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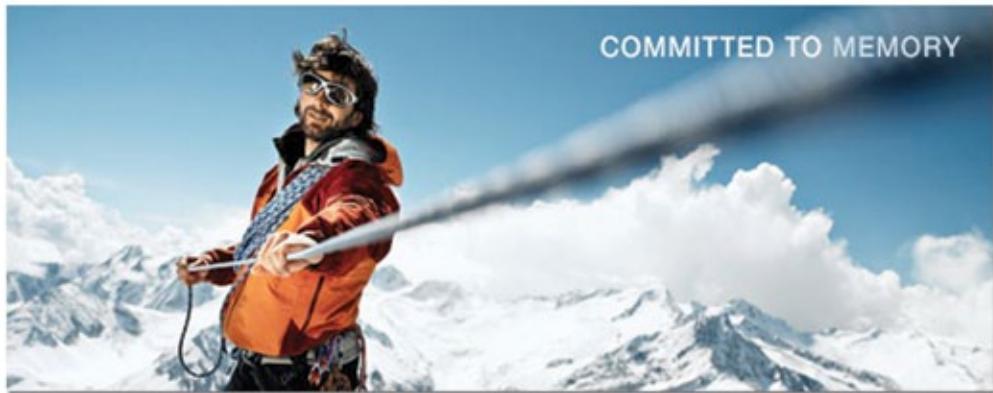
LÉ SAMUEL BECKETT

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web <http://mileata.com> **email** info@mileata.com **Twitter** [@Mileata](https://twitter.com/Mileata)

**Manager**

Capt Declan Barrett
info@military.ie
+353 (0)45 44 5306

Editor

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

Photo/Journalist:
VACANT**Connect**
Sgt Karl Byrne
connect@military.ie**Photographer**
Cpl Neville Coughlan
photo@military.ie
045 44 5307**Subscriptions**
Cpl Kelly Gallagher
+353 (0)45 44 5312
subs@military.ie**Magazine Archivist**
Mr Sean Shinnors**DF/PR Information:**
Cpl Lee Coyle
admin@military.ie
+353 (0)45 44 5308**DF Webmaster**
Sgt Mick Burke
+353 (0)45 44 5309
webmaster@military.ie**Designer/Advertising**
JM Publishing & Media,
Arklow, Co. Wicklow, Ireland
Tel: +353 1 443 3476
Tel: +353 871 344135
Web: www.jmpublishing.ie
Email: info@jmpublishing.ie**Printer**

Turner's Printing Co., Ltd
Earl Street, Longford, Ireland
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Front Cover

The 76mm OTO Melara main armament firing on LÉ Samuel Beckett by A/S David Jones.

For more Defence Forces photographs, checkout: www.flickr.com/photos/dfmagazine

Editorial



Hello and welcome to our March issue. Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to say congratulations to newly promoted Sgt Paul Millar, who has completed his last Connect Newsletter prior to moving to the NCO TW of the Military College - so not that far away. Paul, thank you from all the staff for your dedication and professionalism to the Information Office, PR Branch.

In this issue we are back to our comfortable 36-pages where we hope to gather a full picture from around the forces. *On Parade* is looking very colourful so thank you for all your photos.

Our first *In Focus* page features two DF characters one of whom sadly is no longer with us, Joe O'Mahony of the ONE in Limerick and Sean Mullen a Congo Veteran from Athlone who is currently in Hospital. Then we have the Decommissioning Ceremony of the LÉ Aoife, held in Waterford recently. We have retained our *Veteran's News* page, which contains two updates from ONE, and Cpl Ronnie Daly's retirement presentation in McKee Bks recently.

