



## Chief Johnson Paudash

**Born:** January 29, 1869 - Hiawatha Ontario on

Hiawatha First Nations Reserve

**Enlistment:** November 11, 1914 - CEF Unit: 21st Bn

**Deceased:** Age 84      **Military Service**

**Force:** WWI sniper, Veterans Guard

**Unit:** Canadian Expeditionary Force

**Division:** 21st Bn



**Citation(s):** Citation reads:For gallantry and devotion to duty. On 26th January 1918, when our trenches were heavily bombarded, Pte Paudash maintained his post and continued to snipe disregardless of danger. Seeing a Hun observing the effect of the Trench Mortars he shot him and continued sniping at various targets while they presented themselves. during his 29 months service in France Pte Paudash has sniped 42 Huns. AFW 3121 27-2-18. He was accredited with 88 kills in his 29 months of service.



## Bio - Information provided by the Great Granddaughter of Chief Johnson Paudash



My Great Grandfather Chief Johnson Paudash was an Ojibway native born on January 29th, 1869 on the Hiawatha First Nations Reserve. Which is located on the north shore of Rice Lake east of the Otonabee River in Ontario, Canada. He was the grandson of the last Sachem or 'Head Chief' of all the Mississauga's. He was raised at the Rice Lake Tribal Grounds and went to the Brantford Indian School for his education. Then he attended the Mount Elgin Indian School for a few years and later went back to the Rice Lake Reserve. He was in the service of the Canadian government as an expert on Indian Affairs. He is said to have been responsible for the setting up of the hunting and fishing grounds stretching south from Lake Nipissing and also to have negotiated the surrender to government of several warlike Indian bands.

When WWI broke out he enlisted with the encouragement of his friend Sir Sam Hughes (the Minister of Militia & Defence). Sir Sam recognized his friend's keen ability as a marksman so he encouraged him to join the newly formed 21st Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Johnson Paudash enlisted on November 11, 1914 and went to Kingston for training. On May 6, 1915 he boarded a train to Montreal where he embarked on the SS Metagama and sailed to England.

Upon his arrival on May 15th he was sent to West Sandling Camp in Saltwood Kent. For soldiers of the CEF and other allied British Forces this camp provided intensive, harsh training in 'Entrenchment' at Tolsford Hill before they were sent to the front line in France. He was promoted to Lance Corporal on July 6, 1915.

When his training was completed he sailed with the 21st Battalion from Folkestone, England to Boulogne, France on September 14, 1915. They became the first to cross the English Channel in broad daylight. They would fight in France for the remainder of the war.

Johnson soon became one of the top snipers of the First World War. He was known as being a very wise man who was quiet and had a calm demeanor. He was often referred to ironically as the "Gentle Sniper". He has been officially credited for 88 kills which he recorded on the stock of his Ross Rifle.



Shortly after his landing in Boulogne, he was sent to Messines where on September 22nd he was shot in the right thigh. After recuperating from this wound he rejoined his unit south of Ypres in Belgium. He was an excellent sniper and scout. He had an innate talent for slipping perilously close to the enemy trenches without detection. Because of this, high ranking Generals were often put in his care for tours of the front line in France and Belgium. In fact he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal in recognition of having saved the life of an Officer in the Battle of the Somme. He also carried the responsibility of leading entire battalions into position against the German forces.

Johnson Paudash was a highly decorated Soldier. Having fought at Vimy Ridge and the 3rd Battle of Passchendaele he was awarded many medals. Among them was the Mons Star which he was given for being part of a unit that came under exceptional fire in a short period of time. He was presented with the Allied Medal for service, he was also awarded 3 Military Medals; one was received for giving information that the enemy was massing at Hill 70 for a counter attack. Which took place just 25 minutes after he made his report. His timely warning saved many lives. Another Military Medal was received for 'Gallantry and Devotion to Duty'. On January 26, 1918 when the Canadian trenches were being heavily bombarded, Johnson bravely maintained his post and continued to snipe various targets disregarding of personal danger.

By February 1918 my Great Grandfather's battle scars were starting to get the better of him. He had shrapnel in his legs, 4 gun shot wound scars in his right thigh, calf and forehead and multiple bayonet scars. He had chronic Nephritis and Neuritis due to his wartime service. He was almost 50 years old and his body was starting to betray him. In May of 1918 he ceased to be on command of the CCD and was sent home to Canada. On July 9, 1918 he was discharged from the Army at Kingston Ontario because of his health. He became a Civil Servant; a rural mail carrier for the next 25 years. He also became a First Nations Chief and devoted much of his time to the interests of his people and represented them several times in deputations to Parliament in Ottawa.

I never had the honour of meeting my Great Grandfather but I have an enormous amount of respect and pride for him. He voluntarily fought for his Country even though the Indians were specially exempted from the operation of the Military Service Act. Status Indians at the time did not have full rights of citizenship; they could not vote, and were legally treated as 'wards' of the Federal Government, a legal status similar to that of 'minors'. And yet he chose to take up arms and fight for his country. Perhaps his decision can be best explained from an excerpt of a letter that he wrote to a friend from Coburg to let them know of the sad news of the death in action of an Indian comrade. He quoted John 15:13 "Greater love hath no man than this,



that a man lay down his life for his friends.” And perhaps his enlistment was destined, as he comes from a long line of brave warrior Chiefs.

It has been said that of all of the medals awarded to his ancestors one can trace the history of Canada. His Great Great Grandfather fought with Sir William Johnson, in the Imperial Army and served at Fort George and Crown Point in 1755. And then he fought alongside General James Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham in 1759.

His Great Grandfather Chief George “Cheneebesh” Paudash fought in the Revolutionary war alongside the British under General Guy Johnston in 1774 - 75. He also fought in the battle of Chrysler’s Farm on November 11, 1813 during the Anglo American war of 1812. He died in 1859 at the age of 104 the last Sachem or head Chief of all the Mississauga’s.

His Grandfather, Mosang Paudash served in the McKenzie Rebellion in Upper Canada of 1837. He was also the last hereditary Chief of the tribe of Mississauga’s situated at Rice Lake.

He died in 1893 at age 75.

His Father Robert Paudash, Chief of the Mississauga’s at Pamadusgodayond trained to guard against the Fenian Raids 1866 - 71.

***“All of these brave men played a part in defending their country, Canada and it’s freedoms. I am proud to be of the Paudash lineage and with a living tribute on the Highway of Heroes they will be remembered forever.”***

- Great Granddaughter of Chief Johnson Paudash, Susie Rucska

Additional resources regarding Chief Johnson Paudash can be found at:

[www.snipercentral.com/snipers-WWICanadianSnipers](http://www.snipercentral.com/snipers-WWICanadianSnipers)

[http://21stbattalion.ca/tributeos/paudash\\_j.html](http://21stbattalion.ca/tributeos/paudash_j.html)

<http://av.canadiana.ca/en/veteran/5595>

We are proud to say that one of the ‘Trees for Heroes’ trees that will be planted as part of the Highway of Heroes Living Tribute will represent the service that Chief Johnson Paudash made to protect Canada.