"I've Done My Share"

Ojibwe People and World War II

Brenda J. Child and Karissa E. White

Bert Orben Good grew up in a small farming community near the western border of the Red Lake Indian Reservation. The grandson of an herbalist and medicine woman, and the son of a Swedish mother and Ojibwe father, Good had an expansive social world that included Swedish family and neighbors and Ojibwe relatives and community. As an elder, he fondly remembered his grandmother's skill for healing, that she doctored Ojibwe and non-Indian neighbors alike, and how she cured his childhood earaches. He was proud that his mother, "a Swede," got along well with her Ojibwe mother-in-law, Dedaatabiik, and, remarkably, learned to "talk perfect Chippewa with that old lady." It was a friendly time, said Good, when "whites and Indians had powwows."[1]

World War II created tensions in his small town of Trail, Minnesota, even before Good was drafted and entered the army on November 7, 1942. A number of his neighbors, the Swedish farmers, successfully avoided military service, joining the 23,000 Minnesota men who had already gained agricultural exemptions by the time Good left for Fort Snelling.[2] His trip to St. Paul was the first chapter in an odyssey that would take him to army training in the Mojave Desert, across the Atlantic to Europe, and on to three full years of military combat in France, Holland, and Germany. "I never dreamt that they had any terrain like that [the Mojave] in the United States," said Good, who had spent his youth fishing abundant lakes, exploring wetlands, and trapping muskrat on the reservation.

FACING PAGE: *Ojibwe soldier posed by a tree being tapped for maple sap, Mille Lacs, about 1942*

Good did not see desert combat, as warfare waned in North Africa. Instead, he shipped out of New York for Europe, eventually fighting in the Seventh Armored Division of the U.S. Third Army under Lt. Gen. George S. Patton. He was part of an infamous incident near Metz, France, when the Third Army ran out of gas in late August 1944, halting Patton's offensive in the Lorraine campaign. He marked his twenty-fourth birthday, September 17, 1944, in a tank with shrapnel flying overhead, having crossed the Moselle River from France shortly before German soldiers blew up the bridge. He spent nearly a week under heavy fire and thick fog before retreating to Verdun.

After France, the Seventh was the only American division sent to fight in Holland, where Good survived a German attack that resulted in heavy losses for American and British troops. Several men he knew from basic training were killed, including Don Bradehoft from South St. Paul, whose widow Good would later visit. Good's unit then went on to Germany, remaining there until the war's end. During the heaviest of fighting, he recalled with wonder, "Going into combat, you're scared right until you draw fire."

During the Battle of the Bulge, Good sensed the power of a spiritual presence speaking to him in Ojibwe, an extraordinary "vision in combat." Needing to talk with someone, and knowing that the only other American Indian in his company, an Apache from Arizona, had died in the fighting, he finally located one of the army's chaplains. Good related his vision "up on the line" and remembered the chaplain's sympathetic reply: "'Sergeant,' said the chaplain, 'You know what? You were rapping on death's door.'"

Bert O. Good, 1942, the year he was drafted into the army

World War II transformed the lives of Ojibwe people in Minnesota, first by taking young soldiers like Bert Good from rural reservation communities and sending them to the war zones of distant lands, and also by encouraging movement to urban areas where men and women sought out jobs in defense and other war-related industries. The war gave momentum to a migration already ignited by earlier land loss on reservations and economic deprivation during the Great Depression.

This mobility fits a pattern and narrative similar to that of other American people during World War II. Yet, there is a fact regarding Indians in World War II that is consistently confounding, making their wartime involvement unique in the history of North America: Their

Brenda J. Child, associate professor of American studies at the University of Minnesota, is the author of Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900–1940 *(1998). She is Red Lake Ojibwe. Karissa E. White, a Ph.D. candidate in American studies at the University of Minnesota, is Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe.*

participation—25,000 men and 800 women by war's end—was higher than for any other ethnic group or segment of the general population in the United States and Canada. This is all the more astonishing considering that World War II was the first time American Indian men were eligible to be drafted, a result of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, which at long last granted all Indians this symbol of union in American society. Even so, noncitizen Ojibwe had fought in World War I, joining 16,000 American Indians and anticipating the remarkable response of Indian men and women to World War II.[3]

