

PRIME MINISTERS OF CANADA

THEIR MILITARY CONNECTIONS, HONOURS and MEDALS

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Abbreviations:

LG London Gazette  
CG Canada Gazette



**Prime Ministers of Canada  
And  
Their Medals and Military Connections**

One day while reviewing files at the National Defence Historical Department, I came across a file titled Prime Ministers and their military connections. I photocopied some of the interesting pages and made some notes. To those notes, I have added material that I have come across since then and have produced this summary of what I know of the Prime Ministers of Canada and their military connections (and medals).

I cannot guarantee the complete accuracy but most of them I believe are accurate. I have photographed Lester B. Pearson's medals and Mackenzie King's medals at the archives in Ottawa.

One of the big differences between Canada and the United States can be seen when you consider that all American Presidents from Eisenhower until Clinton served in World War Two. Bill Clinton's most recent challenger had World War Two service but not one of the Canadian Prime Ministers saw service in World War Two.

John G. Diefenbaker went to Britain in the Canadian Army in World War One but did not go to the European theatre. Thus, Lester B. Pearson is really the only Prime Minister of Canada to have served in a theatre of operations in either of the World Wars!

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**The Right Honourable Sir John Alexander MACDONALD, PC, GCB**  
1st Prime Minister of Canada  
01 July 1867 to 05 November 1873  
17 October 1878 to 06 June 1891  
Conservative

Born: 11 January 1815 - Glasgow, Scotland  
Died: 06 June 1891 - Ottawa, Ontario

**MILITARY:**

1837 Ensign In the Sedentary Militia

Sir Joseph Pope's book - "Memoirs of the Right Honourable Sir John Alexander Macdonald"



"In 1837, the rebellion broke out, and Mr. Macdonald hastened to give his services to the cause of law and order. I carried my musket in '37', he was wont to say in after years. One day he gave me an account of a long march his company made, I forget from what place, but Toronto was the objective point.

The day was hot, my feet were blistered - I was but a weary boy - and I thought I should have dropped under the weight of the old flint musket which galled my shoulder. But I managed to keep up with my companion, a grim old soldier who seemed impervious to fatigue."

There was a reference to his appointment in the Sedentary Militia.

The following also appeared in the Upper Canada Gazette 15 February 1838

"The appointment of John A. Macdonald, Esq., to be Ensign in the 3rd Frontenac Regiment, has not taken placed."

It appeared again on 22 February 1838.

28 December 1861 to 20 June 1862: Minister of Militia Affairs  
07 August 1865 to 30 June 1867: Minister of Militia Affairs

**MEDALS:**

KCB (civil) London Gazette 09 July 1867, effective 01 July 1867  
GCB (civil) London Gazette 21 November 1884

KCB - Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the Bath  
GCB - Knight Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the Bath  
Both levels confer a knighthood on the individual

**The Honourable Alexander MACKENZIE, PC**  
2nd Prime Minister of Canada  
07 November 1873 to 16 October 1878  
Liberal

Born: 28 January 1822 Dunkeld, Perthshire, Scotland  
Died: 17 April 1892 Toronto, Ontario

**CAREER**

Lawyer

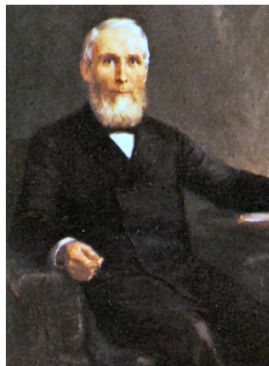
**MILITARY**

14 September 1866: Appointed Major 27<sup>th</sup> Lambton Battalion of Infantry  
04 June 1875: Retires from Sedentary Militia

**MEDAL:**

RED RIVER bar FENIAN RAID 1866 Medal

He refused a knighthood (which would have been a KCMG or KCB)



**The Honourable Sir John Joseph Caldwell ABBOTT, PC, KCMG, QC**  
3rd Prime Minister of Canada  
16 June 1891 to 24 November 1892  
Conservative - Prime Minister while a Senator

Born: 12 March 1821 St. Andrews, Lower Canada  
Died: 30 October 1893 Mount Royal, Quebec

