

War Memories across Canada Conversation Kit:

The Great Equalizer Métis Veterans Memorial Monument Batoche, Saskatchewan



Private G.O. Parenteau (August 1944)
Bibliothèque et Archives Canada – Library and Archives Canada/
PA-128089

Over 7300 Métis men and women who contributed to Canada's war efforts from the First World War to the present day, are commemorated at the Métis Veterans Memorial Monument in Batoche in Saskatchewan. Specifically, during the Second World War Métis volunteers enjoyed the equalizing effects of a nation working together for a common cause. Unfortunately, their efforts were largely ignored after the war when a return to daily life also meant a return to racial discrimination. The monument at Batoche serves as a celebration of the Métis contribution to Canadian and world history, adding to a site already rich in historical and cultural significance.

Discussion Questions:

From your review of the resource material, what do you think is the historical significance of Batoche, Saskatchewan? Why do you think it was chosen as the site for a Métis Veterans Memorial Monument?

How do you think war equalized Canadians of different backgrounds in terms of race, religious beliefs, and economic status? Can you give examples of recent situations where people from various backgrounds pulled together for a common cause?

Describe what happened to Métis soldiers after the war and they returned to their homes and families?

Why do you think it was so difficult to track down Métis soldiers who fought in the Second World War? Why couldn't they indicate being Métis when they enlisted?

How do you think the postwar Métis experience was different from other veterans across Canada? How did discrimination impact Métis soldiers? How should we properly commemorate the contribution of Métis soldiers? Can commemoration be linked to reconciliation as outlined in the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action](#)?

Activities:

The Memory Project has a [collection of veterans' stories](#). Using the keyword *Métis* search the database and select a veteran interview. Listen or read the transcript and write a summary of the veteran's wartime and post war experience. The Memory Project website is also available in [French](#).

Visit Batoche Saskatchewan for [Back to Batoche Days](#), a celebration of Métis culture, which takes place every year in July. Create a presentation about Back to Batoche Days to present to your class.



Brothers Morris and Tommy Prince (February 1945)
Bibliothèque et Archives Canada – Library and Archives
Canada/PA-142289

Resources:

Websites

Aboriginal Canadians in the Second World War –
Veterans Affairs Canada
<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/history/historical-sheets/aborigin>
Available in [French](#).

Back to Batoche – Virtual Museum of Canada
<http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/batoche/html/about/index.php>
Available in [French](#).

Batoche National Historic Site – Parks Canada
<http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/sk/batoche/index.aspx>
Available in [French](#).

Decorated First Nations vet Tommy Prince embodied triumph, darkness of war – CBC News, August 8, 2014
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/decorated-first-nations-vet-tommy-prince-embodied-triumph-darkness-of-war-1.2730680>

Gabriel Dumont Institute – Virtual Museum
<http://www.metismuseum.ca/>
An extensive collection of Métis culture and history.

War and the Métis, by Darren R. Préfontaine:
<http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/db/00732>
A student learning module about the impact of war on Métis communities and families.

Videos

Forgotten Warriors: The Story of Canada's Aboriginal Veterans, by Loretta Todd. National Film Board of Canada, 1996.

Books

Métis soldiers of Saskatchewan: 1914-1953, by Cathy Littlejohn. Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2012.
Outlines the contribution of Métis veterans to Canadian history and Métis culture.

Remembrances: Interviews with Métis Veterans. Gabriel Dumont Institute, 1997.
A collection of the experiences of Métis veterans who served in the First World War, the Second World War, and the Korean War. Available [online](#).

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