

Speech by Lieutenant General Dermot Earley, Chief of Staff

Arbour Hill, 11 November 2007

Chairman of IUNVA, Lord Mayor Of Dublin, General Officer Commanding 2

Eastern Brigade, Superintendent Lernihan, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am privileged, as Chief of Staff of Oglaiġ na hEireann, to be present today at this Wreath Laying Ceremony to commemorate the 89 Irishmen who have paid the ultimate sacrifice while serving abroad with the United Nations in the Service of Peace over the last 49 years.

As Irish People it is part of our tradition to gather in our communities each November and remember our loved ones who have passed away. It is therefore fitting that today a brotherhood of Peacekeepers should gather in this garden and remember our fallen comrades. By joining together we are also reminded that life must continue despite tragedy and loss. We know that this is what all our fallen comrades would want.

It is up to those who follow in the footsteps of the fallen to ensure that their sacrifice is not vain. As we speak members of the Defence Forces and An Garda Siochana are continuing the proud tradition of conflict resolution all over the world in the service of the United Nations as well as NATO, PfP and the EU, all under United Nations Mandate.

In 2008, next year, we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our first involvement with the United Nations in peacekeeping. It was in 1958 that our first operation took place to Lebanon - UNOGIL. Up to 50 officers took part in that operation which led onto UNTSO, the Congo, Cyprus, Sinai, Lebanon for a second mission, to Africa, East Timor, Liberia, Somalia, Eritrea, Lebanon for a third operation and now in preparation for Chad. Today some of our soldiers are in the Arctic Circle in training for possible future deployment as part of the Nordic Battle Group.

In all of these operations involving members of the Defence Forces, An Garda Siochana and members of our civilian population, much sacrifices have been made, with the ultimate sacrifice made by those whom we commemorate today. All of these people, soldiers, gardai and civilians have created a reputation in solving international conflict, of fairness, being humane, having no other agenda, bringing peace to a community, nation or nations and regions, of good humour, of respect for culture, religions and beliefs, of being strong when required and fearless when it mattered.

To help create this reputation we needed the support of our families and that has been always present. I salute our families and especially the families of the 89 whom we remember here today. I thank them for the support as I also thank the people of

Ireland for their support, encouragement, interest and the pride they show in our peace support operations.

This ceremony organised by IUNVA is very much now a tradition. A tradition that has become a central part of our commemorative ceremonies each year.

I commend IUNVA for creating this tradition and for ensuring that so many organisations, groups, associations and the people of this area of Arbour Hill and Stoneybatter are involved in commemorating our fallen comrades.

Tá sé mar nós againn mar shaighdíurí ómos a thabhairt dár gcomrádaithe nach maireann ag an am seo den bhliain. Is mór an ní é an cuimhneamh a dhéanamh sa ghairdín suaimhneach seo agus tá mé buíoch as an deis é a dhéanamh as son Óglaigh na hÉireann.

Go raibh maith agaibh.