

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

AN COSANTÓIR

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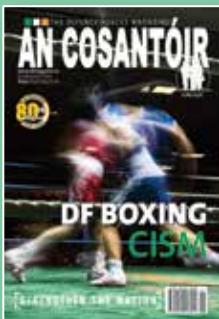
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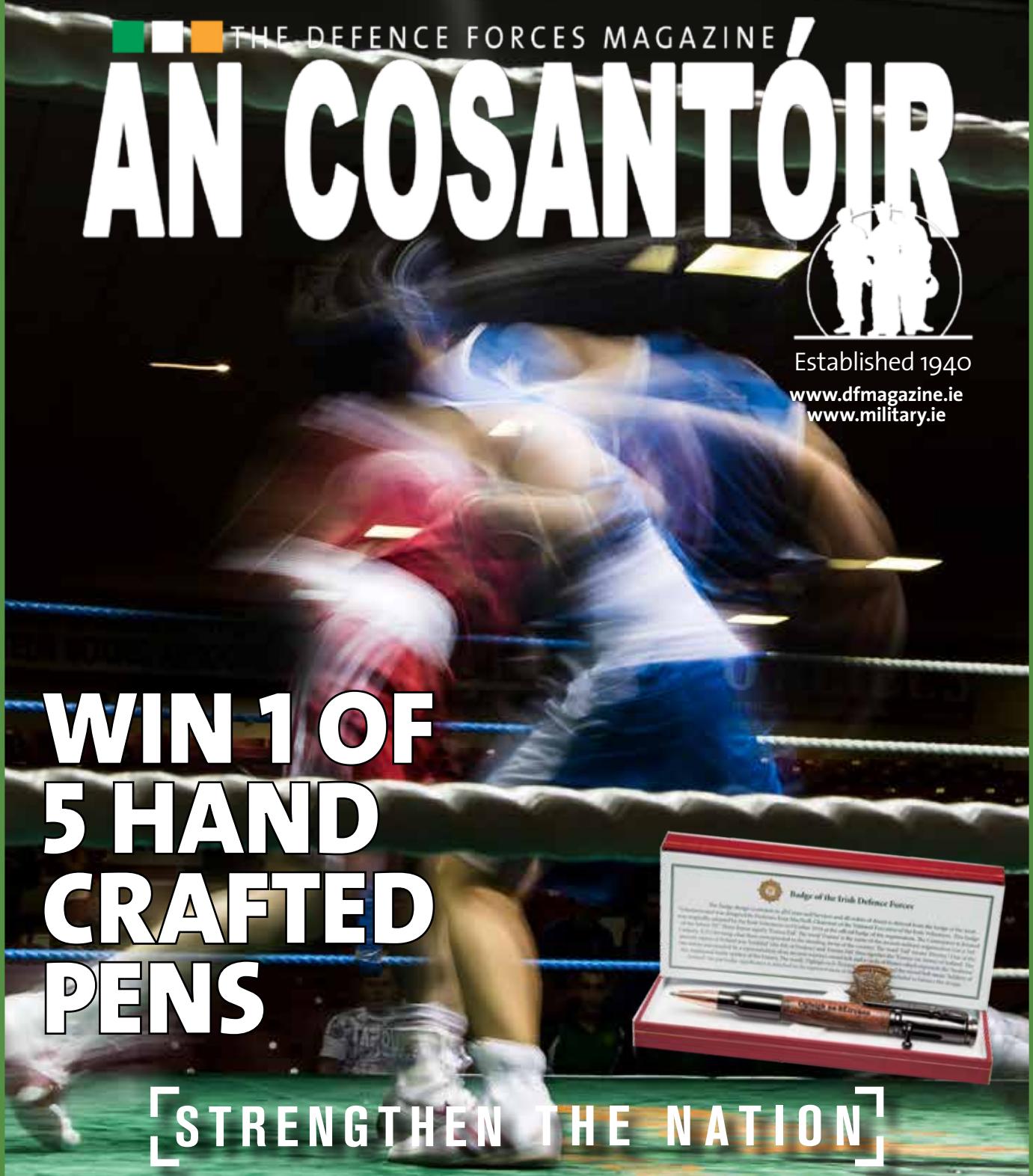
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**Manager**

Comdt David McKnight
info@military.ie
+353 (0)45 44 5306

Editor

Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald
magazine@military.ie
+353 (0)45 44 5307

Connect

Sgt Karl Byrne
connect@military.ie

Photo/Journalist

Cpl Lee Coyle
journalist@military.ie

Photographer

Armn Sam Gibney
photo@military.ie

Subscriptions

Cpl Martin Bennett
+353 (0)45 44 5312
subs@military.ie

DF/PR Information

Vacant
admin@military.ie
+353 (0)45 44 5308

DF Webmaster

Sgt Mick Burke
+353 (0)45 44 5309
webmaster@military.ie

Magazine Archivist

Mr Sean Shinnors

Designer/Advertising

JM Publishing & Media,
Arklow, Co. Wicklow, Ireland
Tel: +353 15331911
Tel: +353871344135
Web: www.jmpublishing.ie
Email: info@jmpublishing.ie

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Tel: +353 (0)45 445312

Front Cover

Front Cover: By Sgt Karl Byrne

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Editorial

Hello, and welcome our fifth issue of 2020, continuing with our 80th volume – in the historic milestone the *An Cosantóir* magazine has reached.

Due to the lack of events happening around the country because of Covid-19 we've replaced our *On Parade* pages with an *In Focus* piece by the Executive Committee of ARCO. The second *In Focus* piece by Capt (AR) Damien O'Herlihy, is about the Cavalry Club. Vets News features a nice piece about a wreath laying ceremony in Listowel, Co. Kerry for the Irish men and women who lost their lives in WWII.

Our first main feature, the second part of our EAS article, provided by Signal Magazine, by Comdt Declan Daly (Ret'd), finishes the article and gave us a very informative look at how the EAS programme evolved through the years.

In *Cyber Security*, by Dinos Kerigan-Kyrou, he gives us some invaluable information on how to protect our online existence during the Covid-19 pandemic. Dinos is responsible for the cyber security sector of the Joint Command & Staff Course. He is an instructor on NATO DEEP - the Defence Education Enhancement Programme - based at the Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defence Academies.

Ruairí de Barra remembers the tragic loss of L/Sea Michael Quinn DSM in *Nuestra Señora de Gardtoza*. This tragic story brings us back 30 years to a courageous attempt to rescue the stranded Spanish crew of the fishing vessel *Nuestra Señora*

Sgt Karl Byrne – (Stand-in) Editor

de Gardtoza after their mayday call.

Moving on from tragedy, Part 2 of our *EUFOR Tchad/RCA Review* continues to look back at the African mission and the political and military aspects that effected the mission, Part 3 next month will complete the series.

In *COVID-19 and the WPS*, Lt Col Mary Carroll informs us of the Women, Peace and Security communities work during the current pandemic and also how WPS will move forward into the future.

Our *Tac-Aide* is a handy feature for the survivalist, with info on how 3 different ways to purify water, life saving information if you every find yourself in a drastic situation at home or overseas.

Lt Nicole Kelly looks back on her overseas trip to Mali in *The Welcome from the Malians has been Humbling*. Cpl Lee Coyle gives us an insight into the *Joint Task Force* which is based in the Mcke Bks gym for the period of its necessity.

There's plenty more to read in the magazine so please enjoy and of course we have our regulars, *Sport*, *Noticeboard*, *What I Do* and our competition which is running for a limited time and could see you win 1 of 5 unique handcrafted pens kindly provided to us by Bill Dooley of Curragh Pens, see page 4 for further details.

Many thanks to all our contributors, especially Ruairí Kavanagh of *Signal Magazine* for providing us with some of the articles featured in this issue of *An Cosantóir Magazine*.

WRITING FOR AN COSANTÓIR

We are always looking for new content from readers of all ranks and units, both serving and retired, full-time or reserve. All material submitted should have a military related topic or be of interest to our readership. Articles should be submitted electronically by email or memory-stick. Written articles (hardcopy written on paper) are also accepted but may delay its use depending on the editorial timeline in which we receive it.

Short articles are from 300 - 700 words max per A4 page along with 3 - 5 photographs. Regular articles are 2 pages with 700 - 1400 words with 7 - 10 photographs to allow a suitable selection process. Larger articles are considered but may spread over 2 or 3 issues depending on its size.

The Following are key elements in a story:

- The Title - the headline of the story
- The Lead - the first sentence of the story
- The Nut Graph - this paragraph explains the news value of the story and usually comes after the lead
- The Body - this includes background information and supporting material
- The Ending - this is meant to give a logical and satisfactory conclusion to the story
-

Sending in photographs:

- Save as - jpeg/png format
- File size - no less than 2mb
- Resolution - 300 DPI / 72 DPI with a larger size is also sufficient
- It must include L/R rank, first and second names & who took the photograph



SITREP FROM ARCO

Camaraderie Through Service

INTRODUCTION

Having celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 2019, the Association of Retired Commissioned Officers (ARCO) takes this opportunity of saluting the initiative, foresight and determination of our founding members.

Operating on a voluntary basis, with 26 years of steadfast service to the Defence Community, we are a vibrant, evolving and flourishing Representative Association, recognised by both the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces.

We provide a strong collective and authoritative voice, representing and supporting Army, Naval Service and Air Corps officers, who retire and transition to civilian life, and eligible spouses or civil partners.

As a distinctive group of retired officers, ARCO encourages and fosters the unique fellowship and comradeship, which derives from our extensive military service in Óglaigh na hÉireann, both at home and overseas, serving Ireland, its Government and its citizens.

Our membership is identified as a valuable asset in enhancing the credibility, influence and integrity of the Association.

We commend the significant Defence Forces support provided to the Government and Civil Authorities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Likewise, we salute the valuable material and social support provided by ONE, IUNVA, and the ARCO membership to vulnerable Veterans, and to the families of some serving personnel who find themselves in need at this difficult time.

POSTURE

Readers of *An Cosantóir* will be interested to note that our aim and objectives have been substantially revised. Likewise, building on our ethos, values and accomplishments, and with a willingness to change, ARCO is committed to a more diverse and inclusive organisation and intends to remain representative, relevant, and viable, in order to safeguard our future.

We provide a valuable forum for analysis and debate, which enables the Association to address a range of issues that impinge on the interests and quality of lives of retired officers, and eligible spouses or civil partners.

Retired personnel will recall that ARCO's pension strategy focuses on: the restoration of FEMPI pension reductions; pension parity, the value of Veterans' pensions which must be maintained into the future; the establishment of a statutory, independent third-party mechanism for the negotiation of public service pensions; and finally repealing abatement anomalies.

As is generally known throughout the Defence Community, ARCO remains fully engaged with ONE, IUNVA, RACO and PDFORRA. Of significance relevance to serving and retired officers, we are represented on the Executive Committee of the Defence Forces Benevolent Fund, on CAOGA's Board of Management, and on the Council of the Alliance of Retired Public Servants.



Harnessing our diverse skills, vast range of expertise and experiences, derived from service in the Defence Forces, we hope to be engaged in supporting the Defence Forces Mentoring and Coaching Programmes, involving the current generation of officers who are the future generation of ARCO's membership.

In parallel, we are examining the provision of networking opportunities and social occasions for our members and the wider Defence Community. Such events will enhance the valuable links among both serving and retired officers, providing ample opportunities to share talents and interests for their common benefit. Accordingly, ARCO intends to organise events based on relevant defence, security, leadership and management themes. Unfortunately, on account of



Commissioning Ceremony, Lt Turlough Gallagher, 27 Inf Bn, recipient of An Claidheamh Gasciochta.

the Covid-19 pandemic, our inaugural networking seminar was deferred to quarter 4 of 2020.

