



**NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION**

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER  
TRANSFORMATION**

**SACT REMARKS to**  
**HQ NATIONAL DAY RECOGNITION CEREMONY**

**NORFOLK, 03 September 2015**

**As prepared**

**Général d'armée aérienne Paloméros**

Duration : 12 minutes

Location : Flag plaza ACT



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Ambassador, Generals, Admirals,

RADM Frank Morneau – Representing the Fleet Forces Command

Dear Mrs Yvonne Allmond from the Norfolk NATO Festival

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

It is a real privilege, an honour, and a very emotional moment for me to lead this National Day Recognition Ceremony.

Indeed, it answers to the decision I made to refresh our traditions, and our Command Senior Enlisted Leader, Jack Johnson and the staff have done a superb job in putting together this new ceremonial, allowing us today to raise all our 28 flags in one single ceremony, as a symbol of NATO's solidarity and national pride together.

US Senator John Tune once said that *I believe that the US flag is more than just cloth and ink. It is a universally recognized symbol that stands for liberty, and freedom. It is the history of our nation, and it's marked by the blood of those who died defending it.*

Listening to the presentations of all our 28 countries, we can feel the same pride, the same deep respect for what our elders have achieved to defend our values, our people, and our nations

The date for this inaugural ceremony is very symbolic as we mark the 70th anniversary of the first day following the signing of Japan's surrender aboard the USS Missouri, which ended officially the fierce combat on the Pacific front during World War II.

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For the world, it was the first day to step back and realize the magnitude of the devastation caused by one of the major conflicts of modern history; the first day to assess what could be done in the aftermath of such a worldwide long period of destruction.

This 3<sup>rd</sup> September was truly a day of hope for the generation who brought that terrible war to a close; a day that raised great expectations to build a new stable international order in which Nations could peacefully prosper and cooperate. It was a day of true belief that it would be possible to prevent the rise of hateful and destructive ideologies in the future.

This inspiration, this hope, this willingness for a new peaceful world order followed one of the United States Founding Fathers, Thomas Jefferson's advice that *we should like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past.*

North American and Western European countries did rapidly turn towards a promising future. After only 4 years, twelve Nations forged the Treaty of Washington, and with it, the vision, and the principles of ensuring the security, the stability, and the prosperity of the Euro-Atlantic area.

And this vision is still with us this morning, captured in the NATO flag which flies in the middle of the plaza. The white compass rose emblem symbolizes the aim of the Alliance to find a path towards peace and two key principles, the transatlantic bond symbolized by the blue colour of the Atlantic Ocean and unity represented by a circle.

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Unity and the transatlantic link are still the foundations of our Alliance, which today ensures the Collective Defence of 28 Nations and their 900 million citizens. These principles have been enabling NATO to remain credible, open, balanced and modern, able to adapt to changing times and to respond effectively to the many crises we have experienced over the past 66 years.

This did not happen by chance, but rather through the steadfast efforts of our Nations, adapting, transforming, and connecting their forces into the most powerful military Alliance in the world.

They were led by courageous and determined leaders such as our first Supreme Allied Commander, Dwight D. Eisenhower who observed that *“the real problem is not our strength today; it is rather the vital necessity of action today to ensure our strength tomorrow”*.

And there is an enduring necessity for us in ACT to make every effort to ensure that this legacy can be passed to future generations. Thanks to your outstanding commitment, NATO keeps on transforming and improving, ensuring our men and women, are equipped, trained, and able to operate together to defend our Nations and our Alliance, now and in the future.

True to our core values, you constantly commit yourself to finding effective solutions reflecting common objectives of our 28 Nations.

You make the best of our diversity, fostering cohesion and mutual enrichment within the Headquarters.



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So, in raising each of the 28 flags today, we pay tribute to each Allies' proud history, culture, and people. We show our deep respect for the roots and origins of our different Nations.

In saluting all 28 flags together during this ceremony, we have also made it clear that our people, our Nations, are gathered in NATO under the same shared values: individual liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. And we stand here, as soldiers, sailors, marines and aviators, behind our respective flags, willing to protect these values, to promote peace, and to fight for them when needed. This is what we have done, and will continue to do, in Afghanistan with the Resolute Support Mission, in the Mediterranean Sea, in the Balkans, in the Horn of Africa and in many other places when needed.

100 years ago, in the midst of the First World War, Marshall Foch stated that *"to work, to fight together, there must be understanding, trust and confidence"*

The mutual understanding, the trust and confidence that we build on a daily basis here in Norfolk is the best way to efficiently face, today's and tomorrow's security challenges together.

In light of recent events in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, NATO is at a turning point in its history, facing a new set of risks and threats, a test of our will, cohesion and capability.

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Our adversaries and potential opponents are becoming increasingly innovative and adaptive, making use of new technologies and terribly effective strategic communication, and they have been able to strike our Nations, even within our own territories.

And this is an incentive to carry on, a very dynamic NATO's Transformation.

Today, we are also one week away from the commemoration of 9/11, and this is a vivid memory, not only here in the United States, but for NATO's community as a whole.

9/11 demonstrated the global magnitude of the terrorist threats for which the United States invoked Article 5 for the very first time in our Alliance's history. And the Allies - individually and collectively- proved their full solidarity in supporting the United States and stood ready to do more. This solidarity, within our Nations' armed forces has been exemplified by the true brotherhood in arms demonstrated on every single theatre of operation during the last decades.

The outstanding commitment and resilience shown by our Alliance since the end of the Second World War shall give us the confidence to face together the uncertainties and the risks of our agitated world.

Yes, I'm confident that we will succeed, we will succeed in keeping a relevant and powerful NATO, a NATO strengthened by the faith of our citizen in their defence forces, a NATO reenergized by new investments, a NATO served by unwavering men and women.



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This ceremony is also dedicated to them, to the service men and women who are currently deployed in harm's way; those who were wounded in their mind or in their body, and those we have lost in protecting our values. God bless all of them and their family.

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In closing this first National Day recognition ceremony, I would like to thank and honour our National representatives here in ACT. They play a major role, a crucial role in supporting our Command, in supporting NATO's Transformation.

They provide tremendous human, logistical and technical support to our international community, and above all, they reflect together the best possible image of Allies and Partners.

Thank you for the time, commitment, and energy you have invested in this command, helping us to take the full advantage of our cultural pluralism and richness.

John F. Kennedy used to say that: *"if we cannot now end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity"*.

Long live our Alliance as it will carry on capitalizing on our differences and our collective commitment to achieve our common goal of preserving peace in the Euro-Atlantic area.