Before the 1924 act, citizenship and voting rights for Indian people were piecemeal and hampered by expectations that they disavow cultural and political sovereignty. Honorably discharged veterans were extended U.S. citizenship in 1919, and in 1924 Canada followed suit. In Minnesota, some Ojibwe became citizens after World War I or on a case-by-case basis when taking allotments on reservations. Still, as late as 1942, U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier pointed out that even as Indians were being drafted and volunteering for the war, they were

Colonial education in the form of government boarding schools had a tremendously important role in recruiting American Indians for the military during both world wars.

still denied the right to vote in three states and prevented from "any participation in civic life of white communities."[4] The legacy of colonialism should have curtailed the number of Indian people fighting under the U.S. or Canadian flag. Yet Ojibwe and Dakota people entered the military in proportions far surpassing those of the general population.[5]

ONE CONTEXT for understanding the high wartime participation of the Ojibwe is their long history of military service. They had participated in every major conflict involving the United States since the Civil War, when men from northern Minnesota reservations enlisted or were commandeered for service. Joseph Charette, or Wainjemahdub, was awarded a Grand Army of the Republic button for his service in the Civil War by the United States and an eagle feather by his Ojibwe community at White Earth.[6] Throughout the nineteenth century, the Ojibwe did not engage in warfare against the United States military, aside from their victories at the Straits of Mackinac in the War of 1812 and a small conflict on the Leech Lake Reservation in 1898. They maintained relationships of trade and diplomacy and generally accommodated their new neighbors. In the most difficult times, Ojibwe leaders negotiated for boundaries and rights over lands ceded in treaties while being tolerant of the newcomers in their homelands who respected Ojibwe sovereignty.

The history of land theft and resource exploitation that dominated Minnesota-Ojibwe relations in the early-twentieth century does not appear to have significantly deterred Ojibwe men from volunteering in World War I. This despite the fact that within the broader pattern of dispossessing Indians of their land, Minnesota, in the words of one historian, "did not follow the national trend—they helped to set it." By World War I, most of the land on White Earth Reservation, the supposed sanctuary of removed Ojibwe, was owned by non-Indian Minnesota citizens.[7]

Colonial education in the form of government boarding schools had a tremendously important role in recruiting American Indians for the military during both world wars. Off-

Ojibwe from White Earth Reservation (in moccasins) and other Civil War soldiers of Company G, Ninth Minnesota Infantry, about 1864

reservation boarding schools were the primary means of Indian education from 1879 through the 1930s. At a time when policymakers viewed tribal life as undermining their goal of Indian assimilation and future citizenship, children as young as five or six years of age might spend years at school without visiting home. The founder of Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania was a former U.S. military officer who in 1879 designed the boarding-school program that other schools adopted, including those in the Great Lakes and western states. At Carlisle young people from approximately 58 tribes attended school in a former army barracks; Ojibwe students formed the largest tribal group.[8]

Boarding schools followed what was essentially a military model as students marched to and from class, wore uniforms, and practiced drills in assigned platoons. Jim Clark, a Mille Lacs Ojibwe who served as an army medic in Europe during World War II, said of his experience at the Hayward Indian School in Wisconsin, "We'd march military style, even to school." Clark chuckled remembering, "So when I got in the service, I knew all the commands." Some of the 800 American Indian women in the armed forces during World War II found military life less harsh and restrictive than their prior experience in boarding schools. Significantly more so than the average American child, Ojibwe and other Indian children lived, worked, and grew up within a school environment that celebrated the culture of military life.[9]

Nearly all the young men who attended government boarding schools served in World War I, volunteering in numbers far greater than their counterparts on reservations. The U.S. Indian School at Mount Pleasant, Michigan, one of a number of such schools in the Great Lakes (including Hayward in Wisconsin and Pipestone in Minnesota), patriotically maintained a special honor roll of former students who had served in the army or navy during the Great War. The small school's honor roll lists 60 former students, most of them Ojibwe, Ottawa, or Potawatomie.[10]

Morris Indian School students in military-style uniform, posed in a studio with their teacher, about 1895