In the prevailing environment, we maintain a pro-active involvement with kindred organisations and agencies, and we continue to engage in public advocacy and appropriate lobbying, on pertinent issues relative to the Association's objectives.

ARCO has promoted the absolute requirement to articulate and institutionalise an inclusive and comprehensive Government Veterans' Policy. In the interim, we are actively advancing the Combined Veteran's Strategy, collectively submitted by ARCO, ONE and IUNVA. This Strategy includes the establishment of a Joint Office for Veterans' Affairs, consisting of personnel drawn from the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces.

SUBMISSIONS TO GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Our membership reflects a considerable reservoir of experience and expertise within the realm of Defence. Consequently, ARCO is very well positioned to contribute to discussions on Defence related issues,

As such, we have made wide-ranging submissions on the White Paper on Defence, the White Paper on Foreign Policy and External Relations, and recently on the National Security Strategy.

Regarding pension related issues, serving and retired personnel may wish to recall that we have made comprehensive submissions to the Public Service Pay Commission, the Department of Defence, and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

COMMUNICATIONS

Our recently activated Social Media Platforms can be accessed as follows: LinkedIn via Association of Retired Commissioned Officers, and Twitter and Facebook via @ArcoIreland. Providing a marketing tool for the Association, they also facilitate cost effective, innovative and efficient communications support for our membership.

These platforms convey our key messages, encourage debate and conversation, and assist us in connecting with members, potential members, the wider Defence Community, and the Veterans' Community.

Our Social Media Platforms, restructured Web-site, <https://iarco.info/>, Text-a-Message Service and Newsletter, are core elements of ARCO's Information Strategy.

FUTURE

Finally, in these challenging times, ARCO's focus for the short to medium term, is to protect our legacy, ethos and values, to implement its aim and revised objectives as adopted at the 2019 AGM, to expand our membership base, and to prepare a framework for the elaboration of a Veterans' Policy, whilst advancing the Association's relevance with its evolving membership cohort.

Executive Committee
18 May 2020



25th Anniversary Reception, Senator Michael McDowell SC, Lord Mayor Councillor Paul McAuliffe, and Brig Gen Paul Pakenham (Retd)



BY CAPTAIN (AR) DAMIEN O'HERLIHY, 2 CAV SQN

The Cavalry Club is the longest established Club in the Irish Defence Forces and was born in 1944. The idea was to enable members of the Corps who had retired from the service or would soon be de-mobbed after "The Emergency" to have ongoing and maintained contact with serving Cavalry Officers and, by extension, the Corps.

The initial proposed objectives of the "Cavalry Officers Association" were:

- a. To enable the Association members to keep in touch with each other by the organisation of social functions.
- b. The promotion of the welfare of ex-members of the Cavalry Corps of all ranks.

The founding members wanted to ensure that the club had the required permissions and entered into correspondence with the authorities at the time. After informing the authorities of their intent to keep in touch with former colleagues and to use it as a social means to stay in touch they were eventually given permission in or around February 1946.

The title of the Association was changed to "The Cavalry

Club" on the suggestion of the then Director of Cavalry, Colonel A.T.Lawlor.

A number of committee meetings led to the first Annual General Meeting in the Clarence Hotel, Dublin on the 8 May 1946 and the following officers of the club were elected:

President: Comdt A. Mayne (Retd)

Chairman: Capt P.J. McHale (Retd)

Secretary: Lt J. Crowley

Treasurers: Capt L.N. Atchison (Retd), Capt A.I. Elliot (RO)
Members Lt J. Cleary (RO) Capt R. Collier, Lt F. Dwyer (RO) Lt J. Harrison (Retd), Major RC. Byrne Lt Count O'Kelly (Retd)

The Motto of the Cavalry Club is Carpe Diem "Seize the day" and this group of erstwhile Cavalry officers wasted no time and in true Cavalry form declared at the AGM that the Gresham Hotel had been booked for a dance on 7 August in the middle of Horse show Week that is held annually in the RDS. This was to be the location of the first Cavalry Ball an event which was to become the social focus of Horse Show week and the must attend event for years to come.



The Club has over 75 years of continuous existence and the fact that it has survived and is still active today, even in these days of social distancing is testament to a number of stalwart members in the PDF, Reserve, Serving and Retired members.

The activities of the Club include visits to barracks where Cavalry units are based, to the pinnacle event of the Annual Dinner that is held in Mess Dress and is rotated between, Dublin, the Curragh and Cork. The club has also visited WW 1 & 2 battlefield sites as well as Waterloo and a visit to Lebanon. With subject matter experts in the Corps giving excellent briefs about sites that helped shape the history of the last few hundred years.

This new way of living has brought many challenges for us all both serving and retired but as ever the Defence Forces and the Cavalry Corps are ready to serve and are helping the HSE and in multiple locations around the country are lending a helping and a caring hand to the members of the

public who may feel wary in these uncertain times.

But our Motto "Carpe Diem" still rings through as there is zero doubt that the members of the Cavalry Corps and by extension members of the Cavalry Club will seize the day and will display along with our colleagues in the Defence Forces the values that we all hold true to strengthen our nation. By inspiring pride and leading excellence and adhering to and living every day our core values of Respect, Loyalty, Selflessness, Physical Courage and Moral Courage

All members PDF, Reserve, Serving and Retired are encouraged to adhere to the guidelines from the HSE and the Members area on military.ie and when the time is right we all can safely gather again to come to a club event and re-connect with former colleagues and make some new ones. To find out more about the current Cavalry Club committee and some of the events we have had please check out the website for more information and pictures - www.cavalryclub.ie ■

VETERAN'S NEWS VETERAN'S NEWS VETERAN'S NEWS

VE DAY WREATH LAYING CEREMONY



On Friday, 8th May, 2020, the world remembered the 75th Anniversary of the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany.

In Listowel, Co. Kerry, John Wade, Secretary of Post 2 of the Irish United Nations Veterans Association, received a phone call and was asked by Jim Halpin, of the Listowel and North Kerry Military Heritage Group, to lay a wreath in memory of all Irish men and women who served and died during WW2.

John immediately accepted the invitation and contacted John Monaghan, a local Royal British Legion member, hoping he could join with him at the wreath laying.

Unfortunately, John was unable to do so, as he was still recovering following a recent illness – plus, he was cocooning.

Jim, a former member of the FCA and an Associate Member of Post 2 IUNVA, provided a wreath and a poppy designed arrangement. Jim was also unable to attend, so it was left to

John alone to do the honours....such are the times we live in.

The wreath was laid, two minutes silence was observed and those being commemorated were remembered. Also remembered were those who have died as a result of Covid-19.

Two Irish Army soldiers who drowned in the Blackwater River whilst taking part in the largest Irish Army manoeuvres ever to have taken place in Ireland in September 1942 were also recalled.

They were Lt. Thomas Ryan from Cashel, and Sgt. Michael McElligott who was from Rathea, near Listowel. An Cosantoir has covered the tragedy in a previous publication.

Jim Halpin, with other members of the aforementioned Military Heritage Group, have promoted Listowel and North Kerry's military connections, the Defence Forces, IUNVA, ONE and have been involved, for many years, in organising a Parade and Wreath Laying Ceremony in Listowel over the

May Bank Holiday Weekend.

Ambassadors, Military Attachés, Defence Forces members of all ranks, local Dignitaries, VIP Guests of Honour such as some of our Jadotville Tigers have all participated in the ceremonies over the years.

It was a great achievement, by Jim Halpin, and an honour to have John O'Gorman, Tom Gunn and Noel Stanley – three Jadotville Tigers - plus Leo Quinlan (the son of Cmdt. Pat Quinlan from Kerry who was their Company Commander in Jadotville) presiding over a seminar on The Seige of Jadotville.

This year, we were to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Battle of at Tiri, the subsequent death of Stephen Griffin as a result of a head wound and the shooting of Tom Barrett, Derek Smallhorne and John O'Mahony.

The latter was to take part in a seminar on the event and a great friend of the Group, Paul Clarke of the 2nd Inf. Bn. Association, offered to act as the Moderator.

Paul has been a true comrade with the giving of his time, his knowledge, contacts and assistance to the Group.

It is hoped that the situation will improve sufficiently to allow the Group to fully commemorate those from North Kerry who served and died in WW1, as has been done for a number of years now with a Remembrance Mass and Wreath Laying Ceremony in November with the participation of Veterans from ONE, Post 2 IUNVA, RBL and the American Legion. ■



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"They were sent over here to break the people and they were a far more dangerous force than the Black and Tans." - Commandant Tom Barry

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PART 2

BY COMDT (RET'D) DECLAN DALY
PHOTO'S BY PTE LUKASZ GANCARZ & DF FLICKR

STRESSORS ASSOCIATED WITH EAS

On EAS, you are going to come across things that are outside the experience of most people and which can very easily be described as traumatic. For the most part, you will get used to it, to a point of being very blasé about other peoples' problems, but the truth is, everyone is human and from time to time some crewmembers will need a bit of help. Presented by personnel from PSS, during this training, students are given a detailed brief on the kind of stress reactions that are common in this line of work and what help is available to them if they feel they need it. This help is offered anonymously and is as much a part of looking after your overall health as reporting sick with a physical injury. Also covered are Critical Incident Stress Debriefings. These are compulsory events whereby a crew is debriefed by PSS or a Unit facilitator after an incident that has been deemed serious enough to warrant it. These are not common but can be initiated by the aircraft commander or another person higher up the chain of command if they feel it is warranted.

What are the stressors associated with EAS? I can see a few, both by looking at the data and from anecdotal experience:

1. PILOT SHORTAGES

It's not controversial to say that at the moment we are low on people. In terms of pilots numbers – specifically we have about half of the authorised establishment figures and the authorised establishment – the amount of people we are allowed to have in the unit by law - does not account for EAS, as it was determined before EAS existed. The numbers are especially low at Capt/Lt and Airman levels where the people leaving plus small class sizes during the recession have had a real detrimental impact in terms of numbers. In addition, and in contrast to



previous times in my service, the P1 side of the roster is still largely populated by Comdts / Lt Cols. This means that we are often away from what is nominally our own primary, supervisory, role. This creates a conflict between what we are meant to be doing and our actual day to day activities which leads to frustration and potentially, a level of stress. Whereas in previous times a Comdt might expect to come off the roster to focus on their responsibilities in the Wing, that no longer automatically happens. The result is that the work associated with his actual appointment has to be done somewhere and that's often on EAS duty, which should be admin free in an ideal world. The thing is, if these same guys stopped flying altogether, they'd probably be more stressed, so maybe this one cancels itself out to an extent.

2. EAS ITSELF

This is a multifaceted contributor to stress levels. People would assume it's the contact with badly injured people that causes the stress. This not without warrant for some people, but in truth though, it's not the blood dripping from the ceiling jobs (although you'll get those) that you generally remember and concern for the patient is usually overruled by self-preservation and concern for your crew.

Acute stressors can exist here though. Everyone will have flown jobs where they had to deliberately tell themselves to stick by the rule book, one I remember was a 14 year old boy in cardiac arrest (there was a lot going on with that job besides the patient too, including a roof detaching from a building in the first PDLZ we landed into) where I had to really tell myself to follow best practice and fly away from our direct track and NOT fly through a shower which was sandwiched between a cloud and a mountain. I would pride myself on my ability to maintain a detachment from the clinical side of the house and keep my focus exclusively on flying the aircraft, but aircrew are normal humans too and you can't help but feel sometimes for the patients and families who are the reason that you're out flying in the first place. Such jobs can also leave you with mental souvenirs (stuff you collect on your travels

but realise you don't actually want when you get home). In this same example, I won't forget the sight of our crewman Sgt Alan Martin (Retired) leading a group of NAS personnel towards the heli while also performing CPR on a boy too small for a Lucas automatic CPR machine. That's not PTSD or anything damaging on that scale at all, just sometimes an image sticks with you. Alan was nominated for a Defence Forces Values Award on the back of that flight.