**MILITARY**

14 March 1862	Major	11th Battalion, Volunteer Militia Rifles Canada) (Argenteuil Rifles)
21 March 1862	Lieutenant-Colonel	11th Battalion V.M.R.
1867	Lieutenant-Colonel	Argenteuil Rifles
22 June 1883	Lieutenant-Colonel	Retires retaining rank as Lieutenant-Colonel

**MEDALS**

LG 25 May 1892 KCMG



**The Right Honourable Sir John Sparrow David THOMPSON, PC, KCMG**  
4th Prime Minister of Canada  
05 December 1892 to 12 December 1894  
Conservative

Born: 10 November 1844 Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Died: 12 December 1894 Windsor Castle, England

**CAREER**

Lawyer  
Attorney-General in Nova Scotia

**MILITARY:**

Nil

**MEDALS:**

LG 10 September 1888 KCMG While Minister of Justice

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**The Honourable Sir Mackenzie BOWELL, PC, KCMG, VD, QC**  
 5th Prime Minister of Canada  
 21 December 1894 to 27 April 1896  
 Conservative - Prime Minister while a Senator

Born: 27 December 1823 - Rickingham, Suffolk, England  
 Died: 10 December 1917 - Belleville, Ontario

**MILITARY:**

24 July	1856	Ensign	1st Battalion Belleville (Sedentary Militia)
04 March	1858	Ensign	1st Volunteer Militia Rifle Company Belleville
23 Dec	1864	Ensign	#6 Company First (Western) Administrative Battalion to prevent American Confederates crossing into the USA during the civil war)
02 June	1865	Ensign	retires
23 March	1868	Captain	#1 Company, 15th Battalion of Infantry - now 9th Anti-tank Regiment (self propelled) (Argyll Light Infantry) 15th Battalion was on active service at the time having been called out on 8 March 1866 during the Fenian scare.
22 Feb	1867	Major	49th "Stirling" Battalion of Infantry now the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment
01 March	1867	Major	Qualified for a First Class Certificate at a Military School of Instruction
22 Feb	1872	Brevet LCol	Promoted Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel
12 March	1874	Brevet LCol	Retires retaining Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel

**MEDALS:**

LG 01 January 1895	KCMG
1866	Canadian General Service Medal with bar Fenian Raid 1866
1876	Colonial Auxiliary Officers' Decoration (Edward VII)

Latter two medals held by Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta



**The Right Honourable Sir Charles TUPPER, PC, Bt, GCMG, CB, MD**  
6th Prime Minister of Canada  
01 May 1896 to 08 July 1896  
Conservative

Born: 02 July 1821 - Amherst, Nova Scotia  
Died: 30 October 1915 - Bexley Heath, Kent, England

**CAREER:**

Physician  
Premier of Nova Scotia  
Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom

**MILITARY:**

Unknown - probably none as there isn't anything in his short biographies

**MEDALS:**

CB (civil)	London Gazette 09 July 1867, effective 01 July 1867
KCMG	London Gazette 24 May 1879
GCMG	London Gazette 02 February 1886
Baronet	London Gazette 11 September 1888





**The Right Honourable Sir Wilfred LAURIER, PC, GCMG, KC**  
7th Prime Minister of Canada  
11 July 1896 to 09 October 1911  
Liberal

Born: 20 November 1841 St. Lin (County of Assomption), Lower Canada  
Died: 17 February 1919 Ottawa, Ontario

**CAREER**

Lawyer

**MILITARY:**

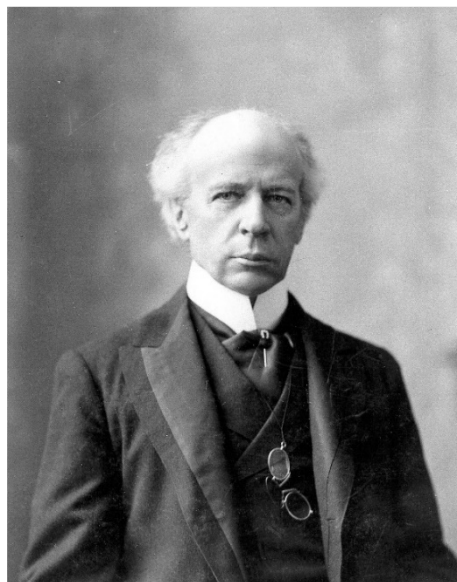
23 July 1869: Ensign - Athabaskaville Infantry Company  
26 Aug. 1878: Ensign - Unit disbanded "retires"  
? to 1911: Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel  
9th Battalion "Voltigeurs de Quebec" until his death

