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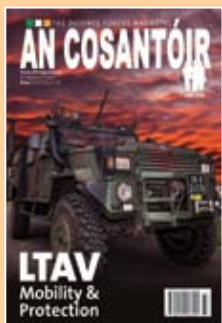
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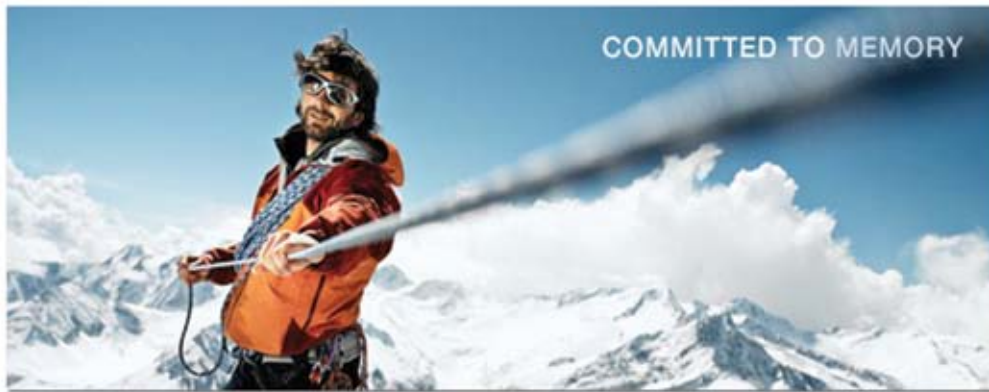
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Photo by Sgt Karl Byrne

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Editorial

Hello, and welcome to our May issue. Taking a back seat this month, Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald hands the reigns over to myself as he prepares a *Peace Keeping Special* for June's issue, which promises to be a collector's edition to your *An Cosantóir* stockpile. This month we have an array of different articles and features, varying from transport to RDF recruitment to fitness testing.

As always our *On Parade* photographs feature on pages 6 & 7, moving onto our *In Focus* pages, which feature *Museum Aiken Barracks* by Sgt Riccardo Lucchesi, as well as the *Easter Sunday Parade*. Veterans News takes up its usual spot on page 10. Our first feature of the month is the *57 INF GP March Past* who have recently travelled into the mission area, we then take a look at *Ex Skipjack* by our resident journalist Cpl Lee Coyle, which was a collaboration exercise between the Gardaí and our own Defence Forces. Cpl Lee Coyle features again with an article looking at an Engineer exercise called *ESSC EX20*.

This is followed by our first *Sport* themed article by Sgt Shane Whelan who was a student on the recent PTI course run in the DFPES in the DFTC.

Capt. Aislinn Kelleher (6 Inf Bn) then provides us with a nice piece, *Mobility & Protection*, on the recent LTAV operator driver's course, which was run in the 6 Inf Bn back in March. In our second *Sports* article CQMS Michael Barrett (7 Inf Bn Army Reserve) reports on the RDF fitness testing procedures in *RDF – First Challenge*.

The *Tac Aide* moves into its fourth part of the series in survival, looking at

how to make a Spanish Windlass.

This month's first *History* article comes from Guy Warner with *Desmond Arthur Irish Airman*, this is followed by *Child Of Jadotville*, written by Professor Declan McCabe which looks into the story of his father's deployment to Jadotville.

Page 30 takes us back to athleticism with a report by Comdt. Orla Jennings (OC 501 Sqn & 2IC No 5 Sp Wing) on the DF 5 mile road race, which took place in Baldonnel Aerodrome back in April. Pte Padraic O'Sullivan (DFAVS) brings us a piece about current professional boxer and serving Cpl John Joyce (7 Inf Bn) in another *Sport* feature *From Demons to Titles*.

Looking at the later end of this month's magazine, Hobby Airsoft affords the opportunity to win a pair of Defender-Flex jeans worth €105 in our regular *Gear Up* on page 35. Which leaves us with all the rest, *Notice Board*, *Book Reviews* and *What I Do*.

Lastly, I'd like to acknowledge a member of our staff who has returned to his home unit, 105th Squadron in the Air Corps, Cpl Neville Coughlan. Neville spent 7 years with us here at An Cosantóir, also working very closely with the Press Office and very often the Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Mark Mellett. Neville will be missed by all the staff here at *An Cosantóir*, and we would like to wish him all the best in his career back with the 105 Squadron, Air Corps. Below are just a small selection of Neville's front covers that are accredited to him whilst working with us. We would also like to welcome A/M Jamie Barrett who replaces Neville from Photographic section, Air Corps.

Sgt Karl Byrne - Editor





▲ 3* PROMOTIONS IN KILKENNY

OC 3 Inf Bn Lt Col M Larkin presented 3 star rank markings to the 37 successful students from the 3 Star Course held in Stephens Barracks on the 5th April. Congratulations to the Students, training staff and 2/Lt C Troy on a very successful course. *Photo from DF IKON*



▲ CADETS FALLING PLATES SUCCESS

Falling Plates shooting is a team skill that takes many units years to master. Not so for members of the 94 Cadet Class, who won both the Falling Plates (on their first time to train or compete) and the Novice Rifle DFTC events at the small arms shooting competition on the 17th April. *Photo from DF IKON*



▲ DA'S VISIT DFTC

29 Defence Attachés (DA), including the 3 resident DA's (USA, UK and Russia), were welcomed to the DFTC on the morning of the 17 April by the Chief of Staff, Vice Admiral Mark Mellett and GOC DFTC Joe Mulligan as part of the Annual DA Week, coordinated by the Defence Attaché Liaison Office. The purpose of DA week is to educate, inform and discuss Defence Matters of mutual interest. *Photo from DF IKON*



▲ STATE STRIPE IN CORK

OC 1 Bde Brig Gen Patrick Flynn presented Gnr Sammy Hayes of 1 BAR with the State Stripe in Collins Bks Cork. Cpl Hayes has 38 years service and dedicated meritorious service in the Defence Forces. Well done Sammy. *Photo from DF IKON*



▲ SECTOR WEST PRESENTATION

Pictured, OC 111th Inf Bn, Lt Col Neil Nolan, makes a presentation of a hurley inscribed with the crest of the Irish Defence Forces to outgoing Sector West Commander, Brig Gen Rodolfo Sganga, during Brig Gen Sganga's final visit to UN Posn 2-45 in April, before his rotation out of the AO. *Photo from DF IKON*



▲ PROMOTION OVERSEAS

Pictured, newly promoted CQMS Alex Kiernan receives his rank markings from Sector West DCOM Col Rory Sheerin at Sec West HQ, Shama, on 10th April. CQMS Kiernan is currently serving with Sec West HQ and will take up an appointment with Sp Coy, 7th Inf Bn, on his return from service in UNIFIL. Congratulations CQ. *Photo from DF IKON*



▲ HOME SAFE FROM UNDOF

The 56th Inf Group returned to Dublin safely under the command of Lt Col Dermot Hanifan The Chief of Staff, Vice Admiral Mark Mellett welcomed the 56 INF GP back to Ireland after a successful deployment on the Golan Heights with UNDOF. Thank you for your service and for the sacrifices you and your families make by serving your country at home and abroad, Strengthen the Nation. *Photo from DF IKON*



▲ ESSC EXERCISE

The Corps of Engineers ESSC Spring Exercise 2018 took place in the Dublin area from 09-12 Apr. This Exercise provided ESSC Teams from each formation and 112 INF Bn UNIFIL an opportunity to deploy in a variety of realistic scenarios. *Photo from DF IKON*



▲ BECKETT ONROUTE TO THE MED

The Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM, bid farewell to the crew of LÉ Samuel Beckett prior to their departure to the Mediterranean at 11am on Sunday 15th April 2018. LÉ Samuel Beckett will be the first Naval Service vessel to deploy to the Mediterranean as part of Operation Sophia this year. Good luck to the crew and we wish you a safe trip. *Photo from DF IKON*



▲ NEW TOYOTA FOR 111 INF BN

Pictured, the students of the first AUV Driving Course completed their training last week in UN Post 2-45. The completion of the course means that the new Toyota Armoured Landcruisers can now enter service with the 11th INF BN. Some of the instructors were sent out from Ireland to help complete the training, congratulations to all involved. *Photo from DF IKON*



▲ SEN NCO CSE AWARD

Congratulations to Sgt Paul Farrell 6 Inf Bn on achieving 'Best Student' Award for the 35th Sen NCO course. The Staff of the NCOTW and the 'An Cosantóir' wish him and his fellow students all the best in their future careers. *Photo from DF IKON*



▲ LFTT CSE COMPLETE

Pictured are students and instructors of the 10th LFTT course, run by the IWW. The course ran from the 5th March to the 20th April. Congratulations to all the now LFTT qualified students and best of luck carrying out future operations where an LFTT element is involved. *Photo by Sgt Karl Byrne*

MUSEUM AIKEN BARRACKS

BY SGT RICCARDO LUCCHESI

Dundalk town has a rich and long military history dating back to the ninth century. The Irish name for the town, *Dun Dealgan*, means *Delagn's Fort* and refers to the *motte and baily castle* which dominated the landscape for many centuries and the mound upon which it stood still remains to this day.

The current military barracks stands on the site of a former linen mill, established in 1737. The buildings erected were referred to as Parliament Square. In 1798 the then disused mill buildings were used to quarter a local militia raised by Lord Roden and, following the suppression of the Insurrection in that year, the British military maintained regular troops on the site. In 1825 the barracks was completely rebuilt to accommodate a cavalry regiment. Lord Cardigan and Baden-Powell served tours at the barracks, as various units of dragoons, lancers and hussars rotated in occupation over the next seventy years.

In 1902 the barracks at Dundalk was again rebuilt, this time to accommodate an artillery regiment. In 1922 members of the 4 Northern Division, under the command of Frank Aiken, took over the barracks briefly before it came under the control of Gen D. Hogan and the Free State Army.

