas of Nawash and the Italian Campaign of WWII

PATRICK LAVALLEY · GIOVEDÌ 17 OTTOBRE 2019 · READING TIME: 26 MINUTES

**By Patrick Lavalley**

This article is condensed down from weeks of chat correspondence between myself and Matteo Incerti, a journalist and writer from Italy since this past July. Matteo was on the search for Native veterans of the Italian Campaign of WWII when he happened upon my <https://www.facebook.com/Saugeen-Ojibway-Nation-History-204452976256743/> page here on Facebook; and I can respect that. At times we exchanged only a short question and answer and other times provided new information for each other, and along the way other Band Members began getting involved. Matteo's search is also a fine reason to look into the History Bank collection and see what kind of story we can tell.

**July 13, 2019, 11:46AM** A friend request on my personal page followed a Like on my Saugeen Ojibway Nation History and Native Canadian-Native American Veterans and Warriors pages. I recognized the name Matteo Incerti from my history pages and e-mail updates; not long after, a chat message popped up. After I read it, I accepted the friend request:

**MI** My name is Matteo Incerti. I am an Italian journalist - writer writing a book about Native soldiers who fought in Italy during World War Two. I have found already more than 20 histories, and then yesterday I came across your article, [20th Century Warriors of the Chippewas of Nawash]**1**. with another incredible and sad story.

Do you have more info about Isadore Pedoniquott? Or do you know about other Natives from his band who fought in Italy and survived? I have found his military documents. If you have his picture or have some relatives to put me in contact with it would be great. No one knows these histories of Natives in Italy.

I have read he had a little child of 6 when he died, but it's not mentioned in the file. They died same day but it can be an error of the military file. Do you know if there were other members of the band in WWII in Italy and were KIA or survived?

**Wilmer Nadjiwon** was standing on the side of a road at a wine shop. **Isadore Pedoniquott** was riding in the back of a truck which was passing by. 'Hey! Hey! Hey!' shouted Isadore to Wilmer and he waved his arms excitedly. The truck

wasn't stopping; and that's the last time Wilmer saw him. Isadore would die about two weeks later.<sup>2</sup>



Pte. Isadore F. Pedoniquott, 4th Princess Louise Dragoon Guards, RCAC B/48668  
Died : September 23, 1944.  
Born: \_\_\_\_\_  
He is buried at the Cesena War Cemetery; Provincia di Forli, Italy; Grave V.H.7.  
His service is commemorated on page \_\_\_\_\_ of the Second World War Book of Remembrance.



Cesina War Cemetery, Provincia di Forli, Italy

### I. F. PEDONIQUEOTT FROM CAPE CROKER IS KILLED IN ITALY

CAPE CROKER, Oct. 13—Cape Croker Indian Reserve suffered the loss of another of her soldier-sons when Trooper Isadore F. Pedoniquott was killed in action in Italy on September 23rd, according to word received here.

Trooper Pedoniquott was thirty years of age and was one of the most popular Indians on the Reserve. He is survived by his wife and three children, Gwen and Glenda, four-year-old twins, and Francis, 18 months. Another daughter, Carol, aged six, died the same day that her father was killed, September 23rd last. His father, John Pedoniquott, passed away last year.

Isadore enlisted with the Grey and Simcoe Foresters in June, 1940, training in various camps including Borden, Toronto, Debert, N.S., before going overseas in June, 1943. He went to North Africa in December of the same year and to Italy last

October 00, 1944 Canadian Echo

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October 05, 1944 Canadian Echo

### DAUGHTER DIES DAY DAD KILLED OVERSEAS

Tpr. Isadore F. Pedoniquott, Cape Croker Indian, has been killed in action in Italy, according to word received by his wife, who survives together with three children. Another daughter, aged six, died the same day as her father was killed.

Tpr. Pedoniquott was 30 years of age and enlisted with the Grey and Simcoe Foresters in June, 1940, training at Borden, Toronto, Debert, N.S., before going overseas in June, 1943. He went to North Africa in December of the same year and to Italy in February".—SunTimes, October 16, 1944

**PL** There were many veterans from the Invasion of Italy from my reserve. The last one passed away in 2018.

**MI** What was his name? I would like to remember all of them.

**PL** His name was Wilmer Nadjiwon.

I told Matteo a bit about Wilmer and his book. He called the publisher and had a copy shipped to him. I then put him and Wendall Nadjiwon, Wilmer's son together to talk some history.



