

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

# AN COSANTÓIR

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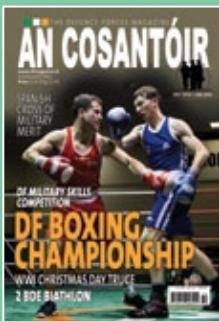


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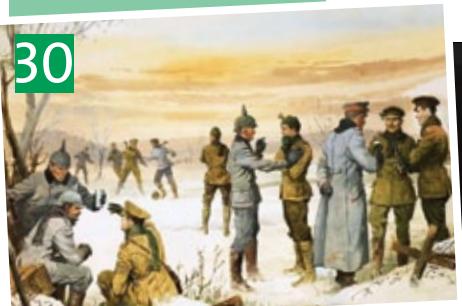
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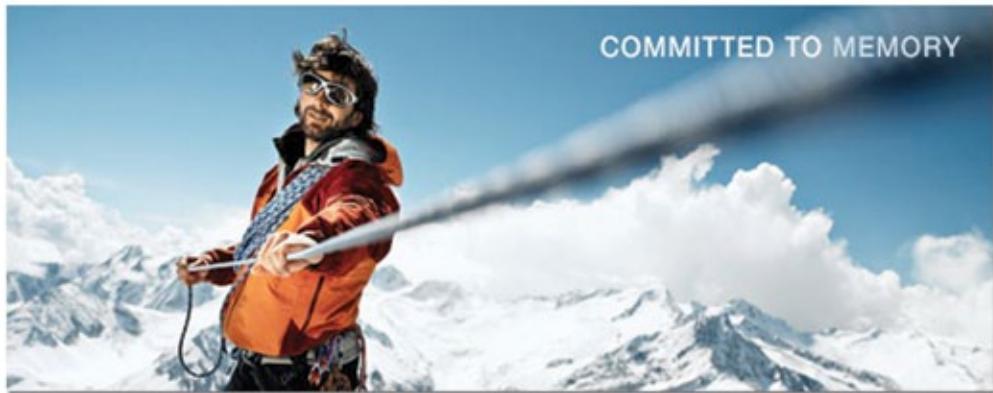
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**Front Cover**

Athletes pictured at the recent Defence Forces Boxing Championship 2014 by Sgt Karl Byrne.

For more Defence Forces photographs, checkout: [www.flickr.com/photos/dfmagazine](http://www.flickr.com/photos/dfmagazine)

# Editorial

**H**ello and welcome to our December and January issue, which has 44 packed pages. On a special note, An Cosantóir celebrates its 75th Volume in 2015, so we have dedicated our annual wallplanner to this with many of our front covers reappearing in print from December 1940 to November 2014, we hope you like it.

As ever this issue starts with your photographs *On Parade*. Next *In Focus* features some Veteran's news that's followed by another movie reel of photos from WWI aviation films made in the 1960s that involved Air Corps personnel. Page 10 has been utilised again this month to bring you a short piece on the recent 2 Bde Biathlon Competition in Gormanston Camp. Our first main feature is *The Spanish Cross of Military Merit*; Lt Col Stephen Ryan (3 Inf Bn) and Coy Sgt Mitchel Bohan (7 Inf Bn) were awarded with the *Cruces del Mérito Militar* with white distinction for their heroic actions in an attack on Spanish UNIFIL Peacekeepers in June 2007. Next up we have an introduction to *IUNVA Post 5* based in Cavan, and then how a primary school in Newbridge celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Great War with their military re-enactment. Then we have two pieces on UNIFIL, starting with the Irish UNIFIL Association's visit to the recent UNIFIL Reunion held in Soesterberg, Netherlands, that's followed by a complementary piece on the history of Dutchbatt in UNIFIL. We have the long awaited results from our Defence Forces Photographic Competition, which was kindly sponsored by Barker Photographic Ltd – well done to all who entered. Our *Strategic Review* feature *Carnage In The Desert* by author and historian Paul O'Brien, looks back on the January 2013 terrorist attack on the Tigantourine gas plant in Algeria. The *2 Bde Military Skills Competition* and the results are on page 24 and assistant press officer Capt Dónal Gallagher briefs us on *Exercise Joint Action*, with the Nordic Battlegroup 15 that was held in Sweden recently. We then have a three-page feature on *The Congo Remembered*, by Comdt Conor O'Shea, who along with three other DF members visited historic sites of Irish interest in the Congo. Our double History features are the infamous WWI story *The Christmas Truce* by James Scannell, that's followed by *Ballymullen Barracks* by Robert Tangney to compliment his recent book on the barrack's long history. In *Sport*, we have the recent *16th Confidence Training Instructors Course*, the *DF Boxing Championship 2014* and a short piece on the recent international women's soccer match against the Netherlands. Plus we have all our regular features – *Tac-Aide*, *Gear Review*, *Noticeboard* and *Reviews*.

**Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald - Editor**

**DEFENCE FORCES****REVIEW 2014**

*The Defence Forces Review 2014 was launched on the 10th October 2014, in the Officers Mess McKee Bks by Defence Forces Chief of Staff, Lt Gen Conor O'Boyle, OiC Public Relations Branch, Lt Col Michael Dawson and current Editor Comdt Neil Nolan, Mil Col, DFTC.*  
*Limited printed copies are available and an electronic copy is online: [www.military.ie/info-centre/publications/defence-forces-review/](http://www.military.ie/info-centre/publications/defence-forces-review/)*

**MULLINGAR****REMEMBERS WWI**

*Pictured at the WWI Centenary Service of Remembrance held in All Saint's Church, Mullingar on Sunday 9th November. Members of Mullingar Branch ONE, Post 20 IUNVA, Mullingar, Westmeath Civil Defence HQ, Mullingar, RSM Noel O'Callaghan, 2 Arty Regt and sitting is Lt Col Harvey Kelly Retd MBE Irish Guards who fought in WWI on D Day and at Arnhem Bridge. Photo: Ger O'Connor, Mullingar Branch ONE*

# 6 | ON PARADE



## DF VS AN GARDA HURLING

On 14th October the Defence Forces and An Garda Síochána resumed a long standing hurling fixture between both organisations. The venue was Cusack Park, Mullingar, with the Defence Forces team led out by All Ireland winning Kilkenny hurler Cpl Paul Murphy, 3 Inf Bn. The final score was 6-22 to 2-13, with a strong Defence Forces Team coming out on top. *Photo: Capt Liam Halpin, NBG 2015-1*



## RUGBY IN BEIRUT

On 26th October members of the 45 Inf Gp took on a Beirut Select team in a game of rugby in Beirut University. Although narrowly beaten, the Irish players performed excellently for a team who had just been formed 6 days previously. Pictured is Capt Donal McCann (BSG) on the attack. *Photo: Lt Thomas Mullarkey, PIO 45 Inf Gp*



## NEW GOC 1 BDE

Pictured is Lt Barry alongside the new GOC 1 Bde, Brig Gen Kieran Brennan on his arrival in Collins Bks on 23rd October. *Photo: Cpl Christine O'Leary, HQ 1 Bde*



## AN COSANTÓIR 10K

On 16th October 2014, 9 days after deploying in theatre, the 46 Inf Gp hosted the UNDOF edition of the An Cosantóir 10k race in Camp Ziouani. A total of 93 personal competed, drawn from FIJIBATT, INDCON, UNDOF Force HQ, UN Civilian Staff and the FRC (46 Inf Gp). In a very tight race, which was only decided on the finishing straight, 1st was Pte John Dillon (38min 12s), 2nd Cpl Steven McKeigue (38min 17s), followed in 3rd Pte Niall Kelly (38min 27s). The event was a huge success in establishing positive relationships with the other UNDOF troops and also raising €513 for Our Lady's Children's Hospital and the Westmeath Hospice. *Photo: Lt Ronan Lambe, 46 Inf Gp*



## WARRIORS DAY

Pictured are members of the ONE Lower Ormonde Branch (Nenagh) at their Lá na bFiann Mass for deceased members. ONE branches from Cork City, Ballincollig, Templemore and Tipperary Town paraded alongside The Royal British Legion Limerick, American Legion and The Irish Legion. Branch standards' from the USA, Canada, France and the UN flew beside the National Colours. *Photo: Seamus Lawlor*



## WELL DONE!

Pictured are the students who completed the Higher Diploma in Business and Supply Chain Management Level 8, at Carlow Institute of Technology. It was undertaken from September 2013 to July 2014, under the Life Long Learner's umbrella. They were conferred on Thursday evening 6th November. *Photo: Pte David Hogarty, 2 Bde HQ*



### CARLOW GRADUATION ▲

The Minister of State Mr Paul Kehoe TD accompanied by D COS Ops Maj Gen Ralph James, attended the conferring ceremony of 223 Defence Forces graduates at Carlow Institute of Technology on 7th November 2014. Drawn from all formations of the Defence Forces the graduates successfully completed elements of the Leadership, Management and Defence (LMDS) programme. This training and education programme is of major significance to the educational recognition of training conducted by the Defence Forces. Photo Armn Billy Doyle, 105 Sqn



### SANTA RUN ▲

Pictured are members of 50th Recruit Platoon, 27 Inf Bn signing up for the local charity Santa Run in Dundalk recently. Last year's World Record of 4,961 Santas' running one mile is up for breaking again this year. The event organised by Dundalk Chamber of Commerce will raise funds for local charities SOSAD, Louth Men's Shed, North Louth Hospice, SNAP and Lordship Children's Respite Centre, as well as other local groups, clubs and organisations. The event will take place on 5th December 2014. Photo: Lt Hugh Forde, B Coy, 27 Inf Bn



### ENGINEERS LEADING THE WAY ▲

Pictured during the Corps of Engineers TACEX in the Glen of Imaal Co Wicklow are three members of the RDF platoon. From L/R: Cpl Shane O'Reilly, Pte Marie-Claire Hallinan (both 1 Fd COE, 1 Bde) and Cpl Cathal Cawley (2 Fd COE, 2 Bde). Photo: Pte David Flood, 2 Fd, COE 2 Bde.



### MEDIA DAY ▲

Pictured are 27 Inf Bn RDF personnel undergoing M203 Training with instructor Cpl Eamon Lawlor, A Coy, 27 Inf Bn during the Battalion Media Day in Aiken Barracks, Dundalk. Photo: Lt Hugh Forde, B Coy, 27 Inf Bn

### WEDDING BELLS ▲

Pictured are Cpl Deirdre Crowe, 12 Inf Bn, Limerick and Pte John Corry, 1 Inf Bn, Galway on their wedding on the 13th September 2014 at the Church of the Annunciation, Bansha Co. Tipperary. Photo: Cpl Deirdre Crowe



### CIVIL DEFENCE ▲

The Civil Defence Officers Association holds a training seminar each year. This year it was held on the 5th/6th November in the Tower Hotel, Waterford City. Each year they invite national and international speakers covering a range of topics relevant to the Civil Defence. This year the Civil Defence wanted to discuss how the organisation can use Social Media as an effective Public Relations tool. Capt Laura Keane (DF Asst Press Officer) addressed the seminar on the topic of social media as a communications tool and participated in a Q&A session. Pictured with Capt Keane are (L/R) Anthony Graham, Civil Defence Officer, North Tipperary and Brian Sweeney Civil Defence Officer, Leitrim



## Conwall Memorial, Letterkenny

REPORT & PHOTOS MARTIN CRAWFORD

**O**n Sunday 21st September upwards of 200 people attended the official dedication of the new Irish United Nations Veterans Association (IUNVA) memorial at Conwall cemetery Letterkenny. This consisted of members of IUNVA, DF veterans, An Garda Síochána and family members of those whose names are inscribed. The memorial was built by two former soldiers, Eunan Carroll and Martin Crawford who saw it through to its present glory - a fitting tribute to those who gave their all in the name of peace. The memorial has four burial plots within its confines for members of IUNVA, ONEt or any former member of the PDF should their circumstances require one. On the wall are two time capsules, which will hopefully be re-opened in 100 years time.



IUNVA Guard of honour



The former soldiers who built the memorial, Eunan Carroll and Martin Crawford.



The Conwall Memorial, "Lest we forget".

## In Memory of the Congo

PHOTOS BY SGT MICK BURKE

**O**n 8th November, 2014, the Organisation of National Ex-Servicemen and Women (ONET) held the 54th Annual Niemba Ceremony and Mass in memory of those that lost their lives in the service of peace at Niemba, Congo on 8th November 1960. The ceremony was held in Cathal Brugha Bks, Dublin, and was followed by a wreath laying ceremony accompanied by DF bugler and drummer.



## Niemba Ambush Remembered

BY COMDT GEORGE KERWIN RETD IUNVA NATIONAL PRO



IUNVA Post 1 held their Annual Wreath Laying Ceremony on 8th November 2014, at the Congo Plot in Glasnevin Cemetery, to remember their UN colleagues lost in the Niemba Ambush. Pictured from L/R are: Michael Colton (Pres Post 1), Dan Garland (Nat Sec), Noel Cullen Royal British Legion (RBL), George Kerwin (Nat PRO) and Ronnie Daly (Post 1).

# Battles Among the Clouds

BY SGT JIMMY HAYLES, AIR CORPS PRESS OFFICE PHOTOS LT COL KEN BYRNE (RETD)

*"We've tolerated you here because we've had to! One day, Stachel - or should I call you Bruno? - one day, I'm going to shake you up considerably. I wonder if you're as good as you think you are..."*

**Willi von Klugermann, The Blue Max**



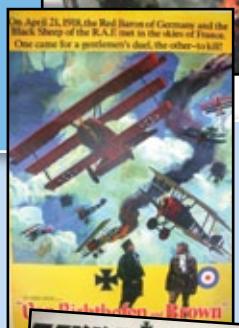
In 1965 Hollywood came knocking at the gates of Baldonnel and as a result the Air Corps' pilots got to display their flying skills to international acclaim on the silver screen. Filming of *The Blue Max* provided sensational sights for everyone watching from around the area and when viewing the spectacular dogfights on screen, many a Dubliner was able to say nonchalantly: "Sure I saw them live!"

