



International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers 2015



*Remembrance Ceremony
The Cenotaph, Whitehall
1300, 20 May 2015*



International Day of UN Peacekeepers

In 2004, UNA Westminster Branch founded an annual conference, in partnership with the Royal United Services Institute, and a wreath-laying ceremony to mark the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. The event is now the largest annual gathering of its kind, bringing together diplomats, military personnel and UN veterans from around the world, with civil society and the public, to recognise the service of UN peacekeepers and remember those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.

For more information on UNA Westminster Branch and previous conferences and ceremonies, visit www.unawestminster.org.uk

The United Nations Association - UK (UNA-UK)

UNA-UK is the UK's leading source of independent analysis on the UN, and a UK-wide grassroots movement. UNA-UK believes that a strong, credible and effective UN is essential if we are to build a safer, fairer and more sustainable world. We call for strong government support for the UN and demonstrate why the UN matters to people everywhere.

UNA-UK is a longstanding advocate for UN peacekeeping. In 2014, we launched a year-long campaign on increasing UK engagement, which we believe will strengthen UN peacekeeping, protect civilians and contribute to the UK's own security goals. Specifically, we would like the UK to:

- Contribute more practical expertise to UN peacekeeping operations, e.g. rapid response teams and training in areas like counter-insurgency
- Provide more logistical support to UN peacekeeping operations, such as transport vehicles, surveillance drones and helicopters
- Update its current stance on UN peacekeeping, ensuring any new doctrine does not confine the UK's role to 'niche capabilities' and deployments to NATO-led missions
- Consider how the global service of British peacekeepers could be better celebrated and recognised within the UK

For more information, visit action.una.org.uk

Remembrance Ceremony

The Band of the Royal Logistics Corps and the Colour Guard of the United Nations Veterans Association will lead members of the diplomatic corps and other wreath-layers from the Royal United Services Institute to the Cenotaph.

Statement: David Wardrop,

Chairman, United Nations Association - Westminster Branch

We gather here to mark the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. To pay tribute to men and women from countries across the world who serve selflessly and, sometimes, unrewardingly in UN peacekeeping operations.

Let us remember those who have laid down their lives in lands far from their own in the service of peace. They came from 122 countries. They are mourned in 194. They chose to serve their country. Their country chose them to serve the world, to serve us. They died in a country with which their own had no dispute. Each is mourned by a mother, a father, a widow, by family, by friends.

And we are here because we mourn them too. We look forward to the day when we in this country have a memorial to them as do other nations; a memorial that recognises the sacrifice of all peacekeepers from wherever they came. For when each of these died, we might have lost one of our own.

In this window of calm in Whitehall, close to where the General Assembly of the United Nations first met in 1946, we reflect on the challenges we set ourselves then and the tasks that remain unfinished. Today, here, we comprise the largest gathering worldwide of diplomats, visitors from many countries, and of people from this country marking this International Day.

We encourage all nations to hold such gatherings, remembering not only their own sons and daughters but also those of other nations, serving all humankind. When together we can do this and mark this day together, it will be then that we may truly call ourselves the United Nations.

Prayer:

The Rt. Rev. Lord Harries of Pentregarth DD

Wreaths

- **Astrid Bernadotte**, *in memory of her grandfather, Count Folke Bernadotte, UN mediator in Palestine, assassinated in 1948*
- **John Cooke**, *UN Veterans Association, in memory of UK servicemen and women*
- **Admiral Henri Schricke**, *Defence Attaché, Embassy of France, in memory of Commandant René Laberrière, the first UN peacekeeper to lose his life*
- **The Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns**, *Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office*
- **Major General John Patterson**, *UK Ministry of Defence*
- **Sir Thomas Winsor**, *HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary*
- **Members of the Diplomatic Corps** *will lay wreaths on behalf of their countries in memory of those from 122 nations who have lost their lives in the cause of peace*
- **Irene Wills BEM**, *Chairman, War Widows Association*
- **David Irwin**, *former UN civilian staff*
- **David Mitchels**, *British Association of Former United Nations Civil Servants*
- **Sir Jeremy Greenstock**, *Chairman, United Nations Association - UK*
- **Adam Badrawi**, *President, UNA Youth*
- **Pupils from Grey Coat Hospital School for Girls and Westminster City School for Boys**

Prayer: **Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra**, *Leicester Interfaith Forum*

Closing statement: **David Wardrop, Chairman,**
United Nations Association – Westminster Branch

Now we return to our homes and to our loved ones, to our work and our colleagues. As we remember those who set out to keep the peace, let us remember also those they have set out to protect; those who yearn for the three fundamental freedoms - the freedom from want, the freedom from fear and the freedom to live in dignity. And that one day, in lasting peace and in that larger freedom, they also may say as we here can say 'We too are the peoples, the peoples of the United Nations'.

The Colour Guard of the United Nations Veterans Association will then lead the wreath-layers back to Royal United Services Institute.

