

THE PEACEKEEPER

IN THE SERVICE OF PEACE

Peacekeepers are military personnel, police and other peace officers on active service or in retirement. Over 125,000 Canadians have served on peacekeeping operations with the United Nations Organization (UN), with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), and the African Union (AU) or with other international organizations as well as with the other multinational forces mandated by the United Nations. Only the UN Peacekeepers wear the light blue headdress, the others wear other colours such as; royal blue, pale green, orange and white.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BLUE HELMETS

The first United Nations peacekeeping force was sent to Egypt in 1956. To distinguish themselves from the belligerents as members of the international contingent, Canadians and the other UN Forces painted their vehicles white and their helmets blue, the official colours of the United Nations. In the process, they created what was to become the well known symbol of UN peacekeeping and those charged with maintaining the peace since 1956: the **Blue Helmet**.

ABOUT PEACEKEEPING

Peacekeeping forces are traditionally placed between hostile forces to supervise cease-fires and the withdrawal of opposing forces. In recent years the role of peacekeepers has expanded to include the delivery of humanitarian aid, the supervision of elections, the repatriation of refugees, the disarming of warring factions and the reclamation of shattered landscapes through the clearing of mines, etc. Another increasingly important aspect of peace support or **peacekeeping operations** is support for stable government and human rights, including the organization of electoral systems, and the training of police forces and the judiciary. These new peacekeeping activities now involve many Canadian civilians, in addition to the Canadian Forces.

THE PEACEKEEPING VETERAN

A “**Veteran**” is a person on active service or retired who has served in time of war or in time of peace, such service being officially recognized by the award of a national or international service decoration. A “**War Veteran**” is a veteran who has been in combat. A “**Peacekeeping Veteran**” is a veteran, including a war veteran, who has served on an international or multinational peacekeeping mission.

THE 1988 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

All UN Peacekeepers, the « **Blue Helmets** », who served between 1956 and 1988 were collectively awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize for 1988** in recognition of their historic service to limit violence and promote peace in extremely difficult conditions and by their efforts, the peacekeeping forces largely contributed to the realization of the fundamental objectives of the UN; security and world peace, but they are not Nobel Laureates.

THE CANADIAN PEACEKEEPING SERVICE MEDAL

Motivated by the award of the **Nobel Peace Prize** to United Nations Peacekeeping Forces in 1988, the Order in Council of September 1999 awards the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal (CPSM) to each member of the Canadian Forces upon return from their first peacekeeping operation. Today, the CPSM is also awarded to police and other peace officers, to civilian public servants as well as the military. This includes peacekeeping service with the United Nations Organization as well as all international and multinational missions recognized by the Government of Canada.

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THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS

In 2002, the United Nations General Assembly declared in favour of an International Peacekeeper's Day to pay tribute to all the men and women who have served and continue to serve in **United Nations peacekeeping operations** for their high level of professionalism, dedication and courage, and to honour the memory of those, over 2000 souls, who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.

OUR NATIONAL PEACEKEEPER'S DAY

This day recalls the sad and fatal incident which occurred on August 9th 1974, a date which marks the greatest single loss of Canadian lives in peacetime. Nine Canadian UN Peacekeepers serving with the United Nations Emergency Force in Egypt and Israel, travelling aboard a "Buffalo" type UN military transport aircraft during a routine flight were shot down by a Syrian surface-to-air missile as the aircraft flew over the Lebanon's Bekaa valley as it was preparing to land in Damascus, Syria. Bill C-287, officially recognizing the **9th of August** as a Canadian Commemorative Day received Royal Assent in July 2008. Each year, on 9 August, or thereabouts, we remember the 171 Canadians who fell on the Field of Honour as well as those who are physically and psychically wounded **in the service of peace**, give recognition to family and friends who help make duty on peacekeeping missions and operations in far-away countries less arduous, and honour those who are decorated for their bravery and their sacrifice during these dangerous observation missions and peace operations since 1947.

THE UNITED NATIONS FLAG

The UN flag utilizes blue as a background and white as the colour of the motif, these two colours are the official colours of the United Nations. The central motif, inscribed in a wreath consisting of olive branches symbolizes peace, represents a world map formed by an azimuthal equidistant projection centered on the North Pole. The olive branch symbolizes peace since Greek Antiquity. The world map depicts the area of concern to the Organisation in achieving its main purpose: peace and security. Blue represents the sky and the spirit, and white purity and peace. The flag of the United Nations Organization may be used liberally as a sign of support for the Organization and its works; however this being subject to the conditions laid down in the United Nations Flag Code.

THE CANADIAN PEACEKEEPING VETERANS ASSOCIATION

Established by Canadian peacekeeping veterans and federally incorporated in 1991, the Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association (CPVA) is a democratic, apolitical, non-sectarian, and not-for-profit, veterans-only organization. The CPVA mission is to bring veterans together in comradeship, to advocate for the defence of their rights and to watch over and promote their interests. One of three peacekeeping veterans associations in Canada, it is governed by veterans for veterans. Membership is open to all veterans of war and peace, including veterans of all nations who are members of the United Nations Organization.

« Honour the Peacekeeper, for he is your Soul, the Spirit of the Nation »