

PEACEKEEPING VETERAN HONOURED AT THE NSW POLICE COLLEGE - Author, Mr Denis Percy - National President - UNPAA.

INTRODUCTION:

On the 14th November, 1974 Sergeant Ian Ward, a member of the New South Wales Police Force, who had been seconded to the then named Australian Commonwealth Police, (later named the AFP), for 12 months service with the United Nations Force in Cyprus, (UNFICYP). Ian died as a result of a land-mine explosion whilst travelling in a Land Rover.

He and Sergeant John Wolcott, the vehicle observer, also on attachment from the NSW Police, were conveying four Turkish refugees from the Greek Cypriot sector village of Ayios Nicolaos to the Turkish sector in Lefka District. One of the Turkish refugees was killed and three were seriously injured in the explosion. The Land Rover was completely demolished by the anti-tank mine. Sergeant John Wolcott survived the explosion; however, he received serious facial and other injuries.

Sergeant Ward had been in Cyprus for only five days on his 12 month secondment to the United Nations Police Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). Ironically, Ian had previously served and survived as a Military Policeman, whilst performing his National Service during the Vietnam War.

Lieutenant-General Bedrettin Demirel, Commander of the Turkish Peace Forces in Cyprus, in a heart felt expression of sympathy wrote to Sergeant Ward's Family and stated, "*Your son, who was making every effort to assist in the humanitarian activities indiscriminate of race, religion and language, is a martyr of duty. His memory and service live in the hearts of all personnel of the Turkish Peace Forces in Cyprus*".

HANDOVER AND BLESSING OF THE DAG HAMMARSKJOLD MEDAL.

On the 29th May, 2009 in Goulburn at the NSW Police College, 35 years after his death on a lonely village road and a world away from Cyprus, we remembered our Police colleague. The service held at the NSW Police College demonstrates that Australian Police do not forget those who die in the line of duty, either in Australia or whilst serving overseas.

In a highly symbolic ceremony, the Australian Federal Police officially handed-over "**on-loan**" for a five year period, the *Dag Hammarskjöld Medal* awarded to the late Sergeant Ian Donald Ward. That medal had been in the custody of the Australian Federal Police as Ian died as a Federal Police Officer on attachment from the NSW Police for his UN Service. That medal is awarded by the United Nations to those of its members who are killed whilst performing duty with the United Nations. It is named after the now deceased and former Scandinavian leader of the United Nations at its headquarters in New York.

The day's proceedings commenced in Goulburn with a moving march of a group of United Nations Police veterans who had served in Cyprus, the Middle East, East Timor, the Solomon Islands and other multinational peacekeeping operations. The veterans march was preceded by combined ceremonial support elements of the NSW Police Force and the Australian Federal Police the marching band of the NSW Police Force, a combined NSW Police Force Mounted Unit and the Australian Federal Police Ceremonial Mounted Cadre and a combined New South Wales Police Force and Australian Federal Police flag party.

The Parade Commander UNPAA President Denis Percy instructed the parade to an “eyes left” towards the NSW Police Eternal Flame, which honours all those members of the NSW Police Force who have died in the service of their state and their country.

POLICE COLLEGE CHAPEL CEREMONY:

Upon arrival at the NSW Police College Chapel, the flags of the United Nations and the Australian Federal Police were laid up by the Senior Police Chaplain, Reverend Peter Robinson.

Gathered in the Chapel were a number of representatives of the Australian Defence Force, the United Nations Information Centre, the Senate, the Parliaments of the Commonwealth of Australia and New South Wales. The Mayor of Goulburn mingled there with senior AFP, NSW Police Force and Victoria Police officials and members of the United Nations Police Association of Australia, (UNPAA), the Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association, the Australian Bravery Association, the National Executive of the RSL and the NSW Police Force Sub Branch of the RSL

Sergeant Jeff Little, NSW Police and a peacekeeping veteran from East Timor and Cyprus read the invocation. . Guests in the Police Memorial Chapel joined in singing the United Nations Anthem, ‘The song of All Nations’, followed by another peacekeeping veteran, NSWPF Sergeant Dave McCann, OAM reading the Beatitudes. Police Chaplain read a prayer and then came the official handover, which involved the signing of the temporary loan agreement by AFP Commander and former peacekeeping veteran Shane Connelly – performing the duties of National Manager, International Deployment Group and Chief Superintendent Gregory Moore, APM the Principal of the NSW Police College. Due to its national significance, the AFP Museum are the current custodians of the late Sergeant Ward’s medal and have entrusted its’ safekeeping with the NSW Police College for the next five years.

