

# Remembrance Day: Aboriginal Soldiers and History

## ***Interesting fact***

“Aboriginal participation in Canada’s war efforts was proportionately higher than that of any other group of people in Canada. It is estimated that one in three able-bodied Aboriginal men enlisted in the First World War. More than 7000 Status Indians fought in the two world wars; some estimate that the number would be closer to 12,000 if the Non-Status Indians were included.” (Source: Veterans Affairs Canada website.)

Quoted from [http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/foundation\\_gr6/cluster2\\_partb.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/foundation_gr6/cluster2_partb.pdf)

## ***Lesson Ideas***

Have the students research an Aboriginal veteran. This could be a veteran from any war, including those soldiers in Afghanistan today. There are also websites and books mentioned below that would provide information.

Have a local Aboriginal veteran come in and speak about his/her experiences, lessons and memories of service for Canada

Put together a PowerPoint for the school about Aboriginal involvement in the wars of Canada and show this at the Remembrance Day assembly.

Create a timeline of all the external wars Canada has been involved in to give students a sense of when wars happened.

## ***Websites***

### **Native Soldiers – Foreign Battlefields**

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=history/other/native>

This is a great resource for information on Aboriginal involvement in World War I and II, as well as the Korean War. The book profiles specific soldiers, such as Tommy Prince and Tom Longboat. This book will be distributed to schools in both English and French, but an English PDF version can be found at the address above. Call 1-877-604-8469 toll-free to order a paper copy of this book from Veterans Affairs Canada.

### **Aboriginal Veterans: Stories of Honour and Heroism**

<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ach/lr/ks/cr/pubs/vet-eng.asp>

“Imagine yourself having lived in a small community all your life. Now, imagine that the year is 1914.” A short article about Aboriginals who were involved in the First World War. This is a downloadable PDF from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

## Aboriginal Spiritual Journeys

[http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=feature/abspirit/hero\\_rem](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=feature/abspirit/hero_rem)

This specific website address is for the *Heroes Remember Interviews* which has information for five Aboriginal veterans. The page has details for each veteran on the wars fought in, personal history and has great video clips of the veterans speaking about their experiences. The number of video clips varies per veteran. Transcripts are provided for each clip. Topics covered are wide, including experiences of fighting the SS and Hitler Youth, racism the veterans experienced, and battle conditions. You can click on the *Aboriginal Spiritual Journeys* link near the top of the page to go to the Table of Contents.

## Tommy Prince, Canadian Hero

[http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/PrinterFriendly.cfm?Params=A1ARTFET\\_E69](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/PrinterFriendly.cfm?Params=A1ARTFET_E69)

## Historica Minutes – Tommy Prince

<http://www.histori.ca/minutes/minute.do?id=14741>

## Cree Code Talkers Kept Allied Secrets Safe during the Second World War

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=feature/week2001/media01/cree>

“Navajo code talkers proved so successful in battles fought by the American forces that the U.S. 8th Air Force stationed in England requested assistance from Canadian Aboriginals to encode messages about bombing missions over enemy territory in Europe.” From Veterans Affairs Canada website. (2001)

## Spirit of the Bear Ceremony Reaches Out to Soldiers

[http://www.army.forces.gc.ca/lfwa/feature\\_spirit\\_bear.asp](http://www.army.forces.gc.ca/lfwa/feature_spirit_bear.asp)

This is from the National Defense website about Aboriginal soldiers in Afghanistan and ceremonies for returning soldiers. The article is written by Sgt Dennis Power, a reporter with Army News Shilo (2006).

## ***Resources in the District***

### ***LRC resources***

Forgotten Soldiers (video) c. 1991 30 mins. Gr. 10-12 bar code VT1720 call # VT 970.004 FOR

Summary: This video provides information about how First Nations soldiers were mistreated before, during and after serving in World War One and World War Two. First Nations soldiers' involvement in the history of fighting for Canada was forgotten and this video, through interviews with soldiers, archival footage and photographs gives an excellent history of the wars from the First Nations soldiers' perspective. Candid interviews with two soldiers describe mistreatment by the federal government of First Nations soldiers. Remembrance Day material.

