



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

CONNECT

Defence Forces Newsletter

www.military.ie

MARCH 2019 Vol 23 Issue 1

CHIEF OF STAFF'S MESSAGE To the Men and Women of Óglaigh na hÉireann

A Chairde,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to update you on where we are now, where we would like to go in the future and on the progress we are making on getting there. In my meetings with the key leaders and with you in our 'Town Halls' and our face-to-face engagements, I have always emphasised the need to keep you fully informed – this is why I am writing to you today via CONNECT.

The General Staff continues to work hard on understanding and addressing our current challenges, in particular in relation to Retention and Remuneration. While policy on pay and allowances are not within my remit, with the General Staff I am continuing to work in every way possible towards a positive, sustainable outcome to the ongoing deliberations of the Public Service Pay Commission (PSPC). During his recent visit to Mali, the Taoiseach acknowledged that "low pay is an issue for the Defence Forces" and went on to say that allowances specific to Defence Force members are being considered by the PSPC. The PSPC had originally been focusing on technical appointments only, and hundreds of technical personnel engaged in a survey and interviews in mid-2018. I have always believed that this approach was too narrow – I'm glad to report that early in the New Year the PSPC broadened its survey to include Line personnel. This was not to lessen the importance of the case that we have made for our technical personnel, but broadened the scope of the Commission's work to include all members of Óglaigh na hÉireann – as such it was a welcome development. I hope that as many of you as possible took the time to participate in this voluntary 'Line' survey, interviews and focus groups and to have your say. I was particularly glad of the opportunity to appear in person before the Commission on 5th March to set out the unique nature of military service and to make the case in person for an appropriate remuneration package for all personnel. I was able to refer to the written material already presented to the Commission, while also reinforcing key areas of concern and the impact that these are having on you, the men and women of Óglaigh na hÉireann. I, along with the other members of the General Staff and Formation Commanders, will continue to advocate on your behalf in the coming weeks and months.

In parallel with our efforts on remuneration, we are working hard to advance a wide range of **Non-Pay Initiatives**. Since my mid-year message in July 2018, while we have not made as much progress on certain issues as I would have liked, we have made steady progress across many areas. Some of these Positive Developments include;



- **NCO promotions:** So far in the current (2017) competition, we have promoted **447 NCOs**, while an additional 295 Privates/Abs have been promoted to Cpl/LS. The order of merit list for this present competition expires on the 15th of May. One of my top priorities for 2019 is to reach agreement with the Department of Defence and PDFORRA on new, improved terms of reference for the next NCO promotion competition, so that we can proceed with the next set of promotions as soon as possible after the transfer window. As I write, Annex XYZ is being reviewed, as is the points-based system for the selection for career courses. On a separate note, I am looking forward to the commissioning of 24 members of the 10th Potential Officers Course in March.
- **Contracts:** It remains the General Staff position that all post-1994 personnel holding the rank of Private and Corporal should be allowed to continue in service beyond 21 years up to the age of 50, provided they are medically fit (with the agreed, prescribed medical grade) and operationally ready. We are continuing to engage with the Department in order to make that happen.
- **Training and Education:** We are increasing the number and types of opportunities for personnel at

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all ranks to further their personal and professional development. In 2018 alone, you completed over 1,100 internal and 430 external courses, including up to level 6,7,8 and 9 awards. I am also delighted that we are reinvigorating fitness, sport and adventure training. I encourage you to make the most of all these opportunities.