**MEDALS:**

22/06/1897+ GCMG  
Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee Medal (silver)  
Edward VII Coronation Medal  
George V Coronation Medal

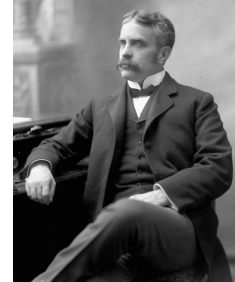
He had refused to take a knighthood until 1897. While attending the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Service, he was informed that he would be awarded the GCMG and told it would not be politically correct to refuse it at this point.

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**The Right Honourable Sir Robert Laird BORDEN, PC, GCMG, KC, LL.D., QC**  
 8th Prime Minister of Canada  
 10 October 1911 to 10 July 1920  
 Conservative / Unionist

Born: 26 June 1854 Grand Pre, Nova Scotia  
 Died: 10 June 1937 Ottawa, Ontario



**CAREER**

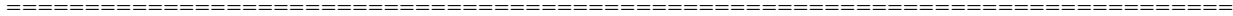
Lawyer 1891 QC

**MILITARY**

1878: Cadet Military school at Halifax  
 31/10/1912 Honorary Colonel 63rd Regiment "Halifax Rifles"  
 03/20/1916 Honorary Colonel 85th (Overseas) Battalion C.E.F.  
 Nova Scotia Highlanders

**MEDALS:**

LG 19/07/1912+ PC Privy Council Member  
 CG 18/07/1914 GCMG 1914  
 22/06/1911a George V Coronation  
 Grand Cross - Legion of Honour France  
 Grand Cross - Order of Leopold Belgium



**The Right Honourable Arthur MEIGHEN, PC, KC**  
9th Prime Minister of Canada  
10 July 1920 to 29 December 1921  
29 June 1926 to 25 September 1926  
Unionist / Conservative

Born: 16 June 1874 Anderson, Perth County, Ontario  
Died: 05 August 1960 Toronto, Ontario

**CAREER**

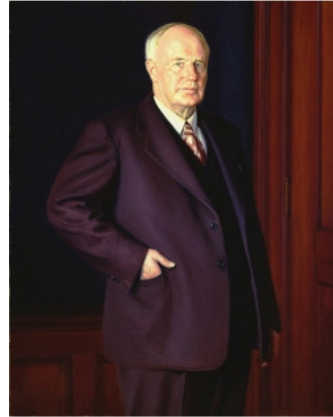
Lawyer

**MILITARY:**

Nil

**MEDALS:**

22/06/1911a George V Coronation  
06/05/1935 George V Jubilee  
12/05/1937 George VI Coronation  
05/06/1953 EIIR Coronation



Member of Parliament: 1908 - 1932 (Portage La Prairie)  
Appointed Senator: 1932 - resigned 1941  
Defeated in 1941 Election for House of Commons

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**The Right Honourable William Lyon Mackenzie KING, PC, OM, CMG, BA, MA, AM, PhD**  
 10th Prime Minister of Canada  
 29 December 1921 to 28 June 1926  
 25 September 1926 to 06 August 1930  
 23 October 1935 to 15 November 1948  
 Liberal

Born: 17 December 1874 Berlin (now Kitchener), Ontario  
 Died: 22 July 1950 Ottawa, Ontario

**CAREER**

Lawyer  
 Canada's First Deputy Minister of Labour  
 Senior Staff Rockefeller Foundation



**MILITARY:**

Nil

**MEDALS:**

LG 18/11/1947+ OM Order of Merit - George VI  
 CG 28/07/1906 CMG Companion Order of St. Michael and St. George / Breast Type  
 06/05/1935 George V Jubilee Medal  
 12/05/1937 George VI Coronation  
 After WWII Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour (France)  
 05/1950 Grand Cross - The Order of the Crown of Oak (Luxemburg)  
 03/1950 Grand Cross - The Order of Leopold (Belgium)  
 03/1950 Grand Cross of the Order of the Netherlands Lion (Dutch)

A contradiction in attitudes: he didn't want the Canada Medal or Canadians to receive honours but took the CMG and Order of Merit and four Grand Cross awards for himself!