Forgotten Warriors (video) c. 1996 51 mins. Gr. 10-12 bar code VT6522 call # VT 970.004 FOR (also available at Highland, Isfeld and Vanier)

Summary: Documents the story of the thousands of Aboriginal men and women who enlisted and fought alongside their non-Native countrymen in WWII, and their post-war loss of reserve land to non-Native war veterans. Aboriginal veterans also share their wartime memories and healing processes. Narrated by Gordon Tootoosis.

Native Soldiers; Foreign Battlefields (kit) c. 1993 bar code KT1402 call # KT 970.004 NAT

Contents: 16 books: 15 copies: Native soldiers: foreign battlefields; 1 book: Forgotten soldiers by Fred Gaffen (ISBN:0919441106), 1 pamphlet: Aboriginal veterans: stories of honour and heroism.

Summary: Canada's first inhabitants responded quickly and in impressive numbers during the First World War, the Second World War and the Korean War. Their sacrifices and achievements were inspiring. In producing this publication, Veterans Affairs Canada hopes that Canadians, particularly those who are learning about Canadian history in the classroom, will gain a better understanding of the contribution of Aboriginal Veterans to this nation's wartime response. Over twenty Native veterans describe their experiences and present a general overview of the wartime sacrifices and achievements of all of Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

Remembrances: Métis Veterans (book) c. 1997 Gr. 6 – 12 call # HL 940.4 REM

Summary: A collection of interviews with Métis veterans from both World Wars and the Korean War. Their experiences, the social and economic pressures that were at play at that time, expressions of what was lost or gained, are stories told with a gentle humour and wry sense of reality.

### ***Individual school resources***

Tom Longboat (graphic story), from Literacy Power (Level E) p. 63-67 c. 2004 available at Lake Trail

Aboriginal Information, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (duotang of 9 booklets) c. 1998, 2000 call # PRO 970.004 ABO available at Comox Elem (? Might be Aspen or Queneesh)

Summary: included are stories of aboriginal veterans, aboriginal names, aboriginal foods, aboriginal communities, First Nations music, First Nations people of Canada, legends and stories, stories the totems tell and Aboriginal honor through proud military traditions in the Canadian forces.

Fallen Hero: The Tommy Prince Story (video) c. 1998 call # VT 971.009 FAL available at Highland

Summary: THE FALLEN HERO - THE TOMMY PRINCE STORY is the story of a man of incredible drive and ambition, with keen instincts, sharp eye and strong leadership qualities. His name is well known across Canada, both for his unprecedented accomplishments and as a metaphor for the hypocrisy and prejudices of our country, Canada. Many stories have explored Tommy's past, but this documentary focuses on his life & his lasting legacy. His story, from the poverty of his isolated reserve, through becoming a war hero, to the minefield of being an Indian in Canada is a journey of epic proportions.

Canadian heroes Maxine Trottier (book) c. 2007 call # 971.1 TRO available at Aspen, Lake Trail

Summary: Shadow Tommy Prince as he scouts out the enemy and reports their position.

Forgotten Soldiers Fred Gaffen (book) c. 1985 call # 940.3 GAF available at Lake Trail

Native Soldiers, Foreign Battlefields Janice Summerby (book) c. 1993 call # 355 SUM available at Puntledge, Cape Lazo, Cumberland Jr., Highland, Lake Trail, Isfeld, Miracle Beach  
Issued also in French under title: Soldats autochtones, terres étrangères.

The man who ran faster than everyone: the story of Tom Longboat Jack Batten (book) c. 2002 call # 796.4  
BAT available at Aspen, Cumberland Jr., Vanier, Highland, Hornby Is., Lake Trail

To run like wildfire: the story of Tom Longboat and the race to be world champion Suzy Botica (book) c. 2009  
call # 796.42 BOT available at Lake Trail

Tom Longboat Bruce Kidd (book) c. 2004 call # 796.42 KID available at Lake Trail

Summary: Tom Longboat was Canada's greatest distance runner. This book describes his background and details some of his famous victories and his life after he stopped running. The book's author is another famous runner Bruce Kidd. Some topics covered include Lacrosse, Lou Marsh, Native people, the Olympic Games, the Olympic Marathon, and World War I.

Tom Longboat: coureur de fonds Leslie Garrett (book) c. 2005 call # FRA 796.42 GAR available at Robb Road