In our first main article *Tackling Ebola*, by Sgt Karl Byrne we meet the DF Medical team prior to their departure to the UK and then on to Sierra Leone. Next we have *Prepared at all Times* by Capt Stephen Molumphy, on our ISTAR Task Force, taking part in the Nordic Battle Group 2015, in Sweden. In *Brú na Bhfíann - Home of the Brave*, where I visited the ground breaking homeless initiative funded and managed by ONE, in Dublin's inner city. Our Front Cover story features *Testing Times for LÉ Samuel Beckett* by Lt Cdr Caoimhín Mac Unfraidh, about a surface gunnery trial for the gun and fire-control system on P61.

In our *Strategic Review* feature *Next Generation Stealth: The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter* by Robert Tarrant, we learn about the highly rated fighter jet that is now \$150 billion over-budget and 7-years behind schedule. Next in *Command and Control*, Sgt Karl Byrne and Cpl Neville Coughlan travelled to Finner Camp in Donegal to visit troops before deploying on a 72-hour exercise involving two Mowag courses, a command and a dismount course.

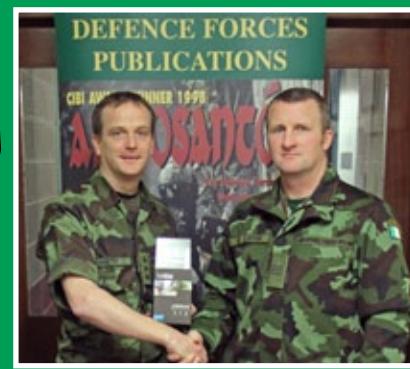
Our *History* spread features an interesting personal reflection of Major General Emmet Dalton by Liam Murray. In *Sport*, Pte Niall Kilcrann along with two other members of 46 Inf Gp, UNDOF, participated in the Tiberias Winter Marathon, the lowest altitude marathon in the world. Plus all our regular features and reviews.

Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald - Editor

Winner! WINNER!

Pictured is Capt Declan Barrett, Manager of An Cosantóir congratulating the winner of our 2014 DF An Cosantóir Photographic Competition, Sgt Dos McAllister, HQ DFTC, where he also presented him with his prize of a GoPro Camera worth €490, which was kindly sponsored

by Barker Photographic Ltd, Cork (www.barkerphotographic.ie). Photo by: Cpl Lee Coyle, PR Branch



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6 | ON PARADE



NBG SOCCER MATCH

The Nordic Battle Group Officers v NCOs Christmas soccer match was a very close and competitive match with the final score 4-4 after full and extra-time. The NCOs won the match 4-3 in the penalty shoot out in Collins Bks, Cork. Photo: Captain Stephen Molumphy, NBC 15

BEST STUDENT

Sgt Phil Cole, 2 BTC was awarded the cane from the NCO Trg Wing, Mil Col as Best Student on the recent Senior NCO Course. Pictured L/R is: RSM Phil Hayden, Coy Sgt Mick Smyth, Col Joe McDonagh, D Inf and Sch Comdt Inf Sch, Sgt Phil Cole and Comdt Sean Holly, OC NCOTW. Photo: Sgt JJ Ryan, HQ DFTC



BEST SOLDIER

Pictured on 28th January 2015, is Brig Gen O'Giollain, GOC DFTC congratulating Pte Daniel Hanley on winning Best Soldier with 104 Recruit Platoon, 1 ACS, DFTC. Photo: Sgt JJ Ryan, HQ DFTC

IN COOPERATION

Capt Mick Murray is pictured giving a talk on 29th January 2015, to 25 members of An Garda Síochána who attended the Forensic Collision Investigator Seminar conducted by the staff of Defence Forces Vehicle Base Workshop (DFVBW), Tpt Gp, DFTC. Photo: Comdt Laura Fitzpatrick, EO Tpt Gp, DFTC



KILMICHAEL: A BATTLEFIELD STUDY

Comdt Sean A Murphy Retd is pictured after giving a brief to the Snr C&S Course and presenting a copy of his book, Kilmichael: A Battlefield Study to Comdt Sue Ramsbottom (OIC DF Library) and Lt Col Liam Condon (Chief Inst OTW). Photo by: Cpl Neville Coughlan, PR Branch