Matteo Incerti with his copy of Wilmer Nadjiwon's, "Not Wolf, Nor Dog".

MI Italy must say **THANKS TO THEM!** □



Gordon Johnston receiving the Millenium Medal from Grand Chief Matthew CoonCome, September 11, 2001.



**PL Pte. Gordon Johnston** age 20 was wounded in Italy.

**Ex-Chief's Son, Pte. Gordon Johnston Wounded in Italy**

**August 31, 1944:** "Pte. Gordon Johnston was wounded in Italy on August 31st, his parents Mr. & Mrs. Oliver Johnston of Cape Croker, have been informed. Oliver Johnston is an ex-chief of the Indian Reservation, and another son, Victor, is back in England after serving for some months in the Italian campaign.

Gordon joined the army in April, 1943, having his medical in Owen Sound and then going to Toronto where he was attached to the Royal Regiment of Canada. He went to Britain a year ago this month. This summer he went to Italy with the Irish Regt. of Canada. Nature of his wounds were not revealed in the telegram. Gordon is 20 years of age.

Another brother, Douglas, lives with his parents at home, while two sisters also reside at home, Wilda, 15 and Pauline 8".

Gordon's brother **Pte. Victor Johnston** also fought in Italy; as did **Pte. C.T. Nadjiwon, Pte. Wellington Elliott, Pte. William 'Bill' Solomon, Pte. Ernest Akiwenzie** and **Pte. Wilmer Nadjiwon**. On August 22, 1942 Wilmer was on board the TSS Awatea as it was leaving Halifax Harbour enroute to the Mediterranean when it was rammed by the American destroyer, USS Buck. He eventually took part in the 2nd Wave of the Invasion of Italy called Operation Timberwolf.



Clifford Nadjiwon, Victor Lavalley, Isadore Pedoniquotte, John Johnston, Orville Johnston, and Jack McLeod.





Edwin Akiwenzie, Ernest Akiwenzie, Francis Nadjiwon, Charlie Nadjiwon, Alfred McLeod, Leonard Nadjiwon.

**Pte. Fred Jones** fought in the Battle of Ortona. “**Pte. Fred Jones** my father was involved in the "Battle of Ortona. An important sea port that the British needed to shorten their supply lines. This battle was fierce as it was house to house combat fighting & casualties were

high. My Father, Fred was wounded severe enough to be taken back to England where he recovered enough to resume action with transporting vital supply lines to the front. He is 99 years young as of Nov.1st 2013. We are very proud of his service. God bless him”.**3.**

## **Ortona Street Fighting Was Terrific, Says Orville Johnston**

“To-day Pte. Orville Johnston goes back to Christie Street Hospital, Toronto, after a week’s leave at his home at Cape Croker, his first visit home since October, 1941, when he went to England with the Perth Regiment. Since that time he has covered a lot of territory and taken part in much action against the enemy, having seen service in Sicily and Italy before contracting pleurisy.

“Orville is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Johnston of Cape Croker. He joined the service on September 28th, 1938 in Stratford. In England he made a name for himself as a boxer, and it was here that he transferred to the Saskatoon Light Infantry and went to North Africa, landing at Algiers. Sometime later Orville was sent into the Sicilian campaign, landing at Catania, and was in action for a week. A week later his Unit landed at Reggio, Italy, and went up the Adriatic coast. It was in Ortona that the action was the hottest, however, and the young Cape Croker soldier says the street fighting was terrific. He received a shrapnel wound in his leg which required two weeks’ hospitalization but he went into the thick of the fight again before he was knocked out by illness. After twelve days in hospital in Italy he was returned to Great Britain, where he again entered hospital, this time for six weeks, until finally he was returned to America aboard the Queen Elizabeth, landing at an Eastern American port.

“He entered Chorley Park Hospital on July 8th and is now in Christie Street, where he is receiving medical attention.

“Orville, like Ernie Akiwenzie, who returned from Italy this month, says the cigarettes are coming in fine and the boys are very grateful”.**4.**

**Pte. O. Johnston of Cape Croker Back From Italy. Cont.**

**Dispatch Rider at Front Lines**



“Ortona was awful for the boys in the street fighting” he relates. “It wasn’t so bad for me, because I was riding a motorcycle between the front lines and headquarters. I averaged about 100 miles a day, I suppose.”