DEALING WITH STRESS

We can be as removed as we can possibly make ourselves from the patient and even make our decisions entirely objectively under challenging conditions but there's no escaping the human element of what we do sometimes. Maybe I'm just going soft, but on the other hand it is visible on whole crews sometimes and as previously noted, it's usually on the return leg where it may first become apparent.

Unlinked to patients (except where they complicate issues by being onboard) is when the flying itself gets stressful. The bad weather scenarios already described are examples of this. Go/ no go decisions in those conditions certainly raise the arousal levels. When you find yourself leapfrogging Plan C to make up new plans as you go along, well, yes, the flying is getting hard. It's not a conscious thing, but your responsibility for your crew looms at the back of your mind in a way it doesn't when it's sunshine and unicorns outside.

Personally, I notice this kind of effect when I have to tell myself to relax on the controls because my forearms have tensed up, which is common in cadets but rather more rare when you have several thousand hours of flying behind you. It's become a reliable cue for me that I should change something about the scenario we're in. It doesn't mean something dangerous is happening, just that you are now in 'working for a living' territory. Where possible, the best thing to do is to back off a bit, either geographically moving away from the problem or just reducing speed in order to give yourself room and time to make a decision on what to do or where to go. This flying falls into the 'hard day's work' category and the safest way out of it is good CRM, looking out the window while flying extremely carefully and making the best calls you can, in ever changing environmental conditions. It can use up energy pretty quickly and leads to acute fatigue over a prolonged flight in bad weather.

Chronically, EAS sometimes uses up your capacity to perform in different ways. For days on end you are in a heightened

state of alert. This 'nearly there' state of unreleased adrenaline does its own work and a day with no calls can sometimes leave you as tired as a busy day. More long term, the combined effects of all EAS stressors – fatigue, occasional unpleasant sights and sounds, work life balance – all mount up.

Everyone has a maximum limit and whether you hit it on one day like a brick wall or it creeps up on you it's the same limit. A holiday or a few consecutive days off reset the clock, and it's for this reason that we adhere strictly to our regulations on rest-off time both before and after EAS duties in particular – you can have many easy days in a row but you don't want to be tired when the hard day sneaks up on you. Giving people the chance to spend enough consecutive days

officer side of things, or stay being primarily a pilot, there was only one way for me. Not everyone wants to be GOC and it's important to have your own idea of what success looks like. Mine looks like spending more time with my family and staying flying.

I can say with all honesty though, I will always look back with great pride and satisfaction at my time in EAS in particular. No 3 Ops Wing is the most highly decorated standing unit in the Defence Forces as a result of its' live saving actions – there's more DSMs or Distinguished Service Medals in the units past than in any others. The opportunity to play a part in that history is a privilege not to be understated or brushed aside. To my comrades and friends of all ranks and trades in the Defence Forces, the National Ambulance Service, the Air



off at home is a way of ensuring they are fit to fly our aircraft or fix them. We go to great lengths to maintain our machines, suitable time off is how we maintain our people.

'A typical landing site in Cleggan, West Galway. Note the rough terrain for carrying a stretcher'

LEAVING WELL

I wrote this account almost entirely while I was still serving, and I've only recently left the Air Corps. The tone and story reflect how I felt at the time and I think that's the way to leave it. So why did I leave? There are no exaggerations in this account – the comradeship, the variety of flying and the job satisfaction in the Air Corps are absolutely second to none. Change comes to everything eventually and my career path was going to leave me spending more time behind a desk than not. Or rather, I would be doing more admin and more deployments to Athlone (and elsewhere) at the same time. With less and less personnel available, the double and triple jobbing was only going to increase. By February 2019, I had served twenty years in the Air Corps and with the critical decision on the horizon of whether to go all in on the staff

Corps and No 3 Ops Wing in particular, what you do matters every day. Go maridís beo.

LETTER TO IRISH TIMES, NOVEMBER 21ST 2019

"Sir, – I refer to your Editorial, "Reaping the harvest" (November 18th). The Emergency Aeromedical Service standing down for 16 days in the next four months is a gravely serious matter (Barry Roche, Home News, November 18th).

For the Department of Defence to shrug it off as the unforeseen consequence of the civilian market demand on Irish Air Corps pilots is insulting.

To see others justify the decision to stand down the service by citing the availability of the Irish Coast Guard or Irish Community Rapid Response shows a lack of understanding of what underpins the decision of the military to withdraw, and the serious risks involved.

As far back as the inception of the service in 2012, military leadership signalled that pilot retirements were having an adverse effect on the ability of the Air Corps to do the many tasks required of it by the government.

As the situation worsened in recent years there was further communication as to the risk associated with the loss of experienced aviators, technicians, air traffic controllers and other specialities.

These warnings fell on deaf ears.

As a result, the squadron that has kept EAS running since

2012 is down to two crews, it is supposed to have 10. This is the same squadron that has a myriad of other military and civilian roles, not least the fire-fighting conducted this year and last.

It is disingenuous to claim that this crisis, similar to other Defence Force crises, has not been years in the making.

I retired from the Irish Air Corps last year following 16 years of service. During this time I was a helicopter pilot on the Emergency Aeromedical Service. I flew these crucial aeromedical missions with the same Air Corps crews who are today preparing to standdown the service.

I saw the life-saving impact this service has on a daily basis on some of our most remote and vulnerable people. I have seen the personal sacrifices the under-staffed and under-paid crews have made to ensure that not a single day's service has been

given every support to ensure that this service is still being delivered by the Air Corps in the decades to come.

Let this unit continue to serve this country with pride and live by the motto it has served under since its inception in 1963: "Go Mairidís Beo": That Others May Live. – Yours, etc,

SEÁN McCARTHY,
Captain, Retired,
Maynooth, Co Kildare."

Disclaimer: Any personal views expressed in this article are those of the author alone.

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lost in the last seven years. They do this not to satisfy shareholders, they do it out of a sense of duty. It is against their DNA to withdraw support to the people of Ireland.

Like any military unit they want to complete their mission. Asking the Irish Coast Guard or the newly established Irish Community Rapid Response to double hat at short notice to cover the gaps left by the Air Corps is a sticking plaster solution.

EAS will be stood down on Thursday November 21st for four days, and this will have to be repeated in December and January at least.

In 2015 the Defence White Paper highlighted the need to make the service permanent and sustainable.

A project group was to be established to make this need a reality, led by the Department of Defence. Four years later this project has not even started. Start it now.

The crews that staff the Emergency Aeromedical Service in Athlone are the best of this country, and they should be



DEFENCE
FORCES
INFORMATION
CENTRE

‘Defeating the Pandemic, Defending Our Critical Infrastructure, and Securing Cyberspace: Battles We Cannot Afford to Lose’

BY DINOS KERIGAN-KYROU

COVID-19 has resulted in serious illness and loss of life across Ireland and the rest of the world. Working closely with our healthcare professionals, the Defence Forces have a critical and central role in the response to the pandemic.

Cyber security and the protection of our critical infrastructure may not appear as issues which are particularly relevant at this time. But they are crucial if we are to minimise economic harm, sustain recovery, and establish safe and effective infrastructure - including resilient medical infrastructure - for the long-term. Unfortunately, the time of such a pandemic is a period when those who want to cause harm online - and there are many of them - seek to take advantage and are at their most prolific.

Cyber security is the security of cyberspace - the online environment that directly affects everyone. Cyber security includes the protection of our personal, business, and organisational information. Your own personal cyber and information security cannot be separated from the security of the Defence Forces and the security of the State.

Many of the things we use every day in the home, and our vital critical infrastructure including factories, transport, supply chains, logistics, finance, energy, and medical and healthcare infrastructure is increasingly connected online. And every company and organisation in Ireland, including the Defence Forces, have moved increasingly to working online, including the use of video meetings, in a way that could not have been imagined just a few months ago.

The security of cyberspace directly affects the economic, and physical health and well-being of every single person in Ireland. But when our guard is down, and we are understandably focusing on other hugely important concerns, is when those that wish to cause harm have an unprecedented opportunity to do so. As US Admiral (ret'd) James Stavridis states: “*Much like the invisible*



enemy of coronavirus, cyberthreats can't be seen until they manifest themselves in the kinetic world. But the triple threat of criminal activity, national security risks and non-state hackers is becoming all too apparent during this pandemic. As more of the world's basic commerce communications and governance goes online - for the most part on unsecured, easily tapped platforms - the cybersphere becomes an increasingly target-rich environment."

GETTING THE FOUNDATIONS RIGHT

Your email is the gateway to all of your information. It's also the door through which a nefarious actor can target the Defence Forces. So use a unique password that you only use for your email. Use 'two-factor authentication' - 2FA. It will take you just minutes to set-up; all major email providers enable it. 2FA exponentially increases your cyber and information security - and therefore the security of the Defence Forces.

A 'phishing' email, which pretends to be from a trusted colleague or superior, is the number one way for a nefarious actor to gain access to your computer or the Defence Forces network. If an email appears suspect, even if you have already clicked on a link or opened a file, report it directly to CIS Corps or via the IKON portal. There will never be any blame for anyone reporting a possible cyber security problem, regardless of how caused.

Don't share the link to join video conferences outside your trusted network. Password protect these calls if you can, and have control over each person's entrance to the meeting. And if someone you don't know appears online question who exactly they are, especially if their camera is switched off.

Keep your computer software up to date. All Apple and Windows systems have free built-in antivirus software so make sure this is switched on, or speak with CIS Corps if you're not sure.

Be careful of any links sent to you by email or text over your phone. Just because the message says it's from your CO or sergeant, it does not mean it actually is. And never click a link claiming to be from your bank. If someone claiming to be your bank calls you to tell you about 'suspicious activity on your account' it will not be your bank. No matter how convincing they sound, hang-up the phone.

Be careful who you meet online and share personal information with. Cyber threats, blackmail, cyber extortion, or cyber stalking should always be reported to your Commanding Officer. Further information is available at National Cyber Security Centre Ireland at ncsc.gov.ie And critical information for keeping your family safe online can be found at cybersafeireland.org

Our cyber security can only be protected by every single person within our companies and organisations across the State being empowered to identify security challenges. And this is critical to defending the Defence Forces as we move to the 'New Normal' online environment in which we'll be working, to a greater or lesser extent, for years to come. It's only by working together across departments outside our normal structures and hierarchies to identify security challenges that we can effectively secure our critical infrastructure, our cyberspace, the Defence Forces, and ultimately the State during - and in the years that follow - the COVID-19 pandemic. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dinos Kerigan-Kyrou is responsible for the cyber security sector of the Joint Command & Staff Course. He is an instructor on NATO DEEP - the Defence Education Enhancement Programme - based at the Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defence

NUESTRA SENORA de Gardtoza



BY RUAIRÍ DE BARRA

'GO MAIRIDIS BEO'

'Go Mairidis Beo'. This is a motto which is widely used by the Irish Air Corps. Its accepted translation is 'So others may live', which echos the US Air Force pararescue motto. It is also often used by the Irish Coast Guard helicopter search and rescue service, and other services who save lives at sea; such as the incredible work undertaken by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. It stands as a statement of commitment, from people who will place the lives of others above their own. It also is very apt to apply it to Irish Naval Service sailors, who in all weathers will put to sea in small RHIB¹, against the fury of the ocean and into the face of the storm to save their fellow mariners who are in peril on the sea. The tremendous work completed by Naval crews during Operations PONTUS and SOPHIA in the southern Mediterranean, where during these deployments over 18,000 people were rescued from dilapidated craft, will always stand as a mark of the commitment of the Naval Service to the safety of life at sea. However, those missions, despite their exceptional difficulty, and the harrowing scenes encounters, and most sadly the loss of life witnessed, are only one chapter in the long history of the Naval Service. This a short account of one previous chapter in that history of service.