- **Our Values:** I had the pleasure recently of calling each of the DF Values Champions for 2018 to congratulate them on their awards. These champions are role models in how they set standards and 'live' our organisational values through their daily behaviours. I want everyone to feel valued in an organisation that promotes personal growth, dignity and respect. This includes everyone, regardless of rank, age, gender, religion, ethnic background or sexual orientation. The more diverse and inclusive we are, the stronger we are.
- **Personnel and Family Supports:** During 2019 we will be continuing to enhance our PSS network, such as by implementing the recommendations of the Working Group on Mental Health and Wellbeing. The introduction of the families' page on www.military.ie is another welcome development.
- **Infrastructure:** Thanks to an increase in our capital budget, we are investing more in infrastructure, and other projects are on the way, such as accommodation upgrades in Baldonnel, Plunkett and Cathal Brugha Barracks.
- **Recruitment:** We inducted 611 people last year – we know that this placed considerable strain on units, but we need this new blood to help share the burden across the organisation. Our recruitment campaign continues in 2019, with an initial focus on the Naval Service. That said, we are very aware that our current turnover rates are unsustainable in the long term. For this reason, we will continue to make the case for better remuneration, and to progress all these other non-pay issues throughout 2019.

We certainly had a very busy year in 2018, with personnel engaged on a wide range of **Framework Operations at Home**, on land, in the air and at sea. We deployed 3,200 personnel in support of the Papal Visit, and conducted hundreds of other tasks including EOD call outs, searches, escorts, air ambulance and emergency aeromedical missions, fishery patrols and drug interdiction operations. We also provided ceremonial duties for important state occasions, for which you received the highest praise. These outputs were matched by your **Outstanding Work Overseas**. Despite challenges at home, your exceptional performance and unrelenting commitment to this vital work has never wavered, a fact acknowledged by the Taoiseach during his recent visit to Mali. As I write, 675 of our personnel are serving overseas in 14 missions, in 14 countries and one sea. Towards the end of this year, we are likely to have a new partner nation in UNIFIL, when Poland is expected to join our battalion.

Over the last year there has been a lot of work done by DFHQ and the Representative Associations towards the implementation of the **Working Time Directive (WTD)**,

which is aimed at safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of all personnel. The successful implementation of the Directive into our daily activities will require a change to both our mind-set and how we plan and manage our working time. It is important that the implementation of the WTD does not have a detrimental effect on the unique military culture and ethos of the DF. I am confident that, with goodwill on all sides, we can arrive at an approach that complies with the legislation, provides for your wellbeing and also supports the operational outputs of the DF.

I'd like to say a few words about the **Reserve Defence Forces**. While the strength of the RDF is lower than I would like, our RDF members made an excellent contribution in 2018, with a 9% increase in Training and Support days (mandays). Our newly-appointed Director of Reserve Forces is pushing ahead with various initiatives, such as planned recruitment campaigns, a Potential Officers course and reducing ineffectivity. A number of White paper projects will in time also help to make the most of our Reservists' talent and commitment. On the 16th of April, we will mark the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the Reserve Component – the State will use the occasion to recognise the very significant contribution that our Reservists have made to '*Strengthen the Nation*'.

Looking Forward to 2019, we certainly have a lot to do, as ever with a limited number of personnel and finite resources. I remain convinced that we will only succeed if we 'cut our cloth to measure' and concentrate on what we can do, as opposed to what we would like to do. In this spirit, measures are being taken to reduce Training Resource Requirements (TRRs), and thereby create more time and space in your calendars. Mindful of the pressures felt in units, I have decided that we will hold a single commemoration event in Merrion Square in November, in place of conducting multiple ceremonies. I have also tasked all commanders to reduce levels of ineffectivity – getting the maximum number of personnel back to work will again help to share the workload more evenly. Overall, experience shows that we can help to address our challenges by being more creative and innovative. I recently launched our 2019 COS Innovation Awards and I encourage everyone to engage, no matter what your rank. Later this year, we will also be rolling out a 'Values in Action' programme, aimed at doing more to turn our six values into everyday behaviours.

I want to finish by saying how proud I am of each and every one of you, and of all that you accomplished in 2018, especially given the challenges that we faced together. You should take pride in the excellent work that you do and in the real difference that you make, at home and overseas. I will continue to do all in my power to drive the improvements that are needed so that you are properly supported, feel valued, have a voice and feel proud to serve in *Óglaigh na hÉireann*.

