



# Global Nonviolent Action Database

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## Chippewa Natives push Canadian military base off ancestral lands (Camp Ipperwash), Ontario, 1995

April

1992

to: September

1995

**Country:** Canada

**Location City/State/Province:** *Ipperwash Provincial Park, near Sarina, Ontario*

### Goals:

- 1.) peaceful protest to reclaim treaty land entitlements
- 2.) protecting the traditional burial ground

## Methods

### Methods in 1st segment:

- 029. Symbolic reclamations

### Methods in 2nd segment:

- 173. Nonviolent occupation

### Methods in 3rd segment:

- 032. Taunting officials
- 174. Establishing new social patterns

### Methods in 4th segment:

- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 011. Records, radio, and television
- 038. Marches

### Methods in 5th segment:

### Methods in 6th segment:

- 173. Nonviolent occupation

### Additional methods (Timing Unknown):

- 022. Protest disrobings › Mooning
- 030. Rude gestures › Dudley George painted "Pig Fucker" on his vehicle

- 171. Nonviolent interjection › Dudley George stood individually in roads to force military vehicles to avoid him;

**Notes on Methods:**

Dudley George was responsible for all three methods listed as "Timing Unknown;" together these may constitute method 161: Nonviolent Harassment

## Classifications

**Classification:**

Change

**Cluster:**

Democracy

National/Ethnic Identity

**Group characterization:**

- Canadian First Nation Peoples

## Leaders, partners, allies, elites

**Leaders:**

Dudley George

**Partners:**

not known

**External allies:**

Canadian Auto Worker, Six Nations Reserve at Brantford from United States, National Association of Japanese Canadians,

**Involvement of social elites:**

not known

## Joining/exiting order of social groups

**Groups in 1st Segment:**

**Groups in 2nd Segment:**

**Groups in 3rd Segment:**

- Canadian Auto workers
- six nation reserves from the United States

**Groups in 4th Segment:**

**Groups in 5th Segment:**

**Groups in 6th Segment:**

- Bruce Elijah was a negotiator
- then Existed

**Segment Length:** 7 months

## Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

### **Opponents:**

provincial government, Federal government, northern Indian affairs, Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat (Julie Jai), Ontario Provincial Police, Canadian Military, Sergeant Kenneth Deane, Department of National Defence

### **Nonviolent responses of opponent:**

the captain Doug Smith of the military base contacted Robert Antone and Bruce Elijah that were trained in Conflict Resolution and crisis management to try negotiating with the Chippewa natives. Antone and Elijah withdraw because they knew that the First Nations people were not going to leave and they did not want to be involved in any physical confrontation.

### **Campaigner violence:**

None known.

### **Repressive Violence:**

On September 7, 1995 Dudley George died from the gunshot wound. Deane was eventually convicted of criminal negligence causing death.

## Success Outcome

### **Success in achieving specific demands/goals:**

4 points out of 6 points

### **Survival:**

0.5 points out of 1 point

### **Growth:**

2 points out of 3 points

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In 1942 the Canadian government used the War Measures Act to force eighteen Chippewa families from Stony Point First nation off their land. The land, which came to be camp Ipperwash, was used for military purposes, and the federal government agreed to return the land once they were done with it. This land is traditional burial grounds of the Chippewa Natives, but the Canadian government broke their promise and never returned the land.

During 1992 to 1995 the Chippewa people started a campaign of non-violent actions on their territory to get their land back and protect the burial ground at Camp Ipperwash.

By 1992 it had been half a century since the land was taken.

The Standing Committee on Aboriginal people had written a report recommending that Ottawa give Camp Ipperwash back to the Chippewa natives of Stony Point. Kettle and Stony Point members followed up on the report by serving the Department of National Defence with an eviction notice. The eviction notice was supported by members of the National Association of Japanese Canadians who were able to relate to the Chippewa natives on the issue of land having been taken from them by the government. During this event there were one hundred people in attendance supporting and protesting with Chippewa natives of Stony Point.

On 27 May 1993 some residents of Stony Point First Nation began reclaiming their former community by occupying a piece of the land. Anthony Dudley George led the 30 protesters; he was to lose his life in the course of the struggle.

Thus began a sporadic occupation which would culminate in a larger occupation of 1995. The occupying community grew to about one hundred people; they got visitors from Six Nations Reserve at Brantford, from the United States, and from the

Canadian autoworkers union.

In July 1993 Clifford George, Derrick George and Martin Glen Kewageshig set up a makeshift toll booth on Matheson Drive leading to Lake Huron and began charging occupants of vehicles five dollars to get to Camp Ipperwash. These men did this in an attempt to develop new social patterns for the people that were using Matheson Drive to go to the beach. The men were arrested and incarcerated for three days by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and charged with mischief. They could have got bail if they agreed to stay away from Camp Ipperwash, but they did not to accept those conditions.