30TH ANNIVERSARY

This year the 30th Anniversary of death of L/Sea Micheal Quinn DSM was commemorated on the Naval Base, Haulbowline. It is important that the next generation of sailors, soldiers and air crew, who through their service inherit the traditions and the history of Óglaigh na hÉireann, know the stories behind the names of buildings and plaques. It is important for the friends and families of the deceased that their loved one's memory is preserved. The simplest acts of commemoration, such as where the oral history of past events and people, is passed on to new entrants, is as important as a large annual parade. The Naval Service has often played a role in the making of the history of our island nation, and it is so important the stories of the sailors who are central to that history, are not lost as time moves on. This is most especially true in the fast-paced cycle of modern life.



L/Sea Micheal Quinn DSM

NUESTRA SENORA DE GARDTOZA

On the night of the 30th January 1990 the LÉ DEIRDRE was at anchor in Lawrence's Cove in the shelter of Bere Island from severe gale force winds. A terrible drama was unfolding close

¹RHIB: Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat.

by, the Spanish fishing vessel, *Nuestra Senora de Gardtoza*, (Our Lady of Gardtoza) had run aground on rocks near Roancarrigmore Light, North East of Bere Island in Bantry Bay. She was taking water and she had 16 souls onboard. LÉ DEIRDRE received the 'MAYDAY' at 2100hrs and as quickly as she could, the crew weighed anchor and headed out of shelter into the severe gale towards the distressed vessel.

The decision was taken to launch the ships Gemini to attempt a rescue, this was due to no helicopter support being available and there was no way to manoeuvre LÉ DEIRDRE in close to the vessel due to the weather. Leading Seaman Mi-

Sadly, the next morning at 0800hrs an Air Corps Dauphin helicopter on a search pattern 3 miles to the east of location of the tragedy, sighted and then recovered the body of Leading Seaman Quinn.

BRAVERY AND DEVOTION TO DUTY

L/Sea Quinn was only 27 when he died and the survivor A/Sea Kellett was only 21. Their courage and their commitment to each other, the Naval Service and the nation is an example of the spirit of Óglaigh na hÉireann, which shone as brightly in these two young men as it has ever shone in any patriot.



chael Quinn, a native of Drogheda along with Able Seaman Paul Kellett from Dublin volunteered to crew the Gemini as boat Coxswain & Bowman respectively. The highly experienced seamen committed to their perilous task, while knowing the risks, in the face of the horrendous conditions.

Once the Gemini manoeuvred close enough to the 'Gardtoza' it quickly became apparent that boarding the stricken vessel and affecting a rescue would not be possible. Unable to board L/Sea Quinn took the decision to attempt to return to his vessel, when disaster struck. The wind & waves capsized the Gemini and cast both sailors into the waves and churning waters.

DEREEN COVE

The brave comrades were separated in the darkness and an exhausted A/Sea Kellett was washed ashore on rocks near Dereen cove. Only concerned with raising the alarm and finding his shipmate, he pushed himself through the barrier of utter exhaustion; he clambered up over the jagged rocks, as they tore flesh from his naked feet, until he managed to reach the main road. A passing Garda patrol picked him up and he passed the message that L/Sea Quinn was lost out there in the blackness.

There were soon two operations underway, an RAF Sea King Helicopter arrived to successfully rescue the crew of the Gardtoza and a number of merchant vessels joined LÉ DEIRDRE in searching for L/Sea Quinn.



In recognition of his unselfish bravery and devotion to duty, the Distinguished Service Medal was posthumously awarded to L/Sea Quinn. The King of Spain also made a posthumous award of the Spanish Cross of Naval Merit in recognition of his brave attempts to rescue the Spanish crew. A/Sea Kellett was also awarded both medals in equal recognition of his bravery and dedication to duty.

The Defence Forces has a set of values, which all are encouraged to try to not just say, but to live by. Respect, Loyalty, Selflessness, Physical Courage, Moral Courage and Integrity. The story of the courage and selflessness of L/Sea Michael Quinn DSM and Mr Paul Kellett DSM are an example of those values in action, and the terrible price that is sometimes paid so that others may live. Go Mairidis Beo. ■

EUFOR TCHAD/RCA

A REVIEW

PART 2

EUFOR TCHAD/RCA

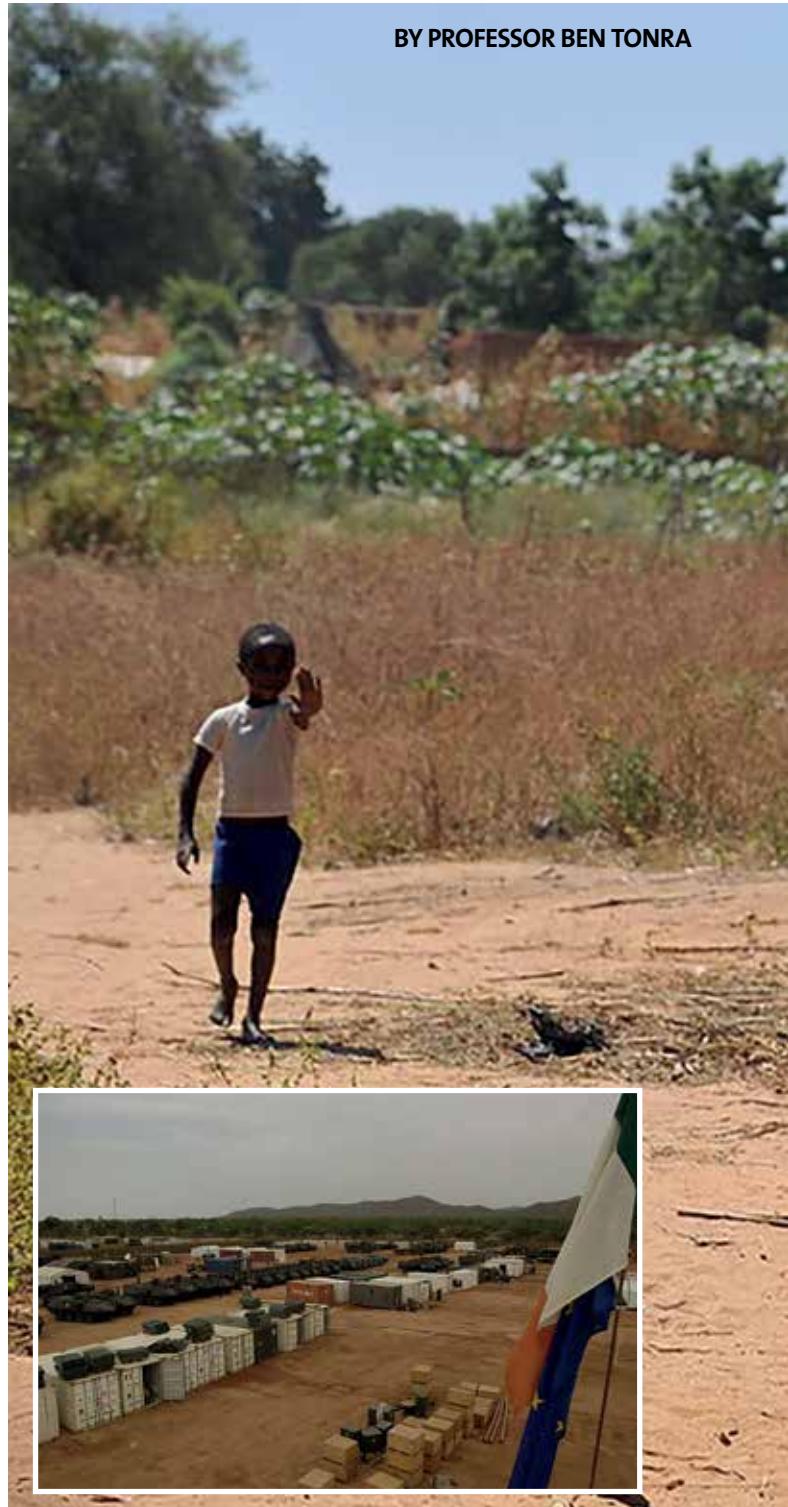
The European Union's 2008-2009 military operation in Chad was the Union's largest and most complex ever undertaken in Africa and remains exceptional in several respects (Seibert 2010). First, EUFOR Tchad/RCA was the first autonomous military operation of the EU. Second, the sheer geographic size of the operation's mandate was extraordinary, covering an area roughly the size of continental France. Third – and significantly – the operation arrived 'cold' to theatre. In other words there had been no associated mission from which EU forces were adding or taking over (as, for example, in the case of Bosnia). The EU therefore had to build, insert and maintain over a period of just 12-18 months, a substantial military force of over 3,500 from scratch in a uniquely challenging environment. Fourth, the operation was designed to hand over to an unspecified replacement UN force – the first of a so-called 'bridging'-type operation, which was argued to offer a new and useful model for constructing international security operations in partnership between the UN and other multilateral organisations.

CONTEXT AND SET UP

The Union's operation in Chad was the direct result of the crisis in the Darfur region of western Sudan. Darfur had been a longstanding flashpoint of tribal conflict, sporadic and contested government intervention, weapons proliferation, Arab-African tension, porous borders, regional power struggles and shifting loyalties, creating a multi-dimensional regional conflict (Flint and De Waal 2008). The Darfur crisis was also interwoven within a geopolitical contest engaging France, Chad, Sudan and Libya. In 2003 new rebel coalitions emerged and long-standing, low grade conflict escalated as a political modus vivendi between Chad's Idriss Déby and Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir collapsed. By 2004/2005 the conflict had emerged as a major humanitarian crisis with hundreds of thousands fleeing Darfur for neighbouring countries and up to one million reliant on food aid for survival. This humanitarian crisis also worsened the interstate security crisis, directly engaging Sudan and Chad (and at the margins the Central African Republic and Libya). Rebels, based in Sudan, attacked the Chadian capital, N'Djamena in April 2006 and the President, Idriss Déby, only narrowly – and with active French support – managed to maintain control.

The combination of a massive humanitarian conflict and the threat to the security of people and states in the region, put the Darfur conflict close to the top of the international agenda. In Europe, the French Government was anxious to seal Chad off from the Darfur conflict in Sudan and the associated rebel pressures. Popular opinion in several European states was effectively mobilised by NGOs to address the associated humanitarian crisis. For its part the UN Security Council, in June 2006, sent a fact finding mission to the region and recommended a security mission. Subsequent peace negotiations in Abuja collapsed and the Sudanese Government rejected the idea of any UN intervention, frustrating efforts to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1706 which proposed a dedi-

BY PROFESSOR BEN TONRA



cated UN peacekeeping mission to the region.

With no prospect of addressing the Darfur conflict directly – due to Sudanese objections – the only possibility was a humanitarian effort directed to address its destabilising consequences in neighbouring Chad. In November 2006, the UN's Department of Peacekeeping

Operations (DPKO) argued that a minimum force of 11,000 would be required for effective protection of refugees and security for their return home. A further 600 police personnel would be required for security within refugee camps. According, however, to the UN Secretary General, the situation on the ground meant that 'the conditions for an effective UN peacekeeping operation do not, therefore, seem to be in place as of the time of writing of the present report'.



This reflected the absence of a ceasefire and any substantive political process. In February 2007 the UN returned to the region and now suggested the installation of up to 16,000 troops in eastern Chad. This was in turn rejected by Chad's President, fearful that such a UN

force would constrain his ability to prosecute his proxy conflict with Sudan and to deal with Sudanese-based Chadian rebels.

