

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

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Statement

November 8, 2021

UBCIC Commemorates National Aboriginal Veterans Day

(X^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skw^xwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – November 8, 2021) Today, on National Aboriginal Veterans Day, UBCIC remembers and honours the contributions of all Indigenous veterans in war and peacekeeping operations. We express our deepest gratitude for the generations of courageous First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples who have supported Canada's military efforts with dedication and valour for over 200 years.

Indigenous veterans have made tremendous contributions to the Canadian Armed Forces, fighting and enduring immense hardship in many conflicts, including World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War, and the Korean War. As some of the highest decorated soldiers, aviators and sailors, it is truly incredible that these Indigenous men and women bravely laid down their lives so that other countries and peoples could achieve what we as Indigenous peoples continually fight for today: peace, freedom, and equality. Despite not having their own Title and Rights respected and recognized by Canada, Indigenous veterans have fought and are continuing to fight to keep Canada at peace, and we must all recognize, honour, and learn from their sacrifices and contributions.

Today, UBCIC honours not only Indigenous veterans of war, but also Indigenous veterans who were subjected to the cruelties and oppression of the Indian Residential School System. Indian Residential School trauma and post-war PTSD continues to have devastating, intergenerational impacts upon Indigenous families, and it is imperative Canada acknowledges and rectifies the centuries of discrimination and injustices committed against Indigenous veterans. As ceremonies are held across Canada to mark this day, UBCIC urges Canada to provide more recognition and supports for Indigenous veterans whose healing journeys continue to be challenged by institutional racism. As Indigenous veterans continue to recover from complicated trauma and continue to share their invaluable stories and wisdom, Canada owes it to their sacrifices to support, cherish, and commemorate them.

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For more information please visit www.ubcic.bc.ca