The first to lose their lives serving the United Nations in the cause of peace

Count Folke Bernadotte

Count Folke Bernadotte headed the Swedish Red Cross during World War II. In 1948, he became the UN's first mediator in Palestine. Shortly before his plan for a political solution to the Palestine question was to be presented to the UN, he was assassinated in Jerusalem. In 1998, his family received the Dag Hammarskjöld medal.

Commandant René de Labarrière

The French officer, Commandant René de Labarrière, was the first peacekeeper to lose his life in a UN peacekeeping operation. Serving as a Military Observer in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation in the Middle East, he was killed by a landmine on 6 July 1948. In 1998, his family received his Dag Hammarskjöld medal.



© RLC Band

The Band of the Royal Logistic Corps

The Band of the Royal Logistic Corps is based near Camberley, Surrey. It supplies musical support to the Royal Logistic Corps, the largest Corps in the Army, throughout the UK and overseas. Formed in 1993, it is based at The Princess Royal Barracks and is made up entirely of musicians from the Corps of Army Music. The Royal Logistic Corps makes up over 16% of the Army and wherever the Army is deployed, soldiers and officers of The Royal Logistic Corps are close by supplying, moving and coordinating supplies to keep the modern Army running smoothly. The Band has recently completed tours of Cyprus and Germany, delivering musical support to British Forces. Some members of the band recently took part in overseas tours to Botswana and Malawi as well as Bermuda, assisting in the training and musical development of military musicians.



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Keeping the peace, protecting the people

Today, there are nearly 107,000 uniformed UN peacekeeping troops from 122 countries, including over 13,000 police, serving in 16 UN operations on four continents. About 4,100 of them are women. They are joined by some 5,000 international and more than 11,000 local civilian staff.

The UN is the largest multilateral contributor to post-conflict stabilisation worldwide. Only the US deploys more military personnel. Currently UN peacekeeping operations have a global logistics operation comprising 56 airplanes, 12 ships, 144 helicopters, 34,742 vehicles, 30 hospitals and 284 medical clinics. Approved resources for 2014-15 were about \$8.47bn (£5.49bn), about 0.5% of world military expenditure - \$1.8trn.

International Day of UN Peacekeepers

A total of 3,348 peacekeepers from 122 nations have lost their lives in service. Of these, 104 were British. The International Day of UN Peacekeepers was first observed on 29 May 2003, the date in 1948 on which the first UN peacekeeping mission, the Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), began operations in the Middle East - it is still there today.

On this day, we pay tribute to all the men and women who have served and continue to serve in UN peacekeeping operations, and honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.



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Women in peacekeeping

From 1% in 1993, women now make up 4% of peacekeeping military personnel and 10% of police. Six missions are currently led by women, and in Cyprus, both the head of mission and force commander are female. There are two all-female UN police units deployed: Indian in Liberia and Bangladeshi in Haiti. Women serve in all areas of peacekeeping. They perform the same roles, to the same standards and under the same difficult conditions as their male counterparts. They have made a positive contribution towards supporting the role of women in building peace, countering sexual violence and protecting women's rights.

It is an operational imperative that the UN and its member states increase the recruitment and retention of female peacekeepers. They serve as role models, inspiring women and girls in often male-dominated societies to push for their rights and for participation in peace processes.

Medals

Exceptional courage: On 8 May 2014, The UN Security Council agreed to create 'the Captain Mbaye Diagne Medal for Exceptional Courage' in honour of a UN peacekeeper credited with saving hundreds of Rwandans during the 1994 genocide. It will be awarded to peacekeepers "who demonstrate exceptional courage, in the face of extreme danger ... in the service of humanity and the United Nations." Captain Mbaye Diagne of Senegal served with the former UN Mission in Rwanda.

Dag Hammarskjöld: The medal named after the former UN Secretary-General (1953-61) is a posthumous award to members of UN peacekeeping operations who have lost their lives in service. Hammarskjöld died in a plane crash while on a peace mission in the Congo. UNA Westminster Branch and others have long campaigned for the UN to re-open its inquiry into the cause of the crash. In 2014, the General Assembly requested an independent panel to examine new information that had emerged. The panel is expected to submit its report by 30 June 2015. See www.humanrights2008.org.uk

Time for a UK medal? Several countries, such as Canada and Ireland, award medals to peacekeepers – military, police and civilians. No equivalent exists for the UK.



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Support UNA-UK's call to honour British peacekeepers

The UK has been contributing our armed forces to UN peacekeeping missions since 1964. In the 1990s, the UK was one of the top contributors, with over 10,000 troops deployed in Bosnia. Today around 300 UK troops serve in UN peace operations across the world. 104 brave British citizens have lost their lives while taking part in UN peacekeeping missions.

The global service of peacekeepers is woefully undervalued in the UK. Support our call to the UK Government to publicly recognise the commitment and sacrifice of its peacekeepers.

Visit **action.una.org.uk** for more information and to join the call.



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To find out more and to join our growing movement, visit **www.una.org.uk**

If you are interested in working with us, please contact us on: **+44 20 7766 3454** or **info@una.org.uk**

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