DF MASSED BANDS CONCERT

Pictured at the official launch of the 2015 Defence Forces Massed Bands Concert is (L/R): Col Patrick Flynn (EO & 2i/C 1 Bde), Mr Ciaran McMahon (MD Ford Irl), Brig Gen Kieran Brennan (GOC 1 Bde) accompanied by members of the 1 Bde Brass Band. *Photo by: Sgt Barry McCarthy, HQ 1 Bde*

TRIATHLON IRELAND COACHES

Pictured from L/R is: Sgt Johanna Tilley-Rock, Pte John Joyce, Comdt Mairtin Coffey and Mr Eamonn Tilley, of Triathlon Ireland in December 2014, after Pte Joyce and Comdt Coffey completed their Level 2 Triathlon Ireland Coaching Course. This has brought the number of DF Level 2 Coaches to 3 including Sgt Tilley-Rock who completed her course 5-years ago. Sgt Tilley-Rock was also finally assessed by Coaching Ireland that same day and successfully passed her Tutors Course - this is a first for the Defence Forces. Everything was overseen by Triathlon Ireland's Head Tutor Mr Eamonn Tilley who is the Manager for Coaching and Education. He has been great help to the Defence Forces Triathlon Association (DFTA), as well as a big thank you to Comdt Ross Dunphy and his staff for all their help. *Photo: Sgt Johanna Tilley-Rock, HQ DFTC*



IN MEMORY ▲

On 10th February members of CIS Group, DFTC and friends presented €1,310 to St Bridget's Hospice Curragh. The presentation was made to Eileen McDonald and Dolly Weller from the Hospice in the CIS School. The money was raised from the Annual RSM Joe McGann Memorial Walk in Stradbally Woods last December and a Race Night held at the CIS Group Christmas Dinner. Many thanks to all those who took part in the walk and race night, a great time was had by all. *Photo by: Sgmn Trevor Cummins, CIS Group*

DOGGIE KEANEY 10TH ▲ ANNIVERSARY

The Naval Service Fly-Fishing Club (NSFFC) held their annual Doggie Keaney competition where they also raise money for the Mercy Hospital Cancer Research Unit, Cork. This year they got a big sponsorship of boats and engines from McDonald's of Middleton. The overall winner of a Waterford glass trophy was Mark O'Halloran. Pictured handing over a cheque for €1,764 is L/R: Jimmy Losty (NSFFC), Deirdre Finn (Mercy Hospital), Paul Ahern (Mercy Hospital) and Pius Nolan (NSFFC). *Photo: A/B David Jones, NS*



THE HOULIHAN FAMILY ▲

Sgmn Keith Houlihan, Cpl Douglas Houlihan, CQ Paddy Houlihan, Cpl Lawrence Houlihan and Sgmn Ryan Houlihan are all serving members of the CIS Group, DFTC. Keith (10-years) and Ryan (2-Years) are sons of Cpl Douglas Houlihan (36-years). Paddy and Laurence Houlihan have 38 and 33-years service respectively. Douglas, Paddy and Laurence are the sons of BQ Lawrence Houlihan Retd (33-years). Their uncles also served in the Defence Forces: CS PJ Houlihan Retd (25-years), BSM Mick Houlihan Retd (33-years), RSM Cyril Houlihan Retd (27-years) and Sgt Declan Houlihan Retd (43-years). Their grandfather, Keith and Ryan's great grandfather, RSM Patrick Houlihan Retd served for 31-years and would have served longer but retirement was then capped at 31-years. Their combined service is 301-years. *Photo by: Sgt Mick Burke, PR Branch*