ABOVE: *The Amyotte family in Grand Marais, about 1938. Parents Alfred and Margaret sit at rear; William is second from right.* RIGHT: *William Amyotte, about 1944.* BELOW, RIGHT: *After the war: Alfred Amyotte, center, surrounded by sons (from left) Henry, Andrew, Ben, and William, about 1946.*

Government boarding schools funneled Indians to the war effort in other ways, too. After 1941, six of these institutions—including Flandreau in South Dakota and Haskell in Kansas, both with large populations of Ojibwe students—were designated as defense-training centers. Many young people then went directly from the classroom to defense-related wage labor.[11]

OJIBWE SOLDIERS TRAVELED to every theater of global conflict during World War II. All six sons of Alfred and Margaret Scott Amyotte served in the war. The Amyottes raised a family of ten children in Colvill, nine miles up the Lake Superior shore from Grand Marais, near the Grand Portage Reservation. Their second-youngest son, William, born May 22, 1922, left school at 16 to enter the Gunflint Trail Civilian Conservation Corps camp, where he spent two years thinning trees and surveying lakes before enlisting in the military in the summer of 1940—before the draft began. Of his brothers, Eugene, enlisted in the Marines and took part in the battles of Guadalcanal and the Russell Islands; Henry received the Bronze Star for his time in Merrill's Marauders behind Japanese lines in Burma; Ben was in the navy in the South Pacific; and Jack fought in the Philippines and served in the occupation of Japan in 1945. William and his brother Andrew served together in Alaska for two-and-a-half years. William then stayed on for another year to complete his military service, while Andrew took part in the Aleutian Island campaign.[12]

In Alaska, William was issued army snowshoes and skis for his

work in civilian travel control, making use of his north woods experience. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he and other soldiers trained to protect Alaska in the event of a Japanese landing, spending long, cold weeks stationed on gun position. No fires were allowed, and so he cut balsam boughs and slept in the snow. The Amyotte family knew a number of Grand Portage men in the war, including Bernard Cyrette, who survived the Bataan death march, and Francis Bushman, who was killed on Corregidor. The six Amyotte boys survived the war.

Four of B. L. Tibbetts's childhood friends at Leech Lake did not return home from World War II. B. L., short for Burnham Lyle, was born and raised in Ball Club, where he spent a pleasant childhood fishing and going to the movies with his best friends. At 15, lying about his age and dropping out of high school, he entered the Civilian Conservation Corps Indian Division camp at Nett Lake and paid $25 of his monthly wages to help support his family through the Great Depression. Enlisting in the navy at Bemidji in 1942, he served in the armed forces along with three brothers and his sister Dela, who was stationed in Chicago in the U.S. Navy WAVES. Tibbetts was glad that a portion of his military paycheck, like his CCC wages, helped support his parents and family at home.[13]

Tibbetts first saw combat after sailing from Bermuda to North Africa, where it seemed "the ocean was on fire," but never felt overwhelmed until he worked as a gunner during the Battle of Midway. During his several years in the Pacific, "We'd get our supplies right off ships." He recalled the terrible fighting on Saipan and Tinian and the horror of seeing the bodies of Japanese civilians—men, women, and children—who had thrown themselves off the cliffs because of their fear of American capture. After two years in the Pacific, he had a shore leave in Sydney, Australia, but for most the war he lived on the *USS Cleveland* with 3,000 other men, "a floating city" with "barbershops, little stores, and an ice-cream stand."

MINNESOTA OJIBWE WOMEN left home for jobs in defense and war-related employment, to work as army nurses, or to serve in the armed forces. Emily Peake, a White Earth Ojibwe, was born in Minneapolis in 1920. During World War II she worked at Honeywell making parachutes before joining the Women's Coast Guard in 1944. Peake and some friends formed an early women's social club in the Twin Cities during the 1940s, an effort that presaged later, significant Indian organizations and centers of community life. Ojibwe women's personal networks with other Indian people were essential to city survival, and their early endeavors were an expression of indigenous values that resulted in the emergence of distinctive urban Indian communities in the Great Lakes States.[14]

After the war, Peake attended the University of Minnesota on the G.I. Bill, graduating in 1947. She worked in Europe in the 1950s, returning to Minneapolis during the termination era, when the federal government sought to end its trust responsibility to American Indians while placing them in cities. In Minneapolis, she helped found the Upper Midwest American Indian Center with Dakota and Ojibwe colleagues.