Beir Bua



DEFENCE FORCES SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The Defence Forces Social Media Policy has been updated. The aim of this document is:

1. To enable Defence Forces personnel to make full use of online platforms while protecting their own safety and security, as well as that of their colleagues.
2. In line with the Defence Forces communication and engagement guidelines, to harness social media in order to:
 - a. Invigorate the internal audience
 - b. Create advocates for the Defence Forces both internally and externally
 - c. Enhance public perception
3. To outline the procedures for establishing and maintaining social media sites and to establish a code of conduct for communicating across all platforms on social media.
4. To provide guidance on how to ensure our members maintain an Accurate, Appropriate and Apolitical presence on social media.
5. To describe expected behaviour on social media, and specify conduct which would contravene GRO 43/55, Para 27 of Defence Forces Regulation A.7 Discipline, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679 and The Data Protection Act 2018.

The full updated version of the Defence Forces Social Media Policy can be found on IKON.

THINK BEFORE YOU POST.
OPSEC, IT ONLY TAKES
A MOMENT



2018 VALUES AWARDS WINNERS

Chief of Staff Vice Vice Adm Mark Mellett is delighted to announce the winners of the Defence Forces Values Awards for 2018. Each winner received a personal phone call from the Chief of Staff where he delivered the good news. His phone calls were met with mixed reactions from silence, to surprise, delight but all recipients were honoured to receive their award as nominated by their peers.

Moral Courage:

Cpl Caitriona Lacey, 6 Inf Bn

Respect:

A/Mech Ryan O Driscoll, NSDS

Integrity:

Gnr David Stack 1 BAR

Physical Courage:

Cpl David McCormack, 1 Cn Cois

Selflessness:

Cpl Thomas Carew, 3 Inf Bn

Loyalty:

Sgt PJ McCabe, 2 MPC

Values Champion for 2018 was awarded to RSM Johnny Murray, DFTC CIS Gp.

EAS – EMERGENCY AEROMEDICAL SERVICE

In just a 7 day period during February, the EAS service carried out 9 life saving missions across the country. From its helipad in Custume Bks Athlone the EAS crew carried out its missions from Mayo to as far as Wexford (exact locations undisclosed).

The No. 3 Operations Wing AW139 helicopter, which is permanently based in Custume Bks has a cruise speed of 140 knots, allowing patients to be transported to hospitals without delay while receiving critical care from the onboard Advanced Paramedic. In between missions the crews complete training missions to prepare themselves for when the phone rings with a real life situation.

Go Mairidis Beo - That Others May Live, No. 3 Operations Wing Motto.

“ THE FALLEN ”



I returned to Lebanon in 2017 with the 111th INF Bn, during our tour our Platoon were to carry out two separate ceremonies

at the Tibnin memorial. I immediately volunteered to be a part of it, for me it was an honor to recognize our fallen comrades. I have always had a huge respect for those who sacrificed their lives in support of peace. Those who have visited this beautiful Memorial all experience the same feelings, the feelings of sorrow, tranquility and pride.

While I was there, I thought to myself, “*Not everyone will get to experience something so beautiful*” it was then I created “*The Fallen*” project.

The project is a 3D replica of the Tibnin Memorial and its surroundings using simulation technology and virtual reality devices so that anyone may visit the memorial without having to be physically there. The application will be educational, where virtual visitors may learn more about the memorial's design and about those whose names are etched at its base. It will also have a wreath laying ceremony ‘experience’ for those who would like to pay their respects to those who have sacrificed their lives in the name of peace.

“*The Fallen*” project software will be made available to everyone at no charge. It is my hope this application will be on display at all military museums nationally in the future.

Author: Sgt. Damien Meade



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Sudoku Competition



**LAST ISSUES' WINNER WAS: JOHN MCQUILLIAN,
AMMUNITION DEPOT, DFTC. Please contact Sgt Karl Byrne at
connect@military.ie to claim your prize**

To be in with a chance of winning a Defence Forces Cross Pen:

- 1) Complete the 9x9 grid so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the digits from 1 to 9.
- 2) Fill in your details.
- 3) Post it in by 10 May 2019 to: Sudoku, Connect, DFHQ, Block 5, Ceannt Bks, Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare.