In the late '60s early '70s, in addition to *The Blue Max* (1966), which starred George Peppard as a German fighter pilot on the Western Front, Air Corps flying officers choreographed and flew in many wonderful dogfight scenes in films set during the Great War, like *Darling Lili* (1970), a musical starring Julie Andrews and Rock Hudson; *Von Richthofen and Brown* (aka *The Red Baron* -1971) a story of the German air ace's battles with Canadian Lt Brown, starring John Phillip Law and Don Stroud; and *Zeppelin* (1971) a spy thriller starring Michael York and Elke Sommer.

Not only was the standard of the pilots high enough for the Hollywood filmmakers, but many Air Corps ground crew worked on making set props and also took part as film extras. The films, however, did have their downside and sadly a few tragic deaths happened during filming.

Many interesting tales remain from this period including this one from Eddie Bourke: "A friend who was involved in manufacturing Mini Marcos cars at the time got some work making fibreglass props. One request was for 20 dummy pilots' heads to go in a line of planes that the props department had built. Having great difficulty finding a head to use as a mould, he eventually bought a bust of Eamon de Valera and used that. He didn't tell anyone, however, as 'Dev' was President of Ireland at the time and his 'head' and 20 copies got blown up during the filming!"

It just goes to show that a career in the Air Corps can offer you some excellent and unpredicted opportunities and can take you to some unbelievable places. "During my service, not only was I lucky enough to fly in dogfights with the Red Baron but I was also involved in pioneering helicopter operations in Ireland, flying life-saving search-and-rescue and air ambulance missions, and training the next generation of Air Corps pilots" - Lt Col Ken Byrne (retd) ■



# 2 BDE BIATHLON

PHOTOS BY CPL COLIN DELANY, 2 BDE HQ

**P**hysical fitness and mental agility are ingrained in all members of the Defence Forces. In the military, as in sport and life, one competency is useless without the other - a healthy balance is key.

On 30th October 2 Bde held the first ever Military Biathlon Competition in Gormanston Camp, Co Meath. This high intensity competition was designed to test teamwork, physical fitness, marksmanship and composure. Competitors had to negotiate a 2km circuit three times. At each lap they had to fire five rounds, the first lap from a standing position, the second lap from the kneeling position before finishing the course with five shots from the lying position. All competitors had the standard combat kit of a 14kg backpack, helmet, combat vest and personal weapon.

The 7 Inf Bn took the honours in the Team Event, displaying the physical fitness, marksmanship and tactics required to win the inaugural event. Pte McCabe, 27 Inf Bn won the Individual Race and Tpr McCarthy, 2 Cav Sqn won the Over 40's category. Well done to all who took part and organised this challenging event.



## RESULTS

### Category: Team

- 1st: 7 Inf Bn (I/C Cpl Finlay)
- 2nd: 28 Inf Bn (I/C Sgt Gillen)
- 3rd: 7 Inf Bn (I/C Sgt Meade)
- 4th: 2 Bde (I/C Comdt Carley)
- 5th: 2 Cav Sqn (I/C Cpl Scollard)

### Category: Male/Individual

- 1st Pte Mc Cabe - 27 Inf Bn
- 2nd Pte Englishby - 27 Inf Bn
- 3rd Pte Harte - 27 Inf Bn
- 4th Pte O Donoghue - 6 Inf Bn

### Category: O/40

- 1st Tpr Mc McCarthy - 2 Cav Sqn (RDF)
- 2nd CQ Murphy D - McKee Bks
- 3rd Capt Ensor- 2 Bde CIS



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# The Cross of Military Merit

## (Cruces del Mérito Militar)

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD



*Lt Col Stephen Ryan and Coy Sgt Mitchel Bohan being presented with their Cross of Military Merit with white distinction by Spanish Ambassador Flórez and Defence Attaché Captain Víctor Díaz del Río. Photo: Lt Col Anthony Cudmore, ADC COS.*

**O**n the early evening of 24th June 2007, having finished their patrol in UNIFIL's Eastern Sector, two Spanish APCs were returning to their base in the Lebanese town of Marjayoun when they were struck by a car bomb. The explosion caused ammunition inside one APC to explode, which made putting out the fire an almost impossible task. The attack resulted in the deaths of six peacekeepers and serious injury to two others.

Travelling on the same road, an Irish patrol commanded by Lt Col Stephen Ryan (3 Inf Bn) and Coy Sgt Mitchel Bohan (7 Inf Bn) witnessed the explosion. After quickly assessing the situation the two Irish peacekeepers risked their own lives by approaching the vehicles with extinguishers to try and put out the fire. Despite constant explosions from the APC ammunition they continued their efforts to put out the fire and then helped to evacuate the injured to the Spanish base in their vehicle.

This was the first fatal attack on the 13,000-strong UNIFIL force since the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war and drew swift condemnation from many international leaders. The attack was one of the worst experienced by UNIFIL in its 29-year presence in South Lebanon.

On 21st October this year, a ceremony was hosted by Spanish Ambassador Mr Javier Garrigues Flórez in the Spanish Embassy attended by distinguished guests including Chief of Staff Lt Gen Conor O'Boyle, Brig Gen Colm Campbell (ACOS), Brig Gen Michael Beary (GOC 2 Bde) and Captain Víctor Díaz del Río, the Spanish Defence Attaché.

At this ceremony Lt Col Ryan and Coy Sgt Bohan were awarded the Cross of Military Merit (*Cruces del Mérito Militar*) with white distinction (con distintivo blanco) for their actions. The medal is generally awarded to members of the

Spanish Armed Forces, or civilians, for outstanding actions or extraordinary service.

Ambassador Flórez said it was a special honour to host the ceremony and that *"the model behaviour and extraordinary courage of the recipients should be a matter of pride for the army they serve."*

The ambassador continued: *"We are presenting these awards as a testimony of gratitude and admiration from the Spanish Army to Lt Col Ryan and Coy Sgt Bohan, who carried out this heroic action. We also wish to recognise the altruistic work that military personnel do in peace missions throughout the five continents."*

This is not the first time that the Irish Defence Forces have been honoured by Spain for heroic acts safeguarding Spanish lives. In January

1990, L/Sea Michael Quinn and A/Sea Paul Kellett, members of the Irish Naval Service on LÉ Deirdre, were awarded the Spanish Cross of Naval Merit by the King of Spain for their heroic rescue of a Spanish trawler crew aboard the Nuestra Señora de Gardtoza. Sadly L/Sea Quinn lost his life in the attempt and A/Sea Kellett was badly injured.

Ambassador Flórez concluded, saying: *"I would like to stress that Ireland and Spain are strongly committed to the UN and are actively engaged in its peacekeeping operations around the world. Let us celebrate today not only the admirable courage and generosity shown by Lt Col Ryan and Coy Sgt Bohan, but also the special relationship that both our countries have enjoyed throughout the centuries."*



A Spanish soldier tries to stop journalists access to the area of the attack. (Reuters)

## THE SCENE



(courtesy of Reuters, AP & AFP)

# IUNVA Returns to Cavan

BY COY SGT SHAY WHELAN (RETD) AND CPL KEITH GUILFOYLE PHOTOS  
SGT DENIS BARRY (RETD)



**I**rish United Nations Veterans Association (IUNVA) Post 15 was founded in 1994 in Dún Uí Néil, Cavan, but due to several factors it ceased to operate in the late 90's.

With the closure of Dún Uí Néil in March 2012, serving and retired members who served in the barracks found it increasingly difficult to maintain contact with each other. As a result, members of IUNVA's national executive visited Cavan in July 2012 for a meeting to see if there would be support for re-establishing a post in the area. A large turnout gave everyone the answer and a committee for a new Post 15 was elected that night. Membership has since grown at a steady pace and now stands at 38, with more applications pending.

It was obvious from an early stage in the post's development that a permanent meeting place would be essential to its future success. As there was no accommodation available within a military post in the area due to the barracks closures in Cavan, Monaghan, Castleblayney and Longford, the committee decided to seek accommodation from the local authority. As a result, in November 2012 committee members contacted Cavan Town Council and were pleased to find that they were supported by local politicians and Cavan's lord mayor.

A meeting was arranged and took place in the building that the council was offering to Post 15, Ashvale House, a derelict house that had been built around the end of the 1940s. The building was in very poor repair and in need of modernisation but nevertheless in January 2013 Post 15 signed a tenancy agreement.

The huge task of refurbishing the site was approached on a phased basis, with the house being the priority. Members of the post started work immediately, turning their hands to everything from painting, plumbing, and bricklaying to tea making. With funding from the IUNVA National Executive, Cavan Town Council, local businesses and private donations, an enormous improvement could be seen in a short space of time and Ashvale House was officially opened by Lord Mayor Des Cullen in June 2013.

The house, which isn't far from the old Cavan Bks, is located in Swellan, which has a long established community into which the post and its members settled quickly. The welcome afforded to the post by the local people and the community spirit in the area has resulted in the local tenants' association now using Ashvale House on a regular basis for their meetings.

Phase 2 of the development, a disabled toilet facility, a roofed display area and the development of a memorial garden, quickly progressed. Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht Heather Humphries opened the memorial garden on 20th September 2014, with a large number of IUNVA members, representatives from the Defence Forces and ONEt, local politicians and members of the business community in attendance.

The final phase of the development of the site entails the construction of a recreational area/garden with a mural depicting the history of the Irish soldier – from Cúchulainn to the present-day soldier serving with the UN.

A small military museum is also being developed with a view to it becoming part of the Cavan Town Walking Tour in the future. To help us in this venture, the committee of Post 15 would ask readers of *An Cosantóir* to search your attics for any memorabilia that we could display in our museum – anything from a web belt to a water bottle.

Ashvale House provides a popular 'drop-in' centre for both serving and retired members of the Defence Forces. It is opened daily from 0900hrs-1300hrs and boasts a coffee room, kitchen, meeting room, reading room and office facilities.

Our motto is '*If the flag is on the pole the kettle is on the boil*', so please feel free to visit us at any time. ■



# In their FOOTSTEPS

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD PHOTOS SGT MICK BURKE

**O**n Tuesday 21st October 2014, students and teachers from the Patrician Primary School in Newbridge, Co Kildare held a World War One re-enactment parade from the Bord na Móna HQ (the old British Army Barracks) on Main St. Newbridge to the train station on the outskirts of the town – to re-enact the troops leaving Newbridge to head for ‘The Front’ in 1914.

Hundreds gathered outside the Bord na Móna HQ, as an introduction to events and the roll call of those 26 Newbridge men who had fallen in ‘The Great War’, were 26 students dressed up in their WWI uniform and gave a full description of the person they were representing. Like student John Crofton: “William Willmot, Irish Guards, 1st Battalion. Killed in action France on 26th March 1916, age 24. Born Brownstown. Son of George and Kate Wilmot, Linden House, Athgarvan, Newbridge.”

This idea of organising the re-enactment stemmed from School Principal John O’Donovan, to celebrate the centenary of the school titled ‘100 years of Education in Newbridge’ and to tie it in with the anniversary of World War One. The school used many a military connection to put replica uniforms and equipment together, and to their credit they were of great quality and exemplary turned out as soldiers of 1914. Other school children were dressed in civilian clothing of that period and were accompanied by the school band – which to everyone’s delight played exceptionally well. More pupils were holding up placards with the fallen family names on and with recruitment posters from that period. The other teachers dressed up were Frank Kirke and Cormac O’Shea.

The parade of 70+ students and teachers followed by a hundred or more townspeople marched out towards the train station. Upon their arrival a pair of cavalry vehicles greeted them, a Scorpion CVRT and Mowag Piranha MkIII under the command of Lt Donacha Lenihan, 1 ACS, DFTC. Before entering the platform the pupils were given a farewell salute by an honour guard drawn from 1 Mech Coy, DFTC and under the command of Sgt Gary O’Brien, whilst Military Piper CQMS Davy Usher (Ord Sch) played a lament.

The students in return put on a fine display of military drill, accompanied by their band and followed by the applause of everyone watching. It truly was a great spectacle especially the rendition of the ‘Minstrel Boy’ by both military piper and teacher Frank Kirke on the drum.

The students then took the 11.48am train to Dublin – Heuston to simulate the soldiers going “off to war”. They did in fact take a museum tour of Collins Barracks, Dublin. The real finish was that they did eventually take the train on the Thursday that took them on their journey to visit the battlefields of Europe including Ypres and the Somme.

The School gladly thanked all those who had helped make this celebration one to remember, and especially thanked: Manguard Plus, An Post, Irish Rail, Bord na Móna and the Defence Forces including: Chief of Staff, Lt Gen Conor O’Boyle, Tomás Caulfield, John O’Brien, Padraig Murray, Martin Sweeney and Seoirse Devlin. ■



Pupil Ethan Harrington wearing medals of his great great grandfather Andrew Sherlock



Pupil Óran Mc Donnell with a recruitment poster



The framed medals of William Willmot



1 Mech Coy GOH and Piper CQMS Davy Usher (Ord Sch)



Pupil Naoise McBride representing fallen soldier



# UNIFIL Reunion 2014

REPORT AND PHOTOS BY SGT CON LEIGH, E COY, 1 CN COIS



**O**n Saturday 18th October a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) reunion, organised by Dutch UNIFIL veterans, was held at the National Military Museum in Soesterberg, Netherlands. Two members of the Irish UNIFIL Association (IUA), Chairman CQMS Larry Dorgan (retd), who served with 11 Inf Bn, and Secretary Con Leigh, E Coy, 1 Cn Cois, travelled to this highly celebrated event to represent the association.

The day started with a train journey from Den Haag to a town called Amersfoort just south of Utrecht – with train tickets free to veterans on the day. There were coaches laid on to take all veterans from the station to Soesterberg, about 3km away. The reunion was attended by in excess of 2,500 veterans.

On arrival it was obvious that this was going to be a huge event as the layout was impressive, with marquees, displays and stands filling the arena, and a range of military vehicles lined up beside the museum. The dress for the initial meet-and-greet was casual, but most veterans proudly wore their blue berets.