Ojibwe women from the plundered White Earth Reservation had begun migrating to Minneapolis shortly after World War I. Some of them already mothers, they found jobs in the city, often switching employers and moving frequently as opportunities arose. Women came from reservations in greater numbers during World War II to take advantage of the wealth of jobs suddenly available to them.

Indian enrollees in the Civilian Conservation Corps, Nett Lake Reservation, 1941

Mary Rogers from White Earth found work as a welder in Minneapolis.[15] Amelia Jones, Winnie Downwind, Alvina Stately, Fanny Stately, and Melissa Tapio, all teenagers from Redby on the Red Lake Reservation, together headed for Minneapolis in 1943. Like most Ojibwe women who left home in the 1940s, they had few resources but were determined and hard working. They stopped to top onions at a farm, then went on to Wells, Minnesota, to make wages in a chicken factory before landing in Minneapolis where they "went to work right away," cleaning houses by day, getting paid every evening. The young women learned of an employment office and found work cleaning rooms at the Hampshire Arms Hotel in downtown Minneapolis, where they lived in a basement annex with "lots of Indians." The teenagers "thought we were having a big adventure. We were scared to go out at night.

Emily Peake, about 1940

. . . We rode the trolley cars to get around town," Jones remembered.[16]

One of her contemporaries among the early community of urban Ojibwe women was Ignatia Broker, who arrived in the city from White Earth in "1941, the year Pearl Harbor was attacked." Broker was 22 when she began attending night classes and working in a defense plant; she later wrote about the war years as "unstable for everyone, and more so for the Indian people." Broker herself lived in a tiny, congested room with six other people during the war, sleeping on small cots in shifts. Still, they opened their door to other Ojibwe who needed a hand. While these women found jobs in the city, they also entered a decades-long struggle for human rights and equality in employment, housing, education, and social welfare. Broker and her community experienced racial discrimination on a wide array of fronts.[17]

> Although employment was good because of the labor demand of the huge defense plants, Indian people faced discrimination in restaurants, night clubs, retail and department stores, in service

Hampshire Arms Hotel, where the Red Lake teenagers lived and worked as domestics

> organizations, public offices, and worst of all, in housing. I can remember hearing, "This room has been rented already, but I got a basement that has a room. I'll show you." I looked at the room. It had the usual rectangular window, and pipes ran overhead. The walls and floors were brown cement, but the man with a gift-giving tone in his voice said, "I'll put linoleum on the floor for you and you'll have a toilet all to yourself. You could wash at the laundry tubs." There was of course, nothing listed with the War Price and Rationing Board, but the man said it would cost seven dollars a week. I know that he would have made the illegal offer only to an Indian because he knew of the desperate housing conditions we, the first Americans, faced.

Reservation border towns that capitalized on the presence of the Ojibwe by luring tourists to the north woods with picturesque imagery also reprehensibly locked Indian participants out of the local economy, except as consumers. Bemidji, 30 miles from the borders of Red Lake Reservation and a shorter distance from Leech Lake, was, by midcentury, the central shopping destination for hundreds of Ojibwe. Roberta Head McKenzie of Red Lake remembered, "Oh yes, Bemidji didn't like us," even at a time when her two brothers were risking their lives in the military during World War II. McKenzie's father, Selam Head, worked as a lumber grader at the reservation sawmill, toiling long hours, six days a week, during the war. After the war, when McKenzie was a young mother, her parents helped her enroll in secretarial training in Bemidji. After completing her course, she painfully discovered that this reservation border town was entirely closed off to Indians seeking jobs. She began working Saturdays as a file clerk for a small ice-cream business in town, but when the owner came into the office and discovered a young Ojibwe woman, McKenzie remembered, "He was really outraged," and "didn't want me out in front in the office." She lost even her meager part-time job.[18]

Roberta Head McKenzie in 1946, a tenth-grader at Red Lake High School

World War II soldier James Wipson's family not only experienced prejudice but the theft of their land along the north shore of Lake Superior. Wipson lived in Chippewa City with his beloved grandmother, Kate Frost, a medicine woman who spoke Ojibwe and raised Wipson, though with few resources other than what she gained from the land. Mrs. Frost suffered from arthritis, and on many days her grandson stayed home from school to help her during bouts of illness. He recalled the contentment of life with his grandmother as well as the difficulties they faced together.

