

# Private Alfred Joseph McLeod

## The Perth Regiment

### Family Life:

Alfred was born to John and Mary Louise McLeod on October 10, 1914, in Neyaashiinigiing (Cape Croker). He had thirteen sisters and brothers, several of whom also performed military duties during the Second World War. His father was a First World War veteran who served with the Veterans Guard during the Second World War, guarding German prisoners-of-war at Bowmanville (Camp 30).

Alfred spent 8 years at St. Peter Claver Residential School in Spanish, Ontario. He was working as a truck helper for K. Stanboro of Chesley at the time of enlistment. His goal was to be a construction worker after the war. Alfred's mother, Mary Louise, was named the National Silver Cross Mother in 1972, representing mothers across Canada who have lost a son or a daughter in the military service. She laid a wreath at the National Remembrance Day Ceremony in Ottawa, alongside Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. She was the first Indigenous woman to receive this honour.



### Service History:

Alfred McLeod enlisted with the Perth Regiment on September 28, 1939, less than three weeks after Canada declared war on Germany. He was first attached to the machine gun platoon and completed much of his training at Camp Borden. One special task assigned to Private McLeod was “to take part in a military display with the Ford Company” of military vehicles at the Canadian National Exhibition Grounds in August of 1941.

After a year of training in Canada, the Perth Regiment including Private McLeod embarked overseas in October 1941, arriving in the United Kingdom. As part of the 11th Brigade of the 5th Canadian Armoured Division (CAD), the Perth Regiment was transferred to Italy in late 1943. Along with the 1st Canadian Infantry Division, the 5th CAD formed the 1st Canadian Corps in Italy. The Perths were first committed to battle in January 1944.



### Decorations:

- 1939-45 Star
- Italy Star
- Defence Medal
- War Medal 1939-45
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp

### Service History:

In anticipation of upcoming amphibious operations at Anzio, the British Eighth Army, including the 1st Canadian Corps, were ordered to “maintain sufficient pressure on the enemy forces” to ensure that the Germans would not move into the Anzio sector. The 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade were ordered to cross the Riccio River and advance towards the Arielli River just north of Ortona on January 17, 1944. This was the Perth’s “baptism of fire” in Italy, where they faced intense machine gun fire and heavy mortar and artillery fire as they attempted to advance across the river valley. A fellow soldier of this attack lamented, “We were all in a state of shock over the events of the day, knowing that besides losing the battle, we’d also lost a hell of a lot of our buddies.” It was during this action that Private McLeod was killed. Forty-six other members of the Perth Regiment lost their lives on this day. He is buried in the Moro River Canadian War Cemetery, San Donato, Italy.