REMEMBRANCE DAY 2026

(Written yearly by a Parishioner)

Canada and International Peacekeeping

Canada has a long history of serving in support of peace efforts around the world. Those in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) have made significant contributions in dozens of peacekeeping efforts. They play vital roles including monitoring ceasefires, patrolling buffer zones, clearing landmines, investigating war crimes, helping refugees and providing humanitarian aid. More than 125,000 CAF members have served in international peacekeeping efforts in dozens of countries over the decades. Approximately 130 of them have lost their lives and many more have returned home with physical and psychological wounds. Canada played a key role in creating the concept of UN peacekeeping. Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester B. Pearson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership in helping establish the United Nations Emergency Force in Egypt during the Suez Crisis of 1956. Canada also took part in this large-scale mission that helped prevent a wider war.

Here is a brief summary of our peacekeeping deployments over the years:

Afghanistan (2001 – 2014)

More than 40,000 Canadians would serve in the region. This would become the largest deployment of our troops since the Second World War. The conflict lasted more than 12 years— the longest in Canada's history.

Cambodia (1954 – 2000)

More than a thousand Canadian Armed Forces members served in Cambodia to help stabilize and rebuild the country during four peace support missions between 1954 to 2000. They took part in United Nations and other international community efforts there to help the people of this war-torn land.

Balkans (1991 – present)

Canadians served in European Community, United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization missions in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. These new countries arose from the ashes of the former country of Yugoslavia. As of 1991, tens of thousands of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members joined these missions in the Balkans region of southeast Europe. They worked to restore peace and security to the people there.

Cyprus (1960 – present)

The peacekeeping operation in Cyprus, from 1964 to today, is one of Canada's longest and best-known overseas military commitments. A large Canadian contingent served on the island from 1964 to 1993, and a small Canadian Armed Forces presence remains there today as United Nations (UN) peace efforts continue. In total, more than 25,000 Canadian Armed Forces members have served in Cyprus over the decades. Many of them served in Cyprus more than once, participating in several rotations.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (1949 – present)

One of the Canadian military's central roles over the years has been to stand side-by-side with our allies to help defend international peace and security. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established in 1949, and this important partnership has endured for decades in a world that has undergone many significant changes.

Egypt (1956 – present)

Over the last 70 years, thousands of Canadians have participated in peace efforts in Egypt. Their service has touched the lives of many people in a land often rocked by strife and conflict.

Golan Heights of Syria (1974 – present)

Canada has been a peacekeeping presence in the Golan Heights of Syria since 1974. This makes it one of our longest-running international commitments. More than 12,000 Canadians have served in this region since the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force began there. Canadian Armed Forces members who served in Syria have a deep understanding of how fragile peace is – and how important it is to protect.

Gulf War (1990 -1991)

The Gulf War of the early 1990s was an important chapter in Canada's military history. More than 4,000 Canadians served in the Persian Gulf region in 1990-1991 as part of a Coalition of countries. Their goal was to remove the invading forces of Iraq from neighboring Kuwait. This was the first conflict where Canadian women played an active combat role.

Ethiopia and Eritrea (1985 – 2003)

Canadian Armed Forces members served in a United Nations (UN) peace mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea from 2000 to 2003. At times, more than 500 Canadians served in these major efforts. Some Canadian military personnel also took part in humanitarian aid missions to the region during the 1980s.

Mali (2018 - 2023)

More than 1,250 Canadian Armed Forces members made important contributions to the United Nations (UN) efforts. Their work helped stabilize the country after years of unrest.

Rwanda (1993 – 1996)

Canada played an important role in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions in the African nation of Rwanda from 1993 to 1996. UN peacekeepers were unable to stop the worst of the violence. Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members tried to restore order. They delivered needed humanitarian aid and other help. Hundreds of CAF members returned from Rwanda affected by the horrors they had seen.

Somalia (1992 – 1993)

Canada has long participated in international peace efforts, but the nature of these missions is far from simple. The Canadian men and women who find themselves on the ground in far-off countries in turmoil often must deal with a great deal of hostility and resistance from the citizens they are trying to help in the course of their duties.

The Congo (1960 – present)

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has a long history of instability and violence. Since 1960, more than 2,500 Canadians have taken part in several peace support operations there. Their work has tried to restore security and freedom to the people of Congo, as part of international efforts to help stabilize and rebuild the country.

Haiti (1974 – 2010)

Canada has taken a leading role in international peacekeeping and humanitarian aid efforts in Haiti. This is in large part due to the shared linguistic and cultural ties between our two countries. Canadians in uniform have also served in several peacekeeping and natural disaster response operations in Haiti. Notably, Canadians participated in large-scale peace efforts in Haiti in the mid-1990s and mid-2000s. In 2010, Canada offered significant aid to help in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake.

On this Remembrance Day, let us remember our brave men and women who served on these missions for democracy and freedom and especially those who did not return.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM