

# Beading a Soldier's Story

## *Alberta Program of Studies Connections*

### ***Social Studies 7, 8, 9, 10, 20, 30 and Indigenous Studies***

**Program Overview:** Beading a Soldier's Story is a full-day Indigenous cultural and historical education program where students become "story keepers" for Northwestern Alberta soldiers killed in WWI and WWII. Students participate in sacred smudging, research their assigned soldier through service files and artifacts, learn traditional beading techniques, and create a beaded memorial keychain (campaign ribbon + ID tag) that they keep forever.

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## **Grade 7: Canada: Origins, Histories and Movement of Peoples**

### **Skills and Processes (7.S) – PRIMARY ALIGNMENT**

**7.S.1: Develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking** - Students create beaded memorial keychains (campaign/war ribbon design + ID/dog tag) that represent a soldier's service and sacrifice - Students make creative decisions about design, color, and meaning while learning traditional Indigenous beading techniques

**7.S.2: Develop skills of historical thinking** - **Evidence:** Students examine service files, artifacts (firearms, mess kits, uniforms), and soldier storyboards as primary sources - **Cause and consequence:** Students explore why soldiers from diverse backgrounds enlisted and the discrimination many faced upon return - **Historical perspective:** Students understand WWI/WWII through family-narrated stories and oral histories from Elder Bill Chalifoux - **Continuity and change:** Students connect historical Indigenous cultural practices (beading, smudging) to contemporary commemoration

**7.S.7: Apply the research process** - Students are assigned a specific soldier and research their story through service files, storyboards, and oral histories - Students gather information about their soldier's regiment, battles, and sacrifice - Students become the "keeper" of that soldier's story through their beaded memorial creation

**7.S.8: Demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy** - **Oral:** Students participate in smudging ceremony and listen to Elder teachings and family-narrated soldier stories - **Written:**

Students read and interpret service files and historical documents - **Visual:** Students create a visual representation of their soldier's story through beaded keychains (campaign ribbon + ID tag) - Students express personal connection and understanding through their handmade memorial

## **General Outcomes (STRONG CONNECTIONS)**

### **7.1.1: Appreciate the influence of diverse Aboriginal, French and British peoples -**

Northwestern Alberta was incredibly diverse in 1912—almost every ethnicity under the sun lived and worked together, and they all served - Students learn about soldiers from Indigenous, Métis, French, British, Ukrainian, Polish, Scandinavian, and many other backgrounds who enlisted from this region - Students explore how this diverse community came together during wartime - Students learn about Col. Stone (British) and the remarkably diverse group of soldiers—including many Indigenous soldiers—who served under him - Students understand how Northwestern Alberta's multicultural reality shaped local military service

**7.1.2 & 7.2.1: Appreciate the challenges of coexistence among peoples -** Students learn about discrimination Indigenous veterans faced when they returned home despite their service - Students explore how soldiers from different backgrounds were treated differently—some honored, others denied recognition and benefits - Students understand the social implications of military service for Indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups - Students see how diverse peoples served side-by-side in war but faced different realities at home

**7.2.4: Analyze the impact of the Indian Act and residential schools -** Students view the residential schools display at Veterans Memorial Gardens - Students connect how residential school policies affected Indigenous soldiers and their families - Students learn why Indigenous Veterans Day was created to honor those denied recognition

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## **The Cultural and Emotional Power of the Program**

- **Smudging Ceremony (Cultural Protocol and Spiritual Connection)**
  - Students participate in sacred smudging with Elder Bill Chalifoux
  - Students learn the cultural importance of cleansing mind, body, and spirit before important work
  - Students understand Indigenous spiritual practices and protocols
  - **Curriculum Connection:** This teaches respect for Indigenous worldviews and ways of being, cultural practices, and the spiritual significance of remembrance
- **Beading (Cultural Practice and Art Integration)**
  - Students learn traditional Indigenous beading techniques from skilled artisans
  - Students develop fine motor skills, patience, focus, and attention to detail
  - Students understand beading as a cultural practice passed down through generations