The Germans sent the propaganda leaflets across every afternoon at five o’clock, he explains. The leaflet he brought back isn’t the usual Goebbels baloney. It was more of a plea to the soldiers’ sentimentality.

“Summer will frustrate even more of our illusions,” it runs, in part. “You expected when you left home that you would soon return the victor. Instead at the present rate of advance, you won’t reach Northern Italy until the autumn of 1946... Canadians, what do you want in Europe? What is your interest in Italy? Why do you sacrifice everything – your homes, wives, families or sweethearts – for an illusion?” And more of the same.

“The guys just laugh about them,” relates Johnston. “They think they’re a big joke, something to set their watches by at 5 o’clock every day.”

**The Following Letter Was Received By The Little Port Elgin Community Club In Appreciation Of Smokes Sent To Cape Croker Boys:**

Central Mediterranean Force

Italy, November 28th 1943

Dear Friends:

Yesterday I received the three hundred cigarettes which were sent on the third of September. The rest of the boys received theirs also. They are certainly appreciated, especially in this country, as it is impossible to buy any here. While we were in England we were able to buy a few English cigarettes.

Bill Solomon is the only one who did not receive his. He just came back to our regiment a short while ago and his cigarettes probably went to his former unit, and in all probability they will catch up to him in the near future. His address now is the same as mine.

In the name of all the boys, once more I thank for the smokes.

Wishing all the members of the Club and the people of the Reserve a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Always your friend,

**Charles C. Nadjiwan**

“Among those leaving this morning for Stratford for examination are: **Edwin** and **Andrew Akiwenzie**, **James** and **Fred Jones**, **Alfred McLeod** and **Orville Johnston**, all of Cape Croker”.<sup>5</sup>

**Pte. Orville Johnston** also served in Ortona. He was a dispatch rider in both Sicily and Italy. **Pte. Jim Jones** served in Italy, he too was wounded in combat; as was **Pte. John Johnston**, wounded in the left knee and leg. Pte. Ernie Akiwenzie suffered a smashed wrist while on ack-ack duty. In a hospital in Italy he met **Pte. Frank Nadjiwon** and **Pte. Fred Jones** from Cape Croker convalescing.<sup>7</sup> **Pte. Edwin Akiwenzie** (a Bat Man) was also wounded in Italy. **Pte. Matthew Solomon**, Veterans Guard, served at an Italian and German POW Internment Camp in Gravenhurst, Ontario.□



When I was 18 months old my father Edwin (Bun) Akiwenzie joined the Armed Forces. When he was in Italy he was never discriminated against for being an Indian. For the first time he felt on an equal basis. After he was wounded in Italy in 1945 and returned to Canada he was not allowed to vote, drink alcoholic beverages in the hotels with his army buddies or purchase any kind of alcoholic beverages.... As I think back today, I wonder whose freedoms and rights was he fighting for?

Verlyn B. Akiwenzie, "Elders of Neyaashiinigmiiing".

Edwin 'Bun Cook' Akiwenzie was a Bat Man, responsible for the welfare and protecting the officers. Wherever the officer went, so did the Bat Man. He didn't want to keep going into battle, and going into battle. It wasn't the battle that bothered him, but the it was being responsible for the officer.

'I think the next battle he got shot. All of his men were shot, he went on. Then he was shot. He was out in the field alone wounded. He crawled back the next night.- Conversation Patrick Lavalley and Wilmer Nadjiwon, June 26, 2015.

we were the only two from Cape. After battle we would go out and have a drink together'. - Conversation Patrick Lavalley and Wilmer Nadjiwon, June 26, 2015.

#### Fight For Italy Ambush Although Nazis Are 3 To 1

**Lakeview, May 26, 1944** One of six Indian brothers in the armed services, **Acting Corporal Charles Cecil Nadjiwon** has been slightly injured in action in Italy, according to information received by his father, Peter Christopher Nadjiwon, Parker Cres.

"One night, **Jimmy Jones** and I and three others were out on patrol. We were just about across no-man's-land, when we ran smack into a German ambush patrol" he wrote when telling of his injury. Pte. Jimmy Jones is a cousin, whose home is Cape Croker, Ont.