In January 1979 the Dutch government received a request for soldiers to serve in the UNIFIL mission and between 25th February 1979 and 6th November 1985 approximately 9,084 Dutch peacekeepers served in Lebanon in their country's first major peace-keeping mission.

The centrepiece of the event was a memorial service for the nine Dutch peacekeepers who gave their lives in the service of peace in Lebanon. This comprised of a minutes silence followed by the Dutch national anthem and some short speeches. Outside the main marquee there was also plenty of



activities taking place, including rides in APCs, jeeps, etc.

The museum was an ideal setting and is now expected to be the location for most of the Netherlands' national military events in the future.

The rest of the day was spent looking at the exhibits, meeting old friends and making new contacts, and of course finished with a good chat over a few beers.

Overall the Dutch and Irish seem to have a great respect for each other, stemming from our days together in South Lebanon and we have carried on that friendship to this day. The IUA are twinned with the Dutch UNIFIL Veterans and both groups have attended ceremonies in Den Haag, for National Veterans Day, and Wageningen, for Liberation Day, since 2005.

The IUA is a strictly meet-and-greet group which came together to keep alive the memories and friendship formed in Lebanon over the years. We are also twinned with the Norwegian UNIFIL Association and have attended their tattoos in 2008 and 2010, where our group had the honour of being introduced to King Harold V and Queen Sonja at Akershus Castle in Oslo in 2008. On that occasion we were also presented with the 30-year jubilee medal from the mayor of Ebel Es Saqi to commemorate our service with UNIFIL.

We also have contacts with Canadian and French UNIFIL associations, the Royal British Legion and the American Legion. We continue to visit Lebanon, and in 2005 and 2007 helped with donations to the orphanage in Tibine and Shaqra school.

For information on association membership and events, we can be contacted through Facebook - Irish UNIFIL Association Group - or by email: iua46leb@gmail.com. ■

# Dutchbatt, UNIFIL

17

**O**n 18th January 1979, UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim formally requested the Dutch government to provide an armoured infantry battalion to UNIFIL. The Council of Ministers agreed to accede to the request and that the battalion would initially be deployed for one year. The Ministry of Defence assigned the task to Zuidlaren-based 44 Armoured Infantry Battalion (Regiment Johan Willem Friso), which had been available for UN tasks since 1965.

Typical activities for Dutchbatt, and in effect UNIFIL as a whole, if not indeed all traditional UN operations, were to actually prevent the threat and use of force by what sometimes seemed like endless negotiation.

Nevertheless, UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura often made use of the services of the FMR. Dutchbatt made a name for itself as part of the FMR in two separate incidents. During the period between the Israeli invasions of March 1978 and June 1982, the IDF conducted several small-scale military operations in the UNIFIL area. One was on 9th May 1979 in the town of Shaqra in the eastern part of the Irish battalion sector. The Israelis arrived here with a mechanised force of at least battalion strength to track down PLO sympathisers. The FMR, which was conducting its first major assignment at Shaqra, stopped them. Chief Operations Officer J Tjassens, who assumed command at the scene, used a combination of talking and sabre-rattling to force the Israeli antagonists to sound the retreat.

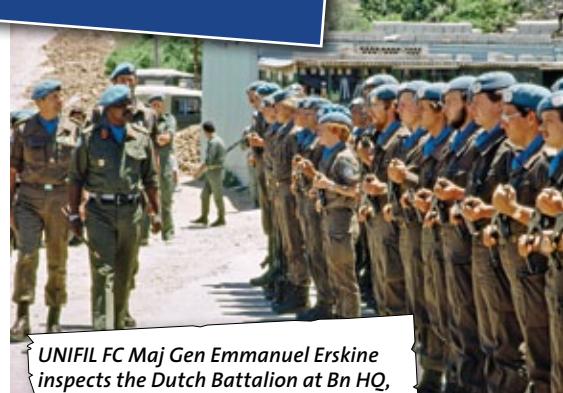
On another occasion, in April 1980, the FMR again showed what it was made of when Major Haddad's DFF (De Facto Forces) tried to set up an observation post in At Tiri, in Irishbatt's area. Irishbatt resisted and surrounded the intruders. Heavy fire by the DFF on the Irish prompted a decision by UNIFIL HQ to send the FMR, under the command of Capt WJTM Jeurissen, to At Tiri. The deployment of the TOW wire-guided anti-tank missile convinced Haddad's men that withdrawal would be the best option. These were, however, incidental successes. It was by no means the case that UNIFIL was at all times able to perform its task properly.

The helplessness of the peacekeepers was particularly distressing after June 1982, following the Israeli invasion into Lebanon. After June 1982, UNIFIL in effect had to operate in Israeli-occupied or Israeli-controlled territory, and the IDF no longer took much notice of the UN presence.

On 20th June 1983, the Council of Ministers decided to terminate the Dutch contribution to UNIFIL with effect from 19th October 1983, because UNIFIL was unable to perform its tasks properly; certainly after the Israeli invasion the previous year. Furthermore, the risk of clashes with Israeli military and Israeli-backed militias was considered too high. Under enormous international pressure from the UN, a number of Arab countries, and the US in particular, the Council of Ministers decided at the last minute to reconsider its decision and instead reduced the Dutch contribution to a reinforced company of 155 personnel, which carried out the same role as the withdrawn battalion.

On 4th October 1985, the Dutch government again decided to withdraw the entire Dutch contribution to UNIFIL, and on 17th October Dutchbatt handed over its responsibilities to Nepbatt and Fijibatt.

In March 1981 Dutchbatt received the Prince Maurits Medal from the Royal Netherlands Association 'Our Army', and was awarded the Bronze Shield by the commander-in-chief of the Royal Netherlands Army in October 1983. Dutchbatt was also recognised for its efforts with the 1985 Carnegie-Waterloo peace prize in January 1986. ■



UNIFIL FC Maj Gen Emmanuel Erskine inspects the Dutch Battalion at Bn HQ, Haris. 1st May 1980.



Dutchbatt on patrol near As Siddiqin.



Dutchbatt personnel in Haris, May 1980.



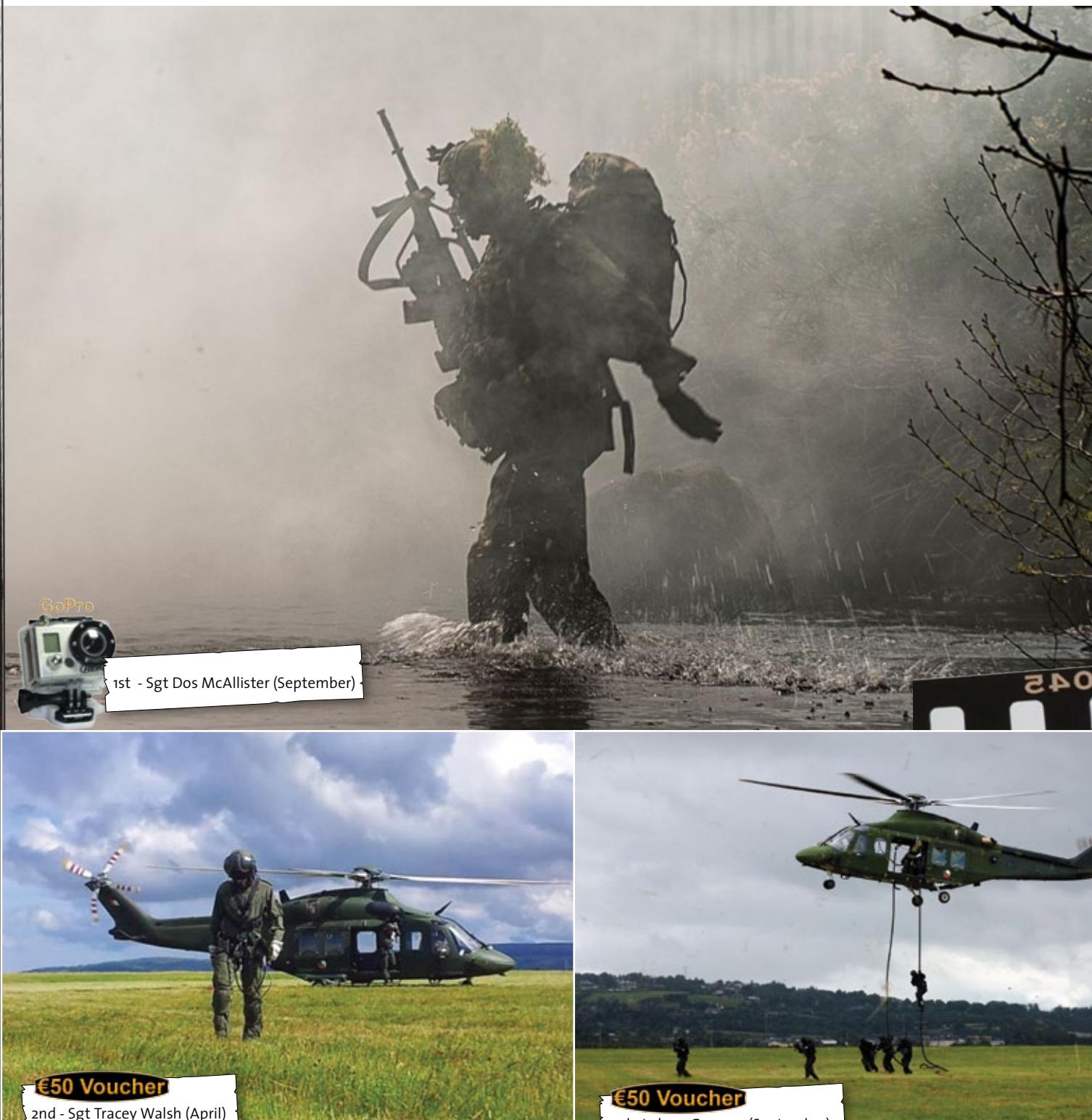
UNIFIL monument in Tyre, Lebanon

**This is an abridged version of an article produced by the Netherlands Ministry of Defence.**

(Photos courtesy of [www.unmultimedia.org](http://www.unmultimedia.org)) To read the full article visit: [www.defensie.nl/english/topics/historical-missions/documents/leaflets/2011/01/20/united-nations-interim-force-in-lebanon-unifil-6](http://www.defensie.nl/english/topics/historical-missions/documents/leaflets/2011/01/20/united-nations-interim-force-in-lebanon-unifil-6)

# AN COSANTÓIR – DEFENCE FORCES Photographic Competition

**A**t the start of the year we announced our Defence Forces Photographic Competition, which was kindly sponsored by Barker Photographic Ltd. The competition was open to all readers of *An Cosantóir*, both civilian and military. All entries had to contain some relevance to Military Life and it was limited to one entry per month per person. The best ten finalists are published here with sponsored prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd overall. Congratulations to the winners, well done to the 10 finalists and thank you to all who took part, the standard of photography was excellent.



Seamus Lawlor (March)



Cpl Colin Delany (August)



Sgt Dos McAllister (June)



Cpl Colin Delany (October)



CQMS Michael Barrett (July)



Sgt Dos McAllister (August)



Lukasz Gancarz (August)



# CARNAGE in the DESERT

BY PAUL O'BRIEN

**A**t 05.50hrs on Wednesday 16th January 2013, workers at the Tigantourine gas plant near the town of In-Amenas in Algeria were awoken to the sound of a fire alarm followed by explosions and automatic gunfire. This was the beginning of four days of terror as al Qaeda-linked insurgents seized control of the complex.

The Tigantourine facility, which is located 40kms southwest of In Amenas, close to the Libyan border, about 1,300kms south-east of the country's capital, Algiers, provides 10% of Algeria's natural gas production. Sonatrach, a government-owned company, operates the gas field, along with Britain's BP and Norwegian firm, Statoil.

Entering Algeria from Libya and northern Mali, around 40 insurgents travelled in Toyota Land Cruisers across the desert. On their way to the gas plant they intercepted two buses transporting employees from the plant to the airport. The insurgents opened fire, killing a number of employees, before continuing on to their target.

As the gunmen crashed through the gates, an unarmed security guard activated the plant alarm, warning that a terrorist attack was in progress, before he was shot and killed. At the time many of the plant's 700 Algerian and more than 130 foreign workers were preparing for the start of their shift, some eating breakfast, others making their way to their workstations.

The insurgents had detailed plans of the 15-hectare site and they immediately split up in an attempt to locate foreign workers, while showing little interest in the domestic workforce.

Many of the foreigners attempted to flee, but were caught or shot dead by the insurgents. Others tried desperately to hide in the vast complex, securing themselves under tables and behind presses in offices, canteens and even in ventilation shafts.

Systematically, the gunmen began to move through the living quarters, searching for foreign workers. Volleys of Kalashnikov fire and explosions echoed through the buildings as the insurgents searched the living quarters, dragging workers from under beds and from behind cupboards, beating those that refused to move and shooting those who attempted to escape.

Those captured were taken to an open area where their hands were secured with cable ties and had Semtex explosives placed around their necks and waists. Some foreigners were helped in their efforts to hide by several of their Algerian colleagues.

By noon the next day, members of the Algerian security





the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) who established his own group after apparently falling out with AQIM's senior command, although still claiming loyalty to the main al-Qaeda organisation. The group's demands include an end to French military operations against Islamists in northern Mali and the release of prisoners held in American and Algerian prisons.

Algeria's minister of the interior, Dahou Ould Kablia, stated that the government would not respond to the demands of terrorists and would not negotiate with the hostage takers.

Intelligence gathered indicated that there were two types of hostage, those that were in the assailants' hands and those that had managed to evade capture but were still trapped in the compound. This information was gleaned through a number of phone calls and text messages sent to their families by those in hiding. Realising that the insurgents were monitoring the media the authorities reported as little as possible on the situation.

At 14.00hrs the Algerian Special Intervention Group launched an assault on the plant. Helicopter gunships strafed a convoy of militant vehicles as they transported hostages within the compound and four of their five vehicles were destroyed. The insurgents then used the hostages as human shields as they attempted to move closer to the main processing plant.

