



Óglaigh  
na hÉireann  
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

# CONNECT

Defence Forces Newsletter

www.military.ie

Vol 23 Issue 3 2019

## BRIGADIER GENERAL DAVID DIGNAM GOC DFTC

I originally started my military career as a FCA gunner in the 2nd Anti Aircraft Battery (FCA unit) in 1st Anti Aircraft Regiment in September of 1977. I started my cadetship in November 1980 after my 3rd application was successful, and I have now served for 38 years as an officer of the Irish Defence Forces. It was always an ambition of mine from early childhood to become an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, whilst I was applying to get into the Cadet School I studied in UCD for an Arts Degree in history & geography. When my application for the Cadets was successful, I left UCD behind to pursue my career in the Defence Forces.

On commissioning in 1982, I initially went to Baldonnell to train as an Air Corps pilot but then moved on and started my new career path in the infantry as a Pln Cdr in B Coy of the 3rd Inf Bn. This is where my very close association with the DFTC really began. Throughout my career I have served as a Platoon Commander, Company Commander, Battalion Second in Command and Officer Commanding 28th Infantry Battalion in Finner Camp, Donegal. I have also served previously as a staff officer in Baldonnell, also in the Defence Forces HQ and have been an instructor in both the Infantry and Command & Staff Schools. I have also served as Commandant of the Military College.

I have served overseas on 7 tours of duty, the first of which was as Pln Comdr with the 62nd Inf Bn Lebanon in 1987, the first of 3 trips to the Lebanon. I have also served in Yugoslavia in 1996, Afghanistan in 2004, Chad 2009 and Kosovo in 2009/10. My last overseas appointment was as Officer Commanding 107th Inf Bn UNIFIL in 2012 – 2013. I have always thoroughly enjoyed overseas as it's an opportunity to put into practice everything we train for here at home. It's an opportunity to serve in a live operational environment, to test yourself against peer armies, and our personnel have always proven themselves to be at the forefront of the challenges faced overseas.

Before being appointed GOC DFTC I was the Director of Operations and Plans in DFHQ, a hugely challenging job but very rewarding. I was then promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in December 2018 on the retirement of Brigadier General Joe Mulligan. For any Army officer to be promoted to the rank of Brigadier General

and be appointed GOC is a huge privilege and for me to become GOC of the DFTC gave me an extraordinary sense of personal satisfaction as I have spent approximately 50% of my career here in the DFTC. I feel a very close association with the Curragh and the personnel in it. This will be my last post as I am due to retire in December 2021 and I look forward to spending my last two years working productively for and with the personnel of the DFTC.

As GOC DFTC I command roughly 1300 people, it's an extremely busy place delivering its Corps & Unit outputs in respect of training, education and technical and logistical support. The DFTC also provides formed units and individual personnel for overseas service. We currently have the lead with the 59th Inf Gp UNDOF at this time and the lead with the EU Battle Gp for 2022-2. Being GOC DFTC is the culmination of my 38 years of formal education and training and experiential learning which allow me to manage the many challenges that manifest themselves here in the DFTC.

It is very important to me to make sure that the personnel of the DFTC under my command feel valued, that their efforts and contributions to Ireland, its people, its values and its interests are understood, recognized and appreciated. I feel it is a responsibility of commanders at every level to hopefully make their people feel that



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their efforts are appreciated. Another challenge that I face as GOC DFTC is the infrastructure within the DFTC. This barracks was built at a different time for a different purpose, one of my primary objectives is to do my best to improve the living and working conditions for the men and women under my command here in the DFTC. We have a number of projects, which have commenced, and a number of projects in the planning phase, which hopefully will bring improvements to bear for everybody here in the camp over the next number of years.

In the DFTC we have outputs that we are required to deliver across all our functional areas, training, education, technical support and logistics. We will deliver all those outputs as part of the wider DF effort to meet the expectations of Government and the people of Ireland. But bearing in mind the challenges we currently face in relation to retention and wider capacity constraints, I have been actively encouraging our Unit Commanders in the DFTC to 'cut our cloth to measure'. We need to manage carefully the outputs of the most valuable resource that we have, these are the men and women who proudly wear the uniform of the DF and the formation flash of the DFTC.