> Grand Marais was very prejudiced against the Indians. When my grandmother would take me to Grand Marais we'd walk a mile. She wanted to just get a few necessities in the grocery store. Them people wouldn't talk to us. They wouldn't pay no attention. The only one that paid attention to her was the one who was trying to get our land. Say, "Hi Katie. You need groceries?"[19]

Kate Frost was defrauded of her land at Chippewa City. The friendly man who gave her flour, sugar, and salt pork was quietly paying her taxes in exchange for her "X" on a piece of paper, and the elderly woman unwittingly signed away her property, effective upon her death. "To make a long story short" said Wipson, "that's how he got our land." The land shark "confiscated all our land in Chippewa City" that sat on a "beautiful bay," while defrauding other Ojibwe as well.

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At 16, Wipson joined the Civilian Conservation Corps and helped construct the park at Gooseberry Falls. When he entered military service in 1941, he first resented being recruited by the Cass Lake Bureau of Indian Affairs agency, reasoning, "They discriminated against

the Indians and make them live on reservations and here they want us to go in there and give our life for our country?"

Wipson was sent to the South Pacific, where he joined the fighting in New Guinea and the Philippines. Remarkably, the army restored his spirit, freeing him from the discrimination he had known near Grand Marais. For Wipson, day-to-day military life was egalitarian: "You were a soldier like the other soldiers and everybody was treated alike." While he was spared, discrimination and violent racism certainly existed within the armed forces: African Americans and Japanese Americans, but not American Indians, served in segregated units.[20]

In 1943 anthropologist Robert Ritzenthaler described the impact of war on an Ojibwe community, especially noting interruptions to ceremonial life as young people left home to serve in the armed forces. The tire shortage also prevented some Ojibwe from traveling to wild rice camps. Observing men and women on reservations following war news on battery radios, Ritzenthaler wrote, "Even some of the older folks who couldn't read or speak a word of English and had never seen a map or even a picture of a tank or battleship" asked him informed questions.[21]

On the other hand, army medic Jim Clark's family at Mille Lacs was able to follow his every move in Europe, as his letters home in Ojibwe were never censored. And not all ceremonial life suffered. During the war, give-aways (ritual exchanges of gifts) and drum ceremonies for departing soldiers were continually held in Ojibwe communities throughout the Great Lakes. Jim's wife, Jessie, remembered, "Every weekend they had the drums out" in Mille Lacs, as prayers were offered that "the kids wouldn't go overseas, but even if they did go over, they would be protected" and return home.[22]

James Wipson

Ernest Olson was working at the Chippewa Lodge near Grand Marais when he learned that the war in Europe had ended. During basic training in Texas, he heard about the dropping of the atomic bomb, the scope of which he found "just hard to grasp." Shipped to Berlin to join the Army of Occupation in 1945, he arrived shortly after Christmas and was stunned by the devastation he witnessed. Berlin was "bombed flat," said Olson, and the army was there "to put it together again." Stationed overseas for a year, he turned 19 in postwar Germany one day before beginning the return journey to Grand Marais.[23]

James Wipson, too, recalled the bombing of Hiroshima. He was carrying the bodies of dead Americans down the dense mountain slopes near Manila when he learned the war with Japan had ended. He and other soldiers cried. "I just can't describe the feeling we had, to know that war was ended. That we had a chance to come home alive."

