

Army War College International Alum: First female UN peacekeeping force commander

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May 15, 2014 -- Major General Kristin Lund of Norway will become the first female Force Commander of a United Nations peacekeeping force, taking the military helm in Cyprus.

“Our operation in Cyprus becomes the first in the world to have a dual female leadership,” said UN

Secretary-General Ban at the official announcement in at the UN's New York Headquarters this week, who noted that the top UN official in Cyprus, Lisa Buttenheim, is also a woman.

A 2007 graduate of the U.S. Army War College, Lund has had a distinguished military career with more than 34 years of military command and staff experience at national and international levels. She was appointed Norway's first female General in 2009, having taken deputy command of the country's armed forces in 2007. Her most recent position was head of Veteran Affairs on the Norwegian Defence Staff.

Her history with UN peacekeeping began in 1986 when she was deployed with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon. She also has served in the Middle East during the first Gulf War in 1991; in Bosnia with the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and later with the NATO-led force; and in Afghanistan with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from 2003 to 2004.

Her experiences in Bosnia, she said, "formed me as a leader because you have to play like an orchestra" [to cope] with the various military components and the people involved in the conflict.

"You learn how important the mandate is," she said, referring to the responsibilities tasked to the Mission by the 15-member UN Security Council. "You see the importance of not taking sides."

"I think it's very important that the UN took this step to appoint a female force commander and I hope that I can be a role model for other female officers that see that it's possible," said Lund. "When you approach a challenge in a country such as Cyprus, it's important also that you represent ... the other 50 percent of the population in the world."

In August, Maj. Gen. Lund will replace Chinese Major General Chao Liu as commander of about 1,000 peacekeepers in [Cyprus](#). The Security Council established UNFICYP, which marked its 50th anniversary in March, to contribute to a return to normal conditions following violence and bloodshed between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots communities. UN troops supervise the de facto cease fire lines established in 1974, and maintain control over the buffer zone dividing the island.