

Ceann Foirne
Chief of Staff
Vice Admiral Mark Mellett (DSM)
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Distribution

Chief of Staff's Message

To the Women and Men of Óglaigh na hÉireann

Over the past number of years Óglaigh na hÉireann have continued to build on our values as we strive for our vision of 'Strengthening the Nation by inspiring pride and leading excellence'. We have also institutionalised awards for our 'Values champions', service women and men selected by their peers who best epitomise each of our values. Our values of Loyalty, Respect, Integrity, Moral Courage, Physical Courage and Selflessness serve as a framework for all of our professional decision making and actions, but also for everyday life if we so choose. Our values can have equal application when we hang up our uniforms at the end of our working day. How we action these values reflects on our culture. They are enablers of a culture by design rather than default; a culture that reflects the position of Óglaigh na hÉireann as part of the bedrock of our sovereignty.

The General Staff and I have spoken in the past of the positives associated with the growth in technology and how it provides and drives so many good things such as providing connectivity throughout the COVID-19 lockdown, how it will help us towards the tech enabled force of the future.

There is also a downside with technology and that is how it can be used to facilitate anonymised attacks, spreading a toxic narrative that is often targeted and personalised. It has been said '*A lie can travel halfway round the world, while the truth is still putting on its shoes.*' Negative commentary, whether from actual or anonymised social media accounts can be hurtful and damaging to people, in fact some recent personalised incidents may amount to cyber bullying. While these comments are never endorsed by Óglaigh na hÉireann, if they are perceived to represent our view, it is damaging to us all and cannot be tolerated. This type of activity is wrong and is not compatible with our values.

All of us who serve have a duty to act wherever we see the misuse or abuse of narratives. This can be difficult especially where those spreading these narratives or those complicit in them remain anonymous. Nonetheless, in whatever way you can, the General Staff and I ask for your support in combatting this distasteful and ultimately toxic activity. Our values in action demand it.

I urge all personnel to review our Defence Forces Social Media Policy and I ask commanders to bring this letter to the attention of all under their command.



MARK MELLETT
VICE ADMIRAL
CHIEF OF STAFF



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