X COUNTRY WINNERS ▲

Members of 1 Cn Cois, Galway were the winners of the 1 Bde Senior Cross Country. The competition took place on 28th January in Limerick. Pictured from L/R: Comdt Murphy (2 i/c 1 Cn Cois), Ptes Landers, ó Máille, Lt Col Carroll (OC 1 Cn Cois), Pte Halpenny, Sgt Devlin and Coy Sgt O'Hanlon (A/BSM). *Photo by: Cpl John Greene, 1 Cn Cois*

Joe O'Mahony

A Tribute



BY GERRY ENRIGHT PRESIDENT AND PRO PATRICK SARSFIELD BRANCH ONE

"It was with great sadness that members of the Defence Forces, An Fórsa Cosanta Áitiúil (FCÁ) and the Organisation of National Ex-Servicemen and Women (ONE) learned of the death of Joe O'Mahony PC.

Capt O'Mahony spent 40-years with the FCÁ as a Capt in B Coy, 14 Inf Bn and, on retirement, joined ONE. Joe was a leading light in the ONE, he was very involved at all levels of the organisation and held the position of secretary, PRO and he also served as president for three years. In 2013 he was elected to the board of directors of ONE in Dublin and in



January 2014 he was elected as president and chairman of the Southern Area Council and was still very active up to a few weeks ago.

As a younger man, Joe was very involved in pitch and putt and won many competitions in the Munster area. He trained as a psychiatric nurse and worked in St. Joseph's Hospital in Limerick. Joe was also very involved in bringing the International Veterans' Parade to Limerick as part of City of Culture. He also spearheaded the opening of the ONE drop-in centre in Edward Street.

On a personal note and as Branch President, I will miss him for his advice and expertise on all matters. He will be sadly missed by his family, his ONE colleagues and many friends."

Joe is survived by his wife Josephine, daughter Patrice, brothers Christy and John and dear friend and neighbour Aisling. ■

CONGO VETERAN



Pictured on 9th August 1960 are members of the 33rd Inf Bn, on the eve of their departure to Congo, Africa. Much has been written on these trailblazing peace keeping missions, where sadly 24 Defence Forces soldiers died during the 4-year mission.

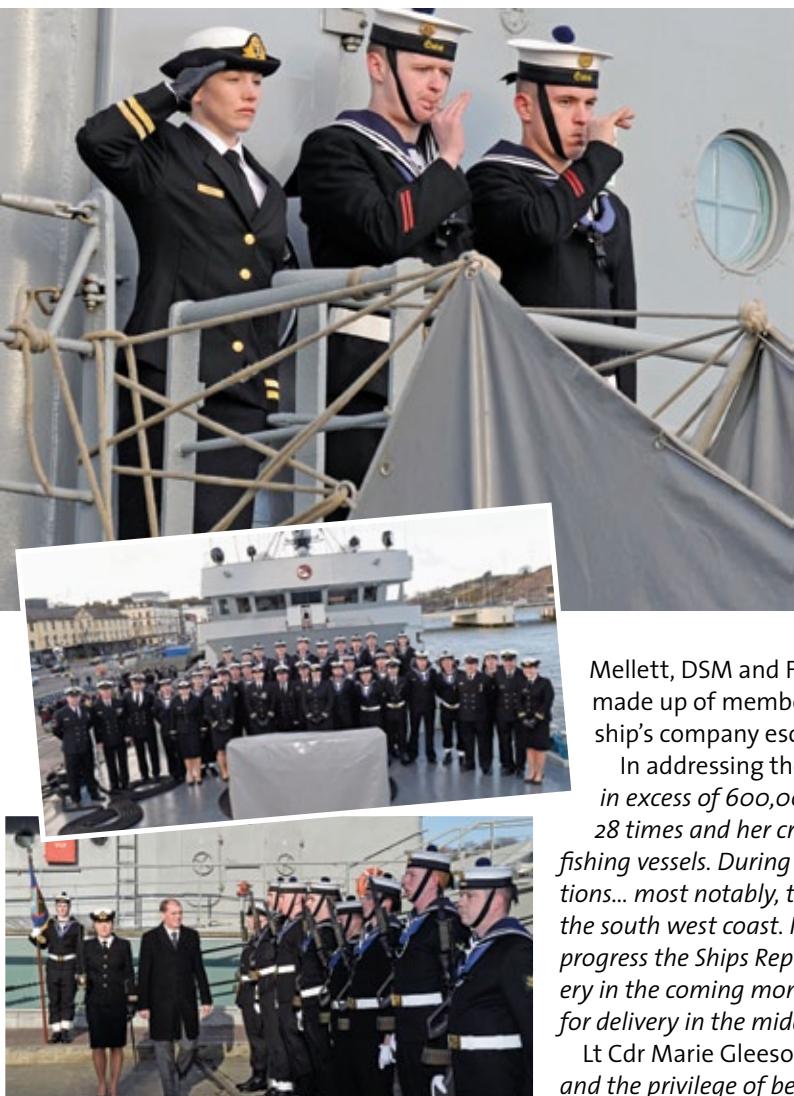
Amongst those pictured is Congo Veteran John (Sean) Mullins (1st left, front row), who is a retired Sgt from Moate Co Westmeath. Sean was stationed at UN Headquarters in Elizabethville and at home was stationed in Custume Bks, Athlone.

