

BLUE BERET

UNFICYP marks International Women’s day 2016

Every year on 8 March, the world comes together to mark International Women’s Day, and UNFICYP played its part this year, with all parts of the mission recognising the contribution of women to the mission and to Cyprus.

At UNFICYP HQ, Senior Police Advisor Colonel Andrii Sachavo hosted a traditional Women’s Day breakfast at the UNPOL Club, which included remarks by Col. Sachavo and the Head of Mission, Ms. Lisa Buttenheim, as well as coffee and snacks.

Each of UNFICYP’s sectors also held events to mark International Women’s Day, with troops hearing from their commanders about the important role women play in UNFICYP and the need for more women to participate in peacekeeping.

UNFICYP’s Civil Affairs Section organised a panel discussion on 10 March titled, ‘How Women Make Peacebuilding Better’, addressing among other things the need to employ new

approaches to peacebuilding that involve greater participation of women.

The mission’s Public Information Office produced a special edition of the Blue Beret magazine dedicated to gender perspectives; the issue included several contributions by male and female personnel on their experiences with gender, and highlighted some of the key events around gender over the past year.

Currently 59 women from Argentina, Paraguay, United Kingdom, Norway, Slovakia, Hungary and Serbia serve within UNFICYP’s military component, representing 7 percent of the total number of troops; these soldiers work in the medical, administrative, logistics, joint operation centres and catering, among others, and range in rank from Lieutenant Colonel to Lance Corporal. Women make up 20 percent of UNPOL personnel serving with UNFICYP.





Lance Corporals Patterson, Holmes and Adair in the kitchen of the former Ledra Palace Hotel, Nicosia

Lance Corporal Lilly Patterson

“International Women’s Day gives us the opportunity to promote the fact that we’re just as good as men. If Carlsberg did soldiers, they’d all be women!”

Lance Corporal Lucy Holmes

“International Women’s day is a good thing. It celebrates women and shows that in the military we can do the same jobs as men, from being on the front line to support roles such as mine.”

Lance Corporal Yvette Adair

“International Women’s Day is important as it recognises that women play an important role in the military and that we are as capable as our male colleagues.”



Lieutenant Humphreys and Sergeant Dickson from UNFICYP’s Sector 2

Lieutenant Emma Humphreys

“It is a really exciting time to be a woman in the British Army because of all the positive changes that are taking place around the type of roles we can undertake and the opportunities we will have moving forward.”

Sergeant Nicola Dickson

“It is important to mark the vital role that women have, not only in society in general, but also in the military. International Women’s Day allows us to pause and reflect of how far we have come along the road to equality and that is something that should be celebrated.”



Lance Corporal McCormick, Sergeant Humphreys and Staff Sergeant Fullerton outside the Med Centre at UNPA

Lance Corporal Bronagh McCormick

“I’m a woman in the army, I’m not trying to be a man. I joined to do my duty, and be the best I can.”

Sergeant Fay Humphreys

“As a female in the army I don’t think I’m treated any differently, although the guys do want to protect you. We all have our jobs to do and my gender doesn’t come into it.”

Staff Sergeant Andrea Fullerton

“The fact that I’m a women is irrelevant. My gender doesn’t define me. I’m a soldier and a medic. My role is genderless and that is how it should be.”

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