

BLUE BERET

ITALIAN UN POLICE CONTINGENT DEPARTS THE MISSION

Thursday 26 March marked a sad day for UNPOL, as the four member Italian Carabinieri Police Contingent ceremoniously lowered their flag outside Headquarters UNFICYP in the presence of the Italian Ambassador, prior to their departure and withdrawal from the Mission the following day.

Italy has contributed four members to UNFICYP since July 2005 and 34 Carabinieri have since served in Cyprus, distinguishing themselves by their high professionalism and sense of duty. Throughout these years, the Carabinieri greatly contributed to the implementation of UNFICYP's mandate and to the daily work of the Mission. Thanks to their specific background as a military police force responsible for public order and security, the Carabinieri officers were always able to establish and maintain cordial and respectful relationships with their counterparts from both sides, while also winning over the trust of the population in both communities. On numerous occasions the Carabinieri were instrumental in lowering potential tensions by facilitating dialogue.



THE ITALIAN CARABINIERI



The ancient Corps of the Royal Carabinieri was instituted in Turin by the King of Sardinia, Vittorio Emanuel I by Royal Warrant on 13th July, 1814. It was given the dual function of national defence, in first position with respect to other branches of the Armed Forces, and policing with special powers and prerogatives. On 24th January, 1861 the Force was appointed "First Force" of the newly founded national military organization, rising to the status of Armed Force on 31st March, 2000. This privileged position, as well as the presence of Carabinieri in every part of the country, even in the smallest village, were and still are the most significant characteristics of the Institution.

Based on a gendarmerie type, as a result of the particular combination of member of the Armed Forces and Police Authority, the Carabinieri Force has the both military and

police responsibilities.

They are, today, particularly proud of the memory of Vice Brigadiere Salvo D'Acquisto, who was executed by the Germans in Palidoro (near Rome) during World War II. D'Acquisto exchanged his life for the lives of citizens due to be executed in retaliation for the killing of a German soldier; instead, he claimed responsibility and was executed for the offence. In fact their motto is "Nei Secoli Fedele" (Faithful for the centuries).

In recent years Carabinieri units have been dispatched on peacekeeping missions, including Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. In 2003 twelve Carabinieri were killed in a suicide bombing on their base in Nasiriyah, near Basra in southern Iraq, in the largest Italian military loss of life in a single action since the Second World War.



L to R: Chief Inspector Massimiliano Velardi, Senior Chief Inspector Walter Geremia, His Excellency the Italian Ambassador Mr. Guido Cerboni, Senior Police Advisor Colonel Andrii Sachavo, Inspector Michele Giovannini and Inspector Elizabetta Lanza.

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