As the attack was taking place, a number of those in hiding decided to try and make a break for it. They located wire-cutters and made their way to the perimeter fence where they cut through the wire and fled into the desert. They were found hours later by Algerian forces, wandering through the desert.

In the early hours of Friday morning, Algerian forces advanced into the compound and surrounded the core facil-

ity where the insurgents were still holding at least seven hostages. On Saturday morning the area was stormed and the sound of gunfire again echoed throughout the facility. In the final assault, 11 militants and seven hostages were killed before the four-day ordeal ended.

An Algerian government spokesperson stated that 11 hostages were killed after the army launched its offensive and that seven people had been executed. Of the attackers, 29 had been killed and three captured. In total, 38 civilians and 29 militants had been killed during the course of the four-day siege and 700 Algerians and 100 foreign workers had been rescued.

An investigation into the attack on the plant has raised a number of questions. Though there was a gendarmerie nearby, the plant's guards were unarmed. Foreign workers had raised this with their employers before the attack but no action had been taken.

The nationalities of the terrorists also raised concern for governments around the world. The Algerian prime minister stated that of the 32 insurgents, one-third were Algerian, while the rest were made up of nationalities that included Tunisians, Canadians, Egyptians, Malians, Nigerians and Mauritians. The escalating number of foreign fighters joining the ranks of insurgent groups is increasing the possibility of terrorist attacks in countries throughout the world. Intelligence agencies are monitoring the situation and attempting to keep track of radicals in order to and prevent them from planning and executing attacks on so-called 'soft targets'.

While the Algerian army are known for their 'zero tolerance' against insurgents, perhaps the biggest question is why did the Algerian army launch an assault instead of negotiating the safe release of the hostages? A number of countries objected to Algeria's heavy-handed approach to the crisis, believing that many more of the hostages could have been saved through negotiation. Japan, the country that suffered the highest number of casualties, criticized Algeria for 'failing to put human lives first and refrain from any assault on the plant'.

As the world attempts to pick through the pieces of this tragic episode, the families and friends of those that died are trying to understand how and why their loved ones, who were simply going to work, perished in such a cataclysmic incident. ■



# 2 Bde Military Skills Competition

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

PHOTOS SGT KARL BYRNE, CPL COLIN DELANY AND SGNM RYAN CONWAY FOR FINALIST GROUP SHOTS

**T**he 2 Brigade Military Skill's Competition took place in Kilbride Military Training Camp, Co Wicklow, on November 4th 2014. The aim of the competition, which was conducted by 2 BTC, is to evaluate and assess the level of competency of the individual soldier and section in the execution of basic military skills, and to provide a focus for training at individual-, section- and unit-level. Skills tested include physical fitness, weapons handling and shooting, military intelligence, battle drills, tactical awareness, admin in the field, comms and leadership, as well as medical skills.

This year's competition was contested by 2 Bde Engr, 2 Cav Sqn, 2 CIS Coy, 2 Fd Arty Regt, 6 Inf Bn, 7 Inf Bn, 27 Inf Bn and 28 Inf Bn, with the three top-placed teams going forward to the DF Military Skills Competition to compete against the three top teams from 1 Bde and the top two from the DFTC in Kilworth, Co Cork, on 11th and 12th November.

Comdt McGrath (OC 2 BTC), Capt Andrew Shinnick, Coy Sgt Matt Masterson and the BTC staff were assisted in running the competition by 16 directing staff (DS) and eight umpires drawn from other 2 Bde units. Each team comprised an infantry section (as per TM201) of two corporals and eight privates, and could include RDF personnel.

After a briefing from Capt Shinnick and Coy Sgt Masterson, the competition started with a comms set-up stand, where the teams had to assemble a SINCGARs radio, input specified frequencies, complete an ERF and an MROAL, and communicate with competition control. The next stage was a military general knowledge test of 20 questions on subjects such as weapons, fieldcraft, tactics and tactical aide



memoires (TAMs), before setting off on a 5km run to camp.

At the next stand teams had to complete a range shoot on silhouette targets, and then conduct a 500m stretcher run carrying a team member. This was followed by a medical drills test on two 'casualties' and a C-IED safe drills test.

The teams then moved across open ground to No 3 Range, where they had to identify ten military objects concealed over an area extending approximately 50m, memorise them, and pass them on at the next stand.

Next, teams had to conduct target grid procedure (TGP) on four targets with the M203 grenade and engage two targets with one round.

The final stage involved map reading and navigation skills. Each team had to complete a resection to produce an eight-figure grid reference, compile a range-card with four targets, and a route-card containing four navigation legs, which they used to get back to camp.





Winners 2 Bde Engrs

Overall, the teams covered 10km in total with the EMIT electronic orienteering tagging system used to time the teams between stands, and a points system used at the individual stands. The time stopped only when the full team crossed the finish line.

It was a tough course with typical Kilbride weather of mist and light rain that failed to stop proceedings or dampen anyone's spirit. Hot soup, rolls and warm showers awaited all competitors thanks to CQMS Paddy Daly and 2 Cav Sqn logistics team.

At the prize-giving ceremony Capt Shinnick said, "A lot of work and planning goes into running these events. This was our first year doing so and Comdt McGrath and I want to thank the BTC staff, the umpires, DSSs, and camp staff that helped to make this such a successful event."

The winners were 6 Inf Bn, followed in 2nd place by 27 Inf Bn, and 2 Bde Engrs in 3rd. They went on to take on the other finalists in the DF Military Skills final with 2 Bde Engrs taking the top spot followed by the 6 Inf Bn in 2nd place. ■



Runners-up 6 Inf Bn

## Vox Pops



### CPL MICHAEL MC-DONAGH, I/C 2 ARTY REGT TEAM.

*"It was tough, especially on the hills, where we used scout's pace on the inclines."*

*Everything went as we had hoped for."*



### CPL THOMAS BRANIGAN, I/C 7 INF BN TEAM.

*"Tough going, but it was worth it. Team-work was good – great cohesion. All the stands were run really well."*



**CPL PHILIP SCOLARD, I/C 2 CAV SQN TEAM.**  
*"It was a good challenging course, with the lads putting in a good effort. You need time to train and plan. We had no snags; all went as planned – except for the weather!"*



# Exercise Joint Action

## Nordic Battlegroup 15 (NBG 15)

BY CAPT DÓNAL GALLAGHER, DF PRESS OFFICE  
PHOTOS: CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN

In 1996, the then Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that, "Irish foreign policy is more about self definition- simply put, for many of us, it is a statement of the kind of people we are." Ireland has long seen its place as part of established international institutions, working towards the collective help of, and consensus of many, rather than operating purely to meet one's own interests.

Earlier this month, 180 personnel from the Irish Defence Forces took part in 'Exercise Joint Action' as part of the EU Battlegroup 2015. This exercise is the final training assessment that will qualify military personnel before they go on a 6 month standby period for deployment, commencing January 2015, where subject to a political consensus amongst all 28 EU member states, they can be tasked to any conflict region within a 6,000 mile radius of Brussels alongside troops from Sweden, Finland, Norway, Estonia and Lithuania.

Tasks allotted to the Battlegroup, the 'Petersberg Tasks' are an integral part of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). They were explicitly included in the Treaty on European Union (Article 17) and complimented by The Treaty of Lisbon (Article 42 of the Treaty on the European Union) and cover five key headings: Humanitarian and Rescue Tasks, Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping Tasks, Tasks of Combat Forces in Crisis Management, including peacemaking, Joint Disarmament Operations, Military Advice and Assistance Tasks and Post-Conflict Stabilisation tasks.

During Exercise Joint Action, the Nordic Battlegroup is deployed to a fictional country and in co-operation with civil and non-governmental organisations is tasked with containing and providing assistance to a severe humanitarian situation.

The Irish Defence Forces form the ISTAR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance) Task Force element of the Battlegroup. This is arguably the most important asset in the Battlegroup. It entails the use of intelligence gathering sensor elements, including reconnaissance and

sniper detachments, feeding information into higher echelon intelligence processing and analysis cells.

Addressing international media at the exercise area in Hagshult Airbase, Sweden,

Deputy Commander of the Nordic Battlegroup Colonel Howard Berney stated:

*"The Nordic Battlegroup is capable of being on site in a crisis area within 10 days of an EU decision. Over the duration of Exercise Joint Action, the Nordic Battlegroup and all of its constituent parts have proven themselves more than capable of fulfilling this. If the EU decides to use the Nordic Battlegroup, then it could well be as support in a humanitarian mission, but if required, we also possess decisive military capabilities. We have trained and are prepared for both sides of that operational spectrum." ■*



CQMS Brendan Fahy on tactical manoeuvres in Hagshult, Sweden.



ISTAR Task Force Comdr Lt Col Paul Carey and Capt Robert Moriarty disembarking from a Black Hawk helicopter.



Col Howard Berney briefs members of the International media at Hagshult Airbase, Sweden.

# The Congo Remembered

BY COMDT CONOR O'SHEA, SO JOC/OFFICE OF THE SRSG, MONUSCO HQ

**T**he Irish Army's deployment to the Congo from 1960 to 1964 remains probably the organisation's most iconic to date, when viewed within the Defence Forces and also by the general public. The word 'Boluba' is commonly used in our day-to-day language and locations such as Niemba and Jadotville are as recognised in Ireland as they are in current day Congo, where these former colonial names have long since been replaced by Swahili ones.

In a time when foreign travel was rare in Ireland, more than 6,000 Irish troops completed tours of duty, 26 of whom died serving in this vast jungle country in the centre of Africa.

Since the withdrawal in 1964 there has been little, if any, connection with this former area of deployment. Currently, however, the Defence Forces contributes four officers to MONUSCO, the UN's peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They are Comdt Conor O'Shea, Capt David Foley, Capt Damian Cawley and Capt Derek McGourty, and are pictured below.

Following the reconfiguration of the force headquarters from Kinshasa in the west of the country 2,000km east to Goma, and some good fortune, these four officers were afforded the opportunity to visit Katanga province, the location for the deployment of the Irish soldiers in the 1960s.

As the 54th anniversary of the Niemba ambush approached we visited the site of three of the most formative episodes in the history of the Irish Defence Forces.



## The Niemba Ambush – 8th November 1960

A three-hour drive west from Kalemie (formerly known as Albertville) on what is little more than a dirt track, lies the village of Niemba. After crossing the Lukuga River on a rickety ferry boat a few meters downstream from the remains of the former road bridge that would have carried Irish troops during their deployment, our apprehension, as well as muted excitement, began to rise. Driving up the main (and only) street of Niemba it became clear that this village was once relatively prosperous and developed. Houses dating back to colonial times were still standing, many inhabited. However, over 50 years of deterioration and no refurbishment has taken its toll. It was in some of these very buildings that Lt Kevin Gleeson from Gorsebridge in Kilkenny housed his platoon in November 1960.

Tom McCaughren's book *The Peacemakers of Niemba* sets the scene of a platoon of soldiers obviously aware of the dangers that existed around them, having already experienced some tense encounters with the local tribe, the Balubakat, referred to by the Irish as 'Balubas' or 'the Cats'. Detailed by Battalion HQ to continue south on the Manono road in an attempt to push past a bridge sabotaged by the Balubas, Lt Gleeson set out with 10 members of his platoon on the morning of 8th November.

On the same road, 54 years later, as we slowly made our way south from Niemba to the ambush site, passing mud hut villages that have remained unchanged since that day, I got a distinct feeling of vulnerability and isolation, something which Gleeson must have felt on that fateful morning. Lightly armed, driving two soft-skin vehicles, and without communications, Gleeson's patrol were two hours from the remainder of his platoon in Niemba and a further three-and-a-half hours' drive from Coy HQ in Albertville.

The site of the ambush is marked by a weathered stone cross, where we laid a wreath and remembered our fallen comrades. The simple task of fashioning the wreath from the local vegetation under the midday sun proved to be energy sapping and reminded us of the difficulties Gleeson and his men faced operating in such a harsh environment. With the help of the transcript of the two surviving members of the patrol from McCaughren's book, we were able to retrace the steps of the Irish soldiers that afternoon. The entire incident occurred within a few hundred metres radius and as we eventually stood on the spot where five of the nine soldiers died overlooking the bridge, I could not help but think that this was a watershed moment in the history of our organisation.

Many lessons have been learned and sacrifices made by our members in the intervening years.



After the five day battle of Jadotville, Congo 1961  
L to R: Kelly, Jeffreys, Neale, Pendleton, Dennehy, Williams, Curtis, Hyne & Crowley  
Photo: Supplied by John Crowley



## The Siege of Jadotville – September 1961

Our drive from Lubumbashi to Likasi (formerly Elisabethville and Jadotville respectively) was a different experience. A tarred road ferrying fleets of heavy trucks laden with cargo from this mining rich area connected the two towns. There was a distinct lack of UN or NGO vehicles to be seen, indicating the relative wealth that exists in this southern part of Katanga compared to the rest of the country.

After an hour's drive, we came to the bridge over the River Lufira, the bottleneck that ultimately prevented the reinforcement of the Irish soldiers under attack in Jadotville. A Chinese engineering company is now in the process of building a large modern bridge a few hundred metres downstream from the remains of what must have been the Lufira Bridge in 1961. Even by today's standards the Lufira would constitute a significant obstacle to troops with modern equipment, so it is not difficult to imagine how the challenge of securing this strongly defended bridge, under fire from a well-armed enemy, impeded both attempts made to reinforce the Irish soldiers. A fact that is often overlooked when remembering this episode is that four Indian soldiers were to lose their lives in the reinforcement operation, while six Irish soldiers received injuries.

Fifteen minutes later and 20km further, we entered the town of Likasi. While not modern by western standards, the town displays obvious signs of prosperity. Encountering the ambush site in Niemba on the previous day had evoked sombre emotions, however locating the building used for Comdt Pat Quinlan's headquarters during the siege, proved to be an exciting experience. Detailed sketch maps drawn by the Irish soldiers and portrayed in

Declan Power's excellent book, *The Siege of Jadotville*, allowed us to plot A Coy's defensive positions. Walking the ground, we were able to appreciate some sense of how Quinlan and his men must have felt during that week-long battle. Power highlights the fact that the unsuitable deployment location, which was imposed on A Company by the UN, contributed to the near impossible task of repelling a sustained

attack by a force of 4,000 troops backed up by Belgian mercenaries and a Fouga jet.

Moving to the high ground overlooking the company's position that was used by the Katangan forces to stage their attack, we could only admire the bravery displayed by the Irish soldiers in holding their position for as long as they ultimately did.

Leaving Likasi that afternoon the extraordinary courage displayed by the Irish troops, combined with the application of tactical awareness which produced a heroic stand, we felt proud of the actions of our soldiers and the progress made by the army during their relatively short period of overseas service.

## The Battle of the Tunnel – December 1961

The journey back to the centre of Lubumbashi City (Elisabethville) saw us reach the location of the Battle of the Tunnel. On this occasion Lt Col Dan Harvey's book, *A Company Action: the Battle of the Tunnel*, provided us with the detail to enable us retrace this famous incident.

The Battle of the Tunnel constituted, in effect, a multi-national brigade-in-attack operation. Access to Elisabethville had been hampered by Katangan forces and their shelling of UN positions had already resulted in the death of one Irish soldier, Cpl Fallon, on the second day of his deployment to the Congo.



remains on the railway bridge from one of the 84mm rounds acts as a reminder of the reality and scale of this operation.

Similar to our thoughts after leaving Jadotville, our abiding memory of 'the Tunnel' will be the professionalism and bravery of the Irish, Swedish, Ethiopian and Indian troops who fought on that day. Fourteen members of A Coy, 36th Irish Bn, were to be awarded the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) following this battle, the most ever awarded to a single Irish unit. Perhaps more Irish soldiers who fought so bravely in the Congo deserved the same honour.

An evident theme throughout our visit to the former battle sites in chronological order was the development in experience and tactical knowledge made by the Irish troops who served in the Congo during the 1960s.

In recounting our experience in Katanga I am not attempting to retell the stories, as the aforementioned authors have done a far better job than I ever could. It was more of an attempt to put myself back more than 50 years to try and get a feeling for what those Irish soldiers must have experienced at that time. The ultimate sentiment that we four Irish officers who underwent this journey will take away from the experience is that of immense pride in the bravery and professionalism of our former comrades who served and died with the United Nations in the Congo in the cause of peace. ■

Six days later saw the launch of Operation 'UNOKAT', designed to clear the Katangan forces that were dominating access to the city. The operation utilised the Irish 36 Inf Bn as the main effort, with one company of Swedish troops to seize and hold two objectives. Two battalions of Ethiopians and a battalion of Indians provided an investment force of troops around Elisabethville.

As I walked the railway line that A Coy used as their axis of advance, I could not help but think of the military decision-making process currently taught not only in our military college, but to militaries throughout the world. This was a deliberate, offensive brigade operation conducted by Irish soldiers in 1961, as part of a UN mission. (As atrocities currently continue to be committed on a weekly basis in eastern Congo, one wonders could the UN learn some lessons from the past regarding its willingness to take decisive action in the cause of peace.)

The reality of the operation soon hit home as we encountered the spot where Lt Riordan and Pte Wickham were shot and killed by enemy fire. Sgt Mulcahy was also shot during the battle and died from his wounds later that day. First-hand accounts from surviving members of the operation recount how deployment of the, then new, 84mm anti-tank weapon proved decisive in winning the momentum of the battle and taking the objective. Impact damage that still





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THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE  
**AN COSANTÓIR**

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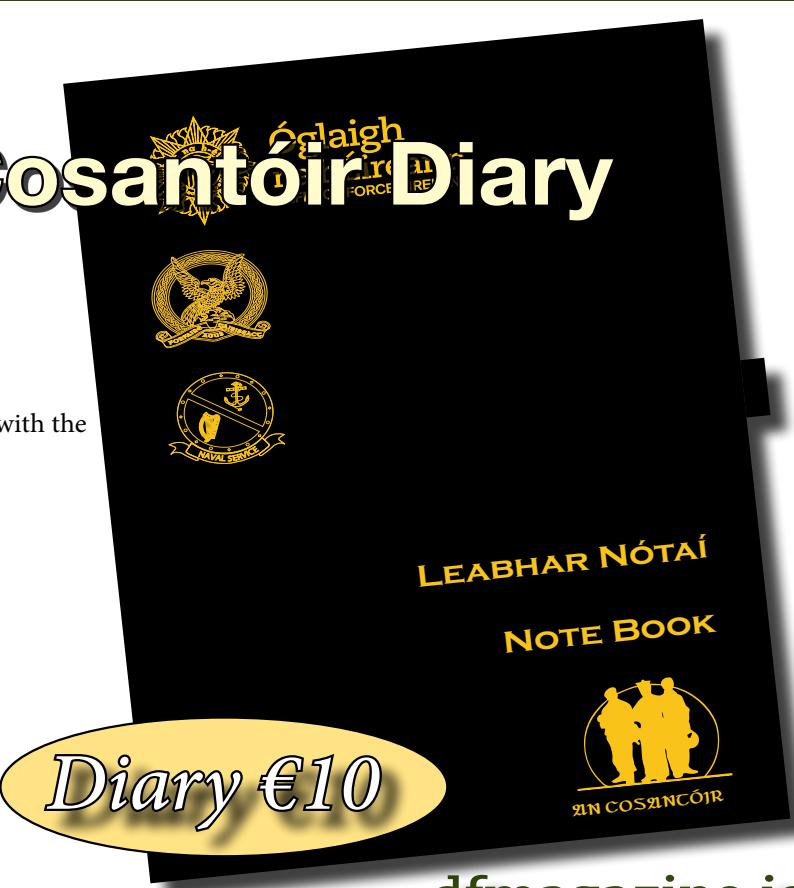
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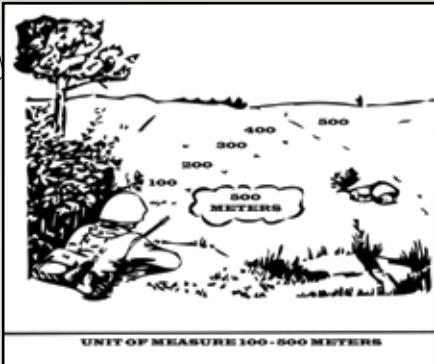


# FIELDCRAFT – PART 4

## Judging Distance

It is important to be able to judge distances accurately, so that fire may be fully effective, and so that observer's reports are accurate in this respect. There are two methods of judging distance, the 'Unit-of-Measure' method and the 'Appearance' method.

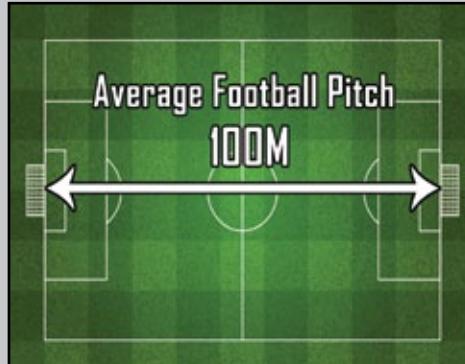
Accurate judgment of distance is a skill which every soldier must develop, when used with certain aids, can produce accurate ranges. It is important, therefore, that every soldier is skilled in the use of the methods of judging distance and familiar with the aids that can improve his/her accuracy.



### JUDGING DISTANCE BY USING THE UNIT-OF-MEASURE

Provided that all the ground between the soldier and the object is visible, use can be made of any unit of measure familiar to the soldier. This may be the length of a football pitch, etc, but must be a unit with which the soldier is very familiar. If no particular unit is familiar to the soldier, he should become trained to recognise a unit of 100 metres.

Estimate how many units of the familiar length can be fitted in between the position and the object to which the distance is required. A simple multiplication should give a figure which can be used as an estimate of the distance. This method is not reliable at distances in excess of 400 metres. You may be consistently over, or under your estimate and you must take this into consideration when fitting in the 100 metre units.



### JUDGING DISTANCE BY APPEARANCE METHOD

The Appearance method of judging distance is based on what an object looks like in relation to its surroundings.

A soldier must know what various objects, e.g. trees, gates, houses, soldiers, etc look like at various ranges.

The amount of visible detail of a soldier at various ranges gives a good indication of the distance he is away, i.e.

- (1) At 100 metres - clear in all detail.
- (2) At 200 metres - clear in all detail, colour of skin and equipment identifiable.
- (3) At 300 metres - clear body outline, face colour good, remaining detail blurred.
- (4) At 400 metres - body outline clear, remaining detail blurred.
- (5) At 500 metres - body begins to taper, head becomes indistinct.
- (6) At 600 metres - body now wedge-shaped, no head apparent.



### CONDITIONS AFFECTING APPEARANCE

*Objects seem closer than they are when:*

- (1) The light is bright or the sun is shining from behind the observer.
- (2) They are bigger than the objects around them.
- (3) There is dead ground between them and the observer
- (4) They are higher up than the observer.

*Objects seem further away than they are when:*

- (1) The light is dull or the sun is shining from behind cover.
- (2) They are smaller than the objects around them.
- (3) The observer is looking across a valley or down a street.
- (4) The observer is lying down.

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# The Christmas Truce

BY JAMES SCANNELL

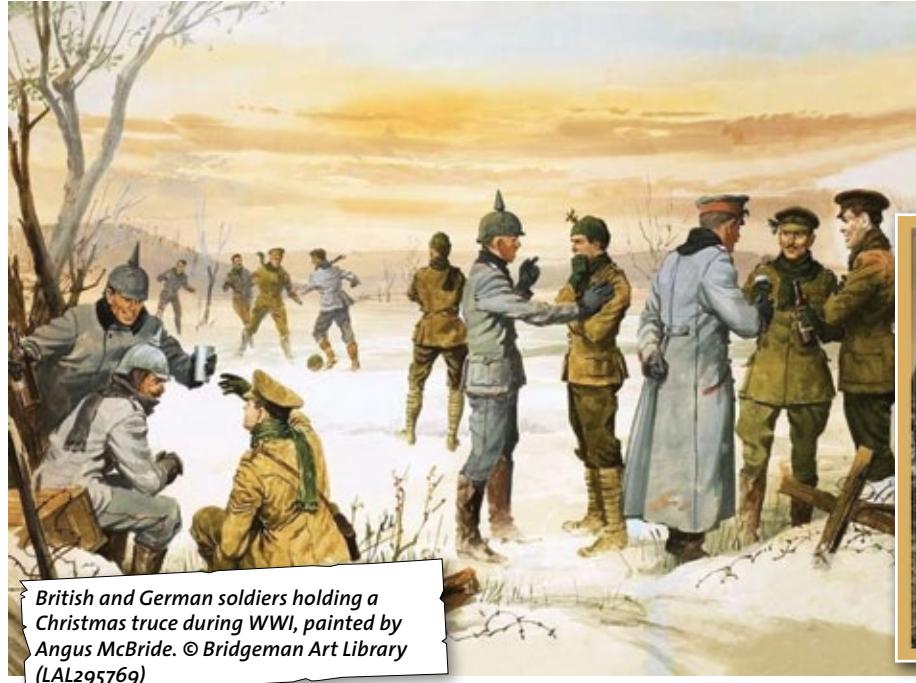
In August 1914, British, French, and German soldiers marched off to war on the general understanding and public perception that it would be over by Christmas, but things did not work as planned. The German plan to defeat France was based on a rapid advance through Belgium, the Schlieffen Plan, but when they invaded Belgium, Britain, as a guarantor of Belgium's neutrality, declared war on Germany and immediately dispatched the small but highly trained British Expeditionary Force across the Channel. In addition, the Belgians put up a far more spirited defence than the Germans anticipated. They also destroyed their own road and railway infrastructure as they retreated, further impeding the German advance.

The German advance was halted 30 miles from Paris by the week-long Battle of the Marne from 5th September to 12th September 1914, after which the Germans withdrew to the River Aisne and dug in, determined to retreat no further. The British and French also dug in and soon both sides had a network of trenches facing each other, running from the Swiss border to the Belgian coast.

The distance between opposing trenches varied from 100 yards to 600-plus yards, with the area in between being 'No-Man's Land', across which both sides sent out nocturnal patrols to collect intelligence on the enemy trench system and defences, especially the locations of machine guns, and to inflict casualties on the enemy.

By December 1914 military operations had effectively come to a halt at many locations along the 250-mile long front, with a 'live-and-let-live' practice being observed by many units under which neither side engaged in hostile operations against the other.

Some days prior to Christmas, General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, concerned about stories he had received about British and German troops fraternising with each other, issued an instruction warning that unofficial local armi-



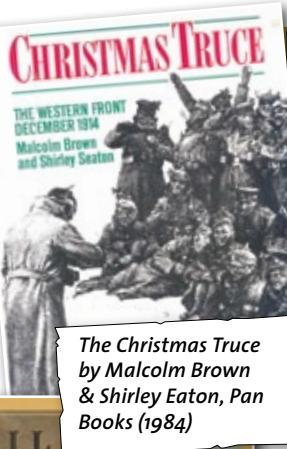
British and German soldiers holding a Christmas truce during WWI, painted by Angus McBride. © Bridgeman Art Library (LAL295769)

stices destroyed the offensive spirit in all ranks. Friendly intercourse with the enemy, the exchange of tobacco and other comforts, and 'we-won't-fire-if-you-won't-fire' practices, were absolutely prohibited, and the war was to be prosecuted with full vigour. While the general was right in assuming that there would be a reduction in hostilities, he hardly imagined what was to happen on Christmas Day, when hostilities halted for 24-hours.

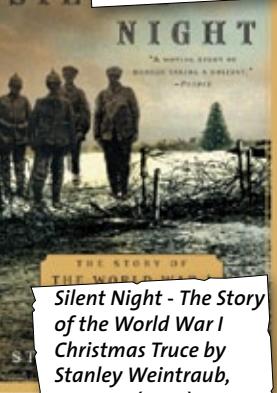
On Christmas Eve 1914, the weather across the Western Front turned very cold but dry with a hard frost falling across the trenches. During the afternoon and into the evening at various places along the trench systems, British troops were amazed to see Christmas trees with candles and paper lanterns appear on top of the German trenches and when darkness fell they could hear German troops singing carols, hymns, and popular songs of the day. In some places the British and German troops engaged in a sing-song, followed inevitably by the call not to engage in hostilities against each other that evening or on Christmas Day.

This unplanned and spontaneous unofficial truce continued into Christmas Day with troops on both sides at different locations emerging from their respective trenches and meeting each other in no-man's land. Officers rendered due military compliments to each other and in some cases exchanged minor gifts with each other, but in many places the priority was to bury the dead who had lain unburied in no-man's land and in front of the trench systems. Work parties from both sides engaged in this process, sometimes jointly.

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*The Christmas Truce*  
by Malcolm Brown  
& Shirley Eaton, Pan  
Books (1984)



*Silent Night - The Story  
of the World War I  
Christmas Truce*  
by Stanley Weintraub,  
Penguin (2002)



Many of those not engaged in burial duties fraternised with each other, exchanging family photographs and cigarettes and in some places playing football. Troops also exchanged uniform badges and buttons and other personal details with each other.

Although as the day passed senior officers on both sides indicated their disapproval of this fraternisation, at nightfall both sides returned to their respective trenches on the understanding that the day would be allowed to finish in tranquillity.

Most of the day's activity was kept to the middle of no-man's land but some soldiers who crossed over into enemy lines were taken prisoner so that they could not bring back information on what they had seen. At the same time, some officers used the occasion to engage in intelligence gathering and the Public Records Office in London holds a number of reports by British officers describing German positions, their weapons, units in the line, and their composition. One British officer donned a German uniform, entered the German trenches undetected and managed to locate a machine-gun post that was regularly causing casualties to his unit, before making safety back to his own lines. There can be little doubt that German officers also used the occasion to engage in intelligence gathering on the British.

It was a remarkable occurrence and years later British troops who took part in these events recalled how they discovered how much they had in common with their German opposition. One British soldier who had been in the Frelkingen-Houplines sector said he "found it rather strange to go out and shake the hand of your enemy and wish him a Merry Christmas". A German soldier, who served near Armentières recalled troops from both sides emerging from their trenches on Christmas Day, gathering around a Christmas tree the Germans had erected on a parapet and singing Christmas carols.

The truce was by no means universal along the front. In sectors manned by French troops there was no let up in hostilities and in an area near Kemmel manned by British troops, while there was no shelling there was some

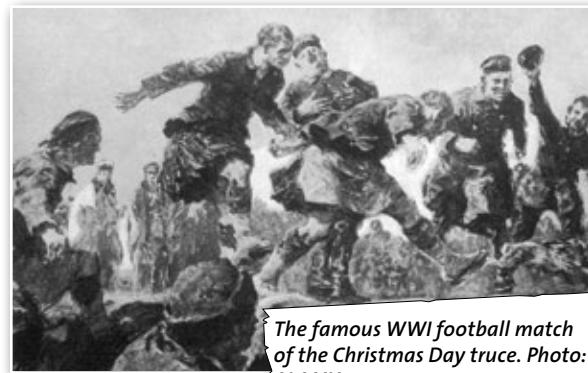
sniping, with the unit commander reporting that they had managed to kill six German snipers.

Further afield the Royal Naval Air Service mounted a Christmas Day air raid on the German Zeppelin airship sheds at Cuxhaven using seaplanes that were placed into the sea at a point north-east of Heligoland from specially constructed seaplane tenders. The intention was for the aircraft to attack their target, undertake a reconnaissance patrol, and return to the tenders for pick-up. However, two of the aircraft suffered engine problems and could not take off, while fog prevented the remaining seven from seeing their target. One pilot claimed that he had successfully attacked the target, although subsequent investigation revealed that he had in fact bombed a fish-processing factory. The crews of the seven aircraft that had embarked on the mission all made it back safely, and three of the aircraft were successfully recovered.

On land, other than in the French sectors, Christmas Night passed off peacefully with no hostilities taking place, but the following day, St Stephen's Day, the end of the truce and the resumption of hostilities was marked at first light by the firing of signal flares and rifle shots on both sides. However, in some sectors the unofficial truce continued into the early days of the new year.

Despite the truce, according to statistics published by His Majesty's Stationery Office in 1921, 41 British soldiers were killed in action on the front on Christmas Day 1914. When those who died of wounds, illness, and other causes are added in the figure rises to 69. Only nine days that month recorded worse casualties.

When the story of the Christmas Day truce subsequently broke in the British papers, it caught the public imagination and shook up the military establishment to the extent that it took steps to ensure that a similar Christmas suspension of hostilities was never to reoccur during the war. ■



*The famous WWI football match  
of the Christmas Day truce. Photo:  
ALAMY*

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# BALLYMULLEN

## Tralee's Bulwark

BY ROBERT TANGNEY



**selves were descended from the Earl of Desmond. The initial demise of the castle at Ballymullen was linked to the crushing of the Desmond Rebellion during the 1580s.**

Ballymullen, however, would revive itself as a military centre-point in the early 19th century when the Viceroy to Ireland announced the townland as the location for the British army's primary garrison in County Kerry. The public tender for the building of the barracks in Ballymullen was issued on the

28th of June, 1810, and work commenced on the 11th of August at the 15½-acre site.

One of the earliest regiments to occupy Ballymullen Barracks was the Dorset Militia Regiment which travelled from Limerick to Tralee in September 1813. With the con-

struction of the barracks completed by 1815, the future security of Tralee from a military point of view was very healthy, even with sporadic events of unrest. Yet by 1840, with 37 permanent barracks established throughout Ireland and a much-changed security situation, the future of Ballymullen looked grim. The 59th Depot stationed at Tralee had received orders to march and the barracks was to be shut up, with the local police force being considered "adequate to the maintenance of the tranquillity of the country".

However, the 1840s would usher in a turbulent era in Ireland, in no small part due to a Kerryman by the name of Daniel O'Connell. The unrest associated with this era ensured that barracks such as

**T**he townland of Ballymullen was once a location of great importance to the defence of Tralee: so great that a castle was built there in the 14th century. The castle was constructed by a branch of the Geraldines (Fitzgeralds) called the MacRoberts, who them-

Ballymullen would be fully populated with British troops.

Throughout 1843, troop numbers were increased significantly across Ireland, including in Kerry, reversing the trend of previous years. When O'Connell visited Tralee in November 1844, in excess of 50,000 people gathered to greet him, with the welcoming procession travelling from the centre of town along Ballymullen, passing the military barracks, and stopping on the Milltown road to await 'the Liberator'. The procession returned to the town passing Castlemorris House, owned by Daniel O'Connell's brother, James, and again passing Ballymullen Barracks, where the gates were closed and the loopholes had been filled with straw by the soldiers. The day passed off peacefully with the troops confining them to the barracks.

The famine that swept across Ireland between 1845 and 1852 led to mass starvation, disease and emigration, yet tons of much-needed, locally-produced grain was exported while locals perished from hunger. The military in Tralee were ordered to protect institutions such as workhouses and the transportation of Indian meal during this period.

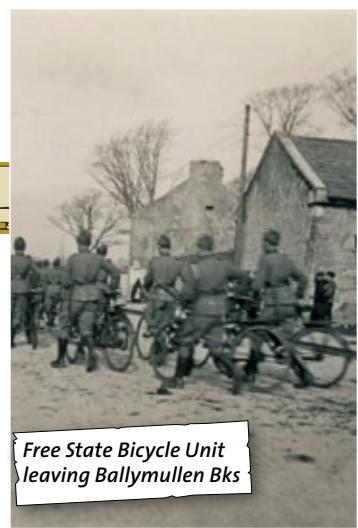
Conditions in Ballymullen Barracks were also very unsafe. Not long after the 88th Connaught Rangers arrived in Tralee in October, 1847, it was reported that the mortality rate there was high and that the barracks was in a very unhealthy state.

In August 1848, the British army purchased an acre of ground for the interment of deceased soldiers in Killierisk, approximately ¼ of a mile from Ballymullen Barracks.

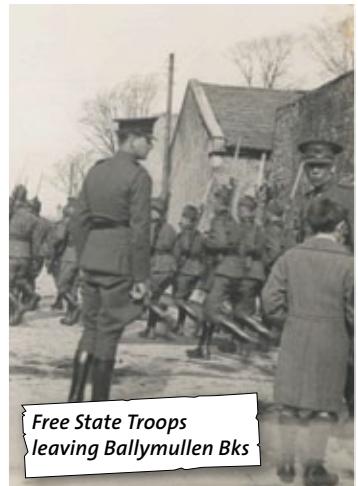
No sooner had the famine receded when the British army stationed in Ireland was confronted with grave tests in the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny, both of which occurred between 1853 and 1857.

The barracks was left with no permanent troops from May 1859 until January 1866 when 288 troops of the 37th North Hampshire Regiment of Foot arrived into Tralee by train and marched to Ballymullen Barracks.

By 1868, increasing troop numbers in the town required the development of Staff Barracks at Dean's Lane, Tralee, where extra soldiers could live with their families. Initially the barracks catered for forty families.



Free State Bicycle Unit leaving Ballymullen Bks



Free State Troops leaving Ballymullen Bks



Free State Mounted Troops leaving Ballymullen Bks

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# STORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY



*Free State Troops outside Castlemorris*

British government realised that its army was ill-prepared for an expansive conflict. This was rectified by the reorganisation of the British regimental system through the Localisation Scheme. This scheme divided Ireland into brigade districts (later to be renamed regimental districts). All infantry regiments were to consist of two battalions with a common depot and recruiting area. The militia of the area would become a third battalion.

On the 1st of April 1873, the 101st and 104th Foot were the line battalions of the 70th Sub-District, with the Brigade Depot at Tralee, and were augmented by the militia of Cork, Clare and Kerry were affiliated.

In July 1881, the two Bengal regiments (101st Regiment of Foot Royal Bengal Fusiliers and the 104th Regiment of Foot Bengal Fusiliers) became the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Royal Munster Fusiliers. Further Royal Munster Fusilier battalions were raised during World War I in order to cater for the increased number of recruits. The extra battalions were numbered from 6 to 10 with a further two garrison battalions created towards the end of the war. The Munster Fusiliers were disbanded on the 12th June, 1922.

During the War of Independence Ballymullen was a stronghold of the British army in Tralee and was occupied by the East Lancashire Regiment during this volatile time. By the time the truce was announced on 11th July 1921, 136 people had been killed in County Kerry. A gunshot fired at 11 o'clock in the morning at Ballymullen Barracks signalled the start of the truce.

The historical moment of British troops leaving Ballymullen Barracks for the last time occurred on Wednesday 22nd February, 1922. Ballymullen was then occupied by Irish soldiers of the 1st Tralee Battalion.

During the eleven months of the Civil War, Ballymullen Barracks was at the centre of some of the worst atrocities of the conflict. The National Army moved swiftly to gain control of the town with a force of over 400 Dublin Guards landing at Fenit Harbour on 2nd August, 1922. During the battle for Tralee, sections of the barracks were set alight to deprive the Free State troops of the town's army base.

Seven Republican prisoners were executed by firing squad at Ballymullen Barracks throughout the Civil War, and the most notorious episode in the barracks' history took place in March 1923 when nine Republican prisoners were taken to Ballyseedy Cross from the

In the wake of the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny the

barracks jail, tied together and blown to pieces by an exploding mine, with only one of the nine surviving. (A monument by French sculptor Yann Renard Goulet was unveiled at Ballyseedy Cross on 30th August 1959 to commemorate the prisoners.)

The Irish Defence Forces and Ballymullen Bks entered a new era with the outbreak of World War II and the creation of the Local Security Force (LSF) on 28th May 1940. At the end of that year this force was split in two, with one group retaining the LSF designation, while the second group was placed under the control of the army and given the title of the Local Defence Force (LDF).

The LDF was equipped mainly with the Springfield 0.300" rifle but as this weapon and its ammunition was in short supply, the 0.22" Miniature rifle supplemented any shortfalls.

The end of the Emergency in 1945 saw rapid demobilisation and the creation of the An Fórsa Cosanta (FCÁ). By October 1959 when 15 Inf Bn FCÁ was established with its HQ in Ballymullen Bks, members of the unit were being trained on the Vickers machine-gun as this weapon was become standard issue for FCÁ units.

A number of adjustments to the barracks were made in 1962 with the demolition of the derelict wing at the town side of the clock archway. The building known as the Colonel's House, which was damaged on the day Free State troops captured the barracks, was also demolished and the main entrance to the barracks was widened.

Major manoeuvres were witnessed at Ballymullen Barracks throughout its history and development of the barracks continued with the opening of the FCÁ Training Complex in December 1983. Uncertainty was rife over the future of Ballymullen Barracks by 1991 even though Minister for Defence Brendan Daly was quoted as saying that any rationalisation plan would relate to permanent personnel only. On 10th July 1992, to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the British army vacating the barracks, a plaque was unveiled at the barracks commemorating the men and women of Kerry who were involved in the struggle for Irish independence. In March 2000, 50 mobile homes were put in place in the barracks to accommodate 1,000 asylum seekers, but have since been removed.

Following the creation of the Reserve Defence Force (RDF) in 2005, and a further reorganisation occurring in April 2013 with the Ballymullen's 32 Inf Bn RDF being brought under the command of 12 Inf Bn in Sarsfield Barracks, Limerick. At present Ballymullen Barracks is occupied by a PDF cadre staff, and is utilised for training exercises and occupation. ■



*Ballymullen Barracks with Irish Free State troops in Square ready to march. Note damaged roof.*

*Captioned photographs were taken by Franz Latchford who lived at Castlemorris House in Ballymullen, and are courtesy of his son Michael. Photographs are dated late 1922/early 1923.*

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# TRAINING FOR CONFIDENCE

REPORT BY PTE DAVID SMITH, TPT COY, 2 BDE

**O**n Sunday 24th August 2014 I arrived at USAC, Dún Uí Mhaolíosa, Galway, as one of 20 students selected for the three-week 16th Confidence Training Instructors (CTI) Course. Skills such as abseiling, traditional rock-climbing and heavy rope-work are employed to achieve the course aim of teaching students how to instruct in the confidence training environment. The course qualified students as Level One CTIs.