"The Germans had about 15 men so we were outnumbered three to one. Grenades and lead were flying thick and heavy for a few minutes, but we got out without a scratch, except for a bullet burn across my cheek", he said. "We all started to run and as we went the Jerrys started to mortar us. But we all got to safe places among the rocks and managed to get away. Afterward we had a good laugh over it", he continued. "Jimmy was telling us that as he ran

he made up a little prayer, and it went something like this: “Oh Lord, if I ever get out of this I’ll never do anything wrong again”.

“Jim later got a bullet wound through his cheek but the Jerry who fired that shot will never fire another” the letter added. “Jim polished him off with a tommy-gun”,

Corporal Nadjiwon joined up just after the war started in 1939 and went overseas the following year. His brothers in the service are: Able bodied seaman Samuel, Gunner Barney, Gunner Wilmer, Sergeant Leonard and Pte. Ray. His father, a veteran of the last war has also served in this one in the Veterans’ Guard.

Jim Jones was shot in the face. The bullet exited behind his ear.

## Peninsula Soldiers Injured In Allies’ Drive On Rome



**Pte. Jim J. Jones**—Cape Croker Indian Reserve was another Peninsula community to receive word that two of her soldiers had been wounded.

James Joseph Jones is in hospital in Italy, result of wounds while in combat. This information has been given to his wife, Mrs. Mabel Jones but no details concerning his injury were made known. However it is understood that he is not in a serious condition.- **Canadian Echo, June 1, 1944**



**Pte John Johnston**—Through telegrams received from Ottawa on Friday and Saturday, Mrs. Rosa McLeod of Cape Croker has learned that her son, Pte. John Johnston has been wounded [while bathing in a river] in the Italian campaign. Mrs. McLeod reports that the injury is of a serious nature, he having suffered wounds in the left knee and leg”.- **Canadian Echo, June 1, 1944**

### Lives Saved By Act of Friendship

“Pte. Edwin Akiwenzie (Cape Croker Indian Reserve, Ont.) and his commanding officer Capt. Roote became separated from their unit and comrades in the dark and chaos of battle. They ran...they knew not where, so long as it was away from the battle front and the

carnage, some place where they could collapse and steal some sleep, rest, and maybe borrow another day from time and eternity.

“Their hearts pounded from fear and effort. They were afraid they might run directly into enemy lines. They were afraid that in the dark they might be mistaken for the enemy by their own forces. They were afraid that a bomb or a shell would blast them to shreds, or worse, leave them broken or blind for life. They were afraid that they’d never see their loved ones again. There was not a moment that Bun (Edwin) did not think of his wife, Isabel, and his daughters, Verlin and Edwina. He was afraid that he’d never see them again. And as they ran, Bun and his companion were afraid that they’d lose each other in the dark.

“Strangers they were, Bun and the officer. War had brought them together, as war had brought every other soldier together. Fear and hope made them comrades. That was all these men and boys had in common in an alien land, killing and dying.

“In the dark and gloom frequently illuminated by exploding shells and bombs and shell fire. Bun and his comrade stumbled upon a barn. They went in. Unable to see, Bun felt his way forward with his foot. He stepped on a body.

‘What in hell’! Bun nearly collapsed in fright. ‘What in hell is this? What t’hell is going on’? Snarled a voice.

‘Just looking for a place to sleep’, Bun stammered, relieved that it was friend not enemy.

‘Well, lie down’! The voice snapped.

“Bun took his helmet and pack-sack off, set them on the ground next to the stranger. Then he lay down and slept. Nothing, not the thunder of cannon, the scream of shells or the convulsions of the earth, could keep Bun from sleep.

‘Bun! Bun’! Someone was calling his name and shaking him.

“Bun opened his eyes. It was morning. Calling his name and shaking him was Ross Whicher, Lieutenant Ross Whicher of Colpoys Bay, a neighbour and friend. Who would ever have guessed that they’d meet on a battlefield in Italy (1943).

“They both got to their feet, put their helmets back on and shouldered their packs. It was time to go, no time for pleasantries. Already some of Lieutenant Whicher’s men were at the doorway waiting. There was time only, they made time for, one brief act of friendship, affection, perhaps the last that either of them would make with each other or with anyone else. They clasped one another, clasped each other on the back.