The barracks was evacuated in 1928 and part of it sold on lease to Rawson's Footwear. In 1934 members of the newly formed Volunteer Force reoccupied the military part of the barracks and it became the home of the Regiment of Oriel. During the Emergency years, the 3, 4 and 5 Cyclist Squadrons were formed and based at Dundalk Barracks. In post-Emergency times the Barracks was HQ for the local LDF /FCA Battalion -now designated as 8 Infantry Battalion (FCA).

During the 1957 IRA Border Campaign, regular troops were again briefly stationed in Dundalk Barracks before it reverted to continuing use by the FCA Battalion and the local Civil Defence Organisation throughout the sixties.

On the outbreak of civil disturbance in Northern Ireland in 1969, the barracks was re occupied by regular soldiers. Troops from various units in the PDF were attached to form Infantry Groups for service along the border, with the 1 Inf Gp stationed in Dundalk. In September 1973 the 27 Infantry Battalion was established,

incorporating troops from the Infantry Group and recruiting locally and nationally. The HQ of 27 Infantry Battalion was established in Dundalk, where it continues to the present day.

Throughout its various occupations the barracks had never been formally named. In 1986 the then Taoiseach, Dr. Garrett Fitzgerald TD, officiated at a special ceremony to dedicate the barracks to the memory of the freedom fighter and distinguished statesman, Mr. Frank Aiken. Thus, for the first time in almost 200 years of military use, the barracks acquired a distinct identity of its own.

To illustrate and help explain this rich history Aiken Bks boasts a small but well appointed museum that has proven to be a popular attraction amongst historians and military enthusiasts for a number of years with people travelling from all parts of Ireland as well as holidaymakers from abroad.

The visitors book contains names from the United States & Canada, Australia & New Zealand and almost every country in Europe. The museum holds a number of personal weapons and documents pertaining to Frank Aiken who commanded the first Free State troops to garrison the barracks on the withdrawal of British forces in April 1922.

A number of organised tours from Dundalk Historical Society and Historical Societies' from Northern Ireland have visited the museum on several occasions over the years as well as school groups from both sides of the border.

The staff of Aiken Bks Museum have built and developed a close working relationship with Louth County Museum which has proved to be mutually beneficial regarding the sourcing, displaying & maintaining of artefacts. ■



EASTER SUNDAY PARADE

BY SGT KARL BYRNE PHOTOS BY CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN

100 troops from various Units of the Army, Air Corps and Navy convened onto O'Connell Street and halted outside the GPO for this year's Easter Sunday ceremony. The ceremony marked the 102nd anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising. The ceremony began with Capt. Seán McCarthy of the Air Corps reading the 1916 proclamation under the GPO portico.

After the reading of the Proclamation, distinguished guests arrived on parade such as the Lord Mayor of Dublin Mícheál MacDonncha, the Minister with responsibility for Defence Paul Kehoe TD, followed the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence Leo Varadkar TD, all receiving salutes from the GoH (Guard of Honour).

The President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins then arrived

on parade to a salute by the 100 person GoH and then proceeded to inspect the GoH. After the inspection the President then laid a wreath on behalf of the people of Ireland, followed by a minutes silence for all those who died in pursuit of Ireland's independence.

The National Flag on top of the GPO was then raised to full mast and the National Anthem was played, during the Anthem the GoH gave a salute and the Air Corps conducted a 3 plane PC-9 fly past, that signified the ending of the ceremony.

The Easter Sunday Parade then followed and was led by the Irish Defence Forces starting at St. Stephen's Green and ending at DIT Bolton Street. ■



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

COL FITZMAURICE AND THE BREMEN FLIGHT REMEMBERED

BY AIR CORPS PRESS OFFICE



Corps Colonel James Fitzmaurice and two German crewmembers, Captain Kohl and Baron Von Huenefeld. Some 36 hours later they landed on Greenly Island on the Eastern shores of Canada.

This was a truly remarkable achievement given the prevailing winds, the treacherous weather conditions and

On the 12th April 1928 a Junkers W33 aircraft named the 'Bremen' departed Baldonnell Aerodrome bound for North America. On board was the Officer Commanding the Air

the multiple previously failed attempts. Colonel Fitzmaurice and the crew of the Bremen were hailed as aviation pioneers and their achievement still stands as one of the greatest chapters in aviation history.

Today in Casement Airbase a ceremony was held at the very spot from which the Bremen aircraft departed on its epic voyage. The ceremony included music from the Defence Forces Bands, a tribute from the Artillery Corps and a Guard of Honour. Unfortunately the poor weather did not allow for a fly past. *Photos: Sgt Colum Lawlor, Armn Jamie Martin and Armn Emmet Long, 105 Sqn* ■



COL JAMES FITZMAURICE REMEMBERED

Members of IUNVA Post 27 Portlaoise are pictured with Lt Col Frank Byrne commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the first transatlantic aeronautical flight from Europe to North America in Portlaoise on the 12th April 2018. A wreath laying ceremony commemorating the flight by local man Colonel James Fitzmaurice of the Irish Air Corps, took place at the Eitilt monument in Fitzmaurice Place.

In attendance were Laois County Council, Laois Heritage Society, the Heritage Council, representatives of the Irish Air Corps, members of IUNVA Post 27 and Portlaoise CBS, where Col Fitzmaurice attended school. *Photos by Martin Rowe* ■



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57TH INF BN UNDOF **MINISTERIAL REVIEW**

BY SGT KARL BYRNE
PHOTOS BY CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN & DF FLICKR



The Minister with Responsibility for Defence, Mr. Paul Kehoe, T.D., accompanied by the Deputy Chief of Staff (Operations) of the Defence Forces, Major General Kieran Brennan, reviewed the 130 men and women of the 57th Infantry Group ahead of their six month deployment to the Golan Heights as part of the United Nations Disengagement Observation Force (UNDOF). The review began on Friday 23 March, at 10.45am in Kilkenny Castle.

The Unit formed up in Kilkenny Castle at 10.30am where they were reviewed by Minister Kehoe. This was followed by the blessing of the Unit Colours, the Minister's address and a ceremonial 'March Past' through the streets of Kilkenny to Stephens Barracks.

Previously in March the 57th Infantry Group carried out a mission readiness exercise in preparation for their forthcoming deployment to the United Nations Disengagement

Observation Force (UNDOF). This phase of training is a culmination of three months of intensive preparation for deployment overseas.

The 57th Infantry Group is commanded by Lt. Col. Mark Brownen. The group contains 130 personnel of all ranks, consisting of 14 Officers, 115 Enlisted Personnel and 1 Chaplain. 41 personnel are now on their first tour of duty overseas. The Group has a wide range of capabilities including Armoured Force Protection, Patrolling and Mobility, Surveillance, Communications, Medical and Operational expertise.

The 57th Infantry Group are the tenth Irish Defence Forces peacekeeping contingent to deploy to the Golan Heights for six months. Drawn from many different Units across the Army and Air Corps, the majority of the 57th Infantry Group's personnel are drawn from the 3rd Infantry Battalion based in Stephens Barracks, Kilkenny. ■

EXERCISE 'SKIPJACK'

BY CPL LEE COYLE PHOTOS BY CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN

Trying to find a month in the last number of years that the words 'TERRORIST ATTACK' weren't blazoned across a newspaper's headline or the top of a webpage is a fruitless task. The words conjure up feelings of dread and fear, while bringing to mind images of despair and pain, like no other words in use today. Attacks across the globe have targeted innocent people in many different locations, from shopping malls to busy streets, with tourist attractions and transport hubs being among the most common targets. The next attack always seems to be right around the corner, making the public and security agencies in every country wonder 'What if?'

In Ireland An Garda Síochána (GS) recently held a major operation, codenamed 'SkipJack', in Shannon Airport to test the emergency response to a terrorist attack. The exercise involved personnel from the GS Regional Support Unit (RSU) and Emergency Response Unit (ERU); Shannon Airport Police; Shannon Airport Authority; and the Defence Forces.

The exercise, which was designed to test interoperability between the participating agencies, played out in three sections in order to simulate time passing between the arrival of each support element and giving the most realistic experience. Each section had its own challenges, and evaluators observed the responders intently to identify improvements that could be made.

One of the GS evaluators told us: *"The main objective of this sort of exercise is to test the capabilities and the interoperability of all the parties involved."*

When asked what he expected from the exercise, he said, *"We can see if the participants mesh together, and it will also give us a chance to test systems that are currently in place."*

The first part of the scenario began at the departures hall, where travellers (played by members of the Garda College) stood around outside the main doors having a last cigarette before catching their flights, on what seemed like a normal day at the airport. Suddenly a van and a car pulled up outside the main doors and five individuals jumped out of the vehicles carrying assault rifles and other weapons. The group immediately opened fire on the people standing at the doors. The first casualties of the exercise slumped to the ground while others screamed in panic and ran for cover inside the building with the terrorists following close behind, like predators on the hunt for prey.



Inside the building, check-in gates were busy with queues of travellers when the sound of gunfire and screaming erupted outside. As the panicked survivors of the initial attack rushed into the departures hall followed by the gunmen, terror spread throughout the crowd inside the building. People dived on the floor for cover, while the terrorists quickly took control of the area, grabbing individuals to use as hostages. As some people struggled with the terrorists the casualty list grew as the attackers responded with fatal aggression.

The terrorist group, with their hostages in tow, then left the

points to monitor vehicle movements, while also looking for any other threats. Meanwhile, the EOD team carried out a check of the vehicles left outside the departure hall and were also on standby to deal with any other explosive devices.

Part two of the scenario was conducted on the runway, with the arrival of the ERU team in two helicopters. The first to arrive was the Garda Air Support Unit (GASU) heli carrying GS marksmen, who took up elevated positions overlooking the terminal. The second was an Air Corps AW139 carrying the ERU intervention team, who quickly made their way to the GS control room.

The final part of the scenario progressed the incident



departures hall and made their way to the upper levels of the terminal.