Sean has spent the last 2-years in St Vincent's Hospital, Athlone due to ill health. The photo and article which is behind Sean's bed was reprinted

in the Irish Times Magazine on 20th April 2013. It was Sean's friend Oliver Horgan who noticed the newspaper page and sent it to us.

Sean loves to read and Oliver brings him in magazines occasionally, he has heard of *An Cosantóir*, but has not read it - we sent Sean a few back copies recently so hopefully he enjoys them. Thank you to Oliver for bringing us this story. *We would like to wish Sean a full recovery.* ■





LÉ Aoife bids farewell

BY NAVAL SERVICE PRESS OFFICE
PHOTOS BY A/S DAVID JONES

On 31st January 2015, a Ceremonial Decommissioning to mark a poignant yet proud day in the history of LÉ Aoife took place on the Quayside in Waterford City where she is twinned with. Commissioned on 29th November 1979, she has given over 35-years of loyal and dedicated service to the State. She has been crewed by in excess of 2,000 Naval Service personnel, both serving and retired in a range of maritime operations.

The Minister of State at the Department of Defence, Mr Paul Kehoe, T.D., escorted by D COS Sp, Rear Admiral Mark Mellett, DSM and FOCNS, Commodore Hugh Tully, reviewed an honour guard made up of members of the final crew of the LÉ Aoife. He then reviewed the final ship's company escorted by OC LÉ Aoife, Lt Cdr Marie Gleeson.

In addressing the parade, Minister Kehoe stated that, "LÉ Aoife has ...travelled in excess of 600,000 nautical miles, an equivalent of circumnavigating the globe 28 times and her crew has boarded over 4,700 vessels at sea and detained over 440 fishing vessels. During her service, LÉ Aoife has been involved in many successful operations... most notably, the recovery in 1985 of the black box from Air India Flight 182 off the south west coast. I am pleased to report that the Dept of Defence is continuing to progress the Ships Replacement Programme. ...the LÉ James Joyce, is scheduled for delivery in the coming months. ... an order for a third new Offshore Patrol Vessel scheduled for delivery in the middle of 2016."

Lt Cdr Marie Gleeson OC LÉ Aoife addressed all those present, "I have the honour and the privilege of being the last Officer Commanding of the LÉ Aoife. ...Every ship develops a character and the LÉ Aoife has been home to thousands of Naval personnel over the past 36-years – she has brought us safely back to port on every occasion and has

never let us down – if she had a voice of her own she would regale you all for hours with tales of the exploits of the sailors of the Irish Navy through the years. She is a fine ship and as you can see she looks as well today as she did when she was commissioned 36-years ago which is a testament to the sailors who have maintained her with pride through the years. Today is a day of mixed emotions – we are all extremely proud to have served onboard her, we are excited at the prospect of the arrival of her replacement the LÉ James Joyce – a state of the art vessel which will serve the country well in the hostile seas of the Atlantic and yet we are all sad to see the departure of the LÉ Aoife from the Naval Service Fleet."

