



Prime Minister of Canada
Stephen Harper

PM TO COMMEMORATE CANADA'S 12-YEAR MILITARY ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN AT NATIONAL DAY OF HONOUR CEREMONY

Ottawa, Ontario

28 April 2014

Prime Minister Stephen Harper will participate in events marking the National Day of Honour on May 9, 2014, to commemorate and recognize Canada's military mission in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister will be joined by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, and General Thomas J. Lawson, Chief of the Defence Staff.

Prime Minister Harper today announced that Rick Hansen has agreed to act as emcee for the National Day of Honour.

Rick Hansen is an internationally recognized wheelchair athlete who has raised millions of dollars for spinal cord research, rehabilitation and quality of life initiatives through the Foundation that bears his name. For his athletic prowess and philanthropic endeavours, Mr. Hansen has received numerous accolades, including Companion of the Order of Canada, honorary university degrees and being made an honorary colonel of the Canadian Armed Forces' Joint Personnel Support Unit.

The National Day of Honour commemorates the service and sacrifice of the members of the Canadian Armed Forces and employees of the Public Service of Canada who served in Afghanistan. It also provides an opportunity to thank family members, friends and all Canadians for their tremendous support. Finally, the day recognizes the sacrifices made by the Families of the Fallen.

The National Day of Honour is being commemorated through a series of events across Canada. In the National Capital Region, the National Ceremony will begin with a parade that will travel from the Canadian War Museum to Parliament Hill. This will be followed by two minutes of silence, a two-part fly-by salute and a public viewing of the Afghanistan Memorial Vigil in the Hall of Honour in the Centre Block on Parliament Hill.

During Canada's 12-year mission in Afghanistan, more than 40,000 brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces, along with hundreds of courageous Canadian civilians and international allies, worked to defeat terrorism and give Afghans a chance at a better future. In the course of the mission, terrorist sanctuaries were destroyed, the Afghan security forces were built-up to defend their country, schools were built to allow more children access to education and critical infrastructure has been constructed to enable development and business.

These great achievements came at a significant price. Our country lost lives, including 158 military personnel, one diplomat and a number of civilians in this mission to make the world a safer place. Their sacrifice is one of the many things that continually inspire servicemen and women to push forward and to continue serving their country.

Quick Facts

- On March 12, 2014, Canada marked the conclusion of its military training mission in Afghanistan during a flag lowering ceremony in Kabul. The ceremony also recognized the conclusion of Canada's current civilian policing mission.
- On March 18, 2014, Prime Minister Harper welcomed home the final contingent of Canadian Armed Forces members from our mission in Afghanistan and declared May 9, 2014 a "National Day of Honour" by Royal Proclamation.
- Canada's contribution to the mission in Afghanistan began in October 2001 with Operation APOLLO. As part of that operation, HMCS Halifax was directed to detach from the NATO Standing Force Atlantic and to proceed to the Arabian Sea.
- Canada's engagement in Afghanistan was a whole-of-government effort throughout the entire mission. Since 2001, Canada has deployed members of various departments including the Canadian Armed Forces, the

Royal Canadian Mounted Police and other police services from across the country, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, Correctional Service Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency, to assist Afghans with the provision of governance, justice, human rights and security.

- Canada was part of one of the largest coalitions in history, bringing together 28 NATO allies and 22 partners representing over a quarter of the countries on the planet.
- Since 2011, Canada's mission in Afghanistan focused on four key areas: investing in the future of Afghans through education and health; advancing security, the rule of law and human rights; promoting regional diplomacy; and delivering humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people.
- The Canadian Armed Forces conducted operations in a number of different roles involving air, land and sea assets. Activities included combat, security, development, support and training operations in varying capacities and regions in Afghanistan.

Quotes

"The Canadians who served in Afghanistan demonstrated time and again the strength, spirit, ingenuity and determination that define our nation. Our troops left Afghanistan a more stable, secure and self-sustaining country and I look forward to joining all Canadians on May 9 in recognizing and commemorating their tremendous efforts." – *Prime Minister Stephen Harper*

"Canada played a central role in Afghanistan for more than a decade. Project by project, kilometre by kilometre, Canadians helped give Afghanistan back to Afghans. With Canada's help, thousands of members of the Afghan National Security Forces have been trained, hundreds of kilometres of roads have been built or repaired, dozens of schools have been restored, thousands of teachers trained, and millions of children have been vaccinated against diseases like polio. Their valour, sacrifices and remarkable accomplishments in the face of incredible odds will continue to inspire and guide us as Canada continues its development, aid and good governance work in Afghanistan." – *Prime Minister Stephen Harper*

Related Product

- **[National Day of Honour Commemorating the End of Canada's Military Commitment in Afghanistan](http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2014/04/28/national-day-honour-commemorating-end-canadas-military-commitment-afghanistan)** (<http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2014/04/28/national-day-honour-commemorating-end-canadas-military-commitment-afghanistan>)

Associated Link

- **[National Day of Honour](http://www.app.forces.gc.ca/ndoh-jndc/national-day-of-honour.html)**(<http://www.app.forces.gc.ca/ndoh-jndc/national-day-of-honour.html>)