A few minutes passed in the now quiet departures hall; no movement, no sounds, apart from sounds of people crying quietly to themselves. Then the first brave souls began to make their escape through the closest exit. Once the first few had made it out, the rest began to follow, with some of the injured being helped to the exits. The survivors left behind a nightmare scene, with blood-stained floors and lifeless bodies lying surrounded by a sea of abandoned luggage.

The timeline was then moved forward one hour to simulate the required response and travel time of the ERU intervention team from Dublin and to allow the time other responders would need to carry out their initial tasks: airport police would immediately close off the airport, gardaí would arrive and set up a control room, the GS RSU would respond, as would the Defence Forces.

During the time shift and the support elements' set-up, evaluators had the chance to monitor signal traffic through the control room and assess the players' response to the situation, which should include certain objectives, such as stopping the lifts and escalators to reduce the attackers' freedom of movement inside the building.

The DF support element consisted of an infantry platoon from 12 Inf Bn and an EOD team. The platoon's main effort would be to set up an outer cordon around the airport and operate check-

points to monitor vehicle movements, while also looking for any other threats. Meanwhile, the EOD team carried out a check of the vehicles left outside the departure hall and were also on standby to deal with any other explosive devices.

to a point where the terrorist had taken refuge in an upper room in the main building. Outside this room the ERU lined the hallway behind a ballistic shield, while the GS negotiator was trying to calm the situation and build a rapport with the terrorists by keeping them talking and asking general questions.

The terrorists responded by taunting the negotiator and demanding the release of an incarcerated accomplice. When the gunmen paraded a hostage in front of the ERU team and threatened to kill him, it became clear that the standoff was not going to be resolved through negotiation, and with no other option in the deteriorating situation the ERU were forced to take action and open fire. After the firing began the ERU team quickly took out the terrorists and freed the hostages.

The final assault marked the end of a very successful exercise, which was challenging for all parties and provided vital information about areas requiring improvement. The simulated incident had involved nearly 130 personnel and was seen as an important step to improving the co-operation between the different security agencies and increase operational readiness for such an event.

Exercises such as this also build confidence in our emergency response to such events. Future exercises, co-ordinated across multiple services, will further the participants' skills and improve the interoperability of all emergency services in dealing with such events in a professional manner, and in doing so will help to give the public peace of mind. ■

ESSC EX 20

BIRDS EYE VIEW SEARCH

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY CPL LEE COYLE

The Engineer Corps recently conducted an Engineer Specialist Search and Clearance (ESSC) exercise to put the DF ESSC Teams to the test and it also gave them a chance to showcase some new equipment. The exercise, codenamed ESSCEX-20, took place in various locations across Dublin City and involved ESSC Teams from each of the Brigades, it also included the ESSC Team from the 112 Inf Bn, UNIFIL, who are currently formed up and will be departing for Lebanon at the start of May.

The Teams were deployed in a variety of Offensive and Defensive search operations, that covered field area Searches, a ship search, a train carriage search, and building searches. The locations for these included Croke Park, Phoenix Park, a P&O Car Ferry, an unmanned train station in Dublin, and a disused factory. The ESSC Team from the 112 Inf Bn, were tasked with searches that incorporated an overseas scenario, in keeping with their upcoming deployment.

Some of the operations were designed to be linked together to give a wider picture of the situation and a more realistic scenario. The search of the ship at the P&O car ferry, was linked to the search at the disused factory. In the P&O car ferry scenario, suspected terrorists had entered Ireland by the ferry, and had left a suspected vehicle that was believed to be wired with explosives on board. Continuing on from this, they were then believed to have set up a safe-house within the Dublin area.

We joined one of the ESSC teams, as they were put through their paces at the disused factory, the factory itself was the old Odlum's Factory at Dublin Port. The area the factory covered was heavily built up, with tall industrial buildings and offices rising high into the air. The building that would be the

focus of their search was an office block that used to house the Odlum's Company offices.

When we arrived at the location, the area had been sealed off and a methodical approach for dealing with the search of the building was being put into place. Entry control points were marked out and safe areas leading to and from the building were cordoned off by tape. The ESSC Team had also set up a control centre from which they would work from. Their mission which was up on a board in the control room read 'conduct an offensive on the unoccupied building by searching the Odlum's offices to clear the suspect terrorist safehouse.'

We spoke to the ESSC Team Officer about the location, they told us, 'This is a high-risk Op as the building is unoccupied, so we will be expecting it to be boobytrapped.' they also added how they were lead to this building, 'In the scenario, we were led to this building by the Garda Síochána, who had received a tip off and they also had forensic evidence from an individual in



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OPERATING SYSTEM: DJI GO 4

AUTONOMOUS CAPABILITIES

OPTION TO MOUNT OTHER CAMERAS OR PAYLOADS

custody, that pointed to this location.'

We also spoke with one of the DS staff about the exercise, 'Their first objective is to clear the building of any boobytraps or devices, then they will carry out a systematic and complete search of the entire building.' 'Once they complete this extensive search the exercise will end, the scene would then be handed over to the Garda Síochána.'

The Team began to prepare how they would gain entrance to the building, this was done by a team member dressed in a ballistic suit setting up a rope and pulley system that would open the main door, this would keep individuals safe from any boobytraps that might be rigged to the door.

While this pulley system was being put in place a new member of the team in the form of an Unmanned Ariel System (UAS) was being prepared for deployment. The UAS is a newly acquired piece of hardware and this exercise marked its maiden flight in a search such as this.

UAS told us that having separate controls allows the camera operator free to conduct the search, while the pilot never loses sight with the UAS. The camera operator told us, 'The area can be seen in real-time and information can be passed along quickly to those in the building.' The pilot told us 'the high buildings make it an interesting place to work', 'there are obstacles all around the area.'

Once the ESSC Team had gained access into the building, they began their initial search for any boobytraps or other dangers. Inside the building the smell of damp emanating from the long since empty rooms was a mix of mould and corrosion. The centre stairwell of the building was very dark and made progress difficult, with movement being slow and steady. The beam of torch light breaking the darkness of the stairwell was an eerie sight. It wasn't long before the team encountered a boobytrap, hidden on the dark stairwell. This was slowly and cautiously made safe.



The ESSC Team Officer told us about the usefulness of the UAS in this situation, 'The UAS can be used to take a look in upper levels before we enter for any individuals or other dangers, it is also non-evasive and doesn't put any of our people in harm's way. It gives us a 360-degree appreciation of the area we are working in, by doing this it is a force multiplier and gives us better situational awareness which will increase our capabilities.' They added 'The skills of the operators will be tested in the area, with it being built up'.

As soon as the pulley system for the main door was all set, the UAS was put into the air and began scanning the building. The UAS was being controlled by a two-person team, these were a Pilot and Camera operator. The pilot of the

This initial search of the building for any boobytraps would take a number of hours giving the size of the building, marking doors and hallways as they went. The team members taking turns wearing the heavy suit and progressing through the building. Once this was complete, then the systematic rummage search would then be carried out.

It is exercises like these that are vital for keeping the DF ESSC Teams trained and fully operational, they are designed to make the teams think and to challenge every aspect of their training. These exercises encompassed the most possible scenarios one might think of in the world today and will give the Teams areas to work and improve on, so they can be ready if and when the time arises. ■

Keeping our Troops FIT TO FIGHT

On 29 January 2018, I was one of 15 NCOs who reported to the Physical Education School (DFPES) in the Curragh, ready to train to become physical training instructors (PTIs).

The 16-week course is physically and mentally challenging, and covers everything students require in terms of professional knowledge and skills.

BY SGT SHANE WHELAN
PHOTOS BY SGT KARL BYRNE

A wide range of subjects are covered on the course, including:-
Anatomy and physiology, where we learn about the skeletal, muscular, respiratory, circulatory and energy systems, and how the body reacts physiologically during exercise;

Nutrition, which covers nutrients, vitamins, fluids and their role in diet, exercise and weight control;

Mental skills training, which teaches how to get the best from different personality types through motivation and goal setting;

Military fitness, where we learn how to prepare troops to physically withstand the rigours of combat (a major part of a PTI's responsibilities) and which includes introducing soldiers to skills like crawling, rope climbing, climbing, and lifting, as well how to conduct military skills circuits, conducting fitness tests, route marches, or any other type of military fitness exercise safely and effectively;

DF fitness tests, including conducting annual fitness tests parts 1, 2 and 3 and learning how to aid people in achieving the fitness levels required to pass their ITs;

Exercising to music and step aerobics, including designing and choreographing exercises to music and step aerobics classes;

Circuit and resistance training, which includes the different types of equipment used and instruction on the basic lifts, as

well as designing training programmes for different individual needs;

First aid, incorporating a three-day PHECC Level 2 first aid responder course, during which students receive training on CPR and the use of the AED, how to deal with suspected spinal injuries, bandaging, haemorrhage control, fractures, and much more;

Functional movement screening, where we learn to identify imbalances in mobility and stability that could lead to injuries while exercising;

Run training, where we learn about programme planning for different methods of training through running, such as long slow runs, hill training, interval training, and fartlek training, and how to conduct these types of training with individuals and large groups, safely and effectively;

During this phase students also complete the Military Obstacle Instructors Course, a tough but enjoyable week during which they learn the techniques to cross 11 different obstacles confidently, as well as learning how to safely conduct training on an obstacle course and how to react to emergency situations that may arise during training. The obstacle course is a great facility for improving a soldier's military fitness and preparing him or her for future operations.

The last four weeks of the course consists of completing the National Certificate in Exercise and Fitness (NCEF) block, where





successful completion earns a Level 6 degree in exercise and fitness from the University of Limerick.

The military fitness phase of the course was physically and mentally demanding as we learned how to progress inductees from physical training in the comfort of runners, shorts and T-shirts to training in combats, boots, helmet, battle vest, and body armour. This prepares the soldier to physically and mentally withstand the rigours of combat regardless of terrain or weather.