Accommodation squared away, we got kitted out with our climbing gear, harnesses, abseil and dynamic rope, hex's, nuts, helmets, screw gates, extenders, and slings; just some of the gear supplied by the Defence Forces Association of Mountaineers (DFAM) for the course.

On the Monday morning after a typical army breakfast we were mobile for the exposed, rugged, limestone cliffs of the Burren and a particular spot known in the guide books as Alladie. Our first abseiling test was less than 90 minutes away and there was an air of nervous tension in the Transits, although nobody was admitting it.

The group came from all branches of the Defence Forces, Army, Navy and Air Corps, with a good mix of youth and experience, and everybody had their game face on. The instructors had the abseil system set up and as soon as the brief was given it was 'over the edge' for each of us.

The Atlantic Ocean was smashing into the rocks below as one by one we lowered ourselves down the sheer face of the Alladie cliffs. Morale was high when we all reached the bottom of the cliff and typical military banter was in full swing.

The rest of the day was spent at Ballyryan Crag learning various rope systems and attempting some of the climbs that are graded, named and described in the climbing guidebook for the area.





We started off with a few scrambles to build our confidence before moving on to some actual climbing. I managed to lead-climb up 'Right Crack', which is graded VD (very difficult), the minimum grade climb you must do for your climbing test. My climbing buddy, Anto Cooney, seconded the climb and removed all my safety gear on his way up.

With the first successful climb out of the way the rest of the week was spent honing new skills on various aspects of climbing.

Our confidence was starting to show as the first week drew to a close, and we were practicing different techniques and trying different climbs. Some of us were managing grade S (severe) climbs.

Week 2 started back at Ballyryan Crag for further instruction and more time on the rock face. It was also test week, so things moved up a gear or two while we were still trying to absorb all the information we were receiving. The emphasis was on getting the systems and drills done perfectly and needless to say there were late nights all week until we passed our tests.

Thankfully, all the hard work and commitment by the instructors and students paid off and the whole group passed their individual exams.

Once again the banter was alive and kicking as we began to focus on our final week, which would be dealing with heavy rope-work, and we were all eager to participate in the DF indoor climbing competition in Awesome Walls in Finglas on the Wednesday.

We moved to McKee Bks for the last week, from where we travelled to Kilbride to learn how to use heavy ropes to construct various types of bridges for obstacle crossing. We covered rat slides, commando bridges, Burma bridges and aerial runways on the Monday and tweaked everything the next day.

There was just one more obstacle looming, the infamous Blessington Bridge confidence jump scheduled for first thing Wednesday morning. When the time came to face the demon, one by one we climbed onto the bridge wall, clambered over the handrail and stepped off into the abyss that is Blessington Lake. I'm sure everybody that jumped in came out an inch taller. The demon had been banished and with an abundance of bravado and confidence we set off for Awesome Walls, eager to put our newfound skills to the test.

Over 60 members of the DF took part in the indoor climbing competition. The format included bouldering problems, top-rope climbing and lead climbing. Points were awarded for reaching designated markers on the wall or, in the case of bouldering, how many attempts it took to complete the problem. The skills of the competitors were varied but regardless of level everyone had a great day's climbing.

At the end of the competition first place was taken by Pte Paul Gascoigne (Eng Gp, 1 Bde), a very experienced climber who completed even the most difficult problems with ease. Second place went to Capt Alan Mordaunt (12 Inf Bn), and joint-third place to Aptce Danny O'Brien (Air Corps College) and Pte Ian Walsh (12 Inf Bn), one of the students on the CTI course. The vast array of prizes (donated by various companies and very much appreciated) ranged from guidebooks, adventure outings, starter kits, climbing equipment and vouchers, and a first place trophy! Sponsors of the competition included Mountaineering Ireland, 53 Degrees North, Kippure House and Awesome Walls – many thanks again to all of them for their generosity.

Following this great event all that remained was to run some students from 7 Inf Bn through our heavy-rope obstacle course the following day. After all students passed their heavy-rope assessment it was simply pack-up, check equipment, debrief and RTU.

We had enjoyed a great three weeks and left as newly qualified CTIs, ready to use our new qualification in our home units to promote confidence training and DFAM activities. Great course, great qualification, don't miss it next year!! ■



# Defence Forces Boxing Championships<sup>2014</sup>

BY CAPT EOGHAN MC DERMOTT PHOTOS BY SGT KARL BYRNE

**B**oxing has a proud and distinguished history within the Defence Forces. National and International Champions have entered the ring as serving personnel to great effect. Boxers of note are many in number and include Phil Sutcliffe and Tony DeLoughrey. The most notable of all is perhaps Michael Carruth who won a Gold Medal in the Barcelona Olympics. DF Boxers have medalled also in CISM Championships and the DF hosted an International Military Boxing Championships in 2002.

Defence Forces boxing is currently going through a renaissance and resurgence and is very much 'punching its weight' on a national and international level. In order to keep the boxing fire lit in the DF we recently hosted the third DF Boxing Championships to be held in recent years. The Championships were held in McKee Bks, Dublin from the 29-31 October with the finals being hosted in the National Boxing Stadium on the South Circular Road, Dublin, which the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA) kindly allowed us to avail of.

The Championships' began with the weigh in and match ups on the Wednesday morning with the boxing commencing that afternoon. A total of 62 boxers weighed in and all were matched along IABA standards as Novice, Advanced Novice and Intermediate. As soon as boxing commenced it was very noticeable that all the bouts were fairly matched. The standard in the DF has noticeable improved in recent years with complete Novices displaying very high standards.

The finals were held in the National Stadium on Friday 31st October, where there were a total of 18 bouts in 10 weight categories in the various classes from Novice to Intermediate. The quality of boxing was to the highest of standards and was thrilling to watch to both the trained and untrained eye. The highlights of the day included K Loonen (6 Inf Bn) Vs M Fitzpatrick (3 Inf Bn), at 71kgs, R O'Connor Vs M Blasisis both from the 1 Cn Cois at 85kgs, to name but a few. The team event was won by the 7 Inf Bn, where they won an unprecedented total of 8 bouts.

For this event to take place a strong, dynamic core of support staff, coaches, umpires and referees have been working tirelessly to promote, support and run this event and continue boxing in the DF to be presented to the highest of standards. They include Pte Paul Thompson, Sgt Stephen Kelly, Cpl Declan Maher, Capt Eoghan McDermott, Cpl Martin Fennessy and Sgt Brendan Murray, to name just a few. Many others (too many to name) are actively boxing, training, umpiring, refereeing or supporting boxing ensuring that it is on a solid foundation and building for the future.



# Results

## WEIGHT RED CORNER

57kgs	C Reynolds, 6 Inf Bn
60kgs	S McCaffery, 6 Inf Bn
64kgs	S Duffy, 7 Inf Bn
64kgs	S Scanlon, 28 Inf Bn
67kgs	R Kelly, 6 Inf Bn
67kgs	C Duggan, 7 Inf Bn
71kgs	McInerney, DFHQ
75kgs	G Burke
75kgs	J Burnett
81kgs	C Sovlin
71kgs	K Loonen, 6 Inf Bn
85kgs	Sheehan, 12 Inf Bn
85kgs	R O'Connor, 1 Cn Cois
91kgs	N Morgan, 7 Inf Bn
91kgs	C Donnelly
91kgs	M Sims, 12 Inf Bn

## BLUE CORNER

Byrne, 12 Inf Bn
Dowling, 3 Inf Bn
L Moyles, 7 Inf Bn
J Mulhern, 7 Inf Bn
D McCauley, 27 Inf Bn
D O'Connor, 12 Inf Bn
E Power, 3 Inf Bn
D Forbes
D Lynch
R O'Flaherty
M Fitzpatrick, 3 Inf Bn
K Callan, 7 Inf Bn
M Balaisis, 1 Cn Cois
Bradley, 6 Inf Bn
A O'Griofa
C Brady, 7 Inf Bn

## WINNER

Byrne
Dowling
Duffy
Mulhern
Kelly
O'Connor
Power
Burke
Burnett
Sovlin
Fitzpatrick
Callan
Balaisis
Morgan
Exhibition
Brady



## INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

### Defence Forces draw with Dutch in Women's International Soccer

BY GERRY MCDERMOTT, COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT, FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND (FAI) PHOTOS BY SGT RENA KENNEDY AND CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN

**O**n Thursday, 16th October 2014, the Defence Forces came from behind to earn a draw against the Netherlands in a Women's International Military Friendly at Station Road, Newbridge.

The Irish side dominated the opening half-hour and, after going close through Shelly Kehoe and Sinead Taylor, they deservedly took the lead when Amy Phelan struck a blistering shot from outside the box that screamed past the Dutch goalkeeper. Taylor and Turner both had chances to extend Ireland's lead but the sides went in level at half-time after some hesitancy in the Irish box, during added-on time, allowed de Kok to score. That equaliser breathed new life into the Dutch and de Kok fired them into the lead six minutes after the break.

However, the Irish girls refused to capitulate and fought their way back into the game with Keogh volleying over and Taylor just failing to finish off a one on one with the Dutch keeper. A lengthy 15-minute stoppage midway through the half following a serious injury to Netherlands player Van Roo didn't disrupt the Irish momentum although skipper and goalkeeper Linda McNamara had to be at her very best to keep out a shot from Hommeles. The equaliser the Irish performance deserved finally came in injury time when Dutch centre-half Kuipers turned the ball into her own net under intense pressure from Taylor and Kelly. Final score: Ireland 2 Netherlands 2.

The teams were, Ireland: McNamara; Kelly, O Sullivan, Hogan; Hannon, Kehoe (Coogan 84), Phelan, Fanning (Byrne 86), Spillane (Kelly 77), Taylor, Turner. Unused Subs: Irwin Nolan, Byrne, Walsh, McConnell, Clancy, Coyle.

Netherlands: Beckers, Donersloot, Kruijsen, Kuipers, Van Lent, Tromp, Van Wezenbeek (Hooren 77), Hommeles, De Kok, Van Roo (Tuns 58), Van der Mark. Unused subs: Dugardein, Der Voort, Flipse, Akker, Tijpjes. Referee: Eoin O'Shea (Ireland) ■



# GEAR REVIEW



Sponsored by Team Alpha.ie

## 5.11 TACTICAL BULLET SKULL HOODIE

**PRICE:** €34.50  
**COLOUR:** FATIGUE

*The manufacturer says...*

Built from a tough, durable, and breathable blend of lightweight 8.5 oz. cotton/polyester fleece, our Bullet Skull Hoodie features 5.11 imagery at the chest along with a traditional kangaroo-style handwarmer pocket at the front. The lay-back hood includes an integrated draw cord to keep out wind, rain, and weather, while a strengthened waist hem and wrist cuffs ensure a perfect fit. A flexible design provides full freedom of movement without bunching or pinching, and the premium 5.11 Bullet Skull graphic remains bright and true, wash after wash.

*Our reviewer Cpl Lee Coyle (PR Branch) says...*

The 5.11 Tactical Bullet Skull Hoodie is tough and durable, I wore this hoodie while weights training and it performed well, it has strengthened waist hem and wrist cuffs that make it hard wearing but comfortable to wear, the fit was loose for a medium as I would normally wear a large fit hoodie. The material is good and provided good protection from a cold gym. The graphic design is up to date and stylish.

*Durability 9 – Comfort 8 – Fit 7 – Anti-Fade 8 – Value 6*



## PENTAGON BODY SHOCK QUICK DRY T SHIRT

**PRICE:** €16.50  
**COLOUR:** OLIVE

*The manufacturer says...*

The Quick Dry-Pro T-shirt is specially designed for high physical effort activities where body has to perspire. Light weight fabrics are produced according to technology and are extremely comfortable and breathable. The optimum temperature control allows stability of temperature for the wearer. The ideal function of Quick Dry Pro Fabric is: quick drying, anti-bacterial and anti-microbial.

*Our reviewer Pte Iggy Mitchell (McKee Bks Coy) says...*

I went for a couple of runs in this t-shirt and I found it to be good. It did absorb the sweat as it said it would, but I found the fit not to my liking I would personally have found it better if it was a small bit tighter. I found it to be quite loose while running even though the size was a small so I reckon it would have absorbed more sweat if it were tighter. This top did keep me warm while running and even as just a t-shirt it is very comfortable for wearing doing any sort of activities and it is extremely durable. It kept its original shape when stretched. The temperature control was good as it kept me warm and I didn't over heat while active. I would purchase this t-shirt for all activities and I highly recommend it as it's reasonably priced.

*Quick dry 8 – Durability 9 – Comfort 9 – Ventilation 8 - Temp Control 8 – Fit 6*



## 5.11 TACTICAL TACLITE PRO SHIRT

**PRICE:** €59.95  
**COLOUR:** KHAKI



*The manufacturer says...*

The Short Sleeve Taclite™ Pro Shirt remains one of our most popular designs, and is worn by law enforcement, military, and emergency services professionals around the globe. Crafted from our proprietary 4 oz. poly/cotton Taclite ripstop fabric, and Teflon® treated for stain, liquid, and soil resistance, our Taclite Pro Shirt stands up to the toughest work environments with melamine buttons that won't burn, crack, or melt. Patented 5.11 Hidden Document Pockets at the chest provide ample and covert storage, reinforced pen pockets at the left sleeve offer quick convenience, and a cape-back mesh panel maximizes ventilation to keep you cool and comfortable in warm climates. The shirt offers superior versatility for a wide range of applications, making it an ideal choice for both on duty and off duty wear.