**The Right Honourable Richard Bedford BENNETT, PC, ED, KC**  
Viscount BENNETT of Mickleham, Calgary, and Hopewell  
11th Prime Minister of Canada  
07 August 1930 to 23 October 1935  
Conservative

Born: 02 July 1870 Hopewell Hill, Albert County, New Brunswick  
Died: 27 June 1947 Dorking, England

**CAREER**

Lawyer KC

**MILITARY**

15 September 1915 Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel Canadian Militia  
22 October 1915 Honorary Colonel 103rd Regiment Calgary Rifles  
03 January 1921 Honorary Colonel Calgary Highlanders (ex 103 CEF)  
03 July 1933 Honorary Colonel The New Brunswick Rangers  
27 June 1947 Retained the three HCol positions until his death

**MEDALS:**

12/1941 KStJ  
1934 ED  
06/05/1935 George V Jubilee  
17/05/1937 George VI Coronation

**TITLE**

16/07/1941 Viscount London Gazette 22/07/1941+



**The Right Honourable Louis Stephen ST. LAURENT, PC, CC**  
12th Prime Minister of Canada  
15 November 1948 to 21 June 1957  
Liberal

Born: 01 February 1882 Compton, Quebec  
Died: 25 July 1973 Quebec City, Quebec

**CAREER**

Lawyer

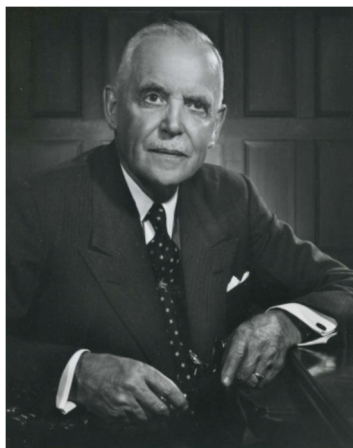
**MILITARY**

nil

**MEDALS:**

15/07/1967 Companion of the Order of Canada (CC)  
02/06/1953 EIIR Coronation  
01/01/1967 Centennial Medal

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**The Right Honourable John George Bannerman DIEFENBAKER, PC, CH, QC**  
 13th Prime Minister of Canada  
 21 June 1957 to 22 April 1963  
 Progressive Conservative

Born: 18 September 1895 Neustadt, Ontario  
 Died: 16 August 1979 Ottawa, Ontario

**CAREER**

Lawyer KC - 1929

**MILITARY:**

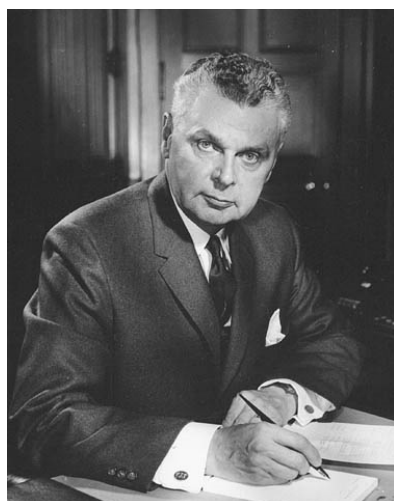
1916	Lieutenant	196 <sup>th</sup> Battalion (Western Universities)
28/08/1916	Lieutenant	Canadian Expeditionary Force to Britain
02/1917	Lieutenant	Canadian Army WW1 - invalided home from Britain
1917	Lieutenant	105th Saskatoon Fusiliers