We also learned how to plan and conduct military fitness classes safely and effectively for new inductees and trained soldiers. Firstly, we covered military skills (jumping, pulling, pushing, balancing, rope climbing, etc) and how to demonstrate these skills and teach soldiers how to perform them confidently and safely. From there we learned how to plan and conduct a combined skills circuit to improve the endurance, speed and strength. We also trained at conducting route marching, scout-paced marching, forced marching, log exercises and rifle exercises. This meant a lot of kilometers travelled around the Curragh plains as each student had to practise conducting such exercises.

During the Obstacle Course Instructors Course we got assistance from a three-star course training in the DFTC, who provided us with students to practice with.

On a couple of occasions the class and our instructors got to get away from the grind



of lessons to go hill walking. On our first walk, which was up Lugnaquilla in the Wicklow Mountains on Valentine's Day, the weather was good as we started out, but when we reached the summit there was driving snow and wind (similar to what I'd imagine the South Pole to be like!), so we didn't hang about too long.

Our second hill walk may not have been as cold, but it was far more challenging as we were in Kerry to climb Ireland's highest mountain, Carrauntoohil. The walk was led by one of the course students, Cpl Eddie Casey, who is a native of the area and no stranger to the mountain. We made it to the top via the Eagle's Nest and O'Shea's Gully, and after a few photos and a quick coffee we descended down through the Heavenly Gates and back to Cronin's Yard. It was a technically challenging route for the average hillwalker but very enjoyable nonetheless.

When the course ends each student will return to their home unit as a fully qualified PTI, armed with the knowledge and skills to organise and safely conduct physical training of various types at unit level, such as introducing military fitness to new recruits or assisting trained soldiers in maintaining their physical fitness at individual or group level.

Also, as PTIs we will be expected to remain committed to learning and self development by keeping up to date with current research in the area of physical training, and maintaining our own high level of physical fitness. But most importantly we will be required to act as positive role models and to promote healthy lifestyles within the Defence Forces. ■



Vox Pops



SGT ANTOINETTE BYRNE, 2 BDE HQ

My interest in doing the PTI course comes from returning to work after injury and following maternity leave. Fitness goals differ in

every individual and how to achieve these goals depends on the person, and how to do this is really well covered on the course. On completion of the course I hope I will be able to assist others to achieving their individual goals.



CPL GARY CANAVAN, 1 CN COIS

The PTI cse is physically and mentally challenging, but also very enjoyable and I would recommend anyone

who has an interest in training to apply for it.



SGT SHANE WHELAN, 3 INF BN

The PTI course has been very enjoyable and interesting. I've always had an interest in physical training and was delighted

to be selected for the course. Every lesson has been interesting and delivered with a high standard of instruction by the staff of the DFPES and outside instructors. I am looking forward to returning to my unit with the skills and knowledge to become an active PTI and assist with all aspects of physical training in my unit.

MOBILITY

The LTAV (Light Tactical Armoured Vehicle) ODC (Operator Driver Course) is primarily undertaken by personnel due to travel overseas. The LTAV is utilized in UNIFIL as part of the QRT (Quick Reaction Team). Smaller than the MOWAG, it is easier to navigate around the narrow roads in the AO, and has been used to good effect. The LTAV provides a Mechanised Company increased flexibility in terms of protection, mobility and CSS. The LTAV can be utilized by a CS & CQ, and also as part of Company Recce Element within a Mech Coy. The LTAV is available for use by external units for exercises, MRE's and shoots from B Coy 6 Inf Bn.

The different variants of LTAV employed in the Defence Forces include Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery and CIS. Each is fitted with a different turret system, however the ODC course is applicable to all. 6 Inf Bn is the designated LTAV School of Excellence in the Defence Forces. From here, we qualify personnel across the Defence Forces on the LTAV RG32M Inf Variant. Other LTAV courses ran annually in LTAV School include Gunnery Dismount Courses (GDC), Fitter Admin Course, and LTAV Instructor course.

The 26th LTAV Operator Driver Course (ODC) commenced on 5th March 2018 in 6 Inf Bn, Custume Bks Athlone. This was the largest ODC since the introduction of the LTAV in 2010, with 18 students drawn from 1 Bde, 2 Bde and DFTC. This course has proven extremely popular by personnel across the 2 Brigades, and this is reflected in the large number of students constantly applying for the course, ran twice annually by 6 Inf Bn LTAV staff. This four week course consists of classroom based lectures, practical lessons, driving instruction, vehicle maintenance and gunnery.

& PROTECTION

BY CAPT. AISLINN KELLEHER

PHOTOS BY CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN & CAPT. AISLINN KELLEHER

This course is designed to qualify personnel to operate the LTAV in a tactical environment both at home and overseas. Ran out of the LTAV School of Excellence in B Coy 6 Inf Bn, the objectives of this course are; to qualify personnel to drive the RG32M in all weather conditions, at day and night, to operate the vehicle in CBRN environment, to conduct driver maintenance, to safely conduct recovery operations on the vehicle, and to be confident employing the vehicle in a tactical environment. The students also fire the MAG58 and 66mm Smoke Discharger system during their qualification shoot.



Week one of the ODC course consisted of classroom based lectures on vehicle systems, and initial basic driver training. Week two mainly consisted of extended periods of student driving both in urban and rural areas, supplemented by practical lessons on vehicle recovery and maintenance. Weeks three and four are assessment weeks, with on and off road testing taking place during week 3. Facilitated and tested by Cavalry School DFTC, all students were put through their paces on the off-road course in Coolmooney Camp, followed by a road test in DFTC. The students also completed an initial night drive in Carnagh training area utilizing NVE, and incorporating a recovery exercise. This exercise is the pre-cursor to the more difficult night drive on exercise in Slieve Bloom Mountains in the final week. The course culminates in Week 4 with a Qualification Shoot on MAG58M and 66mm Smoke Discharge system, followed by driving exercise to, and around the Slieve Bloom Mountains. This exercise tests the students' navigation skills, and they are also assessed on recovery, wheel change, tactical movement and driving using NVE over challenging terrain. This element of the course is designed to take the students out of their comfort zone and into a driving situation that is very challenging. Driving with no lights over a distance of narrow forest tracks utilizing NVE is the culmination of the students driving assessment. B Coy 6 Inf Bn would like to thank all external instructors who assist in the running of these courses, and Cavalry School for their continued support. ■

KEY INF VARIANT LTAV STATS:

WEIGHT: 9,000KG

LENGTH: 6.006 M

FORDING: 0.8 M

TURNING CIRCLE: 17 M

FIREPOWER: MAG58M & 66MM SMOKE DISCHARGER

COMMS SYSTEMS: SINCGAR (X2)

MOTOROLA

ROVIS



RDF

FIRST CHALLENGE!



Potential recruits in gym with staff



REPORT &
PHOTOS BY
CQMS MICHAEL
BARRETT, AR, 7
INF BN

DEFENCE FORCES INDUCTION FITNESS TEST

Push Ups: 20 in one minute

Sit Ups: 20 in one minute

Aerobic Run 2.4km:

Males: 11 minutes & 40 seconds

Females: 13 minutes & 10 seconds

All prospective Recruits who aspire to join the Defence Forces must undertake and successfully pass the Defence Forces Induction Fitness Test. This fitness test is designed to assess the potential recruits level of fitness and his/her capacity to undergo the rigours of Military Training.

Since 2013, and the introduction of the Single Force Concept, all new entrants to the RDF, just like their comrades in the PDF, have had to pass the same Induction Fitness Test. This ensures that all RDF Recruits, on their enlistment are on

an equal physical level as their PDF Recruit colleagues.

On the morning of Saturday 14th April, yet another potential batch of anxious RDF recruits arrived at the main gate of Cathal Brugha Bks in Dublin to undertake the Induction Test. They were met by RDF members of E Coy, 7 Inf Bn, E Coy is currently the unit tasked with all initial admin in the recruitment process of RDF Recruits in the greater Dublin area, and this administration includes the organising and conducting the Induction Fitness Test for these recruits.

Besides E Coys own fitness staff, there are other quali-



Arriving in Cathal Brugha Bks for fitness tests



Crossing the finish line

fied RDF Physical Training leaders (PTLs) in the other two Reserve companies of the 7 Bn - C Coy and D Coy, and if required these PTLs can be called on to assist E Coy in any Potential Recruit Fitness Tests.

Under the supervision of the Coy Comdr Comdt (AR) Eamon Timlin and Coy Sgt (AR) Liam McNarmara - this was the third RDF Recruit induction fitness test conducted by E Coy so far this year, all within Cathal Brugha Bks. Last year 2017, the Coy conducted no less than five induction fitness tests for RDF Recruits in either Cathal Brugha or Mckee Bks.

It must be remembered that for almost all these Potential Recruits arriving for their tests, who are at this stage are still civilians, their arrival to Cathal Brugha Bks is more than likely their first experience of being inside a barracks, and also their first encounter of interacting with Defence Forces members, either RDF or PDF.

The RDF fitness test staff are aware of this, and for this reason maintain a professional but approachable demeanour towards the potential recruits - uniform dress and deportment of the testing staff must also be above reproach.

As the old cliché goes – ‘*you don’t get a second chance to make a good first impression.*’ All the attending RDF applicants had been contacted some weeks beforehand and given their date for the fitness test, and also given a list of items to bring with them, the main prerequisite being sports gear and suitable running shoes. For all candidates there is also video information about the fitness tests requirements available to view on the Defence Forces website www.military.ie.

Initially the potential recruits are taken by the staff to fill in some administration forms, then it’s on to barrack gym, named in honour of Tpr Anthony Browne, BMC.

Inside the gym the important check of Body Mass Index (BMI) is ascertained by the PDF Officer in charge of the tests, Capt Collins. Using weight and height measurements, then it’s on to a warm up session by one of the PTLs. Then there is a demonstration of the correct method of completing sit ups and push ups, before the candidates themselves commence the actual tests of the sit ups and push ups under the watchful eyes of the fitness staff.

