



MOHAWKS OF THE BAY OF QUINTE

KENHTÈKE KANYEN'KEHÁ:KA

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Thursday Night Fire Destroys Hangar, Aircrafts and Equipment

February 25, 2022 – Shortly after 11 p.m. Thursday, February 24, 2022, first responders were called to the Tyendinaga Mohawk Airport for a structure fire. The Mohawk and Tyendinaga Township Fire Departments called in mutual aid from Deseronto and Napanee to help battle the blaze as one of the hangars was fully engulfed in flames.

While the full scope of the damage is unclear at this time, the hangar, along with the aircrafts and equipment inside, has been destroyed. This is a major loss for FNTI's First Peoples' Aviation Technology program.

The loss of the airport hangar is also a cultural and historical loss for members of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte. Although the original buildings were removed in January of 1919, the airfield was originally built in 1916 as a training school for pilots during World War I. It was also put to use in World War II as an advanced instrument-navigation training base for air crews of the British Commonwealth.

Mohawk Fire Chief, Scott Maracle, says there was also some damage to the old terminal building at 314 Airport Road.

The Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte would like to send a large, sincere nya:wen (thank you) to the members of the Mohawk, Tyendinaga Township, Deseronto and Napanee fire departments that worked hard to fight this fire and limit potential damage. The cause of the fire is not known at this time, but there will be an investigation.

'This is a significant, and multi-million dollar loss to FNTI's First Peoples' Aviation program as well as the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte. Some of our administrative archival records were lost in the fire, as was a historic site that is an integral part of Canada's war-time history. Indigenous students from across Canada have graduated from the country's only Indigenous Aviation School, and in order to carry on that success, our efforts must now turn to rebuilding.' – R. Donald Maracle, Chief of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte

'As we deal with the initial shock of such a loss, we would like to thank all of the community members that have offered support, and to BuildAll Contractors for their assistance with equipment and supplies to battle the blaze and resulting cleanup.' – Scott Maracle, Chief of the Mohawk Fire Department

Fire Chief Maracle is also advising the community that the hangar will continue to smoulder for a couple of days before being completely put out. He adds that crews will be keeping an eye on things and that community members should not be concerned with light smoke in the area.

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Photo courtesy of B. Cassibo at First Responders Photography