



MÉTIS NATION

For Immediate Release

The Métis Nation, with support from Veterans Affairs Canada, announce the Métis Veterans Legacy Commemorative Program

February 22, 2021, Winnipeg, MB: Today, David Chartrand, National Spokesperson and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Métis National Council (MNC), and President, Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), is proud to announce the launch of the Métis Veterans Legacy Commemorative Program.

The Metis Nation is honoured to include the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, who signed an historic agreement with the Metis Nation in June of 2019 that recognized the role Metis Veterans played in defending Canada in WWII.

This commemorative program is a key component of the Métis Veterans Legacy Program (MVLV). It is designed as a permanent initiative that honours Métis women and men who served Canada without acknowledgement or financial support upon return from World War II, and will promote awareness and appreciation across the Métis Nation and all of Canada acknowledging the vital role Métis Veterans played in defending Canada.

The sacrifices and contributions Métis Veterans made to ensure peace and prosperity for all remain largely unknown throughout Canada. Many were not given a hero's welcome upon their return and experienced difficulties in transitioning to civilian life. Instead, they returned to indifference and racism, as many Métis endured.

Over the past year, virtually throughout COVID, the Métis Veterans Legacy Program compensated 30 living WWII Métis Veterans who were recognized for their duty in serving Canada in one of the costliest

wars on record. In recognition of Métis Veterans who have passed, 30 spouses of deceased WWII Métis Veterans and 10 children of WWII Métis Veterans, have received recognition payments of \$20,000, thus far. For a full listing of these veterans, and their stories, please visit www.metisveterans.ca

Today's announcement focuses on nationally commemorating the volume of the sacrifice by Métis who were conscripted from hundreds of Métis communities across Canada beginning with the First and Second World Wars. A strong emphasis on engaging and working with Métis communities across the Métis homeland will be placed to bring forth ideas and proposals that fittingly acknowledge the role Métis Veterans played in defending Canada in times of war. Many were very young, not unlike the thousands of other Canadians who defended democracy and decency decades ago.

These commemorative projects will support efforts of Métis communities to honour Métis Veterans. Communities will be called upon to design local initiatives and can be supported to up to \$200,000. Creating space with monuments to gather and honour; hosting ceremonies; creating education initiatives; there are many ways the Métis honour and celebrate in their communities. The Métis Veterans Legacy Commemorative Program will invite Métis citizens to create public displays of homage to Métis Veterans whose contributions to upholding Canadian freedoms are a shared valued in many Métis communities across Canada.

The Métis Nation and Veterans Affairs Canada are committed to working together to improve communications and outreach regarding the Métis Veterans Legacy Commemorative Program to enhance public awareness of commemorative projects for Métis Veterans. Veterans Affairs Canada brings to the partnership their network of contacts across Canada that will support outreach and engagement to better educate others on the impacts of war on Métis Veterans and their families.

The Métis Veterans Legacy Commemorative Program involves engaging veterans, veterans' representatives, and Métis communities to determine the best way to honour the role Métis Veterans played in defending Canada and protecting its democracy.

Statement by Spokesperson and Vice-President David Chartrand, Metis National Council and President, Manitoba Metis Federation

“The objective of the Métis Veterans Legacy Commemorative Program is to leave a strong, honest portrayal and a legacy to the thousands of Métis men and women who fought for Canada but who were forgotten when they came home. Many did not return. These are our heroes, especially in Métis communities where so many young men, and women, left to serve. They will always be our heroes. This program gives new life, and respect to our Veterans who fought for Canada. We now get to share this with others and create a permanent legacy to their sacrifices.”

Statement by the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence

“Over the years, Métis have stepped forward to serve in uniform both here at home and around the world, and I’m very pleased to see the launch of a program that will promote awareness and appreciation of the countless sacrifices and contributions that Métis Veterans have made. Our government is committed to working with the Métis community to support the Veterans Legacy Commemorative Program, and to increase awareness of our programs and services among Métis Veterans. I’m forever grateful to Métis Veterans and their families for the sacrifices they have made in service of our country.”

The Métis Veterans Legacy Commemorative Program will now begin outreach to Métis communities and individuals across the homeland about the commemorative program. It hopes to start announcing projects by June of 2021 in honour of Métis Veterans everywhere.

Métis Veterans: Our heroes today, tomorrow, and forever.

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