Those who pass these stages are then taken outside onto the barracks square, where the route is explained to them by Capt Collins. At the same time marshals from E Coy staff are placed along the route to guide the candidates, and then the timed run of 2.4km begins. For some of the candidates this is the real lung busting part of the fitness tests. Those who pass the run will get dates for the next stage of their recruitment process, normally the interviews. Those who unfortunately fail will be offered a chance to partake the Induction Fitness Test again at a later date and will also be given advice to correct their weaknesses, which caused their failure to qualify.

Most of these weaknesses would be identified as poor preparation for the test, incorrect technique for sit ups and push ups, poor pacing for the run. Other causes can be often more mundane and preventable - no breakfast or liquids beforehand, poor running footwear, sometimes even no preparatory training whatsoever despite been given their test date weeks earlier.

The induction fitness test is arguably the best initial contact with DF personnel for the potential recruits, no boring class rooms lectures here. Instead it’s a muscle burning effort in the gym, then the anxious lung busting run outdoors. Which is a very personal test of their own physical strength, effort and determination to pass - certainly a day for them to remember, especially if they succeed!

Some applicants seem to derive immense joy when they pass their first Defence Forces fitness test, a big sign of joy and relief!

Indeed, it must be remembered that for some of the DF applicants present today, this is the attraction of military life to them, this is what they regard as ‘real army training’, this is part of the appeal they have towards the Defence Forces, intense outdoor physical effort, the ‘life less ordinary’.

But the induction test has its solid purpose, it is to prepare recruits for the robust demands of military life, it is to enhance a soldier’s readiness on the battlefield. Fitness is vital in today’s Defence Forces, and the recruit Induction Fitness Test is the first challenge for these potential soldiers, and it sets the tone for all their future training. ■



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SPANISH WINDLASS

The Spanish windlass is one of the most effective traps for small game like squirrels, foxes or rabbits, etc. It can be adapted to work with a snare or, like this example, a spike and bludgeon. Unlike some of its counterparts (the figure 4, for instance) this trap does require some cordage. Traps are a great way to practice knots and basic carving, helping you become more adaptable with projects and field mechanics.



BY JOE PRICE



- Once you have identified a game trail you can either pick a point between two trees or rocks or drive two poles into the ground.
- Find a suitable stick for your bludgeon or spike stick. Simply make it half the length of your driven poles. You can choose to attach a spike or mace to it at this point.
- Make a fixed loop to go between your two poles with the cordage. A good square knot will be strong enough to hold.
- Next is the trigger. For this trap a stick placed under the butt-end of the trap will suffice. But for a more sensitive trigger I recommend the split stick as shown in the photos.
- To wind the engine, place your bludgeon between the fixed loop and wind in the opposite direction from which you want it to travel. Keep winding until it is as tight as you can make it.
- Place your trigger with bait rope or snare attached under the butt end of the bludgeon.



Joe Price is one of the co-founders of the “Living to Learn” Bushcraft Community, a member of the Irish Bushcraft Club and an Irish Ambassador for Mora Knives.

He works in The Camo Shop www.thecamoshop.ie and you can follow the ‘Living to Learn’ community online:

www.facebook.com/groups/livingtolearn/

DESMOND ARTHUR

IRISH AIRMAN

BY GUY WARNER

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY GUY WARNER

A ghost is said to haunt the site of the former Royal Flying Corps airfield at Montrose in Scotland. On 27th May 1963 the well-known airman and industrialist, Peter Masefield, was flying his DH Chipmunk close to the old airfield when he saw what he believed was a BE2 biplane; the pilot was wearing a leather flying helmet, goggles and a flying scarf. He landed as he thought he had seen it crashing but on reaching the ground discovered that there was no sign of either aeroplane or crash site. Why was this date of particular significance, who was this mysterious figure and what close part does he play in Irish aviation history?

Desmond Perry Phelps Lucius Studdert Arthur was born on 31st March 1884 at O'Brien's Bridge in Co Clare. He was the son of Thomas Arthur and Helen Studdert, a family prominent in the county. Arthur was educated at Portora Royal School in Co Fermanagh, entering the school in 1898. Like many well-to-do young men of his day, he was an enthusiastic sportsman and won a number of prizes in motoring speed trials, before becoming a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Motor Reserve in 1908. Arthur attended the first Irish Aviation Meeting at Leopardstown Racecourse held on 29th August 1910 and organized by the Aero Club of Ireland. It was there that he was introduced to Cecil Grace, which reinforced his desire to become a pilot. Though born in Chile, Grace was of Irish-American ancestry and from a wealthy, elite family. Despite the fact that the weather was not really suitable for flying Arthur was taken aloft for his first flight by Grace in his Henry Farman III biplane 'after much badgering'. All they could accomplish was a short hop

of 600 yards along the length of the racecourse, from which he walked back, as Grace decided that he was too well-built for a return journey. However, even this brief experience was enough to infect young Desmond with the flying bug. He joined the 5th Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers

and was promoted to Lieutenant on 27th May 1911. He was known for his adventurous nature, as well as his unassuming manner and unfailing good spirit. On 18th June 1912 Arthur gained his Royal Aero Club Certificate No 233 after completing his trials flying a Bristol Prier monoplane at Brooklands. A few months later on 9th September 1912 he decided to test his flying skills by entering the Air Race from Leopardstown to the Balmoral Show Grounds in Belfast, again organized by the Aero Club of Ireland. Alas, his participation on the day was limited to the briefest of cameos, as his 70 hp Bristol failed to get clear of the ground, and in landing he buckled one of his wheels. The Irish journal, *The Motor News* described this in some detail, 'The next man to start was Desmond Arthur, on the Bristol. He seemed nervous and excited. His engine was started up, but immediately showed signs of misfiring. Arthur ran her 'all out' for a few moments, and the missing then ceased. The signal was then given to let go, and the monoplane swung for-



Lt Desmond Arthur



A BE2 of No 2 Squadron prepares for take-off



Montrose 1913 - a BE2 flies over the airfield

ward across the ground in the direction of the road facing the stand. But the machine refused to lift, owing to the bad condition of the engine, and the heavy loading of the machine. He therefore 'taxied' round to the right just in time to save himself from running into the crowd. The machine then careered onwards across the road running from the stands to the station, and the right wing struck one of the small flags with which the road was marked with absurd profusion. The near side tyre burst when it struck the 'kerb' of the road, and the machine came to rest a short distance from the Press tent. Arthur expressed the intention of making another start, and therefore had his machine wheeled back to his previous starting place. When, however, it was seen that the wing had been torn in striking the flag-post, he wisely determined not to make another attempt.' Somewhat generously, the organizers awarded him a special prize of £25, plus £40 for expenses.

He joined No 2 Squadron of the Royal Flying Corps on 17th April 1913, based at Montrose. At 7.30am on Tuesday 27th May 1913 Arthur's BE2 biplane No 205 collapsed without warning while flying over Montrose during a routine training flight. He had been in the air for about half an hour. Arthur had begun to descend in a left-hand spiral from 2500 feet and had made one complete turn. Shortly after this the aircraft appeared bank to the right, the outside edge of the top right-hand wing was seen to fail and the wing collapsed. A puff of smoke from the engine was also seen from the ground and the sound of the engine note increased. The aircraft fell comparatively slowly to the ground. The pilot was seen to fall from the aircraft shortly after the increase in engine noise was heard. He struck the ground about 160 yards from the place where the aircraft fell, and was killed instantly. The aircraft was a complete write-off. A report issued by the Accidents and Investigation Committee of the Royal Aero Club on 21st June 1913 found that the accident had been caused by the incompetent repair of a broken spar by an unknown mechanic. It was thought that the damage to the aircraft had been accidental, and poorly repaired to prevent detection prior to the aircraft being transferred from Farnborough to Montrose a few weeks earlier; flown there by another Irishman, No 2 Squadron's CO, Major Charles James Burke, from Armagh. Arthur's death was the

seventh to occur in the Royal Flying Corps, and the first at Montrose. He was the first native-born Irishman to be killed in an aircraft accident. He is buried in Sleepy Hillock Cemetery, Montrose. Meanwhile, Cecil Grace had lost his life in December 1910, when attempting a flight across the English Channel.

It would appear, however, that Arthur's was an unquiet spirit as there was a suggestion of a government cover-up. An official inquiry opened on 11th July 1913. In 1914 the MP for Brentford, William Joynson-Hicks, complained of a whitewash and stated that the Secretary of State for War Colonel JEB Seely would not admit to the faulty repair. In the spring of 1916 the aircraft manufacturer, Noel Pemberton Billing, demanded a judicial enquiry into the military and naval air service, as 'certain officers had been murdered rather than killed by the carelessness, incompetence or ignorance of their senior officers or of the technical side of those two services.' An official investigation by a Government committee set up on 3rd August 1916 concluded that the pilot was at fault and that he had been flying recklessly. Shortly after this was published Major Cyril Foggin saw a ghostly figure enter the Officers' Mess at Montrose. A few days later he saw the apparition again and once more it vanished. There were further sightings by other officers and instructors, all in or around what had been the mess of the No 2 Squadron. As sightings spread more widely the ghost became known as the 'Irish Apparition' or the 'Montrose Ghost'. Fear of the ghost caused guards to desert their posts and personnel to request transfer from the base. The ghost was named as Desmond Arthur by the editor of *The Aeroplane*, CG Grey. Grey, who had been a friend of Desmond Arthur, believed that the appearance of his ghost was linked with the publication of the official investigation. A further report, published at the end of 1916, reinstated the reputation of Arthur, finding that the crash was after all due to a damaged wing. The ghost finally appeared on 17th January 1917 and disappeared again until 1940.

