

## **50th Anniversary of United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Cyprus**

*Statement by the Honourable Jim Karygiannis, Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Agincourt and Liberal Critic for Veterans Affairs.*

March 2014 marks the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

The peacekeeping mission was established to help quell tensions that arose between Greeks and Turks, during the drafting of the Cypriot Constitution, in 1964.

Canada maintained a strong presence in the Cyprus Peacekeeping Mission from 1964 to 1993; today, a small Canadian Forces contingent remains in Cyprus as United Nations peace efforts continue. During our twenty-nine year mission in Cyprus, more than 25,000 members of the Canadian Forces were deployed to Cyprus. Our contribution was not without sacrifice – 28 Canadian personnel lost their lives serving as part of the mission.

I have traveled to Cyprus many times and have gone to the United Nations Buffer Zone, also known as the “Green Line” in Nicosia. I witnessed firsthand, the work our military personnel were doing on the ground. I walked the “Green Line” and crossed the Ledra Palace crossing with our troops. Their work and high level of professionalism was appreciated and is still talked about by both sides to this day.

Today, we honour the men and women of the Canadian Forces who were part of the Peacekeeping Mission in Cyprus and we express our gratitude for their service and sacrifice. We must ensure that when our veterans come home, they can live their lives with dignity and respect. We must not let them down.