



Supplied photo

The new mural, which was finished on Oct. 16. It depicts (from left) Megan Couto, Lester Brown, Jennifer Casey, and Tommy Prince.

# New mural honours veterans

Painting depicts diversity of those who served Canada

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## ST. JAMES-ASSINIBOIA

A new mural honouring Canadian veterans has been painted on the side of the Army Navy Veterans of Canada building on Portage Avenue.

The mural, called *Canadian Heroes*,

located on the side of 3584 Portage Ave., depicts four veterans: Megan Couto, Lester Brown, Jennifer Casey and Tommy Prince.

Its creation was organized by Take Pride Winnipeg, paid for by the ANAVETS members, and drawn by two Manitoba artists, showcasing the diverse soldiers who fought to defend our country.

In September, ANAVETS contacted Tom Ethans, executive director of Take Pride Winnipeg, asking if he could paint over some graffiti. After that, the members asked if Take Pride Winnipeg could beautify the exterior wall.

"A couple of (members) said they were interested in beautifying the wall with a

mural. I told them, "That sounds like a great idea, it'll cost around \$10,000 to get it done," Ethans said.

"Some (members) were more than willing to help pay for it. They wanted a mural that depicts

the (Canadian Armed Forces) honouring the past, present and future veterans of our country. It was a really cool idea."

The mural was a collaboration between two artists, Mandy van Leeuwen and Franklin Fernando. They started painting the mural in early September, and finished their work on Oct. 16. According to a news release, the artwork is an exploration of the spirit and heroism of Canadian Services. It's an "accessible space where passersby can learn and be inspired by the tribute meant to symbolize many parts honoring the Canadian Services."

The ANAVETS membership choose who to depict on the mural. Take Pride Winnipeg unveiled the finished product on Oct. 16. Ethans said the members were blown away by the results.

"They came out to see the (mural unveiling), and they were so excited. They loved it so much ... I think on (Remembrance Day), they're going to hold a service near (the mural)," Ethans said.

"They're going to hold their ceremony someplace else ... Then they're going to walk over and have a celebration near the mural. It's wonderful to see."

Ethans said the ANAVETS members wanted a varied group represented on the mural. They made sure they had men and women represented, and felt that the four veterans were deserving of being recognized.

All of the mural subjects are well-known veterans. Capt. Megan Couto became the first female infantry officer to command the Queen's Guard, leading the Changing of the Guard ceremony at Buckingham Palace in 2017. Lester Brown is a Second World War veteran who is the oldest living black veteran from D-Day.

Capt. Jennifer Casey was the public affairs officer for the CF Snowbirds. She died in May 2020, when her plane crashed while on a mission in B.C.

Sgt. Tommy Prince was an Indigenous Canadian war hero and one of Canada's most decorated First Nation soldiers. He served during the Second World War and the Korean War.

The mural is located at 3584 Portage Ave. For more information, or to contact ANAVETS, visit [anaf283.com](http://anaf283.com)



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