Nov. 8, 2026

BCAFN Honours First Nations Veterans on National Aboriginal Veterans Day

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory/Prince George, B.C.) — In addition to Remembrance Day, Indigenous peoples across Canada celebrate National Aboriginal Veterans Day on November 8th to make visible the contributions and unique experiences of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. The BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) honours First Nations veterans and active service members and recognizes the difficult struggle to secure recognition for the work and sacrifices they have made for their nations. On this day, BCAFN also remembers the families and communities who supported those serving overseas and at home, often while facing restrictive government policies and the absence of loved ones.

First Nations have served in Canada's military across generations, including in the War of 1812, the South African War (1899-1902), the World Wars, the Korean War, the Cold War-era NATO service, the UN peace-support operations, and the Afghanistan mission. Their service reflects strength, courage and commitment to their families, communities and homelands. BCAFN also remembers those who lost their lives and acknowledges the lasting grief and impacts these losses have brought to First Nations communities.

First Nations veterans' sacrifices and service have too often been met with discrimination and exclusion. Many First Nations veterans returned home to face systemic and institutional racism and had to fight barriers to obtain benefits and support. Some were denied access to programs available to other veterans because of policies tied to their First Nations status. Veterans and their families also had to contend with the effects of colonial laws and policies that undermined First Nations' identities and rights.

BCAFN recognizes the determination of First Nations veterans who advocated for equality and recognition, helping ensure their stories are part of Canada's history. The formal apology by Canadian Armed Forces leadership in 2023 for systemic racism, discrimination and harassment experienced by members, including Indigenous veterans and service members, was an important acknowledgment. It must continue to be accompanied by meaningful action to address systemic barriers and support healing.

BCAFN recognizes the continuing service of First Nations people in the Canadian Armed Forces, the Canadian Rangers and reserve forces who maintain peace and our nation's sovereignty. Canadians are reminded to recognize First Nations veterans, support those who currently serve, and advance reconciliation through respect, recognition and lasting change.

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