

November 8th

National Indigenous Veterans Day



This November 8th is National Aboriginal Veterans Day, a day of remembrance and commemoration of the contributions of Indigenous veterans in the First and Second World Wars, as well as the Korean War. This Aboriginal Veterans Day, we would like to express our gratitude for the contributions Indigenous veterans have made to Canada and the world.

National Aboriginal Veterans Day began in Winnipeg in 1994 when Indigenous veterans were not recognized in Remembrance Day activities, and is now celebrated in many communities across Canada. Over 12,000 Indigenous people are estimated to have volunteered in all three wars, including 7,000 First Nations members, and approximately 300 died during these conflicts.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis people were not eligible for conscription because they were not citizens of Canada (they were also unable to vote), but many volunteered despite the challenges they faced, including traveling long distances from remote communities to enlist, learning a new language (English), and coping with racism against them. Indigenous people were not allowed to join the Canadian Air Force until 1942 and the Canadian Navy until 1943. Both men and women enlisted, serving as soldiers, nurses and in other roles. Many served with distinction, winning medals for bravery in action.

After the war, enlisted Indigenous people returned home to continued discrimination, including in some cases denial of benefits, loss of Indian Status, and expropriation of their land by the government for non-Indigenous veterans. It was only in 1995 that Indigenous veterans were allowed to lay wreaths commemorating their fallen comrades at the National War Memorial in Ottawa. The first monument commemorating the role of Indigenous people during these three wars was dedicated in 2001 in Ottawa. It took until 2003 for the Government of Canada to provide veterans' benefits to First Nations soldiers who had been denied them in the past, and Métis veterans have never received them.

Today, Indigenous people continue to serve in Canada's armed forces.

"Fighting overseas for freedom, coming home to inequality" - Scott Sheffield, History professor

We Remember



[14 Facts you may not know about Contributions of Indigenous Veterans](#)



[Remembrance Moments: Indigenous Veterans - Veterans Affairs Canada](#)



[The First Nations, Métis and Inuit people of Canada have a long and proud tradition of military service to our country. - Veterans Affairs Canada](#)



[Honouring First Nations Veterans of Nishnawbe Aski Nation](#)



[Indigenous War Heroes - Muskrat Magazine](#)



[CBC's Unreserved Podcast - Remembering the Contributions of Indigenous Veterans](#)



[Tommy Prince Canadian War Hero](#)



[Francis Pegahmagabow: Most Decorated Indigenous Soldier](#)



[Letters from George Stonefish of Delaware Nation wrote during World War 1](#)

Local First Nation Connections:



[Kettle & Stony Point First Nation](#)

This video shares stories of the veterans and monument of Kettle & Stony Point First Nation.



[Aamjiwnaang First Nation](#)

This article share the stories of veterans from Aamjiwnaang First Nation.



[Walpole Bkejwanong Island First Nation](#)

This video shares a Remembrance Day Ceremony at Bkejwanong (Walpole Island) First Nation.