The Darfur crisis became a significant issue in the French presidential election in 2006 – not least through the effective political mobilisation of a number of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Several presidential candidates – including the two final candidates – signed the pledge of 'Urgence Darfur', an umbrella NGO to address the crisis immediately on election. The new French President, Nikolas Sarkozy, moved swiftly on this pledge to prioritise a response to the Darfur crisis, launching a vigorous multilateral diplomatic effort to engage the UN and EU and appointing leading Socialist personality and NGO activist Bernard Kouchner (who had also co-founded Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) as his foreign minister (Marchal 2009; Weissman 2010).

The first fruit of French effort was a paper in May 2007 seeking EU consultations on options for an international humanitarian mission. On 10 June bilateral talks between France and the Chad Government agreed in principle on an international mission and noted the potential role of the EU in such an operation. Déby's support for an EU as opposed to UN intervention appears to have been predicated on his assumption that the central French role in such a force would buttress his position. Kouchner's efforts to announce an EU role 'in principle' were roundly rejected by the German EU Council presidency and reflected profound reservations in both Berlin and London as well as a general reluctance in many other capitals. Germany, the United Kingdom (UK) and others ultimately conceded the point and it was agreed in July that an EU Operational Plan would be finalised in October. The options paper drawn up in July identified France as the framework nation for the operation but identified no substantial roles for either Germany or the UK.

As framework nation France was entitled to hold operational command or field command, but not both. Prioritising field command, the operational command was thus available to another contributing EU partner. Swedish interest in the mission initially suggested that the 1,500-strong Swedish-led EU battlegroup, which was then on standby for deployment, might be utilised and that therefore a Swedish officer might undertake operational command. However, following a regional visit by Foreign Minister Carl Bildt – and reports of a bitter disagreement over human rights between Bildt and Chad's President Déby, the Swedes either decided against engagement (Dijkstra 2010) or Déby vetoed the idea of a Swedish commander. In either event, a Swedish command role was no longer on the table in August following that meeting. Meanwhile, both the EU and UN were attempting to finalise details of their respective, interlocking operations. An EU study visit to Chad and the Central African Republic in August brought Council Secretariat and Commission officials together to look at policy, planning, logistical and intelligence issues. For its part, the overall UN mission concept was revised to provide that the Sudan/Chad border was to be excluded from the operational area of both MINURCAT and EUFOR and that policing of the refugee camps was to be removed from UN to local Chadian command and control with UN support and training. On 25 September 2007 UNSCR 1778 defined the UN's MINURCAT twelve month mission as being to facilitate the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, to support Chadian police training and engage in human rights monitoring and authorising an EU military support mission.

For its part, the EU Council agreed in October on a Joint Action to deploy four battalions alongside the UN operation and to provide a bridging function to a possible follow-on UN mission at the end of the MINURCAT mandate. From the EU side this was to have a strict 12 month duration from the declaration of initial operating capacity (IOC). This duration was stipulated by the EU, with the UN envisaging only a 'mid-term joint review' with a view to reporting on the possibility of a subsequent UN mission. As a result, the EUFOR operation was the very first to have an end date, as opposed to an end state – significantly complicating operational planning. The EU's mandate for its military operation stipulated its role as protecting endangered civilians – most especially refugees – and facilitating the return of internally displaced persons, improving security for humanitarian aid delivery and protecting UN personnel and operations on the ground.

The Joint Action's common costs – born by the EU – were initially estimated at 99 million, rising eventually to 140 million. The balance of the total one billion euro budget was to be carried by contributing states. French costs included millions in support of the participation of Polish, Albanian, Russian and Ukrainian forces for equipment, accommodation, logistical support etc. (Giscard d'Estaing and Olivier-Coupeau, 2009).

The initial set up of the operation was marked by the reluctant engagement of many EU partners. The Operational Command was ultimately assigned to an Irish Lieutenant General, Pat Nash at an informal defence ministers' meeting 28-29 September. President Sarkozy had personally to intervene with other heads of state and government to secure contributions of troops, equipment and specialised units. An unprecedented five force generation conferences had to be held to address major gaps in enabling forces in tactical air transport, medical facilities and logistics, before General Nash was in a position to propose to the EU Political and Security Committee to launch the operation 'at the edge of acceptable capacity' in late January 2008. Even so, the force had no strategic reserve, having to rely instead on 'a nod and a wink' from several member states that in extremis they would assist (author's interview, 2017). Of the 26 con-

with a French-language draft as a fait accompli even before taking up operational command at the French military headquarters at Mont Valérien, Paris (OHQ) in October 2007. A critical issue here was the repeated French insistence on the creation of a 'Land Forces Command' as part of the mission. This would have served to insert the French General – originally a nominee as Operations Commander – as number two in the command structure thus 'relieving' the Irish Operations Commander of significant responsibility. At Irish insistence, this structure did not emerge.

The initial deployment of EUFOR Special Forces to Chad was further delayed by several weeks as nearly 4,000 rebels launched an attack on the Chadian capital in late January 2008 following a 1,000 km dash from eastern Chad to N'Djamena. Their advance was swift, and within days they were besieging the presidential palace. The attack was only barely repulsed with the support of French national forces stationed in Chad and the arrival of additional armour and weapons airlifted by France from Libya. Advance EU Special Forces (French and Austrian) were already on the ground to provide protection for incoming EUFOR forces. Strictly speaking, such forces were unauthorised but were a necessary precondition for effective deployment. With the rebel attack, these forces were suddenly very vulnerable



tributing countries (included three non-EU states), France provided more than half of the 3,700 troops with 13 countries offering fewer than ten individuals each.

From the outset, the EU mission struggled against perceptions that it was an essentially a French effort designed to buttress the Déby government (Tull 2008; Marchal 2009). Certainly, the operation served to stabilise the region and thereby the Chadian state. Indeed the French force commander, Jean-Philippe Ganascia, was subject to domestic French criticism that the operation did not dovetail more effectively with the parallel French military establishment of nearly 1,200 troops already operating in Chad from 1986 as Opération Épervier. Ganascia and Nash insisted upon a strict distinction between French forces and EU forces with Ganascia declaring that EU forces would maintain a distance from the French military stationed as part of the bilateral Franco-Chadian defence accord. He insisted that, 'There is not a single common point between [the French troops] mission and ours' (The Irish Times, 11 February 2008).

At the same time, those lines had to be underscored on occasion. Both the deputy force commander, Irish Colonel Derry Fitzgerald and the Operation Commander, Pat Nash, had to underline the neutrality of the EU operation in the face of repeated attempts to draw EU forces alongside their Chadian counterparts. President Déby went so far as to insist that he review the draft final concept of operations (CONOPS), that he would assign – by prior agreement with France – up to 1,000 Chadian troops to the EU force and that he would determine the location of the command headquarters. Similarly, General Nash twice countermanded orders that EU forces would jointly patrol with Chadian military and police units. He also insisted on multiple redrafts of the EU force's initial CONOPS – having been presented



and while the Austrian forces kept their heads down, the French Special Forces engaged alongside their national compatriots to defend the airport from rebel control.

OPERATION AND IMPACT

Initial Operational Capacity was declared on 15 March 2008. This was preceded and followed by a herculean logistical effort to provide for over 3,500 troops across a 350,000 km² theatre of operations without a single kilometre of paved road. This entailed moving thousands of tonnes of equipment and material from the Cameroon coast at Douala, across thousands of miles of desert via 21 rail and 140 road convoys and over 500 strategic airlifts to airfields and unpaved airstrips newly built/reconstructed for the purpose (Harvey 2015). In terms of resupplies – which included bottled water airlifted from the Chadian capital – each container took two weeks to travel from Europe to Cameroon, two weeks to reach N'Djamena and a further week to get to the forward command headquarters at Abéché. Full operating capacity was reached on 18 September 2008. The deployment included a rear Force

Headquarters (FHQ) at N'Djamena, the main FHQ at Abeche and three battalions stationed in the eastern Chad areas of Iriba (North), Forchana (Centre) and Goz Beida (South), as well as a detachment in Birao (Central African Republic). The mission lacked sufficient tactical airlift and there were ongoing limitations with medevac support which for some time restricted the extent and range of the patrols used to give effect to mission goals.

Over the course of the 12 month operation, EUFOR's focus was in providing wide area security. This was pursued on the ground through extensive local intelligence gathering, consultations with

local and tribal leaders and extensive security patrolling as well as rapid response to specific threats. This entailed over 250 long range patrols of between 10-15 days' duration each as well as nearly 2,500 short range daily patrols. Special Forces and other elements remained on standby as quick reaction forces.

Once fully operational, the mission faced engagement with four key sets of stakeholders on the ground which may provide a clearer picture of how issues pertaining to justice were handled – both officially and in terms of actual practice. This engagement, with the Government of Chad, with rebel and other armed forces, with NGOs and with the local population, allows us to begin to map this effectively.

ENGAGEMENT WITH CHAD GOVERNMENT AND SECURITY FORCES

Across multiple elite interviews, it is clear that the EUFOR's engagement with the Government of Chad and its security forces was problematic. President Déby agreed to an EU force largely because he felt that such a force would be easier to manage than an exclusively UN operation. He had greater confidence that the central role of France in EUFOR Tchad/RCA would give him a central decision making role and allow him to exploit its engagement as he prosecuted his battle with rebel forces. From the outset, he pressed the EUFOR command-

areas) even after an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) staff member was shot two months later.

ENGAGEMENT WITH REBELS AND ARMED GROUPS

According to senior military interviewees the formal 'centre of gravity' of EUFOR was the protection of refugees, ensuring delivery of humanitarian aid and to protect NGOs and UN personnel and infrastructures. What came quickly to be understood on the ground was that the focus of these efforts would not be the larger rebel groups, but rather the wide number of even more informal militia groups which, periodically and according to the wet/dry season, would temporarily coalesce into rebel formations.

It was these informal, small militia groups that posed the far greater danger both to NGOs and UN personnel as well as local populations. Impoverished young men and boys – sometimes forcibly recruited – were acculturated 'almost as a rite of passage' into violence and theft. NGOs and UN personnel were obvious targets of such efforts as were refugees who had access to resources (food, fuel, healthcare etc.) through the UN-managed and NGO-supported refugee camps.

Extensive cultural analysis – by military staff officers – had provided some situational awareness to the incoming EUFOR troops and com-



Idriss Déby, President of Chad during the EUFOR mission and still President to this day



Lieutenant General Pat Nash Officer in Command of the EUFOR mission to Chad from 2007 to 2009

ers – at both operational and field levels, to agree to joint patrols between Chad and EUFOR troops to pursue shared security objectives. He assured commanders that Chad troops would provide local knowledge, effective cover and – where necessary – robust intervention to fulfil the EUFOR mandate. At operational level, these offers were not taken up with EU commanders insisting that the neutrality of the EU mission was critical to its credibility and success. At field level, however, and with significant pressure from Paris and locally-based French diplomats, joint patrols were ordered by the French Force Commander, formally countermanded from EUFOR headquarters and then reissued locally in writing. This provoked a direct demand from the Operations Commander that unless the orders for joint local Chad-EUFOR patrols were formally countermanded by the French authorities, he would publicly resign. Those assurances were delivered and the orders not repeated.

Chad security forces were responsible for policing. While it was authorised to intervene in situations where civilians were immediately at risk, EUFOR's overall responsibility was for wide area security, undertaking patrols to demonstrate its presence and to deter criminal activity. Under its status of forces agreement it had no policing role or judicial powers, being unable to conduct investigations of criminal activity or punish guilty parties. In particular, EUFOR had no jurisdiction over what went on inside refugee camps or more informal Internally Displaced Person (IDP) settlement sites with EUFOR personnel allowed to enter camps only unarmed except in extreme circumstances.

Even within these narrow parameters, there were tensions with local government officials. In one reported incident in May 2008 the governor of Abeche refused to allow EUFOR even to patrol the town at night (a normal operational role undertaken at the time in other

mandates of cultural norms and practices, but this had not effectively identified the cycle by which these small armed groups – often operating from one or two armed pickup trucks and self-sustained in the field – would operate snatch and grab criminal activities. Periodically, these units would come together for larger mobile quasi military operations.