“At that moment a shell burst nearby. Ross Whicher and Bun broke apart. The men at the doorway were blown to shreds. Both Lieutenant Ross Whicher and Edwin bolted from the barn, each his own way, before the next shell demolished the barn.

“Ross Whicher and Edwin Akiwenzie survived World War II. But for that act of friendship, the embrace, it might not have been.



“With warm regards for Ross Whicher”.

Written by Basil H. Johnston, O. Ont., L.L.D.7.



Copy of O. K. Johnston, Andrew Akiwenzie, Fred Jones, and Jim Jones.

**Chosen to Act on  
Guard of Honour**



Pte. Orville Johnston.

“Relatives and friends of Pte. Ernie Akiwenzie and Pte. Orville Johnston, both from Cape Croker, and now with the Perth Reg’t in England, were proud to hear that they had the honour of being chosen, for the Guard of Honour, for the King and Queen when they inspected that armoured division recently.

“Pte. Johnston was also one of the guard of honour when General McNaughton inspected that regiment.

“Who can blame us then if we are extra proud of our Indian soldiers. We’re sure they made a fine guard of honour for our King and Queen”.**8.**

**January 16, 1944** ‘The day before we were going in the first battle the officers were talking to us telling us what we were to expect, what hills to take.... Max was standing next to me. The officer was saying that, “Some of you won’t be coming back”. Max spoke up, “Don’t worry about me/us, this time next year we’ll all be standing in the lobby of the Ship Hotel in Brighton”.’

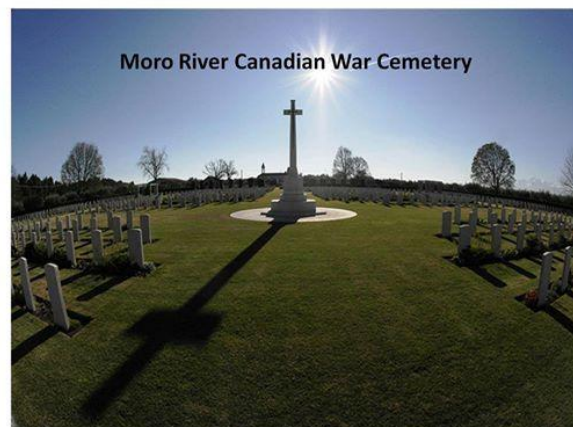
‘The next day he was dead. He was hit by a dud [artillery shell] in the back’.<sup>9</sup>



Pte. Alfred Joseph 'Max' McLeod  
A/11527  
Died : Monday January 17, 1944  
He is buried at the Moro River Canadian War Cemetery; Ortona, Italy; Grave, VI.G.13. His service is commemorated annually on page \_\_\_\_ of the Second World War Book of Remembrance.

**Pte. Alfred J. McLeod Listed as Killed in Italy**

“His mother, Mrs. McLeod, received word about the end of January that he had been reported missing and recently she received a letter from the Chaplain, Capt. D. Crawford Smith, telling her that her son had been with his regiment taking part in a strenuous engagement when he had been hit and instantly killed. He stated that though there was a medical officer on the spot nothing could be done. Pte. McLeod was buried with some companions near the spot where he fell and eventually he will rest with other Canadians who fell in this area.”  
Alfred McLeod, who was the second oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. John McLeod, enlisted when war broke out and was in the army on September 21st and went over to England in October, 1941. He was 29 years of age, was a farmer and in religion a Roman Catholic.  
His family has a fine record. His father is a Veteran Guard at Bowmanville, three brothers: Malcolm, Donald and John are overseas, one brother enlisted but has been discharged and a sister is with the C.W.A.C. There are four other members of the family at home, and the sympathy of the community goes out to the parents and family.  
— Canadian Echo, March 2, 1944



Pte. Alfred Joseph 'Max' McLeod, Perth Regiment killed in action in Italy on January 17, 1944. He is buried at Moro River Canadian War Cemetery, Grave VI.G.13.

**MI** My book will be based on true histories I am collecting and I will rebuild the Italian Campaign and their sacrifice and bravery from Sicily to Gothic Line. The book will end with post WWII history.