- **Curriculum Connection:** Hands-on cultural learning, Indigenous artistry, and traditional knowledge transmission
  - **Creating the Memorial Keychains (Becoming a Story Keeper)**
    - Each student creates:
      - 1. **Beaded Campaign/War Ribbon:** Represents the soldier's service, regiment, and battles
      - 2. **ID/Dog Tag:** Personalizes the connection to their specific soldier
    - Students physically engage with their soldier's story through creation
    - The act of making something beautiful in honor of someone who died creates deep emotional connection
    - Students become the "newest keeper" of that soldier's story—a responsibility and honor
    - The keepsake is tangible, personal, and lasting—students carry their soldier's memory forward
    - **Curriculum Connection:** This is historical thinking at its most powerful—students don't just learn about history, they become part of the story. They create a physical connection to the past that they carry into the future.
  - **Visiting the Memorials (Place-Based Learning)**
    - Students visit Invisible (Indigenous War Memorial) and Infinity (Métis War Memorial), both created by Indigenous artist Grant Berg
    - Students walk the Treaty 8 pathway
    - Students see the names of local soldiers from diverse backgrounds and understand these were real people from their community
    - **Curriculum Connection:** Local history, place-based learning, understanding memorialization and cultural commemoration
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## Grade 8: Worldviews in Contact

### Skills and Processes (8.S)

**8.S.1 & 8.S.2: Critical thinking and historical thinking** - Students create beaded memorials that represent their understanding of a soldier's worldview and experience - Students interpret how Indigenous worldviews shaped soldiers' service and how colonial worldviews shaped their treatment upon return - Students explore how diverse cultural worldviews coexisted in Northwestern Alberta's multicultural community

**8.S.7: Research process** - Students research their assigned soldier and express that research through beaded memorial creation

**8.S.9: Media literacy** - Students interpret multiple sources: oral histories, service files, artifacts, and express understanding through visual/tactile creation

## General Outcomes

### **8.1.1: Appreciate how a society's worldview shapes individual citizenship and identity -**

Smudging ceremony demonstrates Indigenous worldview and spiritual practices - Students explore how soldiers' diverse cultural identities shaped their service and how they were perceived - Students understand how colonial worldview led to discrimination against Indigenous veterans despite their sacrifice

### **8.1.4: Examine how societies interact and change as a result of contact -**

Students learn about relationships between Col. Stone and his diverse group of soldiers—how military service created unique cross-cultural relationships - Students explore Northwestern Alberta's multicultural reality in 1912 and how diverse peoples lived, worked, and served together - Students understand how WWI/WWII impacted Indigenous and multicultural communities

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## Grade 9: Canada: Opportunities and Challenges

### **General Outcome 9.1 – Issues for Canadians: Governance and Rights**

#### **9.1.4: Analyze the impact of government policies on Aboriginal communities -**

Students learn about discrimination Indigenous veterans faced (denied benefits, land rights, recognition) - Students explore why Indigenous Veterans Day was created - Students view residential schools display and connect policies to soldiers' experiences

#### **9.1.5: Rights of individuals and groups -**

Students explore how Indigenous soldiers' rights were violated despite their service - Students understand the ongoing fight for recognition and justice for Indigenous veterans - Students compare how soldiers from different backgrounds were treated upon return

## **Skills and Processes**

**9.S.1: Critical and creative thinking** - Students create beaded memorials that demonstrate understanding of complex social issues (discrimination, sacrifice, honor, diversity)

**9.S.2: Historical thinking** - Students analyze cause and consequence: Why did soldiers from diverse backgrounds serve? What happened when they returned? - Students develop historical empathy through creating personal connection to a soldier's story

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# Grades 10-12: 10/20/30 Social Studies & Indigenous Studies

## Historical Inquiry and Critical Thinking

- Primary source analysis (service files, artifacts, oral histories)
- Creative expression of historical understanding through beaded memorial creation
- Multiple perspectives on Canadian military history from diverse cultural backgrounds