Lt Cdr Marie Gleeson made a presentation to the first Capt of LÉ Aoife in 1979, Cdr Eoin McNamara Retd, of a framed picture of the first ship's company at their private audience with Pope John Paul II in the Vatican in June 1980. A presentation was also made to Warrant Officer Martin Doran, who was a member of the first crew of the LÉ Aoife where he was posted as the Leading Gunner. WO Doran is the only member of the original crew who is currently serving in the Naval Service and he has the distinction of being the most senior NCO in the Naval Service holding the appointment of Master At Arms.

Naval Chaplain, Fr Des Campion blessed The Naval Jack and the Decommissioning Pennant before they were lowered. The Ship's Battle Ensign was lowered for the last time and the ceremony was concluded with the playing of the National Anthem, with musical honours provided by the Band of 1 Bde. The Decommissioning pennant is 42-foot long representing one foot for every year of her commissioned service plus an additional six feet. LÉ Aoife's Naval Jack was presented by A/ CommOP McRedmond to the most senior NCO of LÉ Aoife's final crew, the Coxn CPO Martin Hamilton. LÉ Aoife's Decommissioning Pennant was presented by PO Comop Brendan Kearney to OC LÉ Aoife, Lt Cdr Marie Gleeson.

The ship's company continued their generous support of the Children's Ward University Hospital Waterford by presenting a donation of a cheque for €700. ■



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

THE TWO AMIGOS

Harry Holloway and Paddy Burke, both members of the Mícheál Mac Aodh Bhuí Ballincollig branch of ONE. They are affectionately known in ONE circles as 'The Two Amigos', where you see one, you'll almost certainly see the other. They are both enthusiastic ONE members and can be seen at most veterans' events, including all the ONE 'Laethanta na bhFiann' (Warriors' Days) held annually throughout Munster. Harry together with his trusty camcorder and tripod is transported to these events by his very dependable chauffeur, Paddy. Harry makes a DVD of all these occasions and being the *flaithiúil* person he is gives them out free-of-charge. Photo: Domhnall Mac Cárthaigh FS. PRO SAC of ONE



Cork Harbour Tragedy 1942

The Commemoration Ceremony for the 'Irish Poplar' tragedy, also known as the Cork Harbour Tragedy was held on Saturday 13th December 2014. When at Christmas time in 1942 five people died tragically. The Commemoration Ceremony recalled in Cobh included Prayers, Roll of Honour, Hymns, Poem, Wreath Laying, Military Honours and Song. Photo: Domhnall Mac Cárthaigh FS. PRO SAC of ONE

A GENEROUS HEART

On the 6th February, a retirement presentation was held in the NCOs Mess, McKee Bks for Cpl Ronnie Daly, who retired after 40-years service in the Defence Forces. For his last few years Ronnie worked as sacristan in McKee Bks Church, where a generous collection of €1,000 was made for him. Fr Pat Mernagh CF presented it to Ronnie, but being the man he is, he generously re-donated it to the Cystic Fibrosis Unit of Temple Street Children's University Hospital. On the night a further collection was made raising a further €1,600 for the Hospital. Ronnie is pictured here presenting the cheque to Alfreda O'Brien-Kavanagh of Temple Street Children's University Hospital, along with Sgt Major Mick Dillon, DFHQ. Photo by: Sgt Mick Burke, PR Branch





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Where we are

TACKLING Ebola

BY SGT KARL BYRNE PHOTOS CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN (EXCEPT SIERRA LEONE)

On 11th November 2014, the Minister for Defence Mr Simon Coveney TD announced that members of the Defence Forces would go to Sierra Leone to assist in dealing with the Ebola crisis in West Africa. "Irish Defence Forces personnel have a sterling record of service in support of humanitarian crises across the globe," the minister said. "Working in partnership with the Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade under the ECAT [Emergency Civilian Assistance Team] initiative, and possibly with the UK armed forces, these soldiers will bring a wealth of experience that enhances Ireland's support to the people of Sierra Leone."

