



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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NEWS RELEASE

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BCAFN CELEBRATES THE 25TH ABORIGINAL VETERANS DAY

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC – Nov. 8, 2018) – The British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) remembers and celebrates Indigenous peoples who served and sacrificed for their Nation(s) on the 25th Aboriginal Veterans Day. We hold up our hands and honour our peoples' contributions and sacrifices during and after those times of great conflict.

“We encourage all Canadians to join us in recognizing and remembering the long history of partnerships and cooperation, and the sacrifices and accomplishments in this country.” states Regional Chief Terry Teegee.

This time of remembrance is when we look back and reflect, learn and acknowledge Canada's history of diversity and collaborations. In particular, Indigenous people participated in every 20th century conflict Canada was involved at a higher per-capita rate than any other group. It is estimated that as many as 12,000 Indigenous peoples served in Canada's military service with at least 500 losing their lives. Many overcame substantial challenges to serve, including learning new languages and traveling from remote communities. In addition, First Nations contributed to various war funds despite poverty caused by restrictive government policies and the absence of their able-bodied men. Approximately \$70,000 was raised and donated during the First and Second World Wars.

Sadly, life became more difficult for most First Nations veterans, their families and communities upon their return from war. Enfranchisement was extended to include status Indians who joined the military and after serving their country they lost their status, and in the process, were denied their return home.

Today more than 1200 Indigenous people are currently enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces.

For further information, contact:

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