

**General Thomas ('Tom') James Lawson, CMM, CD  
Chief of the Defence Staff 2012 – 2015**

Born: 02 November 1957 Etobicoke, Ontario  
 Father: Flight Lieutenant George Lawson, RCAF (RAF 239 Sqd WWII Mustangs)  
 Married: Kelly \ and 414 (RCAF) Sqd on P-51 Mustangs  
 Children: 3 Lieutenant Benjamin, air combat systems officer with 414 Squadron (join 2002)  
 Neil  
 Jack (two are members of the RCAF)

**Honours**

Canada Gazette

20/10/2012	CMM	Chief Commander of the Order of Military Merit	General
26/03/2011	CMM	Commander of the Order of Military Merit	Major-General
01/03/2008	OMM	Officer of the Order of Military Merit	Colonel
01/09/1987	CD	Canadian Forces Decoration with two bars	Captain
31/10/2015	Commander	Legion of Merit	USA General
27/04/2013	Officer	Legion of Merit	USA Lieutenant-General

**Military**

01/09/1975	Officer Cadet	Royal Military College Kingston
01/06/1979	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant	Electrical Engineering Degree for RMC
01/07/1979	Lieutenant	Flight Training in the RCAF
01/07/1981	Lieutenant	421 Squadron, Baden Germany flying CF-104 Starfighter
01/07/1985	Captain	Professor at RMC – Master’s Degree over previous 4 years
01/07/1988	Major	United States Air Force (USAF) Staff College Montgomery, Alabama
01/07 1988	Major	Also taking a Master’s Degree in Public Administration at Auburn University
01/07/1991	Major	CFB Cold Lake Alberta to take CF-18 Hornet Training
01/07/1992	Major	To 421 and then 439 Squadron in Baden, Germany to fly CF-18 Hornet
31/03/1993	Major	To CFB Cold Lake with 410 Squadron – OiC Fighter Weapons Instructor School
01/07/1996	LCol	NDHQ in Ottawa as a career manager
01/07/1998	LCol	Commanding Officer 412 Squadron
01/07/2000	LCol	In charge of Career Management for the Air Force; completed USA Air War College
01/07/2003	Colonel	Various Staff Positions with the Air Force
01/07/2005	Colonel	Canadian Armed Forces Transformation Team – Strategic Joint Staff Organization
01/07/2006	Colonel	Wing Commander 8 Wing Trenton
01/05/2007	BGen	Commandant Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario
01/05/2009	MGen	Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, NDHQ Ottawa
01/07/2011	LGen	Deputy Commander North American Aerospace Command (NORAD) Colorado
20/10/2012	General	Chief of the Staff Canadian Armed Forces
17/07/2015	General	Retire from the Canadian Armed Forces



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**2012 – 2015**



Thomas James Lawson was born on 2 November 1957 in Etobicoke, Ontario. General Lawson graduated from the Royal Military College (RMC) of Canada with an Electrical Engineering Degree in 1979. Upon completion of his flight training in 1981, he was posted to 421 Squadron in Baden, Germany, where he flew the CF-104 Starfighter. Following this four-year tour, in 1985, he completed a Master's Degree in Electrical Engineering through RMC, and then went on to serve as a professor at the College.

Promoted to Major in 1988, General Lawson was posted to Montgomery, Alabama, to attend the United States Air Force (USAF) Staff College. During that time, he also completed a Master's Degree in Public Administration at Auburn University.

Posted to Cold Lake, Alberta, in 1991, General Lawson completed CF-18 Hornet training and then returned to Germany for a second operational tour, this time with 421 and 439 Squadrons. With the closure of Canadian Forces Base Baden, he was posted back to Cold Lake where he was assigned to 410 Squadron to serve as the Officer in Charge of the Fighter

Weapons Instructor School.

In 1996, General Lawson was posted to Ottawa as a career manager and soon after promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel. Then in 1998, while still serving in Ottawa, he was appointed Commanding Officer of 412 Squadron. Upon completion of that assignment in 2000, he was placed in charge of career management for the Air Force, at which time he also completed the USAF Air War College Program.



Promoted to Colonel in 2003, General Lawson held various staff positions within the Air Force before joining the CAF Transformation Team in 2005 where he led the stand-up of the Strategic Joint Staff organization. Posted to 8 Wing Trenton in 2006, he completed a year as the Wing Commander before being promoted to Brigadier-General. In May of 2007 he was appointed Commandant of the Royal Military College in Kingston.

In 2009, General Lawson was promoted to Major-General and appointed Assistant Chief of the Air Staff. In July 2011, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General and posted to Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, where he assumed responsibility as the Deputy Commander North American Aerospace Defence Command.

General Lawson was promoted to his current rank and was formally appointed as the Canadian Forces' Chief of the Defence Staff on October 29, 2012. He retired and turned the position over to General Vance on 01 July 2015.