

Spreekpunten voor de minister van Defensie, J.S.J. Hillen, ter gelegenheid van de ontmanteling van het herdenkingsmonument gesneuvelde militairen op Kamp Holland te Afghanistan op 7 november 2010.

Let op: Alleen gesproken woord geldt!

Good afternoon.

Thank you for being at Camp Holland today to witness this important ceremony.

Today marks the real conclusion of the Dutch lead role in Uruzgan that formally ended August first, 2010.

We have already taken home much of our equipment.

We have already taken home most of our soldiers.

**Today, we take home with us the
tangible tribute to twenty-four of our
brave men who gave their lives during
our operations in Afghanistan.**

**Let us all be silent to honour their
memory, and the memory of all the
other men and women of the coalition
forces who fell in Afghanistan.**

[minuut stilte]

Ladies and gentlemen,

**With this ceremony we salute the
extraordinary determination of the
men we lost: the determination to be
of service.**

To their nation.

To their Allies.

To their comrades.

**It was these comrades who took the
initiative to have this memorial
erected.**

Warrant Officer Rien van Duren of the Task Force Uruzgan was deployed twice in this Afghan province. During that time, soldiers fell, some were killed in action.

After their repatriation to Holland, Rien and his colleagues felt a painful void.

Although they would never forget their comrades, they felt the need for something tangible.

A monument.

In the heart of Camp Holland.

To remember.

To honour.

To mourn.

To warn.

This monument embodies all of these feelings.

- **The iron sheet is rough, like Afghanistan.**
- **The nameplates of the fallen hover over the surface, as they fell in a country far away from home.**

- **The monument is open to the elements. The rain leaves traces of rust, resembling the tears that we shed for these men.**
- **The foundation is strong and robust, just like the unit they belonged to.**

Today, we take this monument home with us.

It will be included in the Afghanistan exhibition of our Defence Museum in Delft awaiting its final destination.

**This monument will be treated with
respect and honour.**

**The same way that we treat the
memory of these fine men.**

Thank you.

-0-0-0-