

# TOM LONGBOAT

## The Legend...The Hero

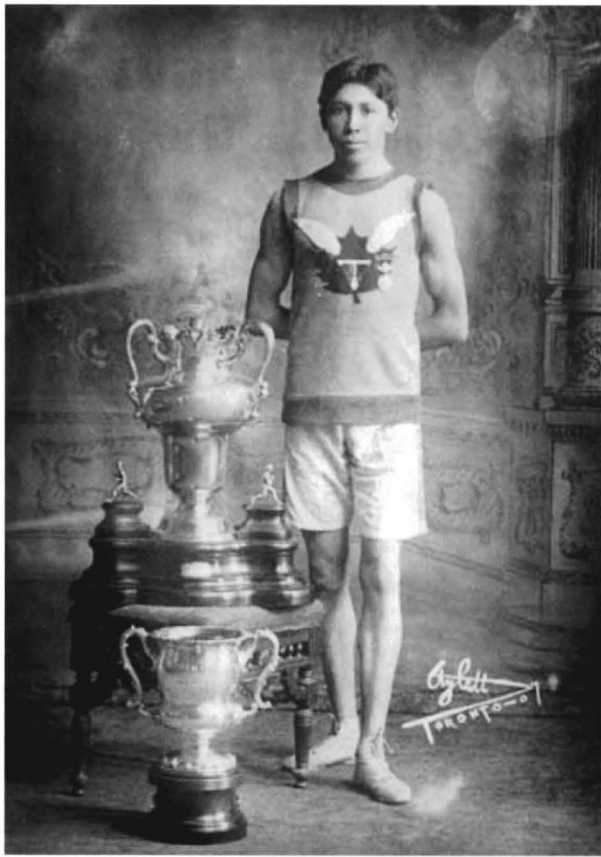


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Tom's 100<sup>th</sup> Year Commemoration  
**The Boston Marathon**  
April 16, 2007



Tom Longboat, Veterans Affairs Canada (DND / PA-1479)



## THE LEGEND

A member of the Onondaga Nation, born June 4, 1887 on Six Nations Reserve, south of Brantford, Ontario, Tom Longboat was one of Canada's most gifted long distance runners.

Largely because of his ability to dominate any race and his spectacular finishing sprints, Tom held every Canadian record from the one mile to the marathon, at one point or another. He won most of the major distance races in North America and Europe, including the Hamilton "Around-the-Bay", the Toronto Ward's Marathon, the New York "World's Professional Marathon Championship" and the Powderhall Marathon in Edinburgh, Scotland. His outstanding abilities led him to compete in the 1908 London Olympics, and as a pro thereafter.

Although he just began his racing career in the spring of 1905, Tom quickly became a household name as famous as Wayne Gretzky in his time.

After only his third competitive race Tom gained international recognition. In the 1907 World-Renowned Boston Marathon, Tom stunned the world by setting a new course record of 2:24:24. His new record was over five minutes faster than the previous record.

Tom ran the first part of the marathon just behind the leaders. However, when a freight train neared a crossing, threatening to cut off the race, Tom entered Boston lore by outrunning the train. In the middle of the race, he ran stride for stride with another Canadian, Charlie Petch. When they moved onto the difficult hill section (now no longer part of the race), and into a snow squall, Longboat ran on alone. Near the end of the race, a young girl ran onto the course and handed him a Canadian flag.



## THE HERO

Longboat's racing career had a bright future, however; in 1916, he set aside his own future for Canada's and enlisted in the War. He joined the 107<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Battalion and became a dispatch carrier, a highly dangerous job. Tom used his athletic ability to run messages from one military post to another. After the First World War, Tom returned to service for the Second World War as a member of the Veterans Guard. He was stationed at a military camp near Brantford, Ontario.



Source: DND/LAC: PA-1479

A remarkable national hero, Tom is recognized in numerous books, articles, and web pages. As well, various races, scholarships, clubs and a school have been named in his honour. The Longboat Roadrunners Club and The Tom Longboat Junior Public School, both of Toronto, Ontario, are examples of such.

Tom's legendary achievements have placed him in both Canada's Sports Hall of Fame and the Indian Hall of Fame.

**Tom Longboat showed what it took to become a legend; and he gave it all up to show what it took to become a hero.**

**Celebrate your hero by sharing his story with others and by participating in ongoing commemorations.**



To find out more about this legend,  
refer to the following:

### Aboriginal Sport Circle

[www.aboriginalsportcircle.ca](http://www.aboriginalsportcircle.ca)

Click on "Awards"

### Veterans Affairs Canada

[www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca)

**Chiefs and Champions: Tom Longboat –  
Distance Runner**, Directed by Annie Frazier Henry

**The Man Who Ran Faster Than Everyone:  
The Story of Tom Longboat**, by Jack Batten

**Tom Longboat**, by Bruce Kidd

For more information on events celebrating  
the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tom Longboat, and  
how you can be a part of commemorating your  
national hero, please contact:

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**Longboat Roadrunners**

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