It is my intent as GOC DFTC to fully represent the DFTC and to further the professional and personal interests of the personnel of the Curragh during my regular engagements with the General Staff and the Dept. of Defence. I will remain focused on improving the working and living conditions of all ranks and to maintain the DFTC at the very heart of the DF. The DFTC has always been a success story built on the hard work and professionalism of its personnel. I very much hope to play an active role as a leader in maintaining that record and look forward to handing over to my successor in due course with the Curragh strengthened and ready for the challenges of the future. ■

## FEEDBACK

### WE HAVE LISTENED TO YOU AND WANT TO HEAR MORE!

Public Relations Branch are working to improve internal communications across our Defence Forces. To assist this we have created a forum for open two-way communication where we welcome your feedback and/or questions on any matter of interest to you as a serving member of Óglaigh na hÉireann. This email address is live now at: [feedback@defencforces.ie](mailto:feedback@defencforces.ie)  
Privacy and Confidentiality are guaranteed and you will receive a response within three working days.

### Military Operations Rapid Instructive Gaming Environment (MORIGEN)

Simulation and virtual reality (VR) are increasingly popular for military training. While there will never be a substitute for live military training synthetic training systems can offer significant benefits in cost, training efficacy and improvements in training tempo for an organisation like the DF.

Military Operations Rapid Instructive Gaming Environment (MORIGEN) is a blended simulation system using "of-the-shelf" desktop PCs, gaming peripherals, Virtual Reality and military simulation software to deliver a highly immersive and interactive simulations to support established and evolving DF military training syllabi.

2 Communication and Information Services Corps (Army Reserve) (2CISAR) Tactical Innovation Cell (TIC) initially conceived the project using a commercial gaming platform to build virtual scenarios to test students on a Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Information (C4I) platform (Sitaware) systems built by 2CISAR for the 2016 the EU Battle Group.

The project team worked with subject matter experts to demonstrate the platform benefits customised to specific training objective requirements for the Defence Forces. The project team members utilised knowledge from DF courses and worked with PDF subject matter experts to develop realistic scenarios utilising contemporary tactics, techniques and procedures in areas such as counter improvised explosive devices, convoy / infantry tactics and casualty evacuation. Using this knowledge 2CISAR built virtual scenarios that optimised blended learning opportunities for combined arms and combined services exercises. In these scenarios, participants used standard desktop computers with keyboard/mouse as well as desktop computers with a range of peripheral input equipment including joysticks, steering wheels/pedals as well as Virtual Reality (VR) headsets to enhance scenario immersion and improve training outcomes.

This synthetic training capability was demonstrated to real world practitioners (pilots, artillery gunners, cavalry officers etc) and senior officers including the Chief of Staff in several briefs in DFHQ and Cathal Brugha Barracks with universal positive feedback. Building on this success, and on behalf of the DF, the project team applied to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's (DPER) innovation fund and the DF was awarded €50,000 funding to further develop the capability. MORIGEN will move to pilot phase in the DF in late 2019 and early 2020.

*Pictured below are:*

*Comdt J Ensor (AR) 2CIS SSO, Sgmn Rob Gilbey (AR) - MORIGEN Scenario Designer, Lt Shane Dunne (AR) - MORIGEN Project Lead, Vice Admiral Mellett - CoS, Col Maureen O'Brien - Dir CIS, Sgmn Stephen Downes (AR) - MORIGEN Peripherals Lead, Sgmn David Young (AR) - MORIGEN Scenario operator.*



## P61 US DEPLOYMENT

The LÉ Samuel Beckett (P61) deployed to the United States of America in support of the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, on the 16th of September. During her four week long diplomatic mission the ship is berthing alongside both New York and Boston (astern of the historic USS Constitution). The Atlantic Ocean transit offers trainee navigators a rare chance to utilise great circle sailing and astro-navigation; plotting the ship's position by Sextant, which is a fantastic training opportunity. While on transit the Naval Service are also conducting NEAFC (North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission) fishery patrolling deep in the Atlantic, external of the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This was the sixth foreign deployment for the NS in 2019, with ships having already flown the Irish flag in Belfast, Liverpool, London, La Coruna & Vigo.



