

April 2020: A tragedy that shook the country

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Ottawa, Ontario



A year ago, Canada went through one of its darkest moments. The largest mass shooting in Canadian history unfolded in rural Nova Scotia, leaving a trail of tragedy that will weigh heavy on the hearts of Nova Scotians, the RCMP and all Canadians for generations.

It is not often that a singular event can have such a profound impact on so many people. It is difficult to describe the tremendous sense of loss that so many are feeling. The loss of a family member, a friend, a colleague. Twenty-two innocent lives were taken too early; too many families changed forever.

Constable Heidi Stevenson paid the ultimate sacrifice serving Canadians, and just like some of the families of the others that were lost, COVID-19 robbed us of the opportunity to celebrate their lives and acknowledge their sacrifice according to our traditions.

To the employees of the RCMP who have continued to serve their communities in the aftermath of the tragedy, and to the hundreds who redeployed to Nova Scotia in the months that followed to provide relief on the front lines and to support the investigation, I want to publicly acknowledge your dedication and let you know that your tireless service is valued and appreciated.

I want to thank the people of Nova Scotia for the notes, public displays, and personal expressions of thanks to our employees—these gestures that have been received with deep appreciation. Your resolve to preserve and defend the true nature of your province—one of kindness, hospitality and compassion—is an inspiration to all Canadians.

In the coming months, we will all revisit these tragic events as the Mass Casualty Commission does its work. This will be a difficult process for many, but along with the criminal investigation that continues even now, it is an important step toward the answers we all want and need.

Over the past year, Nova Scotians have rallied together, united in their grief and in their resolve to honour those who lost their lives. Today, at 3 pm (Atlantic Time), please join us as we observe a moment of silence in solidarity with Nova Scotia, and in tribute to those who lost loved ones.

Brenda Lucki
Commissioner