Were your relatives also in WWII?

**PL** Yes. I have many relatives who served in both WWI and WWII.

**MI** It is sad that they volunteered in WWI and WWII because they had ‘almost’ same right in the Army but when back in Canada they had to fight against racism again.

**PL** I am also working on a series of books about our veterans. There is a huge amount of information on them.



**MI** If you need help from the Italian side I am here too. Perhaps my book would be interesting to translate and yours into Italian? I love to discover human histories; there are incredible human histories behind war experience, some positive some really sad. I have already written four books about WWII in Italy, France, and Russia. I write especially about an Italian partisan, a US soldier of the 34th in Italy and the 2nd Special Air service men (UK). In another story four German brothers during the war they renounced their Nazism and started to act humane during the war and fought against the Nazi order. One died in Sicily in 1943 against British "Red Devil" in Battle of Ponte Sole (Catania). This is from my research. □

**PL** During WWII I think there were only maybe **500-600** people on my reserve, but many times it happened that our soldiers would meet up with other friends and family who were fighting in France or Italy quite by chance.

**MI** I work in Rome during the week but I am from Emilia-Romagna Region, I will visit the Cesena War Cemetery and put a flower for him. Tell me if there is a special Ojibway flower to put on his tomb when I go.

There is another soldier of my book buried there, Huron Brant, (Mohawk), who received the MM (Military Medal) from General Montgomery in Sicily.

**PL** When you do, could you take a photo for me?

**MI** Of course, I will. Tell me which flower your Band would like and I will place it at the gravesite. And if there are other Ojibway in that cemetery of Ravenna (close to Cesena) let me know.



Cape Croker Legion #198 Flag. Photo by, Patrick Lavalley.

**PL** I will ask my community and the president of our reserve's Legion.

**MI** Yes, it will be an honour. I want to give the right tribute for this soldier and all Natives. Italy has to know this story of bravery.

Do you know if they were speaking their language between them? And were they doing the same as the "Code Talkers" (Navajo) were doing with their language? Last year I was in the Navajo reservation close to Monument Valley and speaking with one of the last Code Talkers. He told me 'to find Natives who fought in Italy go to north... Canada'. So everything started...

How do you say 'ciao' to your own language?

**PL** I don't think the soldiers from our reserve were involved with codes, but they did talk to other Natives in their own language when they were able.

We say Baamaapii.

**MI** I will get the military file of McLeod if you need it. Wilmer Nadjiwon was a great one. Do you have his memory of WWII or document pict? Consider that the book will speak also about after war life of these heroes. It's a pity I didn't do this work a few years ago because I would have taken a flight to your Reserve in Canada to meet him.

Baamaapii. □

**Pte. Vic Johnston Home From Italian Theatre of War**

**February 27, 1945:** “Overseas nearly two and one-half years, Private Victor Johnston of Cape Croker, returned to Canada last week and arrived in town on Tuesday last. He saw action in Italy with the Perth Regiment, where he suffered from shell-shock, result of enemy action.

“Arriving at an east coast port last week, Pte. Johnston relates that reception committees treated the boys swell, both there and in Toronto. He came into Wiarton without fanfare and made his way home to Cape Croker, where, no doubt, the Reservation will put on their customary welcome in a short time.

“Enlisting with the Grey and Simcoe Foresters in June, 1940, Pte. Johnston went overseas in 1942, and transferred to the Perth Regiment and went to Italy in the fall of 1943. After being injured he was returned to England, where he met his younger brother, Gordon, who had arrived at that time with a draft of Canadian army personnel.

“Victor is a son of Ex-Chief and Mrs. Oliver Johnston of Cape Croker. He is 22 years of age, and will spend a 30-day furlough at his home before reporting back to military authorities”.**10.**

**PL** Hello Matteo. This is a message I received two days ago: “Hi Patrick, I sent your Facebook message about Isadore Pedoniquott to Marleen Vogl. Her mother Glenda was very touched by the gesture. She said to pass along her thanks to him. Marleen said for flowers some gladioli/sword lilies & of course forget-me-nots from Glen & Glenda.

“Marleen said that is the kindest, thoughtful, caring and respectful act of kindness. Please pass along their thanks. From twins Glenda and Glen (Isadore’s children)”.