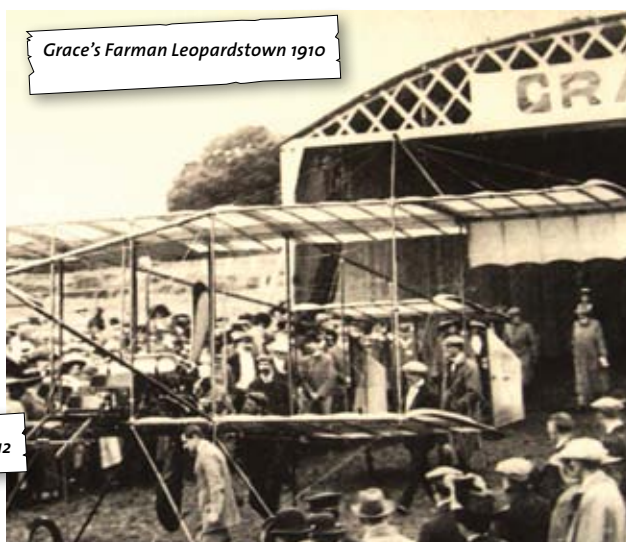
Among the many famous RAF pilots who trained at Montrose there is another Irish connection, as one of those was Wing Commander Brendan Finucane, the top scoring Irish ace. In 1940 the pilot of a Hawker Hurricane was distracted by a mysterious biplane whilst searching for

an enemy intruder. In 1942, another pilot stationed at Montrose was killed when he crashed into the runway not long after take-off. A week before he had quarrelled with his mechanic. An Inquiry was held but failing to find sufficient evidence of deliberate tampering, the charges were dropped. Shortly after the crash, there were reports of a ghost appearing at the airfield wearing a flying suit and goggles, walking along the flight line, emerging from the fog. New trainees were routinely briefed on the ghost. Dozens of sightings occurred of a figure in a white flying suit and a leather helmet until the airfield closed in the 1952. ■



Arthur at Leopardstown Sept 1912

Mr. Desmond Arthur and the chairman of the Aero Club of Ireland, Mr. J. Donville, in a characteristic pose.



Grace's Farman Leopardstown 1910

HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY

CHILD OF JADOTVILLE

BY PROFESSOR DECLAN MCCABE

"Transient ischemic attack" they said; TIA, a mini stroke my sister called it. My 83-year-old father awoke and I was happy to be there. Never before had I seen fear in his eyes. Slight of frame and vulnerable in his hospital gown, but larger than life in the way that good fathers are, he had a confident resilience born of adversity. Little could slow him down or dampen his determination and his hope — always hope; always optimism.

When cancer had taken hold, he still exercised to preserve what grasp on life he could. The TIA had borrowed his voice and 69 years of smoking had been unkind to his blood vessels; no amount of aspirin or warfarin could reverse the damage. Yet the doctors advised hope: "T is for Transient." When hours turned to days, hope was all we had.

It was my deepest privilege to be there when patience paid off. He spoke! First a few words, as if finding his feet on damaged legs and surprised they still worked. Then paragraphs followed sentences and there was no stopping him. He said he felt like he was stuck down in a bog hole, and I briefly questioned his mental state. He hadn't worked a bog in decades. But he lucidly likened his recovery process to emerging from deep in the bog, grasping for the light above.

The analogy made perfect sense as fluency returned in leaps and starts. He spoke first of family: his pleasure that we all turned out well, his pride in his children and our happiness in our lives, spouses, children, jobs, all of it. And, of course, his beloved Edna. He had no complaints about any of us and it gave him great comfort. The fear left his eyes, and the intensity and sparkle returned.

He spoke and he spoke some more. These precious moments were worth far more than my journey from Vermont to Ballinasloe. He told me of old friends: Noel Brett, 'Joxer' Keenehan, Brendan Connolly, Tommy O'Neil, Padraig Shine, scout camps in Cliffoney when Lord Mountbatten would show up on a horse and drink tea from a billycan with scruffy Athlone lads.

And then he spoke of Jadotville. Had facing mortality returned him to where he faced it before? Or is the experience of hostile fire just below the surface for every soldier? Whatever the reason, there was urgency in his conversation and the stories he needed to share.

And share he did, and please indulge this son of a soldier who needs to share them again. Fragments of battle assembled into a narrative that flowed long past the time when other patients slept. Names, locations, weapons, military jargon, and terms that were passingly familiar from my brief FCA service. Brazzaville, Kinshasa, Moïse Tshombe, Dag Ham-

markjold, Operation Morthor, some venom for Connor Cruise O'Brien, and some more for the newspaper reporter who refused to smuggle letters from Irish POWs.

Did I know that army medics

carried scissors to slide in next to barbed arrowheads to ease removal? The Balubas were incredible archers.

My father was one of 155 Irish soldiers sent by the UN to defend a Congolese town dubbed Jadotville by European colonists. Their position indefensible and exposed, they did what previous UN contingents had not - they dug in: defensive positions, trenches and foxholes. In a flat landscape, vertical structures stop horizontally traveling bullets. Lacking structures, well-trained soldiers make them by digging holes, bagging, and piling sand and soil.

I learned from my father that even a hung blanket can stifle a rifle bullet. Irish soldiers in Congo confused enemy snipers by hollowing out termite mounds to make bulletproof firing positions that were literally part of the African landscape. From my father, details flowed on into the night. Near misses, a mortar shell that landed at his feet but failed to explode. (Smaller Irish mortars, launched with pinpoint accuracy, always exploded.) Rifle grenades crashed through vegetation but also failed to explode because some teenage soldier neglected to prime them; his young life ended by triangulated Irish rifle fire, his body never falling from the tree where his commanders had roped him in.

He told me how snipers hidden in a building during a ceasefire fired on Irish positions. Orders were given to train fire from an antiquated, water-cooled Vickers machine gun, first in the air and then on the windows to keep enemy heads down. A second order directed a single shot between the windows from an 84 mm recoilless rifle. The anti-tank weapon pierced the wall, instantly 'neutralizing' the threat. He described the devastating effect of that shot on human bodies that they witnessed when they snuck into the building that night; horrors of war indelible in an old soldier's mind.



In the Congo. Martin McCabe on the left with his good friend Paddy Neville on the right.

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cover, seems a callous disregard for human life. And stories of Gendarmerie commanders shooting deserters would seem to confirm it.

But we do know of the bravery of these unseasoned soldiers. We were dramatically reminded, by the 2016 film *Siege of Jadotville*, that when forced to fight, fight they did. We know without doubt that the officers on the ground felt

On he spoke, needing no encouragement from me. Comrades' names flowed: Mattie McGrath; John Monaghan, and Jack Prendergast, who was a dab hand with the machine gun; Peter O'Callaghan from our street, and his good friend Paddy Neville. There was a bond with these men and I knew he would traverse hot coals barefoot if any of them needed him.

His deepest respect and gratitude was reserved for Comdt Quinlan, his senior officer, although some years his chronological junior. Quinlan's decisions compelled A Coy to dig in despite the African heat. And because of those decisions, they survived; every last one of them survived.

Because they survived, I exist, my children exist, and my comfortable life exists. Whatever impact I have had in life, good or bad, is because in 1961, 155 soldiers of A Coy did their job with intelligence, professionalism, and bravery. I was born five years after my father and his comrades faced down an overwhelming force and prevailed.

In a strange way, I am a child of Jadotville. I can't begin to guess at the total, but Irish families being what they are, a good number of us children, grandchildren, and by now great grandchildren of Jadotville owe our very existences to the professionalism of each and every one of these brave men.

By the same token, countless potential descendants of at least 300 enemy combatants felled by Irish fire were destroyed by the arrogance and hubris of the Katanga Gendarmerie commanders. Did they underestimate the resolve of unseasoned troops; did they assume that soldiers attending Mass would be unarmed? We will never know the full details.

Sending the first wave of foot soldiers against entrenched professional soldiers might seem to be folly. But sending second and third waves after the disastrous results of the first, and after the Irish had burned off what vegetation existed for

strongly that at least eight soldiers deserved medals, and my father, with his recovered voice, agreed. Many have suggested that they all deserve medals and it seems finally that this will happen. (Editor's note: survivors of the Jadotville siege were awarded An Bonn Jadotville at a ceremony in December 2017 in recognition of their bravery.)

My father recovered from his TIA to return home to his Edna, and I to my Margaret in Vermont. Within a month, I returned for his funeral, forever grateful to have had that final opportunity to hear him speak. There was nothing 'mini' about his final stroke, and his rapid passing was more merciful than the lingering death that cancer promised. His surviving comrades spoke for him and brokered a deal with the Boy Scouts at his funeral. A tricolour and a scout flag: one to grace his casket in the church, the other for his final journey to Coosan Cemetery. A ceremonial flag-folding and exchange at the church door. I am grateful to both groups who honoured my father.

This is an abridged version of the author's article previously published in Ireland's Own magazine in August 2017. ■



The author's parents Martin and Edna McCabe (RIP).

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DEFENCE FORCES

5 Mile Road Race

BY COMDT ORLA JENNINGS PHOTOS BY SGT COLUM LAWLOR



The Defence Forces 5 mile road race was hosted by the Air Corps on the 22 March 2018 in Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel. This was the first time in recent years that this event has been organised and the first time it has been hosted by the Air Corps. As a result it drew a highly competitive field with 200 competitors turning up on the day, to test themselves against the clock and each other. The event was centred at the gymnasium, where registration took place, under the watchful eye of Cpl Karen Robinson. This location provided an ideal place for competitors and onlookers to gather and as a result a large amount of speculation over the winning time ensued. All three services were represented with a field drawn from across the Defence Forces. The race got underway just after 1200hrs when the competitors were sent on their way by a whistle blast from Sgt Alan Hayles. It was immediately evident from the speed at which the elite runners took off that the winning time would be a course record. The weather was dry but a strong wind provided a tough test as the competitors made their way around the course which circumnavigated the air field. Marshals positioned on the course provided radio updates to the finish where speculation was ongoing as to the potential winning time. Spectators were finally provided with the answer when Pte Kenneth Rogers, 6 Inf Bn crossed the line in a fantastic time of 26:39, he was followed by PO Darren Molloy from the Naval Service in a time of 27:15 and Pte Paul Buckley also from the 6 Inf Bn was the third man across the line in a time of 28:32. Comdt Maeve O'Grady, ACHQ was the first female across the line in a super time of 34:39. She was followed by Capt Anna Edgeworth, ACC, with a time of 36:29 and the third lady to cross the line was Cpl Kim Mullin, DFHQ, with a time of 36:33. A huge thank you should be extended to all the Units from both within and outside the Air Corps who provided support to this event making it a great day out and a success. It is hoped that this will become an annual fixture in the Defence Forces Athletic Calendar. See you all in 2019! ■