There were some direct engagements with rebel forces. The June 2008 rebel attack on the town of Goz Beida – the location of the Irish EUFOR base in the central region – was the highest profile of these. The town is 70 km from the border of Sudan's Darfur region and was at the time surrounded by UN refugee camps and IDP encampments with a substantial presence of NGOs. A heavily-armed column of up to 100 rebel vehicles entered the town and for a time, maintained a running engagement with Chad government troops.

As they monitored the clash of rebel and government forces, an armoured Irish patrol from the 97th Infantry, received incoming fire and replied in kind. The Irish troops maintained their presence at the camps for Sudanese refugees and displaced Chadians, interposing themselves between their camps and the rebel forces. They were also reported as having actively deterred looters and evacuating nearly 250 humanitarian staff. Medical workers said at least 24 people were hurt in the attack on the town. Government officials later bitterly criticised the EUFOR troops for not assisting Chad troops in repelling the attack.

In their summation of EUFOR's impact on rebel groups, the International Crisis Group concluded that 'the presence of European forces has [...] obliged players in the Chad conflict to act with greater prudence, because they now feel themselves to be under scrutiny' (International Crisis Group 2009). Certainly, no large rebel operations – on the scale of the 2006 or 2008 efforts – occurred during the EUFOR deployment. ■

COVID-19 AND THE WPS AGENDA

BY LT COL MARY CARROLL



Coronavirus
COVID-19



Lt Col Mary Carroll

Each evening for the past month, I have stood on my balcony and clapped and cheered with my neighbours to acknowledge the remarkable efforts being made by those at the frontline of fighting COVID-19, the pandemic that has brought the world to a standstill. A small gesture, perhaps, but a heartfelt tribute nonetheless to the health workforce worldwide, two thirds of whom are women.

The current pandemic sweeping the globe has exercised many minds; academics, policy-makers, health care practitioners, gender experts, security experts,

warlords and politicians have all had their say. The gendered aspects of this crisis in public health have received much attention. This was not the case in previous pandemics. This is ultimately good news for the WPS (Women, Peace and Security) community of interest. At last the message seems to be getting through – that crises and conflicts impact differently on men and women, boys and girls and that a gender lens is, at last, acknowledged as key to a fuller understanding of any given situation.

Some commentators have suggested that the WPS agenda has never been more relevant than at this time of crisis. Sanam Naraghi Anderlini wrote an insightful piece suggesting that the COVID-19 pandemic, with its multifaceted security dimensions, is, in fact, proving the centrality of the WPS agenda to contemporary global peace and security challenges. She ar-

gues strongly that the issues that are so often called for by the WPS community are profoundly relevant to this pandemic too. It may be useful to reflect on what some of those issues are.

Firstly, a gendered analysis is a key enabler in a crisis. The WPS agenda calls for a gendered analysis of the causes and consequences of crises, and the mapping of individuals, communities and institutions involved. This analysis is essential in ensuring early warning, adequate preparation, mitigation, response and recovery from crises. Sex disaggregated data is crucial to understanding the impact of the virus and are necessary to inform the response and recovery strategies needed. Gender sensitivity, understanding the differential implications on men and women of policies that are established, is also critical.

In the case of COVID-19, this would mean investigating and addressing, for example:

- The gendered impact of the course of the pandemic – who gets sick and why? Indications across the world (although sex disaggregated data are as yet incomplete) are that more males die from the virus - what are the impacts of such findings? For example, what are the implications of more female-headed households, more elderly women living alone going forward? Such factors will have profound socio-economic implications that must be considered to reduce longer-term and future insecurity.
- The gendered nature of the health workforce and the significant risks that predominantly female health workers incur.(Interestingly, OECD reported recently that although the majority of the healthcare workforce is female - 85% of nurses and midwives; 90% of long-term care providers - women still make up only a minority of senior leadership positions in health).
- The gendered nature of caregiving responsibilities when schools and childcare facilities close with the bulk of caregiving responsibilities falling to women.
- The gendered implications of imposed quarantine, such as whether women and men's different physical, cultural, security, and sanitary needs are recognised. In terms of individual security needs, reports from many countries suggest significant spikes in cases of domestic abuse, for example, and responses have included ensuring shelters remain open, helplines are staffed, and police training programmes and public awareness campaigns are activated.

A group of medical experts, writing in the Lancet journal, amongst others, recently called on governments and global health institutions to consider the sex and gender effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, both direct and indirect, and conduct an analysis of the gendered impacts of the multiple outbreaks, incorporating the voices of women on the front line of the response to COVID-19 and of those most affected by the disease within preparedness and response policies or practices going forward.

Secondly, the WPS emphasis on women's participation and agency in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding is

also of central relevance in the current crisis situation. In both conflict and crisis, local actors, often women, are at the front-lines. As Naraghi-Anderlini highlights, as well as comprising two thirds of the global health care workforce, women also dominate the community social work and civil society sectors in nations across the world. These women are stepping up to the threats presented by Covid-19, by mobilising and actively responding in very pragmatic, culturally appropriate and astute

2020 was planned as a big year for the Women, Peace and Security agenda with so many significant landmarks to reflect upon and celebrate, including twenty years of blood, sweat and tears since the UN Security Council's adoption of resolution 1325, the first of a series of UN resolutions that put women at the centre of the global peace and security agenda. The global community will also mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the



ways to the multiple threats it presents. These local actors are essential to the response and recovery process because their knowledge can inform and improve interventions. So their participation and inclusion in the assessment of each context, decision making, design and delivery of interventions is crucial. The NATO Civil Society Advisory Panel has offered valuable insights from their respective nations in this regard.

Thirdly, the WPS agenda also calls for greater participation of women in politics and in decision-making on matters of peace and security. The corona crisis is revealing the relevance of this call to leadership with notably effective responses from a number of female world leaders who reacted to this crisis decisively and proactively in, for example, Norway, Finland, and Columbia, whilst the response of some other world leaders was less than encouraging.

Finally, the WPS agenda advocates human security approaches that are people-centric and gender sensitive. If ever people-centric and gender sensitive approaches were required – it is surely now. The COVID-19 crisis is proving to be a game-changer in the emerging security threat discourse and, in common with the WPS agenda, is challenging traditional concepts of individual, state and national security. Both highlight that new ways of looking at security are needed, as indeed are significant shifts in priorities, values, resource allocation, and skill sets that put the needs of both women and men at the core of what is meant by security in any given society.



Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). A five-year milestone will be reached towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By any standard, this was to have been a pivotal year for the accelerated realisation of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, everywhere. Perhaps COVID-19, and the new realities it will herald, not least for the WPS agenda, will be the cause of the most profound reflection of all?

In the meantime, I will continue to join the nightly tribute to those on the front line...they are there, after all, to ensure my security. ■



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

WE HAVE LISTENED TO YOU AND WANT TO HEAR MORE!



Public Relations Branch are working to improve internal communication 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:

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Privacy and Confidentiality are guaranteed and you will receive a response within three working days.



「**STRENGTHEN**
THE NATION」

SURVIVAL TIPS

PURIFYING WATER

● WHY WATER IS IMPORTANT

Water is key to survival and without it you can dehydrate. In sunny weather or hot climates, you need on average 7 litres of water a day. Without water you succumb to heat stroke and die within 24-48 hours. When you perspire (sweat), your body is trying to cool you down. However that is water you need to replace quickly.



● ON FINDING WATER

Once you have found a source of water, you need to determine if it is drinkable.

Is it flowing or stagnant?

Are you in the open country or near a road, a farm, an industrial or urban area?

Unless you are 100% certain that the water is safe to drink, you will have to treat it. It may look clean, but you have no way of knowing.



● NASTY THINGS IN WATER

Water can contain many impurities (toxins, chemicals, human waste and even rubbish).

Even in the open country, animal waste can get into water and contaminate it. Cryptosporidium is found worldwide and causes over 50% of water-borne diseases that are attributed to parasites. It is very common in the local inhabitants, hikers and travellers who drink unfiltered water causing cramps, diarrhoea and sickness.

● PURIFYING WATER

Water can be purified easily by filtration, using purification tablets or by boiling it. However, you may be in an escape and evasion scenario and lighting a fire may not be an option. In certain cases purifying tablets may not kill Cryptosporidium – boiling will. If there are chemicals in the water, only charcoal will take it out. So you will need to light a fire.

● FILTER TECHNIQUE ONE - THE SHIRT ON YOUR BACK

Your DPM shirt or dryflo top will filter out most big particles – use both if you can.

Simply elevate your shirt or dryflo above your container so you can pour the water in. You may have to repeat the process again and again until the water is clear.

● FILTER TECHNIQUE TWO – PLASTIC BOTTLE AND SOCK

You need to put a bit of cloth at the neck of your bottle to stop the rest of your filter (sand, small stones and charcoal) from blocking the hole. With the sock you do not need to do this.

Clean the filter out first by running water through it several times and then throw that water away.





'The Welcome from the Malians has been Humbling'

BY LIEUTENANT NICOLE KELLY

I served with the European Union Training Mission Mali in the Mission HQ (MHQ), Bamako as the Joint Transit Team (JTT) Chief. We were a team of six; one Officer and five NCO's, working in the J4 Branch under SNR Lt Col Robert Corbet. One of the key elements to the mission was to contribute to the improvement of the capabilities of the Malian Armed Forces and to the political stabilisation and improvement of the security situation in Mali. Like all operations and missions, a logistical element is required. This is one of two primary roles for JTT. We were responsible for the day to day EU transit operations and coordinate the marshalling area in liaison with the host nation support, third country nation SNR's and national support elements.

Our other main role involved processing personnel both in and out of the mission. EUTM personnel are governed by the SOMA¹ agreement between the EU and the Malian Government. This includes a provision that all EUTM personnel are exempt from all customs and visa regulations. We ensured that the SOMA agreement was upheld by means of liaising with the Malian authorities.

Our day to day job saw diverse challenges such as the continuing adaptation to an expanding mission in Mali. With this in mind, it's key to utilise equipment and ensure measures are adhered to in managing the stress on equipment and vehicles. With such activities time flies by, as each day rolled into the next. Another enjoyable aspect about the mission is getting the opportunity to work alongside many other nationalities, including the Malians themselves. The

diverse personalities and different cultures were a common topic in conversations. It's very interesting to learn and discuss the working background and methods of other military forces and sharing/comparing stories of how they operate both back home and overseas. Having the opportunity to



work with the local Malians was thoroughly enjoyable. Their culture and mannerism is of a friendly nature, and their welcome to us had been quite humbling.

Over the weeks and months of the trip, various activities and events had been co-ordinated in the MHQ. For the Easter weekend, welfare activities such as volleyball and tug of war were organised. Needless to say our Czech comrades outdid us in the tug of war competition, but these events were excellent to participate in, and get involved in, as it is a means and way of making friends through sport.

My daily routine varied depending on EUTM Mali's objec-

¹ Status of Mission Agreement (SOMA) between the EU and Mali.



tives. In the midst of this it was important to me to keep active by going to the gym or sprint sessions and runs in the MHQ. Throughout the six months, every Tuesday and Friday, IRCON 13 conducted circuit classes and pilates for all staff stationed in the Headquarters. I found this a great opportunity to get to know and have fun with the other contingents while also maintaining my fitness.

Over all the job we did in EUTM Mali was challenging, rewarding and varied. No two days were exactly the same, meaning flexibility and being able to adjust were key

requirements. As mentioned previously, the job of JTT required our presence at the airport where we meet and greeted all EUTM staff coming to and from the mission area. The proudest part of my job was having the opportunity to 'Cead Mile Failte agus Slan Abhaile' to all of these EUTM personnel on a daily basis.