## RETIREMENTS ON AGE GROUNDS AND PSSA 2018 – 2020

BY INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS OFFICER

PDDFORRA wishes to advise its members of the following provision which has been agreed between the Department of Defence and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and applies to the members represented by PDFORRA.

In relation to PDF personnel who have retired, or who are yet to retire, compulsorily on age grounds within 122 days prior to the operative date of the general round pay increases under the PSSA 2018-2020, DPER have recently provided approval to the Department for the following arrangements when calculating the retirement lump sum (gratuity) of such personnel.

If, within 122 days after the date a former PDF member retires on reaching the mandatory retiring age prescribed for his/her rank, a general round pay increase applies to the rank in which he/she formerly served, their retirement lump sum may be revised (uprated) on a once-off basis to take account of that increase.

To qualify:

- (a) the general round pay increase in question must already have been applied to the pensionable rates of pay of serving PDF personnel of corresponding rank; and
- (b) the retiree must still be alive on the effective date of that specific pay increase.

These arrangements as sanctioned by DPER will apply for the duration of the Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020 (PSSA).

Accordingly, Finance Branch will now proceed to calculate the retirement lump sums already paid to those retired PDF personnel who qualify under this arrangement, by reference to the relevant basic pay increase implemented to date during 2018/19 under the PSSA. Specifically, this means that anyone who retired from the PDF having reached the compulsory retirement age for the rank during the period of 122 days immediately prior to:

- (i) 1st January 2018; or
- (ii) 1st October 2018; or
- (iii) 1st January 2019 (relates only to Private or equivalent ranks)

will have their retirement lump sums re-calculated to reflect the benefit of the relevant basic pay increase at (i), (ii) or (iii), as the case may be. For example, if the former member retired compulsorily on age grounds in November 2017, their retirement lump sum now falls to be revised by reference to the basic pay rates operative from 1st January 2018.

The approval of the above arrangements by DPER also means that the DF personnel identified as retiring compulsorily on age grounds within 122 days of the scheduled PSSA pay increase from 1st Sept. 2019, or within 122 days of the 1st Jan. 2020 PSSA pay increase, will not now need to apply to be retained in service. They can retire on age grounds on their due date and provided the conditions at paragraph 1 above are satisfied, he/she will subsequently have their retirement lump sums uprated accordingly by reference to the 1 Sept. 2019 or 1 Jan. 2020 pay increase, as the case may be.

*Information taken from PDFORRA 'Information Circular No 23/2019'*







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## Sudoku Competition



**LAST ISSUES' WINNER WAS: AISLING GRIFFIN, ORD GP HQ, DFTC.  
PLEASE CONTACT SGT KARL BYRNE AT [CONNECT@MILITARY.IE](mailto: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 22 November 2019 to: Sudoku, Connect, DFHQ, Block 5, Ceannt Bks, Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare.

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### COURSES OCT - DEC 2019

#### COURSE

MICROSOFT OFFICE (ECDL) CSE  
AFV RANGE MANAGEMENT CSE  
IKON MANAGERS AND INSTR'S CSE  
FIELD CATERING CSE  
LARGE COACH DRIVING CSE  
BASIC SEAMANSHIP CSE  
PHYSICAL TRAINING SUPERVISORS CSE  
H&K gMM X19 USP CSE  
GMDSS GENERAL OPERATORS CERT  
BASIC INFANTRY RECCE CSE  
ADVANCED NIGHT VISION GOGGLES (NVG) CRSE  
UN STAFF OFFICERS CSE  
IEDD REFRESHER / REVALIDATION CSE  
DETACHMENT COMMANDERS MOD 1 CIS NCO CSE  
MICROSOFT OFFICE (ECDL) CSE  
MOWAG CREWMAN INSTR'S CSE (INF)  
PMS UNIT LEVELCSE  
AFV RECOGNITION INSTRUCTORS CSE.  
BASIC INFANTRY RECCE CSE  
RANGE CONDUCTING OFFICER CSE  
DF HACCP CSE  
PMS INSTR'S CSE  
PMS UNIT LEVEL CSE  
CAVALRY (ARMOUR) DRIVER TESTERS COURSE  
ADVANCED DATA COMMS CSE

