

PEACEKEEPING AND PEACEMAKING

Down to One: Canada's Presence in Cyprus 1964-2011

Character Education

- Consider the causes of conflict in human nature
- Evaluate different methods of conflict resolution
- Apply the lessons of peacekeeping in Cyprus to their own lives

Facts

- Cyprus, roughly the size of P.E.I., gained independence from Britain in 1960 and faced serious internal strife between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots by 1963
- Nearly 30,000 Canadian Forces members served in Cyprus, many on several peacekeeping rotations from 1964–1993. Cyprus is the UN's longest peacekeeping mission
- 28 Canadians died in Cyprus with a total of 181 fatalities related to the UN mission there

Before the Reading

- What do Cyprus, Crete, Corfu, Sicily, Capri and Malta have in common? Share any information you have as a group about these places, especially Cyprus
- Make a list of countries that contain populations of divergent origins—such as French and English Canada. What are the pros and cons of divergent populations?
- If you were a media relations officer for the Canadian Forces, what strategies would you use to give the general public a positive view of Canadian military operations?

Reading 1, the Place

Operation Snowgoose, Cyprus, 1964-1993

Cyprus was Canada's best-known overseas operation for many decades with a battalion-sized peacekeeper deployment there for four decades to keep the hostile Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sides apart. Canadian troops

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The Star of Courage
Étoile du Courage
www.veterans.gc.ca

Major General Alain R. Forand, peacekeeper extraordinaire

"There were two wounded commandos so, as I went to get these guys, I placed two machine guns and told them that if I am fired upon I will give you the order to fire. As I went down to get the first one I was fired upon, so I gave the order to fire back." Then

Captain Alain Forand was

speaking about his rescue of two wounded soldiers of the Canadian Airborne. The lightly armed commandoes had found themselves trapped between belligerent forces as the well armed Turkish Forces advanced. Forand was awarded the Star of Courage for his rescue under fire from both sides.

Forand while with the UN peacekeeping forces in Knin, Croatia earned the Meritorious Service Award for guaranteeing the safety of approximately 1,000 Serbs who sought protection from the indiscriminate killings around them. The Major General was in command of 32 Canadians in Sector Two when he gave sanctuary to the refugees. He fed and protected

were pivotal in the stabilization process in the wake of an attempted Greek coup and attempted Turkish Army takeover in 1974.

After a de facto ceasefire came into effect on August 16, 1974, rotating Canadian Forces (58 six month rotations) in an operation dubbed "Snowgoose" were part of UNFICYP (United Nations Force in Cyprus). UNFICYP monitored the cease-fire between the island's Greek-Cypriot (78% of the population) and Turkish-Cypriot (18% of the population) communities. Canadians helped patrol the 180 km demarcation line separating the warring sides. The line, called the green line, was a buffer zone that ranged in breadth from 20 metres to 7 km (346 square km).

UN observation posts, air, vehicle and foot patrols ensured strict adherence to the status quo of the buffer zone. Operation Snowgoose soldiers were called upon to investigate, act upon and document all violations of the 1974 ceasefire and incursions into Section Three of the buffer zone an area that contained the Cypriot capitol of Nicosia. Crowd control at times became part of the Canadian mission as it was in Nicosia that the buffer zone went down to its 20 metre thread of separation. Tempers flared quickly with such close proximity.

Today, Canada's contribution to UNFICYP is one staff officer working at the mission's headquarters in Nicosia. Canada's sole contributor serves a one to two year rotation with the UN Operation Information Section.

Reading 2, the People

August 17, 1974



Cap Badge Airborne Regiment
Association of Canada

Colonel Guy Lessard and another Canadian officer were trying to keep groups of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots combatants apart in their respective areas of the buffer zone at opposite ends of a street in Nicosia, Cyprus when a truck driven by a Turkish Cypriot erred into the Greek

Cypriot side of the street. The driver was forced from his vehicle and his life threatened. Without hesitation, Colonel Lessard placed himself in front of the driver to shield him from violence. Lessard's brave action earned enough time for a military vehicle to scoop the threatened man up and remove him from danger. For saving a life and defusing a situation that could have led to many casualties Colonel Guy H. Lessard received the Medal of Bravery.

them for two months in spite of the fact that the UN insisted these Serbs were not refugees. According to Calgary filmmaker Garth Pritchards, "We all knew they'd be killed if we didn't protect them. Forand told the world "not on my watch" will they be turfed out to be killed."

In his 33 year military career Forand served with NATO forces in Germany, UN forces in the Western Sahara, Cyprus and Croatia. Garth Pritchards considers him a true Canadian hero.