CAREER BIO

LIEUTENANT NICOLE KELLY

My name is Lt Nicole Kelly. I am from Clonaslee, Co Laois, which is just at the foothills of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. I was commissioned with the 93rd cadet class to Tpt Coy, DFTC in Jan 2018. Before this in 2012, I trained in 1st Mechanised Infantry Coy, DFTC with the 101st Recruit Platoon.

From here I was posted to 3rd Battalion, Stephens Barracks, Kilkenny where I was fortunate enough to serve overseas with the 44th Infantry Group to UNDOF. I have completed a BA in Sports and Exercise and also a BA in Business Management at Institute of Technology Carlow. Throughout my army career I have been involved with many Defence Forces teams such as Basketball, Football and Soccer. My new home club is Eadestown GAA where last year we were successful in winning the Senior Football Championship County Final. ■



JOINT TASK FORCE

BY CPL LEE COYLE

PHOTO'S BY CPL LEE COYLE



The COVID-19 outbreak has us as a society in unchartered territory. It has been generations since a pandemic of this nature has been seen anywhere around the world. The Irish Government have been put in the spotlight for a response and action to stem the spread of this deadly disease. In response the Government have appointed a Cabinet Committee on COVID-19 and they have approved a National Action Plan on COVID-19, dated 16 Mar 2020. This plan has been prepared following involvements from all departments and key agencies from around the country.

The governments National Action Plan outlines a cross-government approach to fight the effects of the virus. This action plan highlighted the requirements of the DF to stand-up a dedicated COVID-19 Joint Task Force (CV19 JTF or JTF) as a reaction to this emerging and rapidly evolving situation.

On the 23 Mar 2020 the Minister for Defence signed and issued DFR: Military Command & Other Powers (Temporary Provisions), establishing the COVID-19 JTF for the purpose of military operations relating to COVID-19. The strategic guidance for the JTF was then formally issued to the Commander of the JTF by the Chief of Staff Vice Admr Mark Mellett (DSM) on 20 Mar 2020, the operation was codenamed as 'OP FORTITUDE'.

The main points in the mission outlined by the COS were: The DF will conduct Aid To Civil Authority (ATCA) operations WEF 20 Mar 2020 in support of the Department of Health, Health Service Executive (HSE), other Principle Response Agencies (PRAs) and Government Departments, and Aid To Civil Power (ATCP) operations in support of An Garda Siochana (AGS), in order to contribute to the national effort in countering COVID-19.

The JTC is located in the gymnasium McKee Bks and is staffed by member from across the DF, this includes all formations. In total there is over 40 personnel manning the JTF, with a wide range of knowledge and skills. Their role with the support from across the DF is to coordinate and prioritise

the effort in response to requests from PRAs. These tasking's from PRAs is mainly to bolster the capacity of the HSE, deploy a range of DF critical capabilities in ATCA and ATCP operations to support the national effort and strengthen the resilience of the PRAs.

The taskings that have been received from the PRAs to the JTF have been wide and varied and required the use of many DF assets from across the country. One of the first taskings acted upon was the setting up of test centres, using DF assets at locations across the country. These locations include Dublin, Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, and Donegal. Providing test centre facilitators at the main locations of Dublin, Cork, and Galway, ships from the Naval Service have been docked along-side the test centre locations. Also at these locations members from the DF Medical Corps have been assisting HSE staff with the testing of members of the public.

Another early tasking was the setup of a contact call trace centre in the DFTC that is being manned by members of the 96th Cadet Class. These centres have been a major tool in stemming the spread of this deadly virus. Other tasks carried out by the DF include the transportation of patients by the DF Medical corps, and the manufacturing of PPE equipment by 3D printing methods in the DFTC. These are a few of the main tasking's that have been received by the JTF and as the course of this pandemic unfolds the DF will be called upon to carry out more and more tasks from PRAs.

Speaking through a letter addressed to members of Óglaigh na hÉireann about the Covid-19 outbreak, COS Vice Admr Mark Mellett said "Fortitude" is defined as the demonstration of great strength of mind to endure adversity with courage over a long period of time.' He also wrote 'Our duty has always been, first and foremost, to defend and protect Ireland and our citizens.' These words mean more today than any other time, they are at the core of every individual of the DF and it is this value that will help our country get back to where it has come from and for daily life for all its citizens to return to normal. ■



CAPT DECLAN HICKEY, AC LNO

The primary role of the Air Corps LNO in the JTF is to advise the COM of all Air Corps assets at his disposal and to be the main POC for all information between the JTF HQ and the Air Corps HQ. A compilation of daily fixed wing, rotary wing and service support assets within the Air Corps is gathered and passed to the JTF HQ staff. An analysis of all CO-

VID19 testing of Air Corps personnel is also passed to the relevant agencies within the JTF. Other roles involve briefing the JTF COM and JTF staff of upcoming weather and how this may have any implications on the use of Defence Forces assets in the forthcoming 24-96 hours.



LT CDR PAUL HEGARTY, NS LNO

As liaison officer for the Maritime Component Commander (MCC) I act as the intermediary between the JTF Commander and the Naval Operations Centre. I perform a myriad of duties that support the MCC assets currently deployed on OP FORTITUDE, and liaise with the other brigade and formation LNO's as necessary. Operationally, I support

other elements of the JTF as the maritime SME, and provide advice and guidance on operational planning requirements and considerations when liaising with external organisations such as the Port authorities and supporting Ireland's island communities. Maintaining open and secure sea lines of communication, both nationally and internationally, is vital in supporting the national effort.



CAPT RUAIKI BYRNE, SO CMU

My role within the JTF is Staff Officer for CMU. I conduct liaison between CMU HQ and JTF. My taskings include but are not limited to determining medical capabilities, analysing medical taskings, advising JTF on the capabilities of the CMU.

I offer medical resourcing advice to the JTF, identify medical capability gaps and advise JTF on the deployment

of medical personnel and equipment. The CMU currently have EMTs, Paramedics & Advanced Paramedics deployed in Dublin, Cork & Kildare responding with the National Ambulance Service (NAS). Medics deployed in John Rodgersons Quay conducting swabbing and CMU personnel are also conducting swabbing in nursing homes. We have Medical Officers deployed in National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) conducting phone triages & in Connolly Hospital in the emergency department.

CAPT ANGELA LYONS, DFTC LNO

My appointment is the DFTC Liaison Officer, with the responsibility for providing a link between the JTF and the DFTC. Key objectives throughout the day consist of compiling daily returns for the JOC



Director on operational activities within our AO. The key areas within the returns are personnel deployed on COVID-19 operations, what DF assets are being utilised within these operations and tracking of all DF members in isolation, testing positive or returning to place of work. Information must be current for enhanced situational awareness and consolidated for the daily CUB through the JOC director to COM.



CS RONNIE BURKE, JTF TASK COLLECTOR

My role in the JTF is the JTF Task Collector, I am the Senior NCO within the JTF. My main responsibility is compiling and maintaining all JTF activities from around the country for the purpose of analysis and planning. This is to assist future operations that may be tasked to the DF.

CISM 2019

BY COMDT ADRIAN WATSON

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY COMDT ADRIAN WATSON

I remember sitting at the back of the bus with 7th Battalions Pte Danny O'Brien a few seats ahead of me, I could see him watching something on his phone but I just could not make out what it was. The bus was not that full, as we left the Olympic village, as it was a world championship semi-final and only the most 'Elite of the Elite' were still standing. It is not everyday your fighting in a world military games semi final representing your country. I turned around to Offaly's

Sgt John Molloy, Danny's long term mentor and asked him what Danny was watching on the phone.....
"He is big into Evander



Holyfield, likes to get into the mode for physical destruction through him...." John said.

The setting was Wuhan in the Hubei Province of China. The opening ceremony of the military olympics had been extravagant to say the least and fittingly Jackie Chan, one of China's greatest exports opened the proceedings amid a city who really embraced the world military games. The stadium had a 100,000 capacity and it was no surprise to learn that the Chinese had created the biggest olympics spectacle ever from a military perspective with over 10,000 entries, nearly 30 percent higher than the previous ones in South Korea in 2017. They had their own championship TV channel so they could live-feed the public's appetite to showcase their military hero's.

The boxing not surprisingly was the most sought after spectator competition of the games. In fairness to the fans they soon came to realise that if you wanted to see "real Combat" fought

out between opposing nations, 'Gladiators' in a colosseum environment, this was as close as you would get. All soldiers are romanticists at heart, and I suppose anyone who can relate to us as soldiers realise there is something magical and unique about soldiers who are prepared to go to war physically in the ring as real life gladiator representatives of their nations.

The team had shown amazing qualities and performances, so far, 7th Battalions Pte Stephen Lockhard proving the age old saying that if your going to beat an opposing fighter in the first round of their home

pride for the supporting Irish soccer players and manager Richie Barber who also represented us greatly but Offaly's own Brian Kennedy DFTC brought the stadium to their feet with his 'toe to toe non-stop engagement' only to be denied by a hometown decision.

Leona Houlihan from Crumlin boxing club having won two national elite championships in 2017/18 was the first elite lady fighter to represent the Irish Army at a world military games and proudly represented going out in the quarter



Pte O'Brien poses with his coaches



Pte Danny O'Brien (centre) with (L to R) Comdt Adrian Watson, COL Tom O'Callaghan, Brig Gen (now Ret'd) O'Halloran and Sgt John Molloy

countries competition you are going to have to knock them out. Unfortunately he did not knock him out but the team and spectators were in no doubt as to why the Irish were renowned as 'The Fighting Irish'.

There is a very good reason why some of Irelands most successful elite boxers have their names on the walls of the renowned old national elite stadium on the south circular road. Pte Ross Hickey from the DFTC is one of the most successful Irish Army boxers in history and having narrowly missed out on a place at the Rio Olympics, The world military games was an opportunity for him to win that world medal he so richly deserved, however we don't always get what we deserve in sport. Ross fought at 69kgs and in order for qualification he had to be the man who had his arm raised on the finals of the elite army championships. The place on the CISM team was going to the winner at the inaugural all army finals between DFTCs Ross and the 27th Battalions own 'The Dark Destroyer' Pte Alan White. The referee after the bout announced that it was the best fight he had ever witnessed and he only wished he had been a spectator for it. Unfortunately in China one minute into the first round Hickey sustained a cut to the nose from his Polish opponents head, and the ringside doctor immediately called a halt to proceedings, it was an unfortunate end to the fight but these were factors outside of our control, Hickey needed 8 stitches in his nose after the fight but again he had represented well. Galway's Antoine O'Griofa and Mick Connelly fought valiantly and brought great

finals. The spectators had come for wars and if the Irish were fighting they were guaranteed brave and honourable displays.

We disembarked the coach into our own cubicle in the warm up area where Danny had already quite the fan club from the nearby student population. We were nearly two hours early for the fight, but we had a lot of preparations to make. The cubicle consisted of a massage table where Danny could rest once he got settled, we would register his presence with the officials, get his gloves issued and his wraps checked. It was fascinating to watch the pre-fight rituals of the alternative fighters warming up. The main fights were televised on large screens inside the warm up area. I happily found Danny resting in his cubicle, as the rest of us were getting nervous. Danny seemed small in comparison to his opposition but maybe that was just me. This was where Sgt John Molloy came to the fore in his ability to distract Danny but keep him mentally prepared for what he needed to focus on. Former 2nd Battalion and '2 time' olympian, Crumlin's Phil Sutcliffe was No. 2 to John but the combination of both men in bringing the best from the competitors was fascinating. One such moment of sheer genius from Phil and demonstrating why he recently cornered Conor McGregor in the Donald Cerrone fight was when just before Danny was due to fight the French champion he pretended to the French coaches as they watched Danny on the pads that he was a southpaw fighter. It took Danny all of 20



seconds to dispose of this prized French fighter, the former world junior championship semi-finalist Frances Michel Gavaj.