In March 1916 he enlisted for officers' training and was commissioned a lieutenant in the infantry. He received his MA *in absentia* and, after a month of lectures and drill, he undertook three months of articling in a Saskatoon law office before requesting an overseas posting in August. He sailed for England in September as a member of the 196th (Western Universities) Battalion and spent the autumn at camps in Shorncliffe and Crowborough. After a few months he was found medically unfit for service at the front and in February 1917 he returned to Canada. He was demobilized in December and denied a pension sought on grounds of disability. The military records and his own account of this episode are contradictory and were never reconciled during his lifetime; the official records suggest that he was judged unfit because of "general weakness" without demonstration of any physical disability, while he claimed to have been injured by a falling pickaxe. (Dictionary of Canadian Biographies)

**MEDALS:**

01/01/1976+	Companion of Honour (CH)
02/06/1953	EIIR Coronation
01/07/1967	Centennial Medal
05/02/1977	EIIR Silver Jubilee Medal
1918	British War Medal

Awarded to all ranks of Canadian overseas military forces who came from Canada between 05 August 1914 and 11 November 1918, Not awarded the Victory Medal as not in a theatre of war.



**The Right Honourable Lester Bowles ('Mike') PEARSON, PC, OM, CC, OBE**  
14th Prime Minister of Canada  
22 April 1963 to 20 April 1968  
Liberal

Born: 23 April 1897 Toronto, Ontario  
Died: 27 December 1972 Ottawa, Ontario

**CAREER**

Federal Civil Servant Department of External Affairs

**MILITARY:**

1914 Private, RCAMC University of Toronto Hospital Unit  
1915 Private RCAMC Overseas - served in the Dardanelles  
1917 Lieutenant Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps  
1917 Flying Officer RFC - pilot training  
1918 Flying Officer RAF - invalided home.

**MEDALS:**

Order of Merit (OM) EIIR  
Companion of the Order of Canada (CC)  
OBE (civil) 1935  
1914/15 Star  
British War Medal  
Victory Medal  
George V Jubilee Medal  
George VI Coronation Medal  
EIIR Coronation Medal  
Centennial Medal  
  
Nobel Peace Prize





**The Right Honourable Pierre Elliot TRUDEAU, PC, CH, CC**

15th Prime Minister of Canada

20 April 1968 to 04 June 1979

03 March 1980 to 30 June 1984

Liberal

Born: 18 October 1919 Montreal, Quebec  
Died: 28 September 2000 Montreal, Quebec  
Married: 04 March 1971 Montreal, Quebec  
Children: Three Sons (Middle son is Justin, 23<sup>rd</sup> PM of Canada)

**EDUCATION**

LLB Law degree 1943 Université de Montréal in 1943

**CAREER**

Lawyer

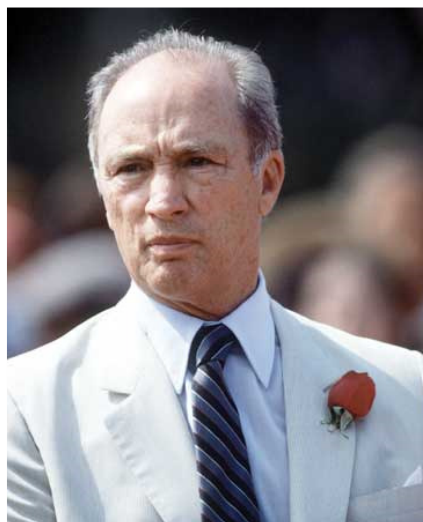
**MILITARY**

Conscripted into the Canadian Army as part of the National Resources Mobilization Act.

When conscripted, he decided to join the Canadian Officers' Training Corps, and he then served with the other conscripts in Canada, since they were not assigned to overseas military service until after the Conscription Crisis of 1944.