Sept 12 1993 citizens of Stoney Point continued to periodically occupy the land but felt they needed to use other tactics to put pressure on the government. It was decided that the people of Stoney Point were going to “[begin] a three week walk to Ottawa with about thirty others to press the government to recognize their treaty rights to Stoney Point.” The media sporadically covered this story; it was an event which hit a nerve with government officials.

In July 29, 1995 The Chippewa Natives used a diversion to force the military personnel completely off of the base, Camp Ipperwash. The Chippewas loaded a school bus of people and forced their way into the park, refusing to leave. At this point protesters occupied not just the land, but also the administrative buildings.

A week after the whole camp was taken over by the Chippewa natives, military personnel helped the Chippewa natives learn how to do the day-to-day operations of the base.

On 4 September 1995 (Labour Day weekend in Canada) the Ipperwash Provincial Park was officially occupied by the leader Dudley George and protesters of Stoney and Kettle Point First Nation. One of the protesters cut a hole into the fence at Ipperwash Provincial Park, and 12 people entered the grounds. By the end of the night there were thirty-five people occupying the park.

The acting park superintendent John Carson was not surprised to hear that the Chippewa natives and supporters had occupied Camp Ipperwash. Carson spoke with acting detective staff sergeant Mark Wright telling him that this occupation was going to be called Project Maple so no one would know what they were talking about when they discussed Camp Ipperwash. The primary objective was to “contain and negotiate a peaceful resolution.”

A plan was developed by authorities for the OPP and the Chippewa Natives to resolve the stalemate, but it was not followed.

This was the plan: there were to be thirteen negotiators working around the clock while the Chippewa occupied camp Ipperwash; arrest teams were to have a male and female officer when they made an arrest; officers were to have cameras with them and videotape the arrests so the police were not wrongly accused of police brutality. The police had spies in the park with the protesters to watch what they were doing. In their reports the OPP officers acknowledged that there were no signs of the Chippewa natives having any weapons or using any violence towards anyone in their occupation.

On 5 September 1995 the park was monitored by the OPP who were watching the protesters by helicopter, boat and with night vision goggles. Also watching the protesters closely was MPP Marcel Beaubien who had a political interest in this protest.

The OPP was waiting for the protesters to attack but the protesters did not do anything. The protesters minded their own business and occupied the park peacefully. The protesters actually felt that the OPP actions were harassing them.

Government officials had meetings all day long on September 5 discussing what they should do about the protesters in the park. There were reports from the police that there were gunshots fired but subsequent reports show that in fact it was that the protesters were lighting firecrackers.

In the morning of 6 September 1995 government spokespeople gave a news briefing to the media saying that there were police cruisers damaged by rocks and reports of gunfire. No one investigated the reports of gunfire, however, there had been an incident in the early morning with Dudley George and a youth where police had make threats toward them and shouted racist comments at them. During this incident Dudley George and the youth formed a barricade with picnic tables which blocked

access to the beach.

Bureaucrats held a meeting in downtown Toronto to discuss the political aspect of ending the Camp Ipperwash occupation. In the early evening Gerald "Booper" George made a statement to Constable Sam Poole about how a rock throwing incident had happened between him and Stewart George which caused damage to his sister's vehicle. This story got twisted into a rumour that added more violence to the story.

Riot squad members then entered the park not knowing the full story and were expecting to use deadly force on the protesters. Just after eleven o'clock that evening Dudley George was shot by Sergeant Ken Deane. J.T Cousins was shot as well but survived and Cecil George was injured by the OPP. Dudley George's sister and brother took Dudley to the hospital for medical attention. Cecil and his brother were arrested before the siblings could talk to the hospital to get help for Dudley.

On 7 September 1995 Dudley George died from the gunshot wound. Deane was eventually convicted of criminal negligence causing death. Sam George pushed for a public inquiry into his brother's death and in 2003 it was finalized and the inquiry was made public. One of the findings of the Inquiry was that, according to Former Attorney General Charles Harnick, the Premier of Ontario Mike Harris had stated "I want the fucking Indians out of the park" just hours before the OPP shooting occurred.

The Inquiry also called on the government to return the land, which it did by 2013. The land had been rendered uninhabitable due to the environmental damage caused by the military base and the potential presence of unexploded ordinances. Because of the condition of the land the agreement is still under review by Kettle and Stoney Point First Nations.

After reclaiming the land, the Chippewas of the Stoney Point First Nation call it Aushoodaana Anjibaajig, or resting place.

## Research Notes

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