B. L. Tibbetts's homecoming was colored with sadness, knowing his childhood friends and a cousin were dead. Immediately after Japan surrendered, he and 25,000 other naval reserves prepared to leave the Pacific. He remembers packing his sea bag and crawling down a cargo net before jumping into a Higgins boat on his way "to transport" and standing in chow lines literally "a mile long" with "oodles and oodles of men." Twenty-eight days later he landed in Oregon, then traveled by train to Minneapolis where he was discharged in November 1945. A "buddy from Deer River" had been aboard his ship, and they went by bus to northern Minnesota. After the war, Tibbetts married a young woman from Naytahwaush, and together they raised a family and later went on relocation to San Francisco.

Relocation offered American Indians over the age of 18 a hand in seeking urban employment, a bus or train ticket, and, sometimes, basic toiletries and domestic goods—including the ubiquitous alarm clock—once they arrived at their destination. Conceived as the twin to termination, relocation was part of the federal plan to end responsibilities to tribal nations in the postwar years. Though Tibbetts found employment and a comfortable house where "You could look right out in the bay and see all the ships anchored out there," the sight made him "lonesome" for his Leech Lake home, so the Tibbetts family "journeyed back to the rez" after three years. Reflecting on his World War II service during an era when Minnesota and the nation paused to honor a "greatest generation," Tibbets knew for certain, "I've done my share."

> *"I just can't describe the feeling we had, to know that war was ended. That we had a chance to come home alive."*

In the postwar Twin Cities, Ojibwe veterans found jobs in the flour mills, factories, and construction trades. Men and women made connections with other tribal people, developing a complex of organizations and networks that formed the bedrock of the urban Indian community. Already tested by growing up on reservations, living in boarding schools, or serving in the military, they brought hard-won knowledge to urban life and forged new communities.

William Amyotte returned home, went to trade school on the G.I. Bill for a year, married a nurse he had met in an Iowa army hospital while recuperating from injuring his hand in Alaska, and bought a house in Minneapolis on a G.I. loan. Employed by General Mills for 12 years, he began working with the union in 1947 when the flour mills shut down for 12 weeks. A dozen years later he was president of the "local union that represented all the flour mills, feed mills, elevators, grain elevators" in the Twin Cites, expanding his union organizing in subsequent years to Idaho, Nebraska, and Mississippi. Amyotte entered union work to fight; this time, the struggle was for decent pensions, life insurance, hospitalization, and better wages at a time when women packing flour in Minneapolis performed the same jobs as men but were getting "ten, fifteen cents an hour less" pay. Looking back on the Great Depression, the war, and the postwar struggles of working people, Amyotte humorously deflected the idea that he was part of a "greatest generation," suggesting instead, "Every generation contributes to the economy and our country." His was not so much "great" as it was "unlucky."

Without hope of finding work closer to home in Bemidji, Roberta McKenzie was accepted into the relocation program in the early 1950s through the Bureau of Indian Affairs area office in Minneapolis. The rural-to-urban migration had gathered momentum in 1952 when relocation expanded from the Southwest to more cities, including Cleveland, Dallas, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, San Francisco, and Minneapolis. McKenzie then spent most of the decade working as a medical secretary at the University of Minnesota.

> And then we went to see the BIA agent and he gave us money to ride the bus. They had streetcars then. We looked around for apartments. And as soon as we found one, we notified him and he went there and got some money to pay our rent until we got paid. They would pay our rent and give us food. But see, I had to go a whole month, because the state just paid every two weeks on the 15th and 1st. But it worked out so well.

The postwar relocation program has been sharply criticized for abandoning American Indians who continued to need services and assistance in the city, but McKenzie was prepared for employment and happy for the opportunity to move to Minneapolis and earn a living to support her young family. Like many relocated Ojibwe people, however, she considered the reservation as her community, and she returned to Red Lake in 1958. Many wartime wage laborers and military veterans also went home after the war. Sam Yankee returned to McGregor a decorated war veteran. He entered the world of reservation business committees and tribal politics when he was elected chairman of Mille Lacs in 1960, leading a struggle for

William Amyotte and wife-to-be Vera Peltz, 1944

decent homes, health care, job and educational opportunities, and tribal sovereignty.[24]

MORE THAN A THOUSAND Ojibwe from Minnesota served in World War II; over 40 were wounded in Europe or the Pacific, and 32 died. Scholars have offered compelling evidence that American Indians during World War II gained newfound respect due to their military participation and that they reinvigorated warrior traditions through wartime deeds.[25] American Indian Studies scholar and Vietnam War veteran Tom Holm has argued, "Warfare continues to be an important way of interacting with the world and defining the boundaries of one's own society" for American Indian people and their nations.[26]

