



Office of the  
Lieutenant Governor  
of Nova Scotia

**9 July 2022**

# No. 2 Construction Battalion National Apology

Prepared for

**His Honour the Honourable Arthur J. LeBlanc, ONS, QC  
Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia**

Prepared by

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## Official Greeting of Dignitaries following the Table of Precedence for Canada

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- Prime Minister Trudeau,
- Minister Anand,
- General Eyre,
- Honourable Members of Parliament,
- Premier Houston,
- Your Worship,
- Members of the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia,
- Family and Descendants of the No. 2 Construction Battalion,
- Esteemed Colleagues,
- Distinguished Guests,
- Ladies, Gentlemen and Friends.



## National Apology to the Family and Descendants of the No. 2 Construction Battalion

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As the Queen's representative in Nova Scotia, it is a privilege and honour to participate in a National Apology to the families and descendants of the No. 2 Construction Battalion.

Today, Canadians gather to pay tribute to the selfless service of more than 600 men who served King and Country during the First World War, while experiencing anti-Black racism and discrimination in many forms.

À titre de représentant de la reine en Nouvelle-Écosse, c'est un privilège pour moi de participer à l'Activité nationale de présentation d'excuses aux familles et aux descendants du 2e Bataillon de construction.

Aujourd'hui, les Canadiens se rassemblent pour rendre hommage au service altruiste de plus de 600 hommes qui ont servi le roi et la patrie durant la Première Guerre mondiale tout en étant victimes de nombreuses formes de racisme anti-Noirs.

Those who joined the No. 2 Construction Battalion – the only Canadian military unit that was primarily comprised of African Canadians – had been prevented from enlisting in the Canadian Expeditionary Force due to their race.

While the No. 2 Construction Battalion was established in response to letters and petitions from African Canadians who fought for the right to enlist, the Battalion was largely assigned with manual labor, duties including lumber operations in France.

Upon their return to Canada, the Battalion was disbanded without receiving appropriate recognition for service and contributions to Canada's role in the Great War.

Today, Nova Scotians and Canadians stand before the families and descendants of the No. 2 Construction Battalion to acknowledge and apologize for these acts of racism and



discrimination. As a society, we take this moment to recommit to the values of diversity and inclusion in our institutions so that past harms are not repeated.

Taking accountability for our history allows us to build communities where all individuals are free to live with dignity. It also reminds us of the ongoing work that must be done to create lasting equality and inclusion for all.

Aujourd'hui, les gens de la Nouvelle-Écosse et du Canada reconnaissent ces gestes discriminatoires et s'en excusent. En tant que société, nous renouvelons notre engagement à soutenir les valeurs de la diversité et de l'inclusion dans nos institutions pour que les torts du passé ne se répètent pas.

Assumer la responsabilité de notre histoire nous permet de bâtir des communautés où toutes les personnes sont libres de vivre avec dignité. Ce fait historique nous rappelle également le travail qu'il faut continuer d'accomplir pour assurer l'égalité et l'inclusion de façon durable pour chaque personne.

I would like to thank the Department of National Defence and the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia for bringing us together today to publicly honour the distinguished service of the members of the No. 2 Construction Battalion.

Finally, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the men who served in the No. 2 Construction Battalion for their sacrifices, perseverance and service to Canada. I also acknowledge the hardships endured by their families and descendants. May their legacy of service inspire all Canadians for generations to come.

J'exprime ma profonde gratitude aux hommes qui ont servi dans le 2e Bataillon de construction pour leurs sacrifices, leur persévérance et leur service au Canada. Je reconnais également les épreuves qu'ont vécues leur famille et leurs descendants. Puisse toute la valeur de leur service inspirer tous les Canadiens et toutes les Canadiennes pour des générations à venir.

Thank you. Merci. Wela'liq.



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