Ladies winner Comdt. Maeve O'Grady, ACHQ



Mens winner Pte Kenneth Rogers, 6 Inf Bn

RESULTS DF 5 MILE RD RACE

22 March 2018 OVERALL WINNERS

MEN

1st Pte Ken Rogers 26:39, 6 Inf Bn
2nd PO Darren Molloy 27:15, NS
3rd Pte Paul Buckley 28:32, 6 Inf Bn

LADIES

1st Comdt Maeve O'Grady 34:39, ACHQ, AC
2nd Capt Anna Edgeworth 36:29, ACC, AC
3rd Cpl Kim Mullin 36:33, J3, DFHQ

SENIOR MEN

1st Pte Ken Rogers 26:39, 6 Inf Bn
2nd Lt Mark Doyle 28:22, No 3 Ops Wing, AC
3rd CPO Graeme Swords 29:11, NS

SENIOR LADIES

1st Cpl Kim Mullin 36:33, D Ops, DFHQ
2nd Pte Michelle Tarpy 42:13, D Tpt, DFHQ
3rd Cpl Carmel Bennett 43:31, No 1 Ops Wing, AC

LADIES O35

1st Comdt Maeve O'Grady 34:39, ACHQ, AC
2nd Capt Anna Edgeworth 36:29, ACC, AC

O40

1st PO Darren Molloy 27:15, NS
2nd Pte Paul Buckley 28:32, 6 Inf Bn
3rd Sgt Owen Connolly 29:26, ACHQ, AC

O45

1st Sgt Pat Byrne 28:10, DFV BW Tpt Gp, DFTC
2nd Tpr Brendan McCarthy 32:10, 2 Cav Sqn Reserve
3rd Sgt John Bootman 32:43, CIS Sqn, AC

O50

1st Lt Col Mark Prendergast 32:47, D Ops, DFHQ
2nd Pte Mark Bulman 34:02, 1 Bde Tpt Coy

O55

1st Pte Fergal Brien 33:57, TIS Kilbride

TEAM PRIZE

1st Naval Service
2nd 6 Inf Bn
3rd AC

FROM DEMONS TO TITLES

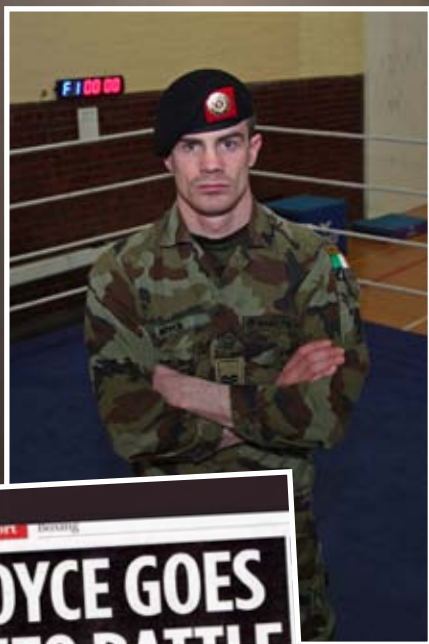
BY PTE PARAIC SULLIVAN PHOTOS BY CPL LEE COYLE & CPL JOHN JOYCE

Tragedy is something that nobody has the power to avert. At some stage in our lives, it will ascend from nowhere and grasp you in its clutches. Life, and people, are measured on how we react to tragedy. It is a true test to a person's character - when the going gets tough, to stand up and fight, for whatever you are fighting for. Symbolically, the image of a punching bag being hit, is a way of off-loading stress and pain. For Cpl John Joyce, this is exactly what he did.

After the sudden death of his brother in 2009, Joyce turned

to boxing as a reprieve from the pain he was immersed in. This was his way of coping, learning and trying to understand. A member of the Defence forces for the last eleven years, Cpl Joyce is based in B Coy, 7th Inf Bn and is the training NCO for the company. With a rich history of boxing in his family, his father was a competitive boxer who fought at all-army level in the 1970's and has several medals to his name.

Cpl Joyce, who is married to wife Anita, holds down an extremely taxing but worthwhile job as a training NCO, but



also has undertaken a career in professional boxing. Having impressed in the amateur ranks, this relatively still unknown fighter, has taken the huge plunge and will pitch himself amongst the best in the country. Amazingly, this has all been achieved by the former Leinster and All-Ireland champion in just five years. Fighting at welterweight, Cpl Joyce is a mid to close range boxer who uses his power to effect, *"I've always had a heavy shot, I've always been a heavy hitter."*

Watching Joyce 'work the bag,' it is evident to see the sheer power he possesses, as the bag cracks with every vicious but measured punch. His timing, focus and determination is written all over his demeanour and he accredits his steel-like poise to his time served in the military, *"I've been in the army for eleven years and it has been bred into me to be tough."* Training up to twenty-five hours a week, Joyce has early morning running sessions, followed by conditioning circuits in the facilities in Cathal Brugha Bks and then has boxing training in the evening.

By nature, a professional fighter dedicates their entire time and focus to boxing and has all the frills that go with such a career. However, Cpl Joyce is sticking to where it all began for him and he is very vocal about the level of support he has from both his unit and the DF on a whole, *"Comdt Padraig Duggan and CS Philip Cole of the 7th Inf Bn and the DF on a whole have been an incredible support for me and I feel they are on this journey with me, which is a great help."* Joyce has added a sports psychologist to his team to fully channel his potential and recognises that the brain ultimately decides what the body does. Furthermore, all his meals are supplied by a local health store, which allows Joyce to focus on his boxing skills.

Under the tutorage of veteran manager and trainer Tony Davitt, Joyce has truly excelled, and the 31-year-old shows no signs of slowing down. Davitt has helped harness the raw materials Joyce possessed and turn him into a more controlled and measured fighter, *"He's teaching me so much. He's teaching me to sit down on shots, be more assured and my shots are more accurate. He's pushing me to my absolute limits."* A member of Celtic Warrior pro boxing club, Blanchardstown, Joyce is truly utilising all the available amenities available to him to be the best boxer he can be.

So many fighters are lured to the professional scene by the bright lights and the potential to accrue large prize pots. However, Joyce is of the purer generation and just wants to pitch himself with the best and see where that takes him. It is evident that he proudly distinguishes himself as a soldier first, then a boxer, and is fully dedicated on representing the DF first and foremost. Considered now as a poster boy for the 7th Inf Bn, Joyce is doing something quite remarkable and should be lauded for everything he has done to date considering how and why this incredible journey began.

With an impressive start to his professional career, Joyce has five wins from five, with three coming from knockouts. The 31-one-year old has the hunger of young and raw fighter, but the maturity of a seasoned campaigner. In his company, you are immediately drawn to that innate drive and steely competitiveness. Every punch it seems, brings Joyce back, and you can sense that visceral connection to why this all started. Coming into this sport mid 20's would be a daunting experience to so many, but the fearless Joyce has an unquenchable thirst for hard work, *"I*

want to stay as busy as possible, I want to make a name for myself. I want to be the best in Ireland."

Ironically, the thing Joyce hates the most about boxing, he also loves the most - in sparring. While he recognises that it is difficult to continually adapt to varying styles and other sparring opponents, in the same light he loves the challenge. Cpl Joyce is being trained daily by his coach, but he was moulded within the confines of the military and attributes his toughness to army life, *"The army has made me a hard person. When I was younger I was getting beaten well by some guys. Now, I've turned it around and I've progressed and now I'm beating them."*

Fighting in June in his sixth professional fight in the Good Council GAA grounds, Joyce will hope to maintain his unblemished record and continue his startling rise and further his reputation. An ambassador for firstly boxing and then sport within the DF, Joyce wants to do his upmost to fulfil his dreams for everyone he is representing in the DF, *"I've got the backing of the army, they're great, they're helping me out and the Director of Sport is following my progress."* To see an individual, have a goal and go after it, is truly a fascinating thing to see. Joyce embodies all the characteristics of a soldier - bravery, discipline and courage are a constant within his being. A journey that started with immense pain, has turned into a message that anything is possible when your desire is strong enough. ■



MONEY MATTERS

5 TIPS ON FINANCING YOUR CAR

BY ROBERT HALPIN, FINANCE OFFICER AT ANSAC CREDIT UNION

1. Avoid Over Stretching

Pretty much everyone has a budget in mind when looking to buy a car. But not everyone sticks to it; those quick-witted car sales people tend to be pretty good at their jobs after all.

Here at ANSAC, we'll be expecting a surge of car loan applications in the run up to July and what I can't stress enough to our Members is - Don't commit to too high a repayment! Your car loan could be for a period of 5 years and what you can afford today just might not be feasible a few years down the track.



2. Avoid Under Stretching

Also ask yourself how long you plan on owning the car? If you expect to be changing it again in three years' time for example, do yourself a massive favour and make sure your repayment schedule will see your loan cleared by then.

3. The new or second-hand conundrum

It's all about circumstances with this one. Yes, depreciation in the context of a new car is a nasty, nasty word but does it really affect you?

If you were to buy a new car for €20,000 that you plan to keep for 10 years the resale value isn't really a concern. In basic terms, the car has cost you €2,000 p.a.

Equally a second-hand car you purchase for €6,000 that you keep for 3 years would cost you €2,000 p.a. less what little money you could claw back when selling it on. There's also the maintenance costs to consider when deciding between new and second-hand.

4. Consider the budgetary knock-on effects.

We always remind our car loan customers to think of the triple whammy here – insurance, tax and fuel! It's easy to just look at the loan repayments when assessing the affordability of a car. Don't be afraid to get a few insurance quotes based on a perspective purchase before you go ahead with your decision. Sometimes it's just better to follow your wallet and not your heart.