While there has been a three-man team from the DF deployed in Sierra Leone since November to support staff in the Irish Embassy in Freetown, the new group would be comprised of medical personnel and would be the first to deploy to an Ebola-stricken area.

With the first cases in March 2014, the current outbreak in West Africa is the largest and most complex Ebola outbreak since the virus was first discovered in 1976, with more cases and deaths in this outbreak than all others combined.

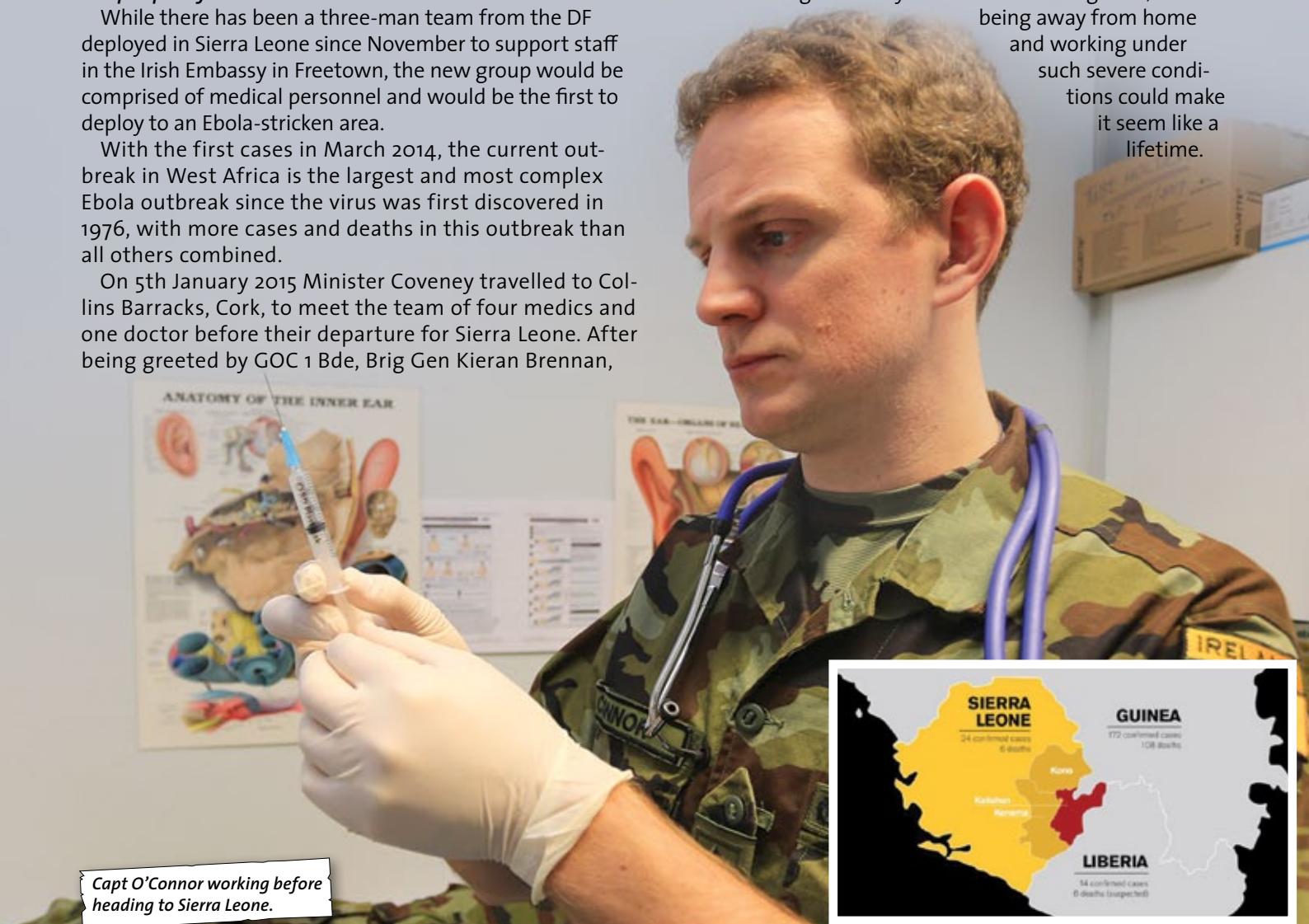
On 5th January 2015 Minister Coveney travelled to Collins Barracks, Cork, to meet the team of four medics and one doctor before their departure for Sierra Leone. After being greeted by GOC 1 Bde, Brig Gen Kieran Brennan,