**MEDALS:**

20/07/1984+	Companion of Honour (EIIR)	CH
29/06/1985	Companion of the Order of Canada	CC
01/07/1967	Centennial Medal	
05/02/1977	EIIR Silver Jubilee Medal	
01/07/1992	Canada 125 Medal	



**The Right Honourable Charles Joseph ('Joe') CLARK, PC, CC, MA, LLD**  
 16th Prime Minister of Canada  
 04 June 1979 to 04 March 1980  
 Progressive Conservative

Born: 05 June 1939 High River, Alberta  
 Living at: Calgary, Alberta  
 Married: 1973 Maureen McTeer  
 Children: one Catherine Clark

**EDUCATION**

BA Political Science University of Alberta  
 MA Political Science University of Alberta  
 No Graduation Law Dalhousie University  
 No Graduation Law University of British Columbia

**CAREER**

Progressive Conservative Party Organizer  
 Minister of Foreign Affairs 1984  
 Minister of Constitutional Affairs  
 Special Representative to the Secretary-General of the UNN for Cyprus 1993-95

**MILITARY:**

nil

**MEDALS:**

09/03/1996 Companion of the Order of Canada CC  
 1983 Alberta Order of Excellence AOE  
 01/07/1992 Canada 125 Medal  
 06/02/2002 EIIR Golden Jubilee Medal  
 06/02/2012 EIIR Diamond Jubilee Medal



Joe Clark with John Blatherwick

**The Right Honourable John Napier TURNER, PC, CC, QC**  
17th Prime Minister of Canada  
30 June 1984 to 17 September 1984  
Liberal

Born: 07 June 1929 Richmond, England (came to Canada in 1932)  
Living at: Toronto, Ontario

**CAREER**

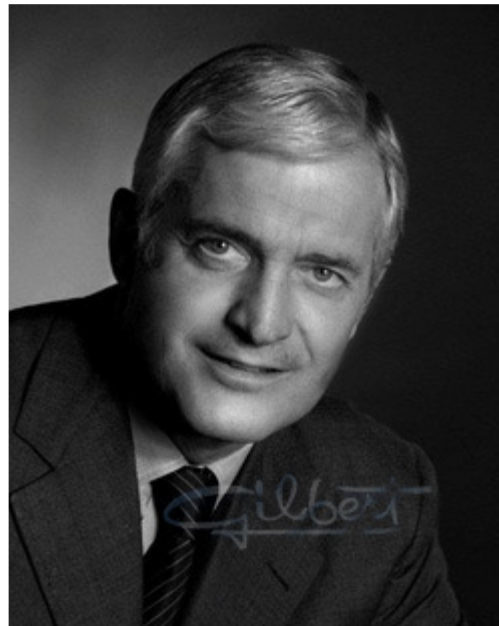
Lawyer

**MILITARY:**

nil

**MEDALS:**

09/03/1996 Companion of the Order of Canada CC  
01/07/1967 Centennial Medal  
01/07/1992 Canada 125 Medal  
06/02/2002 EIIR Golden Jubilee Medal  
06/02/2012 EIIR Diamond Jubilee Medal



**The Right Honourable Martin Brian MULRONEY, PC, CC, GOQ**  
 18th Prime Minister of Canada  
 17 September 1984 to 25 June 1993  
 Progressive Conservative

Born: 20 March 1939 Baie Comeau, Quebec  
 Living At: 2012 Montreal, Quebec

**CAREER**

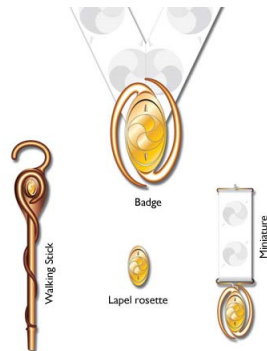
Lawyer

**MILITARY:**

nil

**MEDALS:**

- 19/09/1998 Companion of the Order of Canada CC
- 15/05/2002 Grand Officer Ordre de Quebec GOQ
- 01/07/1992 Canada 125 Medal
- 06/02/2002 EIIR Golden Jubilee Medal
- 06/02/2012 EIIR Diamond Jubilee Medal
- 31/12/2011 Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Star (Japan) **above**
- 03/11/2007 Grand Cross with Collar of the Order of Kniaz Yaroslav the Wise  
 \ (Ukraine) (photo at bottom top right)
- 25/07/2015 Grand Companion of the Order of the Companions of O.R. Tambo  
 \ (South Africa) (photo bottom left)
- 26/11/16 Companion - Legion of Honour (France) (photo bottom right)





**The Right Honourable Kim CAMPBELL, PC, CC, OBC, QC**  
19th Prime Minister of Canada  
25 June 1993 - 04 November 1993  
Progressive Conservative