**MI** Ask them if they have a picture of Isodore with the two tweens.

**PL** His family is very appreciative of your effort.

**MI** I do it with all my heart. After you finished with election where I hope you are elected I will ask you something about native rights because the book will speak of the battle after WWII of the Native veterans for their civil right and in defense of envoiroment (I am going to buy Wilmer’s book from his editor if you dont' have it in pdf).

My book starts from the night of the landing of Operation Husky and finish in these days. I am trying to sort down who was the first "Indian" to land on Sicily beaches from Cape Croker.





Pte. Ernest Lamorandier.

**PL** I think his name was Ernest Lamorandier. I'll have to check. [**Update:** Ernest Lamorandier hiked 170 miles to enlist in the war. It was said by former chief, Thomas Jones that his were the first boots on the ground at the Invasion of Sicily]. □

#### **Ernest Lamorandier's 170 Mile Hike to Enlist**

“Our Cape Croker Indians have been among the foremost in offering their services to their country and not the least of these was [Ernest] Lamorandier, who is a young Indian who walked from Cape Croker to Wiarton in some of our worst winter weather to enlist. He went to the recruiting officer for this district, but Major Simmie had no other recruits at the time, so advised the Indian to go back and wait another week when he expected to have several men ready to go”.

“But [Ernest] had no money and did not feel like retracing his steps the seventeen miles and coming down again. Mr. Simmie took him in and gave him a meal, and put him up for the night. Finally he decided to hitch-hike to London with a letter in his pocket from Major Simmie. Evidently he arrived O.K. For a letter arrived from Col. Beattie, saying that he had been accepted and we believe he was taken right on and sent overseas and probably is now in England with the First Division”.**11.**

After Pte. Ernest Lamorandiere, C.R., First Division, now of the Central Mediterranean Forces arrived overseas he won four medals for his athletic prowess. Private

Lamorandiere's father, Wilfred Lamorandiere, who fought in the last Great War, joined the

Veterans Guard of Canada, but was recently presumed to have lost his life by drowning the night of December 28th when he disappeared while crossing the ice from Depot Harbor to Parry Sound after the Christmas Holidays. □

**The Following Letter Was Received Recently By Wellington Elliott Of The Little Port Elgin Community Club:**

My dear friend:

"Received your cigarettes just the other day. They come in very handy. In this island of Sicily there are no cigarettes, but of course we get our issue.

"I am quite well and happy. Here's hoping you and the family are too. There is not much to say about this country, only that the sun is hot.

"I was in Africa, too, for awhile. The Arab people are quite different. Plenty of mountains and deserts of sand, and water is hard to get; tough battle through there. There are plenty of camels and donkeys, too. That place is a real jungle. I was glad to leave it. Now I am in Sicily. It was a hard battle but it was worth it. We have better times now. The country is more civilized. We get lots of fruit here. They grow bags of oranges, grapes, nuts, lemons, figs and other fruits. We are not hungry. But still I would sooner be in England again. I left over six months ago. I am back in the Royal Canadian Regiment. The Perth Regiment is still in England. I guess it will soon be four years since I left home. Gee, I would love to be there. Oh well, by the looks of things now, it won't be long. We found the Italian soldiers are very poor. They can't fight at all.

April 18th, 1944"Once more I will say, you have been very wonderful, sending cigarettes to us right along. I was in the battle front when the last lot came. I was not the only one who had a Canadian cigarette as I passed them around to others. We don't get issued with Canadian cigarettes here. And I must say thanks a million for your effort Wellington. Give the Community Club my love. Thanks for their kindness. So long for now from the Line. Pte. E. Lamorandiere

**MI** I found also the place where it happened.

**PL** What happened?

**MI** This Ojibwe buried in Rome Military Cemetery. On the night of 12/13 December 1944 Eddie Namaypoke. He was drunk, he fell from a 4th floor window and died. His helmet was found close to the window like he used to go on window then fall. Not sure if he was just drunk or suicide. I found all the document of the investigation with witness really sad history.

<http://cercalatuascuola.istruzione.it/cercalatuascuola/istituti/RMEE8EW034/pisacane/>

That's the place where the Canadians had put the REST PLACE of Canadian Army and cousine. He arrived in Italy on 18 November 1944 and died one month later like this... just 22 years old.