## Indigenous Perspectives and Reconciliation

- Indigenous Veterans Day origins and significance
- Post-war discrimination and systemic barriers
- Cultural practices: smudging, beading, oral storytelling
- Memorial sites and Indigenous commemoration (Grant Berg's Invisible and Infinity memorials)

## Diversity and Multiculturalism

- Northwestern Alberta's incredibly diverse population in 1912—"almost every ethnicity under the sun"
- How diverse peoples served together in war but faced different treatment at home
- Local history of immigration, settlement, and community building

## Identity and Citizenship

- How does creating a memorial for someone you never met shape your understanding of citizenship and responsibility?
- What does it mean to be a "story keeper"?
- How do cultural practices (smudging, beading) connect past and present?

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## Cross-Curricular Connections

### English Language Arts (All Grades)

- **Oral communication:** Participating in smudging ceremony, listening to Elder teachings and family-narrated stories
- **Visual literacy:** Creating beaded memorials as visual representation of understanding
- **Research:** Reading and interpreting service files
- **Personal response:** Expressing emotional connection through handmade memorial creation

## Career and Life Management (CALM)

- **Understanding diversity:** Learning about Northwestern Alberta's multicultural history and how diverse peoples served together
- **Building respectful relationships:** Understanding cultural protocols (smudging), learning from Elders and artisans
- **Community engagement:** Becoming a story keeper—taking responsibility for remembering and honoring
- **Personal growth:** Developing patience, focus, fine motor skills through beading

## Fine Arts

- **Traditional Indigenous art forms:** Beading techniques passed down through generations
- **Cultural expression:** Creating meaningful art that honors and commemorates
- **Fine motor skills and craftsmanship:** Precision, patience, attention to detail
- **Design and symbolism:** Understanding how campaign ribbons, colors, and designs carry meaning

## Indigenous Studies (High School Option)

- **Cultural practices:** Smudging ceremony, traditional beading, oral storytelling
- **Treaty 8 territory:** Local Indigenous history and communities
- **Indigenous perspectives on military service and sacrifice**
- **Contemporary Indigenous art:** Grant Berg's memorial designs
- **Intergenerational knowledge transfer:** Learning from Elders and artisans

# Program Components Summary

### *What Students Experience:*

**Sacred Smudging Ceremony** - Led by Elder Bill Chalifoux - Cultural protocol and spiritual preparation - Understanding Indigenous worldviews

**Primary Source Research** - Authentic service files of NW Alberta soldiers - WWI/WWII artifacts: firearms, mess kits, uniforms, photographs - Soldier storyboards and historical documents

**Local Military History** - Loyal Edmonton Regiment and Col. Stone - Indigenous soldiers and diverse soldiers who served - Discrimination faced upon return home - Indigenous Veterans Day origins and significance

**Family-Narrated Stories** - Oral histories from families of fallen soldiers - Elder Bill Chalifoux's traditional teachings - Emotional connection to real people and their sacrifices

**Cultural Learning** - Treaty 8 pathway - Invisible (Indigenous War Memorial) and Infinity (Métis War Memorial) by Indigenous artist Grant Berg - Residential schools display

**Hands-On Creation** - Traditional beading techniques from skilled Indigenous artisans - Create beaded memorial keychain (campaign ribbon + ID tag) - Fine motor skills, patience, focus - Become a “story keeper” for a specific soldier’s legacy

**Critical Themes** - Discrimination Indigenous veterans faced - Social implications of military service for Indigenous peoples - Historical relationships and coexistence during wartime - Northwestern Alberta’s remarkable diversity in 1912

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## Program Details

**Schedule:** - Full-Day Program - Arrival: 9:15 AM / Start: 9:30 AM / Departure: 2:50 PM

**Capacity:** - Maximum 20 students per session - 5 classes of 20 = 100 students total

**Grades:** 7-12

**Cost:** \$3,575 for 100 students (\$35.75 per student)

**Grant & Sponsorship Support Available** CIMTA assists schools in applying for grants and finding sponsors to make the program FREE for students.

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## Contact for Curriculum Questions

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