If it is true that American Indians found cultural meaning in their military service, it is also true that Ojibwe veterans in Minnesota primarily cite the draft as their reason for going to war; that, or they felt part of the same movement that compelled many other Americans to join up. Ojibwe participation in the war is also inextricably linked to the history of American colonialism. Poverty, discrimination, dispossession, and even colonial education in government boarding schools—institutions that put children in uniforms from their first day of school and then fed them directly into the armed forces—must also explain the high participation of American Indians in Minnesota and the nation. All of Ojibwe Country honored returning war veterans, and at Red Lake, the annual Fourth of July powwow has been an important site for the community to recognize the sacrifice of those who performed military service.

The life stories of soldiers during the World War II at times read like a novel, and that was true of Red Laker Bert Good's narrative of his first day back in Minnesota. Good survived a terrible storm in the Azores before landing in New York when the war was over. Arriving in Minneapolis for a two-hour layover before heading up north, Good phoned the widow of fellow soldier Don Bradehoft. On the morning of the day he was killed in France, Bradehoft had asked Good to call his wife in South St. Paul in the event of his death, showing him a picture of his little boy. Recalled Good, "It was just like they knew."

> So I called, and by God I got a hold of her and she came. She had that little boy with her. She saw the patches. She felt pretty bad and I told her, "Your husband was a good soldier," I said. "Brave." She wanted me to come home and spend the day with her but I said, "I'm sorry. I haven't been home for so long that I've got to go home."

Good took a night train to Thief River Falls, and while walking around town he met an aunt and uncle and learned that his grandfather was there in the hospital. He was able to talk to his grandfather, who smiled at the returning soldier, before he died. Good left the hospital and stopped at a local tavern, meeting up with two friends also just back from Europe. To the outrage of his friends, the bartender refused to serve Good, viewing him as another Indian rather than a decorated American soldier. Good recalled, "Sorry. Can't serve you a beer. My friend Albert said, 'Christ, he just came back from Europe. He's been in combat!'" Later that evening, Good found a car ride and arrived home, unannounced. It was mid-December 1945. Happy to be alive, reunited with his family, and home in a beautiful northern Minnesota winter, he remembered, "I went to trapping right away."[27] ◘

Annual Fourth of July powwow, Red Lake Reservation, 1949

Notes

1. Bert O. Good, interview by Karissa White, July 25, 2006. Good and the other Ojibwe featured in this article were interviewed as part of the Minnesota Historical Society's Minnesota's Greatest Generation Project (MGG) in 2006; information not otherwise cited is from those interviews. Transcripts of all interviews are available at the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) and tribal archives.

2. By war's end, "the number of farm exemptions in the state topped 34,000"; Dave Kenney, *Minnesota Goes to War: The Home Front during World War II* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005), 26–27. Another study of Minnesota is Thomas Saylor, *Remembering the Good War: Minnesota's Greatest Generation* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005).

3. John Collier, "The Indian in a Wartime Nation," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 223 (Sept. 1942): 29–35; Russel Lawrence Barsh, "American Indians in the Great War," *Ethnohistory* 38 (Summer 1991): 276–303. Many Canadian First Nations people could not vote in national elections until 1960. For a Canadian study, see R. Scott Sheffield, *The Red Man's on the Warpath: The Image of the "Indian" and the Second World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004).

4. Frederick E. Hoxie, *The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880–1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 211–38. Collier's oft-cited statement on the 7,500 American Indians who had entered the armed forces by June 1, 1942, was: "While this seems a relatively small number, it represents a larger proportion than any other element of our population"; Collier, "The Indian in a Wartime Nation," 29.

5. See Gerald D. Nash, *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Alison R. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); Jere' Bishop Franco, *Crossing the Pond: The Native American Effort in World War II* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 1999); Kenneth Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

6. Melissa Meyer, *The White Earth Tragedy: Ethnicity and Dispossession at a Minnesota Anishinaabe Reservation, 1889–1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 95.

