

OTTAWA REPORT

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National Day of Honour

With the completion of the Afghanistan mission, Prime Minister Stephen Harper proclaimed May 9 a National Day of Honour to commemorate the valour, strength and sacrifices of the more than 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members who served in Afghanistan.

For twelve years, brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces fought and served this country valiantly in Afghanistan to defeat terrorism, and to help restore democracy and peace in this area of the world.

Events across the country were held to mark this special occasion. Canadians had the opportunity to pay their respects to the Veterans and families of fallen soldiers. In Ottawa, the official ceremony was attended by Veterans and the families of the fallen, as well as Prime Minister Stephen Harper, David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, and General Thomas J. Lawson, Chief of the Defence Staff. The day was marked by a parade beginning at the Canadian War Museum and ending at Parliament Hill with a two minute moment of silence.

Closer to home, I was proud to attend a ceremony at the York Regional Police #3 District Headquarters. Officers, members of the Canadian Armed Forces and observers, all joined the rest of the country for the two minutes of silence. The Towns of Aurora and Newmarket both proclaimed May 9 as National Day of Honour to pay tribute to the legacy of the heroes and recognize the contributions of Canadian law enforcement.

This National Day of Honour builds on our

Government's continued efforts to honour and support Canadian Veterans. Canada's Afghanistan Veterans courageously demonstrated the strength, spirit and determination that have defined our nation from the very beginning. Their collective sacrifices represent another chapter in Canada's long and proud history of fighting for a safer, better world for everyone. We are forever proud and grateful.

Saving Every Woman, Every Child

In Canada, items such as clean water and vaccinations?things we may take for granted? are desperately needed in many regions of the world. Without them, the health of countless human beings lies in jeopardy.

This need for basic provisions is magnified when dealing with expecting mothers and newborn children. Without adequate health care services many mothers and children die each year. Indeed, the most recent data tells us that 6 million children will die before their 5th birthday and 300,000 women will die in pregnancy.

Fortunately, thanks to the Muskoka Initiative launched by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2010, and subsequent global action, maternal and child mortality rates have been declining. Between 2010 and 2013, Canada helped provide 5.8 million children with life-saving vaccines, over 180 million children with vitamin A, and 2 million pregnant women with supplements to help ensure healthier pregnancies.

But there is still more work to be done. Helping to stop these preventable deaths is not only a moral imperative, but something at the very heart of our shared Canadian values.

From May 28-30, Canada will host an international Summit on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health where global humanitarian leaders such as United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Melinda Gates will be attending. Through this Summit we will be working to accelerate our health initiatives and continue to push this issue to the forefront.

Housing First

Since launching our Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) in 2007, we have helped over 26,000 homeless, at-risk Canadians obtain education and training opportunities, helped over 27,000 find work, and created more than 4,800 new shelter beds. We've done this in accordance with solid conservative fiscal principles. For every dollar we've invested, over two dollars has been invested by partners, including other levels of government, community stakeholders, and the private and non-profit sectors.

Building on this success, we have renewed funding under this program for another 5 years, until 2019. Communities will continue to receive the same amount of funding for programs to prevent and reduce homelessness as they did previously.

We are also moving towards a Housing First approach, where once stable housing is obtained, the focus shifts to addressing more

ongoing issues, such as addictions or mental health. Evidence has shown that this is the most effective way to combat chronic homelessness. The ultimate goal is to ensure these individuals learn the skills required to obtain jobs and become fully participating members of society. Preliminary results from a pilot project have shown that after two year, almost 80 percent of the participants remained housed.

If you would like to contact me on any issue, please call 905-953-7515 or visit my website at www.loisbrown.ca.

I look forward to hearing from you.