

The power of partnership represented during United Nations observance

By Robert D. Martin, USAWC PAO 26 May 2022



Col. William Kwabiah of the Ghanaian Army rings the bell to honor those that have fallen during UN Peacekeeping operations

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CARLISLE, Pa. - In May each year, we honor those who have served and those who have died in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. In the 74 years since the first U.N. peace operation began in Palestine in May 1948, peacekeepers protect vulnerable people in the world's most fragile political and security situations. The famous blue helmet has become a symbol of global support to countries navigating from conflict to peace.

At the Army War College, where senior U.S. and international military officers study together, the blue helmet represents the challenge of planning complex and complicated missions. Former peacekeepers within the student body are valued for the lessons and insights they convey to their student colleagues about these operations.

Brig. Gen. Janeen Birkhead, Assistant Adjutant General Maryland Joint Force Headquarters and Deputy Commanding General-Reserve Affairs,

U.S. Army War College War, began the solemn event and was followed by three international fellows highlighting the history, challenges, and future of the U.N.

"I am proud of the number of International Fellows in the Army War College Resident Class of 2022 who have served in UN Peace Operations," said Birkhead. "Half of our 80 International Fellows have served in at least one peacekeeping mission."

"These officers represent a cross-section of the incredible contributions and sacrifices of the tens of thousands who have served before you and those currently serving with the United Nations worldwide," she said.

History –

"U.N. mission began in May 1948. Since then, more than one million men and women, including military personnel, U.N. police, and other civilians from more than 125 countries, have participated in U.N. peacekeeping operations," said Col. Olakunle Nafiu from Nigeria. "More than 4,170 UN peacekeepers from 120 countries lost their lives while serving under the U.N. flag, including 135 who died last year and the six who have died in 2022," he said.

Peacekeeping today and challenges –

"Peacekeeping has always been highly dynamic and has evolved in the face of new challenges," said Col. Florian Goiser from Austria. "The emergence of new conflicts is spreading beyond local and regional boundaries. Signaling that the demand for field missions is expected to remain high, and peacekeeping will continue to be one of the U.N.'s most complex operational tasks," he said.

U.N. Peacekeeping today and challenges –

"In reflecting on the future of peacekeeping and factors that may shape it. Thought is being given to peacekeeping's strengths and challenges and current and emerging global trends," said Malawi Brig. Gen. Daniel Kuwali. "The United Nations continues to promote peace worldwide, and U.N. peacekeeping is evolving to confront nations' changing and challenging environment in conflict."

"The success of the U.N. peace operations has been the commitment of the member nations and the courage and strength of their soldiers, statesmen, and police that have deployed to pursue peace," he said. Peacekeeping is just one of many tools used by the United Nations to help

secure global peace and security. Civilian and uniformed personnel in peacekeeping missions support ceasefires, prevent and respond to violence, investigate human rights violations and abuses, and help build peace, recovery, and development in many conflict-affected countries.

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