#### FROM / TO

07 OCT - 01 NOV  
14 OCT - 08 NOV  
14 - 18 OCT  
21 - 25 OCT  
21 OCT - 01 NOV  
21 OCT - 08 NOV  
21 OCT - 29 NOV  
28 OCT - 01 NOV  
28 OCT - 19 NOV  
28 OCT - 22 NOV  
04 - 06 NOV  
04 - 08 NOV  
04 - 22 NOV  
04 - 29 NOV  
04 - 29 NOV  
04 NOV - 06 DEC  
11 - 15 NOV  
11 - 29 NOV  
18 NOV - 13 DEC  
18 NOV - 13 DEC  
19 - 21 NOV  
25 NOV - 6 DEC  
02 - 06 DEC  
02 - 13 DEC  
02 - 20 DEC

#### LOCATION

CIS SCH  
CAV SCH  
CIS SCH  
DF SCH OF CATERING  
TPT SCH  
NS COL  
DFPES  
1 MIC  
NS COL  
1 INF BN - A COY  
NO 1 OPS WING AC  
UNTSI  
ORD SCH  
CIS SCH  
2 BTC HQ  
1 MIC  
2 BTC HQ  
2 BTC HQ  
1 BTC HQ  
1 BTC HQ  
DF SCH OF CATERING  
MIL ADMIN SCH  
MIL ADMIN SCH  
CAV SCH  
CIS SCH

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

### FIXTURES OCT - DEC 2019

#### EVENT

AN COSANTOIR 10K ROADRACE  
DF CROSS COUNTRY C'SHIPS (ALL CATAGORIES)  
Handball Exhibition  
CISM GOLF  
CISM ATHLETICS WMG  
CISM LIFESAVING  
CISM SOCCER WORLD GAMES  
CISM CLAY PIGEON ISOCA SHOOTS  
CISM TRIATHLON REGIONAL EVENT  
CISM ATHLETICS REG X-COUNTRY  
RUGBY DF V WANDERERS RFC

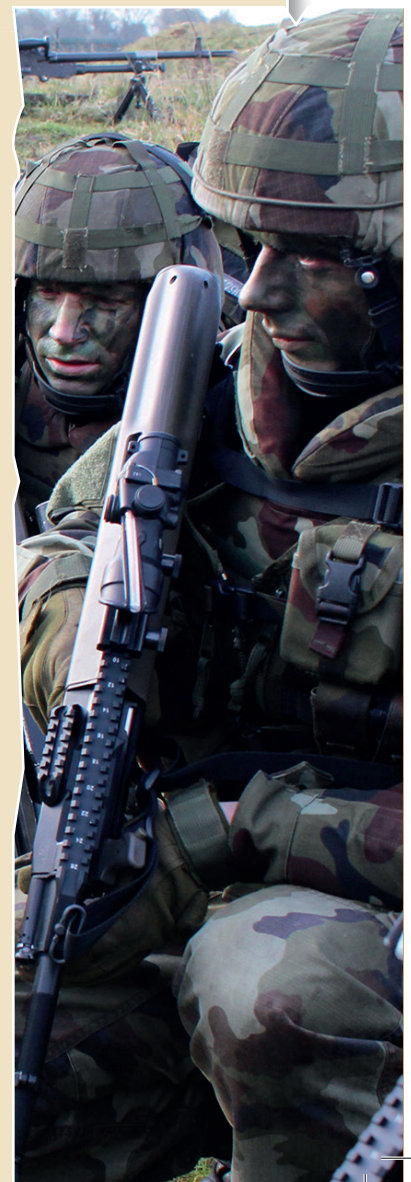
#### DATE

09 OCT  
27 NOV  
13 NOV  
15 - 30 OCT  
15 - 30 OCT  
15 - 30 OCT  
15 - 30 OCT  
15 - 30 OCT  
15 - 30 OCT  
15 - 30 OCT  
03 - 05 DEC  
OCT (TBC)

#### LOCATION

PHOENIX PARK  
DFTC  
TBC (CROKE PARK)  
CHINA  
CHINA  
CHINA  
CHINA  
CHINA  
CHINA  
SCHAFFEN, BELGIUM  
WANDERERS TO HOST

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



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