*Our reviewer Sgt Ruaidhri Jacob (DFTC) says...*

This lightweight material fools you into thinking that the shirt is flimsy but it's far from it. I wore it while training over the Wicklow hills, and had caught the shirt while crossing many barbed wire fences and the ripstop fabric stood up to the challenge. I found myself sweating heavily at times but only due to the severe incline with the shirt's enhanced ventilation assisting greatly in the cooling down of my body. The stain resistant material was tested as I rested against the odd tree, any remaining stains easily washed off after one wash. The melamine buttons feel very strong in the fingers. As regards price it is a slight bit on the high side for a shirt you won't be wearing on a Friday night socially, but you will wear it any time you decide to head off into the wilderness. I would recommend investing in this piece of kit.

*Buttons 8 - Quick dry 7 - Stain resistant 7 - Durability 9 - Comfort 8 - Ventilation 7*

## COMPETITION

**This month Team-Alpha is offering a Princeton Tec Charge MPLS Light (worth €89.75) [www.team-alpha.ie](http://www.team-alpha.ie)**

*For a chance to win this month's prize answer the following question:*

**How much is the Mogul Handgun Locking System on [team-alpha.ie](http://team-alpha.ie)?**

*Answer along with your name & address to An Cosantóir's address or by email to [subs@military.ie](mailto:subs@military.ie) by the 21st January 2015. Winner will be the first correct entry drawn.*

**Last month's winner was:** Jim Tierney, Co Tipperary



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COMMAND UPGRADE PILOT, UK BASED OPERATOR

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Patent pending technology.  
Developed and validated in collaboration with researchers at Trinity College Dublin, Sept 2013.

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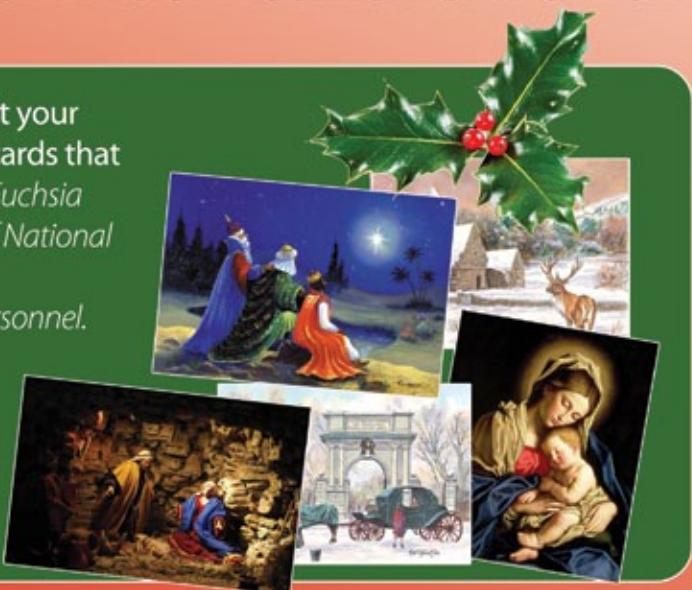


*We wish all retired members of the  
Permanent & Reserve Defence  
Forces a Merry Christmas and a  
Happy New Year*

## Organisation of National Ex-Servicemen & Women

This year, why not take action to support your former comrades by buying Christmas cards that raise funds for the Fuchsia Appeal. The Fuchsia Appeal directly supports the Organisation of National Ex-Servicemen and Women's provision of accommodation for homeless ex-service personnel.

**Packs of 12 Cards, at a cost of €5 per pack + p&p,**  
can be bought from Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann Teoranta  
at address below.



Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann Teoranta, Brú na bhFiann, Smithfield Market,  
North King Street, Dublin 7. CHY 13868 Tel: 01 485 0666

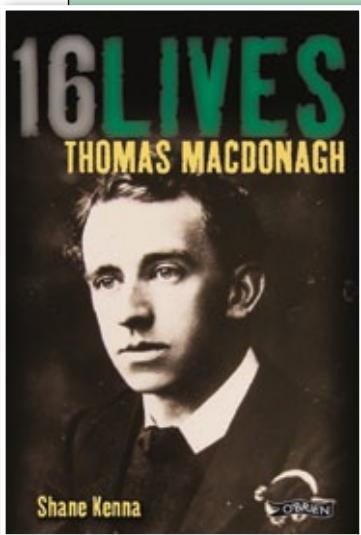
## 16 LIVES SERIES

## THOMAS MACDONAGH

**Author:** Shane Kenna  
**Publisher:** The O'Brien Press (October 2014)  
**ISBN:** 978-1847173362  
**Price:** €12.99 PB / €10.99 eBook  
**Pages:** 320

## ÉAMONN CEANNNT

Mary Gallagher  
[www.obrien.ie](http://www.obrien.ie)  
 978-1847172716  
 416



AS THE CENTENARY of the 1916 Easter Rising rapidly approaches, there has been a considerable increase in books on the subject. O'Brien Press have released two new biographies as part of their 16 Lives Series, Thomas MacDonagh written by Shane Kenna and Éamonn Ceannt written by Mary Gallagher. Both authors have drawn on a variety of sources, some of them from previously untapped private family archives, to document the lives of these two men, their families and their participation in the 1916 Easter Rising.

Thomas MacDonagh, poet, playwright, theatre manager and schoolteacher is perhaps one of the most overlooked leading figures in the insurrection of 1916. During Easter week, this former academic was Commandant of the 2nd Battalion of the Irish Volunteers stationed within

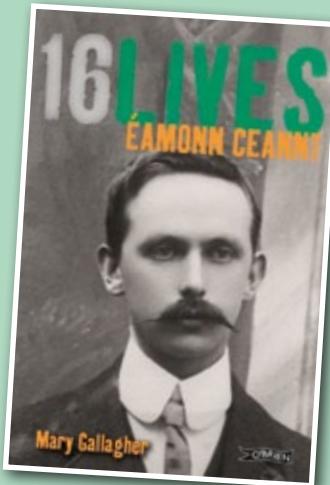
Jacob's Biscuit Factory just off Aungier Street. This

position has been overlooked by some, as one of little importance, but the author has managed, through meticulous research, to detail the many actions that took place in and around this strategically important building.

Éamonn Ceannt was a signatory of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic and during Easter week he was the commandant of the 4th Battalion of the Irish Volunteers. His severely depleted battalion held the strategic South Dublin Union (now St. James's Hospital) where some of the most intense fighting took place. The actions are well described, as is Ceannt's leadership as he attempts to hold off overwhelming British forces before he is ordered to surrender by Volunteer Command.

While both works document the early lives of the men and their participation in the Rising, they also examine the men's lives, who as well as being revolutionaries, were also loving husbands and fathers. Both books also look at the families and friends these men left behind as they faced the firing squads in the stone breakers yard of Kilmainham Gaol.

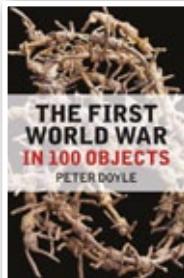
These biographies fill important gaps in the series of sixteen lives that changed the course of Irish history and act as a poignant reminder of those men and women who struggled for Irish Independence. **PO'B**



## THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN 100 OBJECTS

**Author:** Peter Doyle  
**Publisher:** The History Press (March 2014) [www.thehistorypress.ie](http://www.thehistorypress.ie)  
**ISBN:** 978-0752488110  
**Price:** €27.00  
**Pages:** 352

2014 WITNESSED THE start of a series of commemorations to mark the centenary of the First World War the supposed "war to end all wars". There are now no longer any surviving veterans of the Great War, so our memory of this epoch is perhaps necessarily made up of a collection of pastiche and images. In this beautifully illustrated work edited by Peter Doyle the cataclysmic events of this period are brought vividly to the fore by a journey through the Great War that coalesces around 100 objects, which are used to describe the course of the war. Objects allow us to reach out and touch the past and play a role in bringing to life living history. This is both a poignant and effective device as the images range from the mundane, such as a Trench Coat to the horrific German serrated bayonet chillingly nicknamed the 'Butcher Bayonet'. Also a piece of delicate 'Trench Art' in the shape of a maple leaf picture frame dedicated to a nurse by a seriously injured Canadian soldier whom she had nursed while he was recuperating from his wounds. One of the images is of the Russian Mosin-Nagant rifle captured in their tens of thousands by the Germans at the Battle of Tannenberg in 1914. A highly recommended book from militaria collector to historians. **RF**



## EARLEY - AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN:

The Authorised Biography of Dermot Earley

**Author:** John Scally

**Publisher:** Ballpoint Press Limited  
(September 2014) [www.ballpointpress.ie](http://www.ballpointpress.ie)

**ISBN:** 978-0992673239

**Price:** €14.99

**Pages:** 260

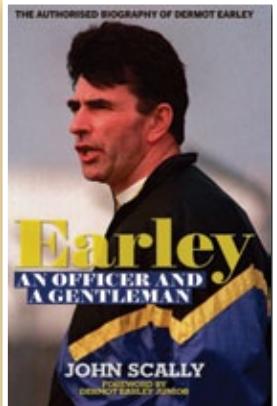
*"Dermot Earley had the greatest medal of all. He had respect"* - Jimmy Magee

BEFORE THE ILLNESS that claimed his life Dermot Earley had been working on a new autobiography with John Scally. At last the inside story of the man often said to be the 'greatest player never to win an All-Ireland medal' is here. For the first time it tells the real story of his spells as manager of Roscommon and Kildare as well as his rise to the top of the Defence Forces, where he was described as 'the most iconic Chief of Staff since Michael Collins'.

It gives fascinating insights into the world of international diplomacy from his four-year spell in New York as Military Advisor to the Secretary General of the United Nations. It also contains moving testimonies from his family about the illness that claimed his life.

This definitive account of a remarkable career pulsates with an insider's knowledge of one of the most celebrated names in Gaelic football, indeed in Irish life as a whole. From the playing field of Croke Park to the killing fields of the Iran-Iraq war this is a book that will surprise and delight.

A must for all sports fans with all royalties from the book going to charity.



## THE HISTORY OF BALLYMULLEN BARRACKS

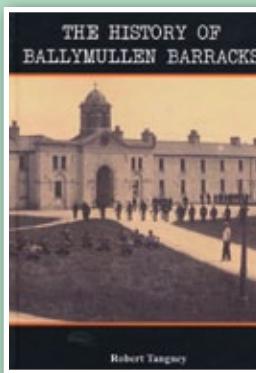
**Author:** Robert Tangney

**Publisher:** Self-Published

**Price:** PB €15 (with a 1912 map of Ballymullen

Bks for €3)

**Pages:** 201



FROM AN IDEA while researching his family history the author found he had more than enough material for a book specifically about Ballymullen Barracks, Tralee, Co Kerry. The author mentions in his preface that he came across a wealth of information available along with vast numbers of people who had a great knowledge and affection for the

barracks. With this book the author has brought us through time including many photographs and drawings, from the 14th century and the demise of the castle of Ballymullen, with the Desmond Rebellion during the 1580s. The Cromwellian era and the plantation process saw the castle in ruin. British rule now applied across Ireland. In the early 19th century military activity in Kerry brought about the choosing of Ballymullen as a strategic military location. Through the decades the barracks saw a multitude of British regiments passing through its gates throughout British rule and then in 1922 becoming an Irish Free State military installation with a new chapter in its fascinating history about to commence – covering LDF, LSF during the Emergency, the FCA, right up to present day. As this book contains an extraordinary amount of historical information I would recommend this book to anyone who has served within or with an interest in the life and times of 'Ballymun Barracks' Tralee and surrounding towns.

The author, Robert Tangney self-published and privately printed this book to which many a historian will owe great gratitude for this painstaking work and endeavor. He lives with his wife and daughter in Tralee, and currently works in Kerry County Council. SS

To purchase a copy call Robert on 087-9715487 or email [rtangney@kerrycoco.ie](mailto:rtangney@kerrycoco.ie)

# NOTICEBOARD

## OUR HERO'S (ÁR LAOCHRA) WWI DATABASE

A new WWI serviceman searchable database has been launched. This collaboration project is between South Dublin Libraries and the Dept of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and was made possible by the generous co-operation of the National Library of Ireland who kindly allowed access to the original set of historic documents.

In 1914, 'Irish Life' newspaper published a supplement called 'Our Heroes', from which this database takes its name, it also publicised the principal events of the war in which Irish regiments were engaged. It contained 1,600 photographs and biographical notes of officers in Irish regiments and of Irish officers in British regiments who fell in action, or who were mentioned for distinguished conduct from 1914 to 1918. The original magazine photographs were assembled by Patrick Hugh Lynch of the Dept of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and then the images were processed by David Power of South Dublin Libraries:

- Optical Character Recognition software was used to create searchable text.
- Image editing software was used to create a set of photographs of the officers and men.
- Additional commemoration information (date of death and place of burial/commemoration) was sourced from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and added to the original data.

This project is a valuable addition to Ireland's Decade of Commemorations. Historians, researchers and students alike will find this resource a valuable tool, allowing interrogation of the original text to find not only servicemen's names, but everything that was contained in the original biographies - school names, rugby clubs, counties and much more besides.

The information contained within this database has all-Ireland importance. It is a snapshot of a cross section of the Irish officer class of the British Army, alongside the privates and NCOs listed among them who bravely distinguished themselves in the field or were killed in action.  
<http://ourheroes.southdublinlibraries.ie/>

## WORD SEARCH

### 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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P Z U P V O H O Q C A L A Y K  
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## Q&A DEC/JAN

### WHAT DATE DURING WWI WAS WILLIAM WILLMOT KILLED IN ACTION (THIS ISSUE)?

Post your answer along with your name and address to us or email [subs@military.ie](mailto:subs@military.ie) for a chance to win a limited edition An Cosantóir Dry Flo T-shirt and DF 'Goody Bag'

Last month's winner of the An Cosantóir T-shirt and 'Goody Bag' was Dylan Morgan, Dublin 24. Closing date is 21st January 2015.



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*Wishing all our  
Subscribers and Readers*

**A Happy Christmas & A Prosperous New Year**

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE  
**AN COSANTÓIR**



*Merry Christmas  
To all our Readers*



*Season's Greetings*

*Le gach dea-ghúi don Nollag agus don Athbhliain  
With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year*

[dfmagazine.ie](http://dfmagazine.ie)

*Aine Fitzgerald*

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