This battle brought him to the forefront of the Chinese fans imagination, as no one else had the ability to TKO fighters in the championships so far. Pte O'Brien was now a marked man at 91kgs he went onto to beat the Finnish elite national number 1 'Krenar Aliu' who ironically Danny had spared at a multi nations training camp in Germany 7 weeks prior to the showdown.

There are no easy fights in a competition of this magnitude as the competitors are a mix of the nations olympic athletes in training and the world's top military athletes. The quarter-finals were the hardest competition to date and to win the bronze Danny had to defeat the Brazilian olympic quarter finalist from Rio 2016, Juan Nogueira. In the blue corner we had a national senior champion from Ireland NOT yet an elite national champion, on the other corner we had the best 91kg fighter a country of 209 million could present. On Paper it was a long shot to expect Danny to realistically compete at this level, however that is the beautiful thing about the art of boxing ...anything can happen.... Danny went into the fight brave and battled hard, he knew he would need the fight of his life to cause an upset. Once the bell went the Brazilian seemed surprised at this supposed Irish unknown entity and his fearless 'all or nothing' toe to toe style. The Brazilian corner soon realised their man had to go 'all in' for the last round, as he was behind, in order to beat this Irish army warrior. The Brazilian support was immense but the Chinese at this stage had grown to love Danny. In the true style of a real fighter Danny seemed to step it up the higher the competition stakes went. Once the final bell sounded the anticipation for the decision was immense, refereeing is a strange and final business, the two fighters poised in the middle of the ring and the Brazilian seemed confident he had done enough. Deservedly we took the bronze medal by winning the fight that night and the Irish supporters were ecstatic. We left the stadium quickly amid all the fanfare to the village in an elated state. The olympic village cafeteria was serving 24/7 and the standards of food never dropped, it was no surprise ironically some fighters never made weight for their respective categories. We asked Danny about a late



night snack and he refused stating he had the weigh in for the semi final at 0700, I suppose this is the unromantic real dedication stuff no one knows about as a fighter, the real self sacrifice to make weight.

Kazakhstan's Abzal Kuttybekov was the next fight for the silver medal, at the weigh in I was amazed he was a cruiser-weight for the size of him. Abzal had already beaten the last guy to beat Joe Ward arguable Irelands greatest ever amateur before he went pro, so we knew we had a serious bout coming our way.

The first round was tight Abzal used his reach to hold Danny at bay and once Danny started to fight on the inside his success in the second round started to become apparent, without warning in the heat of battle both fighters clashed heads resulting in a gaping wound in Danny's head and Afzal's eye lid being opened. With both fighters bleeding heavily, the fight was stopped not even half way through. The decision went to the judges who on count-back awarded the fight to Kuttybekov. Although disappointed at being denied the opportunity to fight three rounds, we soon found ourselves in the back of an ambulance with both fighters on the way to the local A&E. It was amazing to reminisce on the journey whilst looking at the athletes that 10 minutes earlier in the ring they were intent on literally finishing each other off, however within minutes we suddenly found ourselves as a team with the opponent amongst us on the way to the hospital. None of the Kazakhstan entourage accompanied their fighter to the hospital and he looked perplexed at the fact that so many Irish came to ensure our man was ok. Outside the hospital we took photos together in friendship and it was a beautiful moment of solidarity and respect. In the hospital once everyone was medically fit we laughed at the fabulous journey we had begun, years earlier in the 7th Battalion dreaming of a CISM medal. Kuttybekov meanwhile was in an argument with the doctors to plead for glue to stop his eye bleeding rather than stitches so he could fight the final the following day.

Ironically Kuttybekov was stopped in the final the following day by Uzbekistan's Madiyar Saydrakhimov within seconds as he focused on the wounds Danny O'Brien had opened up the previous day. It will be very interesting to watch out for the above two athletes at the Tokyo Olympics

in 2021 and as Irish elite cruiserweight 'No 2' Danny O'Brien is still in contention for an olympic qualification roll forward.

It is a strange old feeling for a little nation of Irelands size to travel to the heartland of China and compete against literally the world's best and bring home a prized medal at the biggest CISM World Olympics in history.

Maybe a few in China had not heard of the fighting Irish before we arrived but they will never forget the 'Gladiators' who represented with pride and left a legacy that any country could be proud of... ■



Pte Ross Hickey attends his wounds



NOTICEBOARD

SUDOKU'S

3			6		8			
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	8			1	2	9		
5			8	1	9			
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EASY

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7				2			3	

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CROSS OFF THE WORDS IN THE LIST AS YOU FIND THEM.

Word searches are fun, they also bring benefits you may not realise and can play an important role in keeping you mentally fit.

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 L I A M K C A L B P A W K R D
 M E R U T C U R T S A R F N I
 Q B Z W W Z P H I S H I N G W
 D K Y T I R U C E S N N U E A
 J S Z M T P H U M F N A V X Q
 N O O X E V S H O A O X M T H
 E F V L N D N R W S I O A O S
 T T G O R Q M K T W T V L R E
 W W F O E A J A K A C J W T N
 O A C D T F L A O W E V A I Y
 R R W I N K J Y Y S T E R O M
 K E O D I G W M P L O B E N R
 L N T N B R Z C T H R E A T S
 L U G S R M D G U W P Y W D Q

BLACKMAIL
 CYBERSPACE
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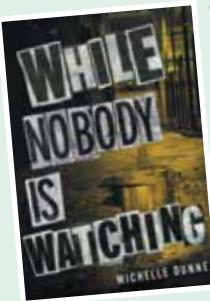
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Last month's winner of the PROTAC €50 Voucher was Finton Smith, Co. Louth. Closing date is 19th June 2020.

BOOKS BOOKS

WHILE NOBODY IS WATCHING

Author: Michelle Dunne
Publisher: Badpressink
ISBN: 978-1-9160845-3-7
Pages: 308
Price: €8.99



'While Nobody Is Watching' is the third book from Michelle Dunne, and the first of her Lindsay Ryan series. This face paced thriller

has its foundations in a gritty reality, and it deals with some hard subjects exceptional well. It weaves action and drama into a thriller with its gripping plot. Drawing strongly on her service in the Defence Forces, and on her overseas experiences with the United Nations peacekeeping forces in Lebanon, Dunne really has created a heroine of great strength and character. A story with twists and turns makes for a real page turner. It does what every great thriller does, leaves you very satisfied but fancying a little more. Be warned this is no techno-babble weapons manual, or flag-waving macho military escapade. This is a real world, with real people and real problems. A story where PTSD is the price paid by those who come home, having seen the face of war, and the ultimate price is paid by those who don't come home at all.

By Ruairí de Barra

BATTLE READY

Author: Ollie Ollerton
Publisher: Blink Publishing
ISBN: 9781788703376
Pages: 320
Price: €21.00 (Easons)



Ex-Special Forces soldier Ollie Ollerton knows more than his fair share about keeping going.

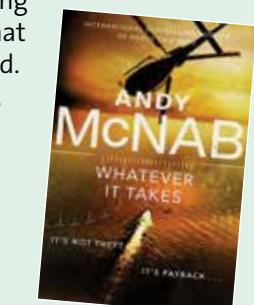
As a recruit he survived the infamously tough SAS selection process on a busted ankle with the Directing Staff pleading with him to give up. But it's in Ollie's personal life that he really had to dig deep. At his lowest he was battling a failed relationship, substance abuse, depression and a reckless disregard for his own life. In his new book Ollie tells the story of how he turned his life around and passes on the lessons he has learned.

In *Battle Ready* Ollie shares the step-by-step plan that changed his life. From finding purpose and visualising an outcome, to breaking bad habits and establishing positive new routines, his advice will help readers to overcome their own obstacles; to become ready for any battle.

Taken from www.amazon.co.uk

WHATEVER IT TAKES

Author: Andy McNab
Publisher: Bantam Press
ISBN: 9791787632110
Pages: 371
Price: €28.00



They say before you embark on a journey of revenge, dig two graves. For James Mercer, the financial ruin of his family by the institutions they trusted can never be undone. It shattered everyone, leaving him with a burning need to right the wrongs they suffered. He will stop at nothing to recoup what they are owed. It's not theft, it's payback. Until his solo crusade falls foul of the very people he seeks to rob - the one per centers, the people who own the bulk of the world's wealth. Soon he is putting together a crew to carry out one last robbery, to undertake one last job. Success will restore his family's fortunes, but failure will destroy them forever. Packed with relentless action and the sort of riveting authenticity only Andy McNab can provide, Whatever it Takes tells the story of one man's extraordinary pursuit of justice against devastating odds, a story as hard and real and controversial as any of today's headlines, which will show the world as it really is...

Taken from www.easons.com

NAME

CPL

RANK

PATRICK O'MEARA

UNIT

PHOTO SECTION, 105 SQN, AC



BY CPL LEE COYLE

Cpl Pat O'Meara grew up in Co. Tipperary, but moved to Trim, Co. Meath when he was a teenager, it was here that his interest in having a military career began. Soon after moving to Trim he made a friend through a running club, by the name of Willie Quinn. Willie told Pat that he was serving in the FCA (RDF) and it was really interesting and a good way to keep fit, this convinced Pat to join up.

Pat enjoyed his time in the FCA, especially the training on summer camps. He enjoyed it so much that Willie suggested to him to join the PDF. So Pat travelled to Cathal Brugha Bks to put his name down to enlist. But during this time the DF was only recruiting a few recruit platoons a year and it was almost two years later when he heard any word back. By this time Pat had travelled to New York for a working holiday, so it was arranged for him to sit his interview the day after he returned in Griffith Bks. It was then a further year before he had completed his medical and was then told to report to Cathal Brugha Bks for enlistment on 08 Aug 1988 in the Command Training Depot East, now the BTC, 2 Bde.

Pat found that his FCA service helped him with the training as it had given him an insight and lessened the shock, his fitness level was really good also, with him just having completed the Belfast marathon weeks before his enlistment. His recruit platoon was one of the last to train on the FN, with them also training on the Steyr during their three star course. His passing out parade was a very proud day for Pat as he had won best soldier of his platoon and was given the option to choose what unit he was posted to, with this chance he choose to go the Air Corps as he had a plan to become a photographer.

When he first arrived in the AC he placed in the catering cen-

tre which was the common thing of the time, he also spent time in the ration stores during his first year there. In 1990 the opportunity came up for Pat to complete a photography course and transfer to Photo Section. His interest in photography had begun at an early age, with his even constructing a makeshift darkroom in his bathroom. After he completed his photography course he also completed various computer courses through the DF.

Pats first overseas tour was with the 78 Inf Bn in UNIFIL in Oct 1995, this was a tough mission with the Grapes of Wrath war happening during this time. It was a bit of a shock for his first tour with a lot of it spent in the bunkers. His second overseas tour was with the 35 and 36 UNFICYP in Cyprus in Oct 1997, with his role as the UN Force Photographer.

Pat completed an NCOs course in 2007/2008 and was promoted in May 2008. Serving with Photo Section Pat was required to complete many survival courses including Personal Survival Techniques, and Helicopter Under Water Recess Training. These courses need to be kept up to date for working in military aircraft.

As a photographer in Photo Section and part of 105 Sqn, Pats role within the AC is very varied. He is required to cover everything photographic related, from taking passport photos to aerial missions on fisheries protection taskings. As an NCO he is also required to have the responsibility of overseeing training of staff and allocation of jobs and making out flying rosters. Routine Maritime missions on CASA are a very large part of what he covers on a daily basis, with the average patrol lasting approx. 5 hours in duration. For the future Pat plans to remain in the organisation as his passion for military life and photography is still there. ■





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