September – December 18, 1989



Captain Stephen Roberts CD, AdC,
Canadian Forces Army Reserve
www.stephen-roberts.com/cyprus.html

Captain Stephen Roberts, Public Affairs Officer, Toronto Scottish Regiment Army Reserve Unit

Stephen Roberts had worked through many stages of his military career from cadet with the Royal Canadian Air Cadets, 172nd

Squadron to Public Affairs Officer of the Central Militia Area Headquarters of the Toronto Scottish Regiment Central Militia by September 1989 when he was asked to go to Cyprus to produce television news stories on Canadian Peacekeepers there.

Roberts and a former CBC reporter documented the activities of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment, and produced television spots for home audiences. Showing tremendous initiative, Roberts marketed "Christmas Messages from Cyprus" to stations near to the soldiers' hometowns. These messages, plus interviews called double-enders (because they simulated a two-sided interview) were broadcast by the CBC and by television and radio stations in Ottawa, Barrie, Hamilton and Toronto between Remembrance Day and Christmas 1989. They provided Ontarians with real faces for peacekeeping.

Twenty-two years ago Bert De Bruijn of Chesterville stated in his interview that his UN tour of duty in Cyprus made him appreciate what he had in Canada. The then 18-year-old Private from the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders manned an observation post and took part in the foot patrols of the thin green line in Section Three, Nicosia.

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Capt Lorne Cooper | October 27, 2010
Nicosia, Cyprus the main door of the UNFICYP
Headquarters building
Photo : Maj Bruce Barteaux
www.comfec-cefcom.forces.gc.ca/pa-ap/potd/photos-eng.asp?id=466

Captain Lorne Cooper, the last man in Cyprus

Since 1993 a series of lone officers have represented Canada's contributions to UN peacekeeping in Cyprus. The current last man's tenure is about to end as Captain Lorne Cooper arrived on

Canada Day 2009. While on duty Captain Cooper has kept in close contact with the UN soldiers and police officers from nations currently contributing forces to patrol the thin green line. While off duty he made it his priority to understand the longstanding dispute, travelling and interacting widely on both sides of the demarcation line.

"My role is to build situational awareness on matters pertaining to the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus"

for the UN Force Commander currently from the UK. I monitor changes in the political climate in the northern side, the military disposition and attitude of Turkey towards the island; anything that could have an impact on our ability to conduct our mission."

For November 11, 2009, the Captain who had only been in Cyprus a matter of months, planned a quiet solo ceremony at the Canadian Memorial in Nicosia to commemorate Canada's fallen peacekeepers. The official UN service was focused on the Sunday before Remembrance Day. Padre Major Danny Connolly of the 27th Regiment of the UK found out about Cooper's solo ceremony and offered his bagpipe and reading expertise. By the time the "small" service took place at the memorial that Captain Cooper had painted and polished, the 27th Regiment was there as well as the wife of the Irish Ambassador to Cyprus, Cathleen Brady, formerly of Toronto.

"Remembrance Day has always been a day for all Canadians wherever they are to stop and remember the sacrifices made to preserve our freedoms that we so cherish. It was simply amazing to me—those who not just remember but make that special effort to actually demonstratively remember, regardless of where they are in the world. Lest we forget."

Memorial Photo, page 7:

www.unficy.org/media/Blue%20Beret%20-%20pdf%20files/2009/BB_Oct-Nov_2009.pdf

The 1989 Cyprus broadcasts may be heard at www.stephen-roberts.com/cyprus.html as reminders of Canada's commitment to the long process involved in peacemaking.

After the Reading

- How old would Private Bert De Bruijn be today? Imagine how his life has changed and what part his peacekeeping service in Cyprus might have contributed to that change
- Discuss Colonel Guy Lessard's actions of placing himself in harm's way to protect someone whose life was in danger. Was he brave or foolhardy? Discuss the best ways to handle such a situation
- Speculate why the Cyprus peacekeeping mission has been such a long one. Suggest ways that the peacemaking process might be speeded up either in Cyprus or in situations you know in your own school or community

Extensions

- Look up School Yard Peacekeeping, Peer Mediation or Conflict Resolution Programs and find the similarities and differences to the Cyprus Peacekeeping mission
- How does the strife between the Montagues and Capulets depicted in *Romeo and Juliet* differ from that between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots? Research how religion and entry into the European union further complicated the long-standing strife in Cyprus
- The film "The Palace" set in 1974 Cyprus was filmed by an international crew in the area of the thin green line in Lefkosia. The award-winning 2011 documentary will soon be available on DVD. Try to obtain a copy to watch with your class to discuss how conflict resolution has to start with character education.
info@anthouse.com

Sources

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