From the rear of the Chapel and carrying the Dag Hammarskjöld medal belonging to the late Sergeant Ian Ward AFP Sergeant Dale Cooper, RFD a former UN Cyprus peacekeeper slow marched towards the front of the chapel, and from the left side of the chapel NSWPF Senior Sergeant Mark Elm a former UN East Timor peacekeeper slow marched to the front of the Chapel where the physical handover took place between the two guardians of the medal. This symbolic gesture, of respect to a fallen Sergeant indicated the deep regard both forces have to their departed colleague and fellow peacekeeper.

Chief Superintendent Gregory Moore, APM has indicated that he is honoured for the NSW Police College to be entrusted by the AFP to be guardians of the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal belonging to the late Sergeant Ian Donald Ward. He went on to state: “Sergeant Ian Ward and Sergeant Patrick Hackett who were killed while on international policing service with the United Nations are role models for NSW Police recruits passing through this college and the great tradition of service that we give on an ongoing basis to the people of NSW.”

DEDICATION OF THE PEACEKEEPING DISPLAY.

The display is designed to honour those members of the NSW Police Force who have

contributed to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations as United Nations Police Officers. As such it fits well within the 'Honour Precinct' of the NSW Police College.

Visitors to the NSW Police College are invited by the Principal; to inspect the newly dedicated display located in the hallway areas of the College building next to the College Library. Out of ten Australians who have died whilst on UN peacekeeping operations, the NSWPF has lost two members with the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), namely Inspector Patrick Hackett in a motor vehicle accident (29.8.71) and Sergeant Ian Donald Ward (land mine explosion). A third Australian Police Officer from the South Australia Police Sergeant Lew Thomas has also been killed in Cyprus (26.7.69) also in a motor vehicle accident.

The Peacekeeping display was made possible with a grant from the Australian Government, Department of Veterans Affairs 'Saluting Their Service' upon a submission made to them by the UNPAA. That grant is a Government initiative which honours the contribution of Australia's servicemen and women in war, conflicts and peace operations. Senior Sergeant Mark Elm was the Project Manager for the display which was funded by contributions from the Australian Federal Police; the NSW Police Force; United Nations Police Association of Australia and its NSW Branch, the Police Federation of Australia; and the Police Credit Union. Ceremonial arrangements were made possible with assistance of the AFP Recognition and Ceremonial team and the Professional Standards Unit of the Office of the Principal, NSW Police College.

UNITED NATIONS ARTIFACTS DONATED TO DISPLAY:

In putting the exhibition together, Snr Sgt Elm collected historic artefacts donated by Australian police peacekeepers who served in Cyprus, the Middle East and East Timor. Said Sergeant Elm: *"Police officers by their very nature are peacekeepers in their home towns, cities here in Australia, and it is a natural progression to take these skills to war torn areas, to build the capacity of local authorities to act against a humanitarian backdrop."* Said Snr Sgt Elm.

"This day has been on the cards since I arrived at the College in February of 2007. Much like all the other proud traditions displays, most of the work undertaken on this display has been conducted on days off so it is really gratifying to see the final results, which I think all peacekeepers will feel proud. I think we got the symbolism right and I think our future members of the force will come to know of the service and the sacrifice of our members who contributed."

In a fitting tribute to Australia's police peacekeepers whether they hail from the AFP, state or territory police force, the Minister for Home Affairs, The Hon. Bob Debus, and MP kindly donated the Australian Coat of Arms, which was presented by Senator the Hon. Ursula Stephens and dedicated by Reverend Peter Robinson at the ceremony. SNRSGT Elm summed up the magnitude of this when he said

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