

BLUE BERET



UNFICYP holds annual Winter Medal Parade

On Thursday 2nd February 2017, the UN Flight hangar hosted UNFICYP's annual military Winter Medal Parade. 226 peacekeepers from all three Sectors and from HQ support units proudly marched into the venue, where, in front their ambassadors and other distinguished guests, they prepared to receive UN medals. The UN medal is awarded to all peacekeepers "in the service of peace"; more than 150 000 peacekeepers deserved this award since 1964.

The lined-up troops welcomed the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in Cyprus and Head of Mission, Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, and Force Commander Major General Mohammad Humayun Kabir. In his address, General Humayun emphasized his satisfaction with the peacekeepers' professional work, which helps to keep the situation in the buffer zone stable and peaceful.

"Since my assumption of Command as the Force Commander about four months ago, I have closely monitored the activities of all Sectors, force troops, and Headquarters staff members. I am proud to say that the military component has excelled in its role as loyal, dedicated and committed peacekeepers," he said. "I am particularly delighted to note the professionalism shown by the Sectors in manning all the sensitive positions along the buffer zone in their respective areas of operation."

In addition, I have noted with great interest your cooperation with other contingents in operational, training and administrative

activities. I am therefore confident that you and your successors are well capable of dealing with all future challenges," he added.

After his address, General Humayun, SRSG Spehar and national representatives awarded the UN medals to peacekeepers. For many of them it was a very emotional moment to receive their first UN medal by the highest mission representatives.

In her address, SRSG Spehar praised the work of UNFICYP's peacekeepers, which is vital to the successful execution of the mission's mandate and ongoing negotiations to reach a comprehensive, sustainable settlement on the island.

"The work you do to maintain a calm and stable buffer zone is vital to our operational success and to the ongoing peace process. The negotiations have reached a critical stage; the convening of the Conference on Cyprus in Geneva in January marked a watershed moment in the talks. We look forward to seeing more progress towards a settlement in the days and weeks ahead," she said.

The highly organised parade concluded with a reception, where each Sector presented the traditional cuisine of their various nations. Each Sector also presented cultural performances for guests.

Congratulations to all who received their UN medals, and special thanks to DCOS Ops Sp Lieutenant Colonel T J D Julian Pemberton-Pigott and his team, who helped to organised and prepared this successful event.





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