

National Aboriginal Veterans Remembrance Day Backgrounder

On November 8, 1993 the first [Indigenous Veteran's Day](#) took place across Canada and in 1994 the day was officially recognized by the Government of Manitoba to honor the contributions of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples who served in the Canadian Military. Six years later on June 21st, 2001 [a national monument of bronze with a granite](#) created by Indigenous artist Noel Lloyd Pinay of the Peepeekisis First Nation in Saskatchewan was unveiled in Confederation Park in Ottawa. Pinay was inspired by the dedication and sacrifice made by his father, Noel Joseph Pinay, who was a paratrooper during the Second World War. Using traditional symbols, Pinay brings the essential Aboriginal value of harmony with nature to the forefront. The inscription of the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument in Ottawa is very heartwarming.

The national monument in Ottawa is featured in an important documentary by [Loretta Todd](#). [Forgotten Warriors](#) (51 minutes, 1997) is streaming for free on the National Film Board's website. This powerful documentary film, nominated for a Genie award, remembers the World War II soldiers who risked their lives overseas only to return to find their land confiscated.

Five year later in 2002, Kwakwaka'wakw Totem Pole Artist [Calvin Hunt](#) was commissioned to create a totem pole at the Veterans Memorial Lodge in Broadmead near Victoria (Lekwungen and W̱SÁNEĆ territories). Another Kwakwaka'wakw artist, [Andy Everson](#), created a poppy featuring four thunderbirds design in 2005 to honour the sacrifices made by men and women to ensure that we can live our lives in comparative peace.