




# Aboriginal Veterans Day

Indigenous Canadian soldiers have contributed their service in every major war conflict Canada has participated in, standing shoulder to shoulder with the other veterans. All the brave men and women, regardless of their cultural identity, gave the ultimate sacrifice and displayed immense acts of bravery to protect the rights and freedoms of Canadians across the country. Although they were not required to enlist, many of Canada's First People did. Determined Indigenous volunteers overcame many challenges to serve in uniform, from learning a new language and adapting to cultural differences, to having to travel great distances from remote communities just to enlist.

Indigenous soldiers were given special roles within the Canadian Armed Forces using their skills. For example, Indigenous soldiers were used 'code talkers' to send secret messages using their nation's language. Many First Nations soldiers were revered for their well-honed hunting skills and used as snipers. Indigenous soldiers were also used as reconnaissance scouts, meaning they used their knowledge of hunting quietly and were able to sneak ahead to gather information on where the enemy was. Despite their significant contributions, sacrifices and perceived equality in battle, Indigenous soldiers were not considered Canadian citizens, and therefore did not receive the same treatment or benefits as the other soldiers did upon their return.



National Aboriginal Veterans Day is a memorial day observed in Canada which recognizes Indigenous contributions to military service, particularly in the First and Second World War and the Korean War. National Aboriginal Veterans Day takes place on November 8th. On November 8th, or while observing Remembrance Day, please take a moment of silence for those Indigenous soldiers who gave up so much, so that we could live a carefree life today.



# Follow-Up Questions



Answer the questions on a separate piece of paper. Remember to restate the question in your answer.

1. What is the date that National Aboriginal Veterans Day observed?

2. What were two obstacles Indigenous people overcame to enlist?

3. What is a reconnaissance soldier?

4. What were the three major wars Indigenous soldiers fought in?

5. What were two special roles Indigenous soldiers played in the Canadian Armed Forces?

6. Where Indigenous soldiers treated the same as other Canadian soldiers while in battle?

7. Where Indigenous soldiers treated the same as other Canadian soldiers after the war? Why?

8. Why do you think it's important to recognize November 8th as National Aboriginal Veterans Day?