

Canada the Peace-Keeper

Canada has about 1,600 peace-keeping troops scattered around the world, more than any other nation. Each is identified by an acronym as part of a larger UN group (UNMOGIP, United Nations Military Observer Group India-Pakistan) and by another acronym as a Canadian unit (CCUNDOF, Canadian Contingent to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force). Canadian peace-keepers have been in India and Pakistan since 1949, in Korea since 1953, in the Middle East since 1948 and in Cyprus since 1964. The smallest contingent, one major and one sergeant, is part of the United Nations Military Armistice Commission in Korea, and the largest is the 880-member group in Ismailia. Below are brief descriptions of where they are and what they are doing:

Middle East 1: 20 officers including 6 lent to the UN force in Damascus (Middle East 3). Headquartered in Jerusalem since May 1948: "To observe and maintain the cease-fire ordered by the Security Council, to assist in the supervision of the application and observance of the General Armistice Agreement between Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Israel."

Middle East 2: 880 Canadians, all ranks. Headquartered in Ismailia since October 1973: "To observe and maintain the cease-fire between Israel and Egypt by interposing troops between the parties concerned."

Middle East 3: 170 Canadians, all ranks. Headquartered in Damascus since May 1974: "To observe and maintain the cease-fire between Israel and Syria by interposing troops between the parties concerned."

Middle East 4: 91 Canadians, all ranks. Headquartered in Nagoura, Lebanon, since April 29, 1978: "To provide communications support to all deployed elements of the UN force and a communications centre."

Cyprus: 515 Canadians, all ranks. Headquartered in Nicosia since March 1964: "To use its best efforts to prevent a recurrence of fighting and, as necessary, to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and to assist in the return to normal conditions."

India-Pakistan: 8 officers, employed as observers and, occasionally, as staff. Headquartered in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, and Srinagar, India, since September 1949: "To supervise the observance of the Karachi Agreement by investigating alleged or suspected cease-fire violations on both sides of the cease-fire line."

Korea: Canada has a single representative, a major, on the Military Armistice Commission; he is assisted by a sergeant. Headquartered in Seoul, Canadians have been in Korea since 1947 and part of the current peace-keeping force since 1957: "To attempt to uphold the Korean Armistice Agreement."

A Peace-Keeping Highlight

"On October thirtieth [1956] after the government of Egypt declined to obey a British ultimatum to withdraw troops from a portion of Egyptian territory on twelve hours notice, the Royal Air Force bombed Egyptian airfields. Five days later British troops landed in Port Said as if nothing had changed since the days of the Khedive and Lord Cromer. About a thousand Egyptian soldiers and civilians were killed. The Soviet Union threatened to rain rockets on London and Paris. The Americans, at the climax of a presidential election campaign, were deter-

mined to push through a flat condemnation of the invasion of Egypt. . . . The Western Alliance was on the verge of dissolution. . . . In hindsight, it is easy to see the [Canadian proposed] United Nations Emergency Force, to which Canada contributed the commander, General E.L.M. Burns, and the largest number of troops, as a simple and obvious solution to the problem. But it met at first the solidly based skepticism of even the secretary-general, Dag Hammarskjold, himself."

William Kilbourn
The Making of the Nation