

# Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## **Métis Nation–Saskatchewan, Métis National Council and First Nation Dignitaries gather at Batoche monument**

**Saskatoon, Saskatchewan** – Métis and First Nation dignitaries gathered at Batoche today for Indigenous Veterans Day to honour the Indigenous men and women who fought to protect our rights and freedoms. A moment of silence was observed for the many soldiers and warriors who fought together more than a century ago on the Métis homeland during the Northwest Resistance at Batoche, Duck Lake, Fish Creek and Cut Knife, and overseas during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, Afghanistan and continue to serve today.

Newly appointed Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) Minister of Veterans Mervin “Tex” Bouvier recognized and acknowledged the veterans, families and invited guests in attendance. Dumont Scout Elder Felix Merasty led the event as Master of Ceremonies including Michif, Cree, and English presentations, prayers by Elders, a lowering of flags, a veteran’s story of remembrance and a procession to the Batoche cemetery for prayers for the Métis and First Nations lost at the Battle of Batoche.

As veterans and Elders looked on, dignitaries representing the MN–S government, Métis National Council (MNC) and One Arrow First Nation placed wreaths at the Batoche National Historic Site monument in remembrance and honour of Indigenous veterans.

Newly elected MNC President Cassidy Caron, who has roots in the historic Métis communities of Batoche and St. Louis, attended the event with family to honour all Indigenous veterans, including those of her relatives whose names are inscribed on the Batoche monument.

“At Batoche, we have the unique opportunity to remember all Métis Veterans who have bravely served both the Métis Nation and Canada. It’s fitting we’ve gathered here for Indigenous Veterans Day,” says President Caron. “But let’s not limit our remembrance to only one day a year. Every day, we can honour Métis Veterans by sharing their stories, recognizing their enduring contributions, and doing our own part to build a brighter, more just future that we’ve all dreamed of.”

MN–S President Glen McCallum says, “Since the earliest days of our leaders Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont, our Métis people were and are still warriors. Our warriors have fought hard and strong to protect our safety, and later our rights and freedom. Métis men and women continue to serve to protect this country, and today, we gather to honour them all.”

Over the past century, Métis people have bravely answered the call to military service to defend Canada and its allies. Despite serving the Métis Nation and Canada with pride during the Second World War, Métis veterans did not receive similar benefits as other non-Indigenous veterans.

In September 2019, the Government of Canada formally apologized to Métis veterans and announced \$30 million to compensate Métis veterans across Canada and support commemorative initiatives. A payment of \$20,000 was allocated to each veteran for their wartime and post-war experiences. Further funding will support commemorative events and monuments at the community level, and MN–S is proud to participate in these activities.

MN–S Minister of Veterans Mervin “Tex” Bouvier says he looks forward to engaging with Métis families and veterans to find out how MN–S can further commemorate our veterans. “We will continue to honour and commemorate the sacrifice and bravery of Métis veterans, their families and communities, and the role they’ve played in our history and continue to play today,” says Minister Bouvier.

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### **About Métis National Council**

The Métis National Council (MNC) advocates on behalf of four Métis Governments: Métis Nation British Columbia, Métis Nation of Alberta, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, Métis Nation of Ontario and their Métis Citizens, on the national and international stage. The MNC is committed to accountability and transparency and is mandated to promote the cultural, social, economic and political interests of the Métis Nation.

### **About Métis Nation–Saskatchewan**

Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) is the recognized government of the Métis Nation in Saskatchewan. MN–S is built on a foundation of Métis identity, culture, values and language. MN–S works to advance Métis rights and recognition. MN–S represents the political, socioeconomic, cultural and educational interests of more than 80,000 Métis in the province through an elected representative system at local, regional and provincial levels.

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