



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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STATEMENT

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National Indigenous Veterans Recognition and the Path Forward

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC) – On this Indigenous Veterans Day, November 8th, we reflect on the significant strides made in recognizing the contributions of First Nations veterans over the years. The evolution of acknowledgment from both the Canadian government and the Canadian Armed Forces signifies a growing appreciation for the strength and courage and the many sacrifices made by First Nations who have served their communities and our nation.

However, while we celebrate these changing perceptions, we must also confront the alarming and stark realities faced by many veterans today. The high rates of homelessness and unemployment among this group are of serious concern and require immediate attention. It is urgent that we not only recognize their sacrifices but also take concrete actions to ensure their well-being and integration into our communities and the larger society.

Moreover, it is crucial to acknowledge and honour Indigenous veterans who served before Aboriginal Veterans Day was established. Their struggle and grassroots efforts laid the groundwork for the recognition we observe today, and we owe it to them to make sure they are never forgotten.

Today, First Nations governments stand to gain significantly by actively employing veterans as they transition out of military service. The unique structure and discipline they bring can profoundly benefit communities, fostering a sense of belonging for those who have dedicated years to being part of a team. By integrating these veterans into community roles, we not only honour their service but also enhance the resiliency and cohesion within our First Nations communities.

Let us strive to do more for our Indigenous veterans, ensuring they receive the recognition and support they deserve, and work towards a future where their contributions are acknowledged every day.

Currently, almost 3000 Indigenous members are enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces. Some also fill other military roles, such as the Canadian Rangers, army reservists who are predominantly active in the North and on remote stretches of our east and west coasts.

Background Links:

<http://www.aboriginalveteranlist.ca/?fbclid=IwAR1oH8QVvutKwiAzDd-re5T3BXrfAsetvbJI0GXdotWmOih5S5xzhCYDPrw>

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/history/historical-sheets/indigenous-veterans>

https://www.nfb.ca/film/forgotten_warriors/

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