7. Barsh, "American Indians in the Great War," 276–303; Thomas A. Britten, *American Indians in World War I: At War and at Home* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997); Susan Applegate Krouse, *North American Indians in the Great War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007); Meyer, *White Earth Tragedy*, 172.

8. Paulette Fairbanks Molin, "'Training the Hand, the Head, and the Heart': Indian Education at Hampton Institute," *Minnesota History* 51 (Fall 1988): 86.

9. Jim Clark, interview by Karissa White, Aug. 23, 2006, MGG; see also Jim Clark, *Naawigiizis: The Memories of Center of the Moon*, ed. Louise Erdrich (Minneapolis: Birchbark Books, 2002).

On the schools, see David W. Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Brenda J. Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900–1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994).

10. Barsh, "American Indians in the Great War," 276–303; Handbook of the U.S. Indian School, Mount Pleasant, Michigan, 1917–18, Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant.

11. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II*, 64–88.

12. William N. Amyotte, interview by Karissa White and Brian Horrigan, Aug. 11, 2006, MGG.

13. B. L. Tibbetts Sr., interview by Karissa White, Aug. 11, 2006, MGG.

14. Here and below, Jane Pejsa, *The Life of Emily Peake: One Dedicated Ojibwe* (Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 2003). See also Emily Peake, Collections of the Minnesota History Society, "Research File on Minnesota Ojibwe Women," manuscript, MHS.

15. Pauline Brunette, "The Minneapolis Urban Indian Community," *Hennepin County History* 49 (Winter 1989–90): 4–15.

16. Coauthor Brenda Child's Aunt Amelia generously took part in this interview, Oct. 7, 2001, two months before her death. Born April 7, 1926, Amelia was the oldest of her siblings.

17. Here and below, Ignatia Broker, *Night Flying Woman: An Ojibway Narrative* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1983), 1–11; quote, 3–4.

18. Roberta McKenzie, interview by Karissa White and Brenda Child, July 24, 2006, MGG.

19. James Wipson, interview by Karissa White and Brian Horrigan, Aug. 11, 2006, MGG.

20. Interestingly, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Collier had argued for separate units for American Indians—as an opportunity for cultural preservation for tribal people serving in the war, rather than racial separation. See Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II*, 22–39.

21. Robert Ritzenthaler, "The Impact of War on an Indian Community," *American Anthropologist* 45 (Apr.–June 1943): 325–26.

22. Jessie Clark, interview by Anthony Godfrey, Aug. 26, 1992, Mille Lacs Ojibwe Social History Project, transcript, MHS (tape in Mille Lacs tribal archive, Onamia).

23. Ernest Olson interview by Karissa White and Brian Horrigan, Aug. 10, 2006, MGG.

24. Sam Yankee was the uncle of coauthor Brenda Child. A special exhibit wall in the Mille Lacs Indian Museum, Onamia, displays photographs of the community's veterans. As the Mille Lacs band was facing a lengthy court contest to protect its sovereignty and treaty rights—the favorable U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Minnesota v. the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe,* upheld treaty rights—the exhibit was important testimony to the band's contribution to American society and Minnesota life.

25. U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Indians in the War, 1945* (Haskell, KS: Haskell Printing Dept., 1946) discusses their service and lists the wounded and dead by tribe and state.

The Ken Burns documentary *The War* includes the remarkable story of World War II soldier Joe Medicine Crow of Montana who captured the horses of German officers, counted coup on U.S. enemies, and performed other brave deeds that earned him the honor of his community in Lodge Grass, Montana, when he returned home. Medicine Crow's war story is well known among Indian people on the northern plains.

26. Tom Holm, "American Indian Warfare: The Cycles of Conflict and the Militarization of Native North America," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, ed. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury (Oxford, Eng.: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 169. On the idea of warrior traditions among modern-day soldiers and veterans, see Tom Holm, *Strong Hearts, Wounded Souls* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).

27. Bert Good received the Bronze Star for heroism in Germany.

The photos of Bert Good, the Amyottes, James Wipson, and Roberta McKenzie are courtesy the respective families. All other images are in MHS collections.