

BLUE BERET

Canada's High Commissioner to Cyprus Pays Tribute

By: Capt Ryan Gillespie, HQ SO3 Ops Info and Canadian Contingent (CANCON)

On 2 July 2016, the Canadian High Commissioner to Cyprus, H.E. Keith Morrill visited Ledra Palace Hotel, where, on behalf of the Government of Canada, he officially thanked two UNFICYP officers from Sector 2 – Cpl Martha Armstrong and Spr Andrew Sheehan – for their efforts to restore a memorial commemorating Canada's fallen soldiers.

Upon their arrival in Cyprus in May 2016, members of the 36th Ghurkha Engineer Regiment Battle Group, under the command of Lt Col Richard Walker, took note of the deteriorating condition of the memorial; on her own initiative, Cpl Armstrong, aided by Spr Sheehan, restored the memorial to an excellent state. The Regiment was highly impressed with their efforts, and Senior National Representative CANCON Capt Ryan Gillespie, as the only Canadian military on island, wanted to ensure proper recognition was shown to the two officers. Words cannot express the

debt of gratitude that Canada owes to these two UK soldiers for their outstanding service to Canada's veterans.

Canada in UNFICYP

On 15 March 1964, the first Canadian soldiers arrived in Cyprus to join UNFICYP. Peacekeeping had been brought into being by Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, who believed strongly that soldiers could be used to create peace instead of war. Continuing the tradition as one of the original Troop Contributing Countries (the others being Denmark, Ireland, and Finland) until 1993, Canada provided some 25,000 soldiers to help bring peace to this island, before withdrawing the large contingent. Twenty-Eight Canadian soldiers paid the ultimate price in Cyprus, and are commemorated on a monument located at the Ledra Palace Hotel in the buffer zone.



From Left to Right: Cpl Martha Armstrong, Sector 2 Commander Lt Colonel Richard Walker, Canadian High Commissioner to Cyprus Keith Morrill, Capt Ryan Gillespie, and Spr Andrew Sheehan

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