During the Italian campaign the Maroque soldiers included in the French Army after the last battle of Monte Cassino raped thousands of women in Italian villages (so today the local population destroy any French monument and invite just Canadian, American, Polish and so for the Liberation Day ). In Pofi (a village close to Rome) it's written that to stop their violence they asked the Canadians to stop them and arrest them. Some Canadian sniper killed some Maroque soldiers who were making sex abuse of female and children...and in the village it was say from oral witness that people who stop them were 'pellerossa'. Have you never heard anything about this from the veterans you have interviewed? It would have a sense because Native had a lot of respect of women so they got crazy to see this violence from soldier from Maroque.

I have interviewed Italian Partisans and old SAS (Special Air Service) soldiers. They spoke about war just with me and only then after their 80's because it was terrible to remember those days. it was a way to protect their children from the hell they have see during the war.

**PL** That happened here also. □

**MI** Tomorrow I will send the 38 names of Natives I found, all involved in the Italian Campaign; 20 killed in action, one died in an accident, and 1 died of accident/maybe suicide. Between them were awarded 5 military medals. □

**MI** Dear Patrick, I have started to put a story together for you. I also put the 12 new names you gave me in order. Tonight I will send you the text and a list of the soldiers I have already found (now more than 50 Native soldiers in Italy with 22 of them killed). □

**MI** My home city is 135-150 km from the Cesena/Ravenna/Rimini-Coriano area where there are four Commonwealth War Cemeteries. I will visit also the others. Today was first with the promise for the Pedoniquott family. □

"Isadore Pedoniquott, a Neyaashinigiing native hero to be remembered. Three sword lilies, two red and one white, and a cross with a poppy to remember this native soldier of the 4th Princess Louise Dragoon Guards. He was killed in action around Rimini area, in the east Gothic Line area in northern Italy 23 September 1944. Isadore, an Oijbwa from Neyaashinigiing made his supreme sacrifice for the freedom of Italy the same day that his daughter Carol died at age 6. When he died he was father of two little twins Glen and Glenda. Now he is buried in Cesena War Cemetery and he is not alone anymore. Three flowers and a cross with the poppies have been put with the name of Glen and Glenda on his grave and the sentence "Dad we love you". His grave, in the shadow of trees is



in the last line of the War Cemetery of Cesena, only a few yards from a soccer field where people enjoy life in peace. A peace that has been gained thanks to the extreme sacrifice of Isadore and other native soldiers like Huron Brant, Mohawk from the Bay of Quinte, Ontario or Roland Nahwegezhic, Anishinabe, both served with the Hasting and Prince Edward Regiment and killed in action around the Cesena area on 14 and 12 October 1944 respectively. They are buried in Cesena War Cemetery.

Italy is thankful to you. Miigwetch! Thanks! Grazie"! -Matteo Incerti□



Matteo Incerti at Isadore Pedoniquott's grave, Cesena War Cemetery, Italy.

**MI** The grave is under beautiful tree. Next time, I will plant roses. It is a really peaceful place. □

**MI** I don't think to become rich selling books (in Italy, it's like this: I have quite success with my books but the market is suffering). But I love to give to other people these histories that can teach people something from the deep values. It's not for money, it is for something more important in life, ethical values. Maybe touching the heart of people we can try to change things. □

**Matteo Incerti is a journalist and writer from Italy.**

**Patrick Lavalley is a historian, artist, and multi-media associate from the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation living at Neyaashiinigiing.**

1. <https://www.facebook.com/notes/saugeen-ojibway-nation-history/20th-century-warriors-of-the-chippewas-of-nawash/1143694125665952/>

2. Conversation Patrick Lavalley and Wilmer Nadjiwon, June 26, 2015.

3. Manley Jones, “Saugeen Ojibway Nation History”, February 09, 2014.

4. Canadian Echo, August 10, 1944.

5. Canadian Echo, September 28, 1939.

6. Canadian Echo, August 10, 1944.

7. “Our Readers Write: Lives Saved by act of friendship”, \_\_\_\_\_, July 1996.

8. Canadian Echo, May 28, 1942.

9. Conversation Patrick Lavalley and Wilmer Nadjiwon, June 26, 2015.

10. Canadian Echo. March 01, 1945.

11. Canadian Echo, February 08, 1940.