8	9		1	4	3	7		
2								
	5					3	6	
1	6			3		4		
			5		4			
		2		6			8	9
	7	9					1	
								3
		8	3	9	2		4	7

Name: _____

Unit Address: _____

Email: _____

COURSES APR - JUN 2019

COURSE

ARMAMENT ARTIFICERS COURSE
INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS COURSE
ARTILLERY STANDARD NCO INSTRUCTOR COURSE
FIELD SECURITY OFFICERS COURSE
SPECIALISED INSTRUCTORS COURSE GRADE 2
DF HACCP CSE ISO 340
PERSONNEL MANAGMENT SYSTEM UNIT LEVEL CSE
PRE-JOINT COMMAND AND STAFF COURSE
MOWAG PIRANHA 111H DRIVING INSTRUCTOR CSE
ORDERLY ROOM CORPORALS COURSE
AIR CORPS SPECIFIC STANDARD NCO COURSE
LARGE COACH DRIVING COURSE
AN CAMPA GAELIGE
NAVAL BOARDING TEAM MEMBER COURSE
M-UAV OPERATORS AND CREWMEMBERS COURSE
BASIC HELICOPTER UNDER WATER EGRESS TRAINING CSE
INFANTRY YOUNG OFFICERS COURSE
INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEWING INSTRUCTORS CSE
CAPS CSE
SNIPER INSTRUCTOR CONVERSION COURSE
ORDERLY ROOM SERGEANTS COURSE
STANDARD NCO COURSE ALL ARMS

FROM / TO

01 APR - 26 JUL
08 - 12 APR
08 APR - 21 JUN
15 - 19 APR
15 - 26 APR
23 - 25 APR
29 APR - 03 MAY
01 MAY - 02 JUN
13 - 31 MAY
13 MAY - 07 JUN
13 MAY - 12 JUL
20 - 31 MAY
26 - 31 MAY
27 - 31 MAY
27 MAY - 05 JUN
01 - 02 JUN
01 JUN - 31 JUL
03 - 21 JUN
10 - 14 JUN
17 JUN - 05 JUL
24 JUN - 05 JUL
29 APR - 28 JUN

LOCATION

ORD SCH
UNTSI
ARTY SCH
OPS DIVISION
INF SCH
DF CATERING SCH
MIL ADMIN SCH
C&S SCH
CAV SCH
MIL ADMIN SCH
AC MIL COL
TPT SCH
OPS DIVISION
NS LINE TRG SCH
ARTY SCH
AC NO 1 OPS WING
OPS DIVISION
MP SCH
CIS SCH
1 BTC
MIL ADMIN SCH
NCOTW

This is only a small selection of courses. For additional information see the ATD on the intranet, or contact your orderly room.

FIXTURES APR - JUN 2019

EVENT

RUGBY: DF V RAF
SOCCER: DF V UK COMBINED SERVICES
HANDBALL: DF ONE WALL OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS
ORIENTEERING: DF SPRIN SERIES
ATHLETICS : DF 1/2 MARATHON
DF SNIPER CONCENTRATION/COMPETITION
GOLF : DF CHAMPIONSHIPS
GOLF : DF MATCHPLAY FINAL
DF SMALL ARMS SHOOTING COMPETITIONS (RDF & PDF)
GAA FOOTBALL: MEDICAL SERVICES FINAL
ORIENTEERING: DF CHAMPIONSHIPS
CISM SHOOTING: REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS
GAA HURLING: CHAPLAIN & PARSONS CUP

DATE

APR (TBC)
22 - 26 APR
24 APR
27 APR
01 MAY
07 - 17 MAY
19 - 20 MAY
21 - 22 MAY
22 - 24 MAY
25 MAY
29 MAY
01 - 06 JUN
5 JUN

LOCATION

RAF TO HOST
TBC
GALWAY
2BDE&AC
GALWAY
TBC
TBC
TBC
TBC
TBC
DFTC
TBC
GERMANY
DFTC

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