



Canada Company Unveils LAV III Monument at Toronto's Fort York Armoury

Monument honours service and sacrifice of Afghan veterans

TORONTO, June 10, 2018 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Today, Canada Company and its supporters proudly unveiled Toronto's only monument dedicated to the 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) who served and the 162 Canadians who lost their lives during the conflict in Afghanistan. The monument honours the Regiments of the Toronto Garrison for the role they played in what became Canada's longest mission in history.

Fleet Street was temporarily closed to accommodate the guests and onlookers who came to witness the unveiling ceremony in front of Fort York Armoury. The monument, donated by Canada Company, is an actual decommissioned Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV III) previously used by Canadian troops to carry out their missions. It now sits on permanent display in the heart of downtown Toronto's busy waterfront area providing the people of Toronto with a special place to visit and pay their respects to a new generation of veterans.

The ceremony featured Canada's top military brass, including Canada's Chief of Defence Staff, General Jonathan Vance, 4th Canadian Division Commander, Brigadier General S.M. Cadden, 32 Canadian Brigade Group Commander, Colonel Dan Stepaniuk and representing The Royal Regiment of Canada, Honorary Colonel Anthony Graham. Canada Company was represented by Chairman and Founder Blake C. Goldring along with Major General (Retired) David Fraser, Chair of the LAV III Monument Program Community Selection Committee.

The ceremony also honoured two Silver Cross Mothers, Kathy Smith and Donna Beek who were escorted to the monument by General Vance to lay a wreath of behalf of their sons and the other Fallen from Afghanistan.

Kathy Smith lost her son Private Demetrios Diplaros, a member of The Royal Regiment of Canada in 2008. He was born in East York and now rests in Toronto. Donna Beek's son Corey Joseph Hayes was killed in 2009 by an Improvised Explosive Device. He was a member of The Royal Canadian Dragoons.

Toronto's new monument honours the Fallen by marking the final destination in their journey along the sacred Highway of Heroes which begins 170 km away, at CFB Trenton.

The monument was donated through Canada Company's LAV III Monument Program and The Royal Regiment of Canada Association accepted the gift on behalf of the Toronto Garrison. Donations collected from members of the Toronto Garrison helped to cover the remaining cost of installation and additional plaques.

Canada Company founder, Mr. Goldring takes great pride in the men and women who serve our nation. He was the former Honorary Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Canada and the first ever Honorary Colonel of the Canadian Army.

His passion to support our military inspired him to create the Canada Company charity, in 2006. With the motto Many Ways to Serve, the Charity has supported initiatives awarding post-secondary scholarships to the children of the Fallen, helping transition thousands of veterans into new careers and building monuments for Canadian communities.

"The goal of the LAV III Monument Program is to recognize our modern-day veterans with a modern-day monument which marks the end of the latest chapter in our military legacy," said Goldring. "This monument will bring deserving recognition to the members of The Toronto Garrison and serve as a public thank you from a grateful nation."

Afghanistan challenged the CAF in many ways. Lives were lost and many lessons were learned. No one understands this better than Major General (Ret'd) David Fraser, who was the former commander of the multinational brigade in Regional Command South and was instrumental in creating the LAV III Monument Program.

"I am honoured along with the other members of the Selection Committee, to be a part of this historic program. The LAV III Monument Program commemorates all Canadians who served in Afghanistan and Canadians back home supporting our men and women in-theatre. These monuments will continue to serve as a catalyst for stories about Canada's contribution to peace and security around the world," said MGen (Ret'd) Fraser.

The Toronto Garrison consists of 16 area regiments, 13 of which belong to the 32 Canadian Brigade Group, headquartered in Toronto. These regiments are all primarily army reserve units who augment regular force regiments on deployments, such as they did in Afghanistan.

"We are honoured that the Fort York Armoury, the home of The Royal Regiment of Canada, has been chosen as the site for this important

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From left to right: BGen Cadden, Blake C. Goldring, MGen Fraser, Donna Beek, Gen Vance, Kathy Smith, HCol Graham and Col Stepaniuk.

monument dedicated to those members of our Regiment, our Brigade, our Division and indeed all of those Canadian Armed Forces personnel who served in Afghanistan,” said Honorary Colonel Anthony Graham of the Royal Regiment of Canada.

After the ceremony the guests all gathered around the monument for a closer look.

About the LAV III Monument Program

The Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) III Monument Program converts decommissioned LAV IIIs into static monuments for qualifying communities across Canada who want to display their respect for the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) who served and sacrificed in Afghanistan (2001-2014).

The LAV IIIs were originally manufactured by General Dynamics Land Systems Canada (GDLS-C) in London, Ontario and were used extensively by the CAF to combat the enemy while navigating the challenging desert and mountain terrain found throughout Afghanistan.

The monuments are assembled in London, Ontario by Fanshawe College students and Militex Coatings Inc. Each approved community is responsible for covering the cost to build, transport and install the monument.

To date 18 communities across Canada have installed LAV III Monuments and the program has committed to building a total of 33 monuments before closing its community application process. All remaining monuments are expected to be collected and installed in 2018. To learn more visit: www.lavmonument.ca

About Canada Company

Canada Company is a charitable, non-partisan organization that serves to build the bridge between business and community leaders and the Canadian Military. Our goal is to ensure that the men and women in our Canadian Armed Forces receive the widest support, care and recognition that they deserve. Canada Company was founded in 2006 by Canadian businessman Blake C. Goldring M.S.M., LL.D., CFA. To learn more visit: www.CanadaCompany.ca

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A photo accompanying this announcement is available at <http://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/f5689062-6461-49c9-bdaf-9d4a66e856b1>