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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Abegweit First Nation Honours National Indigenous Veterans Day



Scotchfort, Epkwitk (PEI) —Abegweit First Nation hosted its annual Indigenous Veterans Day Ceremony yesterday to honour, remember, and pay respect to the Indigenous people who served and continue to serve our country during times of war, conflict, and peace.

National Indigenous Veterans Day is observed each year on November 8 to acknowledge and honour the Indigenous Veterans whose service has often been overlooked in the past.

The special ceremony took place in Scotchfort where Elders, Veterans, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Veterans Affairs Canada, Province of Prince Edward Island, community members, and students from Morell Consolidated School came together under the guidance of Chief Junior Gould to share stories, show respect, and honour their ancestors who fought for their freedom.

The service included a Mi'kmaq rendition of O'Canada performed by Abegweit First Nation youth, a traditional prayer by Elder Doreen Francis, a heartfelt moment of silence and the Mi'kmaq Honour Song performed by Tim Sock and CJ Cleal. The event also featured a wreath-laying ceremony, symbolizing gratitude and respect for the sacrifices made by Abegweit First Nation family and community members.



Chief Junior Gould shared the additional challenges and unique hardships that Indigenous Veterans faced when they returned home. “Despite serving on the front lines together, when Indigenous Veterans returned to Canada, they were not granted benefits like the rest of their counterparts. They had to fight for those benefits,” he stated.

“When these Veterans wanted to participate in Remembrance Day activities at Legions, like making a toast to their fallen comrades, they were not allowed to until 1951. In fact, these heroes nor their families were allowed to lay wreaths until the mid 1990’s,” added Chief Junior Gould.

“It is important that we continue to recognize the truth of our past and honour the First Nations people who served on the front lines for the freedom and rights of all Canadians,” said Chief Junior Gould. “And it’s our duty to continue sharing the truth of Canada’s history, and working together towards reconciliation and respect.”

To learn more about Indigenous Veterans Day and the First Nations, Métis and Inuit people who have contributed to military service, please visit the [Indigenous Veterans page on the Government of Canada website.](#)

About Abegweit First Nation:

Abegweit First Nation is a proud Mi'kmaq Band that traces its roots to Epekwitk (Prince Edward Island), dating back 10,000 years according to oral tradition and archaeological evidence. The official creation of the Abegweit First Nation occurred on March 7th, 1972. Originally, all Mi'kmaq on Epekwitk were a part of one band, the Lennox Island First Nation. The formation of a new Band was proposed as a means of better serving the needs of community members in Eastern PEI, a fair distance from the Lennox Island reserve in Western PEI. An overwhelming majority voted in favour of forming a new Band and Abegweit First Nation was formed. It is comprised of the Morell, Rocky Point, and Scotchfort reserves.

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