Joseph Gagnon

After the war, Gagnon faced unfair treatment because he was Indigenous. Like many First Nations Veterans, he lost his Indian status when he came home from the war. This meant he lost some of the rights and benefits connected to his First Nation identity.

Researchers believe that Gagnon may not have received benefits that other Veterans received, such as a Veteran's pension.
His great-granddaughter, Lynn Gehl, believes this was very unfair. She explained that Indigenous Veterans faced discrimination in two ways.

First, they were separated from their First Nations communities. Then, when they returned home, they were often treated unfairly by non-Indigenous society.
Even though Indigenous Veterans bravely served their country, many did not receive the same treatment or opportunities as other Veterans.



Source:
https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/people-and-stories/indigenous-veterans

Joseph Gagnon: A Brave Soldier Who Faced Unfair Treatment

Lynn Gehl was an adult when she began learning about her great-grandfather, Joseph Gagnon, an Algonquin soldier from what is now Pikwakanagan First Nation in Ontario.

Joseph fought for Canada in the First World War. After the war, he returned home with serious injuries from poison gas, gunfire, and shrapnel. Even though he had bravely served his country, he was often treated unfairly because he was Indigenous.

When Lynn learned more about Joseph's life, she discovered that he did not have a gravestone, even though veterans are supposed to be honoured and remembered after they die. She was shocked and saddened by this. In 2023, she asked for a military grave marker to be placed in his memory. A marker was finally installed in 2024 so people could remember his service.

Joseph was one of 29 men from Golden Lake Reserve who joined the military during the war. At that time, only 32 men lived on the reserve, showing how many community members volunteered to serve.

After the war, Joseph was allowed to vote in Canadian elections, but there was a problem. To gain this right, he lost his official membership in his First Nation community. This was something many Indigenous veterans experienced.

As Joseph's war injuries became worse, he could no longer work to support his family. When he applied for financial help, he, his wife, and their five children were forced to leave the reserve and move to a nearby village before they could receive assistance.

Many Indigenous veterans also missed out on benefits that other veterans received. Some were supposed to receive land, money, and farming supplies to help them start a new life after the war. However, many Indigenous veterans did not receive the same support.

Joseph never received land through these programs. Lynn believes this was unfair because land could have helped Joseph provide for his family and future generations.

Even though Joseph faced many challenges after the war, his story helps us understand the sacrifices Indigenous veterans made and the unfair treatment many experienced when they returned home.

Today, people like Lynn Gehl continue to share Joseph's story so that his contributions, courage, and experiences are not forgotten.

Source:
https://fipa.bc.ca/nm/indigenous-veterans-fought-for-country-but-were-mistreated-after-service-new-book-recounts

Joseph Dreaver

After the war, Joseph worked hard to help First Nations people. He spoke up for Indigenous rights and wanted governments to keep the promises made in treaties. He also worked to improve education, health, and quality of life for First Nations communities.

Even though many Indigenous soldiers bravely fought for Canada, they were often treated unfairly when they came home. For example, Indigenous soldiers could vote while serving in the military, but many First Nations people living on reserves could not vote in federal elections until 1960.

Many Indigenous Veterans also did not receive the same benefits and support as other Veterans. Some faced other unfair rules as well. In some parts of Canada, First Nations people even needed permission to leave their communities.

Joseph experienced this unfair treatment himself. One day, a police officer stopped him while he was driving to visit another First Nation community. The officer said Joseph should have asked permission before travelling. Joseph replied that no one had asked for permission when he left Canada to fight in the First World War. Because of that, he believed he should not need permission now. Joseph then continued on his way.

Joseph's actions showed courage, determination, and a strong belief in fairness and equal rights for First Nations people.



Source:
https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/people-and-stories/indigenous-veterans

Francis Pegahmagabow: Standing Up for Indigenous Rights

When Francis Pegahmagabow returned to Parry Island in 1919, he continued to serve with the Algonquin Militia Regiment. Although he was considered a war hero and one of Canada's most highly decorated soldiers, Francis returned home to face many of the same challenges he had experienced before the war. Government officials called Indian Agents had a lot of control over the lives of First Nations people and even controlled Francis's pension money.

Frustrated by the government's treatment of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous veterans, Francis became involved in local and federal politics. He wanted Indigenous people to be treated fairly and have a stronger voice in decisions that affected their communities.

From 1921 to 1925, Francis served as Chief of the Parry Island Band (now Wasauksing First Nation) and later served as a band councillor. During this time, he wrote letters to the prime minister and other government leaders, asking for better treatment of Indigenous peoples. He wanted First Nations communities to have more control over their own affairs instead of having government officials make decisions for them.

Through his leadership and determination, Francis became an early advocate for Indigenous rights in Canada.



Source: https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/francis-pegahmagabow
https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/people-and-stories/indigenous-veterans