Call 018554489 to talk to ANSAC Credit Union about a Car Loan **TODAY**



5. Haggle

While I've mostly been talking about what you can afford to repay in terms of your loan, there's no better way to have lower repayments than to get a more favourable price in the first place. Dealers often have quarterly targets which determine whether or not they get their bonuses. So don't be afraid to push a little harder at the end of a quarter. And shop around – there's nothing like the fear of losing your custom to a rival to make a dealer pull out all the stops. ■

HOBBY AIRSOFT AND THE CAMO SHOP

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DEFENDER FLEX RRP €80 5.11 TACTICAL

Jeans - they're the absolute utility pant. They go with everything and you blend right in! Now, thanks to 5.11, you no longer have to decide between fashion or function! Retain excellent storage thanks to clever pocket layout, supreme manoeuvrability from the flexible (yet durable) material, and best of all, they'll look fantastic whilst performing.

Available in Dark-Wash Indigo, and Indigo, these jeans have been a long time in the making. The challenge for 5.11 has always been finding a material that was both non-restrictive, whilst being durable enough to warrant putting their stamp on it. Well, it was worth the wait!

Double Stitched, bar-tacked in high stress areas, and made out of 10oz Mechanical Stretch Denim. The hitherto useless "coin pocket" has been enlarged where it can now accept most smartphones! On top of that, there's two additional discrete rear pockets.

Blend in with your surroundings, whilst still being ready for anything. Keep what you need on-hand, and easy access. Nonchalant, unassuming, high quality, and beautifully designed. Tasteful placements of the 5.11 logo put a smile on the face for fans of the brand (inside the pockets, branded rivets, and a small tasteful logo on the rear-right pocket), without signalling to anyone that they're a tactical pant.

Fit-wise, they're perfect for boots (and have been designed with boot-wear in mind), and since they're a tactical pant, they're designed not to give too much away as to what you're carrying. In other words, even the slim fit allows for a bit of discretion, so don't be expecting 5.11 Branded Skinny Jeans!

Overall, these are the most comfortable pair of jeans I have ever owned, and are perfectly suited for the outdoors, or just going to the pub for a few drinks!



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NOTICEBOARD

LOCAL HISTORY LECTURES FOR MAY 2018

19th May (2:30p.m):
Western Front Association
(Dublin Branch)

Bill Fulton will present his lecture 'Generals Died in the Great War,' in the Museum of Decorative Arts & History Lecture Theatre, Collins Barracks, Benburb Street, Dublin 7. All welcome - €3 donation appreciated.

24th May (5:30p.m):
GPO, Dublin, Visitor Centre

As part of the Rebel Women of the 20th Century series of lectures, Donal Fallon will present his lecture on 'Maud Gonne MacBride' in the GPO Visitors Centre, The General Post Office, O'Connell Street, Dublin 1. Admission by free ticket - book via 01-872 1916 or at www.gpowitnesshistory.ie

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

13TH MAY: VETERANS DAY

The event will take place on Collins Bks, Dublin. All veterans and their families are invited to attend.

10TH JUNE: DF OPEN DAY

The 2018 Defence Forces Open Day will take place in Fitzgerald Park, Cork. This event is free and will be open to the public.

8TH JULY: NATIONAL DAY OF COMMEMORATION

The event will take place in the National Museum of Ireland Collins Barracks, Benburb Street, Arran Quay, Dublin 7.




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Q. HOW MUCH IS MEINDL COMBAT BOOTS ON WWW.PROTAC.IE?

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Last month's winner of the PROTAC €50 Voucher was Cameron Conlon, Co. Roscommon. Closing date is 18th May 2018.

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WORD SEARCH

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

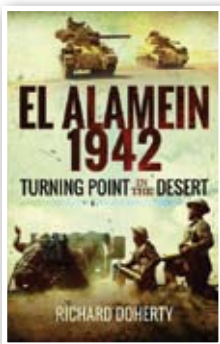
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EL ALAMEIN 1942 TURNING POINT IN THE DESERT

Author: Richard Doherty
Publisher: Pen and Sword
ISBN: 9781526700797
Pages: 288
Price: €35.00



El Alamein 1942 Turning Point in the Desert; provides us with an in-depth and clinical analysis of what many historians would argue was a pivotal moment of WW2. The units, formations and commanders along with precise details of each battle are recounted meticulously including some very informative

illustrations of deployments for each of the three battles. The war in North Africa had to this point ebbed and flowed with the very real possibility that the Italian German alliance would overrun the Allies; the acute political and military implications are well spelt out.

Montgomery and Romell are the commanders that spring to mind when El Alamein is mentioned and although they are the main protagonists the author provides an excellent account of the contributions played by others not so commonly known. In particular the critical part played by Auchinleck in preparing the 8th Army prior to Montgomery's appointment; much of which the author tells us Montgomery tried to deny after the War.

The harshness of the conditions endured by the combatants especially the ferocity of the tank battles and artillery barrages as described by vivid eyewitness accounts make for compelling reading. Montgomery's caution to the point of stubbornness coupled with Rommel's sustained logistical problems and the eventual victory by the 8th Army gives the reader a real insight to the complexities of the battles.

In an interesting final chapter the author viewing the battles in retrospect outlines the extent of intelligence provided to Montgomery by the code breakers at Bletchley Park; he argues it was significant but that Montgomery drove home this advantage.

Reviewed By Owen Foley

WAR AND REVOLUTION IN THE WEST OF IRELAND: GALWAY, 1913–1922

Author: Conor McNamara
Publisher: Irish Academic Press (March 2018)
<http://irishacademicpress.ie/>
ISBN: 9781785371608
Pages: 250
Price: €16.99 PB, €44.99 HB

"The people generally are out for a Republic and they propose to get it." – County Inspector RIC, West Galway, July 1920



The period 1913–22 witnessed extraordinary upheaval in Irish society. The Easter Rising of 1916 facilitated the emergence of new revolutionary forces and the eruption of guerrilla warfare. In Galway and elsewhere in the west, the new realities wrought by World War One saw the emergence of a younger generation of impatient revolutionaries.

In 1916, Liam Mellows led his Irish Volunteers in a Rising in east Galway and up to 650 rebels took up defensive positions at Moyode Castle. From the western shores of Connemara to market towns such as Athenry, Tuam and Galway, local communities were subject to unprecedented use of terror by the Crown Forces. Meanwhile, conflict over land, an enduring grievance of the poor, threatened to overwhelm parts of Galway with sustained land seizures and cattle drives by the rural population.

War and Revolution in the West of Ireland: Galway, 1913–1922 provides fascinating insights into the revolutionary activities of the ordinary men and women who participated in the struggle for independence. In this compelling new account, Galway historian Conor McNamara unravels the complex web of identity and allegiance that characterised the west of Ireland, exploring the enduring legacy of a remarkable and contested era.

Dr Conor McNamara has written extensively about the history of the Irish revolution and rural society. He was previously a winner of the National Library of Ireland, History Fellowship (2009) and was awarded the 1916 Scholar in Residence at NUI Galway (2015–17). He was a Moore Institute, NUI Galway, Visiting Fellow (2017) and this is his fourth publication; he is co-editor of *The Dublin Lockout, 1913: New Perspectives on Class War & its Legacy* (with Pádraig Yeates; Irish Academic Press, 2017).

NAME

SGT BRIAN CASSERLEY

UNIT

2 BTC

OCCUPATION

INSTRUCTOR, COMPUTER SCHOOL



I had an interest in the military from a young age and in 1996 when I heard that some of my friends in school had joined the FCÁ, I decided to join as well, enlisting with A Coy, 7 Inf Bn.

The following September I enlisted in the PDF the Eastern Command Training Centre in Cathal Brugha Bks, and when I finished my training, in March 1998, I was posted to A Coy, 5 Inf Bn, which had recently moved out of Collins Bks to McKee Bks. Later that year I travelled overseas for the first time with A Coy, 84 Inf Bn, UNIFIL. I really enjoyed the trip and thinking about it now it was a great thing to be able to serve overseas so early in my career.

I completed a number of courses over the next few years, including the HMG and GPMG SF. I went on my NCOs course in March 2001 and after I was promoted I completed the Infantry Light Support Weapons Instructor course.

My next trip overseas, my first as an NCO, was to Kosovo with 27 Inf Gp in 2003, as a detachment commander and ops corporal with the Weapons Platoon. During this trip we were involved in stopping severe rioting that broke out across Kosovo over the 17th and 18th of March 2004, which was another good learning experience.

When I returned home I became HQ Coy Clerk and completed a Unit Computing course. Over the next few years I completed an Orderly Room Sgt's course, CAPS course, MT Driver's course and a Mowag Crewman's course.

In 2008 I returned to Kosovo with 38 Inf Gp as a Mowag crewman.

In 2009 I completed the Standard NCOs course, as well as an ECDL and Mowag Crewman Instructor course; and did a Mowag Commander course in 2010.

I served overseas again in Jan 2010 with 102 Inf Bn, MINURCAT, in Chad, as APC Sgt with Recce Coy.

In 2011 I completed an Office Information Systems Instructor course and in 2012 I completed a PMS Instructor course and Web Design course.

I also have a master's degree in Forensic Computing and Cybercrime Investigation from UCD.

In 2012, 5 Inf Bn was disestablished and myself and a colleague were given the responsibility of helping to disband the unit and establishing 7 Inf Bn.

I was promoted to sergeant with A Coy, 7 Inf Bn, in Jan 2013 and I was then posted to the Computer School in 2 BTC as an instructor.

In the school I instruct on all things computer, from PMS, IKON and even CAPS courses. The main course that we teach is the ECDL.

I really enjoy teaching, with the mixture of old and young personnel that come through the school; some having skills they learned at home on their phone or PC, and others having no computer skills at all. However, even the tech savvy individuals learn something on our courses.

Currently, we are promoting an E-learning ECDL throughout the DF, through which personnel can cover the ECDL modules online in their own time and pace. They can undergo the test in any of the DF's computer schools.

I would highly recommend anyone who wants to up-skill to complete one of the many great computer courses run throughout the DF. ■





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