Born: 10 March 1947 Port Alberni, British Columbia  
Living At: Paris, France  
Kiev

**CAREER**

Lawyer  
UBC Professor  
School Board Member Vancouver  
MLA British Columbia

**MILITARY**

Minister of National Defence

**MEDALS:**

08/11/2008	Companion of the Order of Canada	CC
2012	Order of British Columbia	OBC
01/07/1992	Canada 125 Medal	
06/02/2002	EIIR Golden Jubilee Medal	
06/02/2012	EIIR Diamond Jubilee Medal	



**The Right Honourable Joseph Jacques Jean CHRÉTIEN, PC, OM, CC**  
 20th Prime Minister of Canada  
 04 November 1993 - 12 December 2003  
 Liberal

Born: 11 January 1934 Shawinigan, Quebec  
 Living At: Ottawa, Ontario

**Business Career**

Lawyer

**MILITARY**

Honorary Officer Les Voltigeurs de Quebec

**MEDALS:**

13/07/2009+	Order of Merit	OM
09/02/2008	Companion of the Order of Canada	CC
01/07/1992	Canada 125 Medal	
06/02/2002	EIIR Golden Jubilee Medal	
06/02/2012	EIIR Diamond Jubilee Medal	
22/04/2014	Order of Friendship	Government of the Russian Federation



**The Right Honourable Paul Edgar Philippe MARTIN, PC, CC**  
 21st Prime Minister of Canada  
 12 December 2003 to 06 February 2006

Born: 28 August 1938 Windsor, Ontario  
 Living at: 2012 Montreal, Quebec

**Education:**

1964 LLB University of Toronto

**Business Career:**

1969 Board of Directors Canadian Steamship Lines  
 1973 President & CEO CSL Group

**Elected:**

Member of Parliament 21 November 1988 to 14 October 2008  
 34th Minister of Finance 1993 to 2002

**Military:**

None

**Honours:**

04/02/2012 CC Companion of the Order of Canada  
 01/07/1992 Canada 125 Medal  
 06/02/2002 EIIR Golden Jubilee Medal  
 06/02/2012 EIIR Diamond Jubilee Medal





**The Right Honourable Stephen Joseph HARPER, PC, CC, MP**  
22nd Prime Minister of Canada  
06 February 2006 to 04 November 2015  
Conservative Party of Canada

Born: 30 April 1959 Toronto, Ontario  
Married: 1993 Lauren Teskey  
Children: 2 1 Son; 1 Daughter  
Living at: Calgary, Alberta

**EDUCATION**

BCom 1985 University of Calgary  
MA 1991 University of Calgary

**CAREER**

Worked for Reform Party of Canada as Policy Chief

**MILITARY**

Nil

**HONOURS**

2005 Alberta Centennial Medal  
06/02/2002 EIIR Golden Jubilee Medal  
06/02/2012 EIIR Diamond Jubilee Medal  
28/12/2019 Companion of the Order of Canada (CC)





**The Right Honourable Stephen Joseph HARPER, PC, CC, MP**  
22nd Prime Minister of Canada  
06 February 2006 to 04 November 2015  
Conservative Party of Canada



**Stephen Harper receives the Companion of the Order of Canada from GG Mary Simon**



**Martin, Campbell, Justin Trudeau, Stephen Harper, Jean Chrétien - all PC, CC**

**The Right Honourable Justin Pierre TRUDEAU, PC, MP**  
23<sup>rd</sup> Prime Minister of Canada  
04 November 2015  
Liberal Party of Canada

Born: 25 December 1971 Ottawa, Ontario  
Married: 2005 Sophie GRÉGOIRE-TRUDEAU  
Children: 3 2 Sons; 1 Daughter  
Living at: Ottawa, Ontario and Westmount, Quebec

**EDUCATION**

BA 1994 English literature McGill University  
BEd 1998 Education University of British Columbia

**CAREER**

School Teacher - British Columbia (Vancouver and Coquitlam)

**MILITARY**

Nil

**HONOURS**

06/02/2012 EIIR Diamond Jubilee Medal