and inspecting an honour guard, the minister was introduced to the five-man team of Capt Eugene O'Connor, Sgt Dave Sliney, Cpl Pierce Foley, Cpl Frank Noonan and Tpr Richard Fitzgerald.

The minister shook hands with each member of the team and posed for photographs before they retired to the Officers' Mess, where Mr Coveney spoke to the team at length about how important their mission was and how it was extremely important that Ireland play a part in the current Ebola crisis.

The team have committed to a three-month tour of duty, which at first glance may not seem like a long time, but

being away from home and working under such severe conditions could make it seem like a lifetime.



Speaking to the minister the team were very positive about their mission, knowing that they have received the best training and the best personal protective equipment (PPE) possible to carry out the task ahead, and they have every confidence in completing their mission to the highest of standards.

Minister Coveney's final words to the team were: "It is a brave decision you have taken. I am confident in your skill sets and that you can complete the mission in a highly professional manner."

While several West African countries have suffered to varying degrees, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone have been the most severely affected. The virus has affected over 21,000 people with nearly 8,500 confirmed deaths so far, and unfortunately this number is still rising. In Sierra Leone, where our team will be deployed, there have been over 2,700 deaths to date, with more expected.

The team spent a period in Aldershot Bks in the UK, where they received mission briefings, treatment protocol training and PPE training, before deploying to Kerry Town, Sierra Leone, on 15th January. The facilities in Kerry Town for Ebola virus disease treatment are of international standards and also offer treatment to healthcare workers who are providing care to Ebola victims in the region.

Ebola spreads by direct contact with the bodily fluids (such as saliva, mucus, vomit, faeces, sweat, tears, breast milk, urine, blood and semen) of a person who has developed symptoms of the disease; virus, fever, sore throat, muscle pains and headaches. Symptoms emerge between two days and three weeks after contracting the virus. As the disease progresses it leads to vomiting, diarrhoea, a rash and decreased functionality of the liver and kidneys, followed typically by both internal and external bleeding. There is as yet no known effective medication or vaccine for Ebola, something to which this crisis may focus much-needed attention.

As you read this, Ebola continues to affect West Africa, but with increasing international efforts it is to be hoped that the virus will be contained and, hopefully, eventually eliminated. ■



Vox Pops



Capt Eugene O'Connor (Doctor)

"We are providing support to a British hospital contingent treating healthcare workers and supporting British medical units both directly and indirectly. I hope that we can contribute in a positive manner to alleviate the suffering in Sierra Leone. Hopefully we can take any lessons learnt on the ground back to help to deal with any possible cases in Ireland and feed it back to the HSE."



Cpl Pierce Foley (Medic)

"It is a very different type of trip for me as it is my first unarmed mission. Even though there is a high risk

involved there should be no problems, given our safety protocols and the PPE provided."



Cpl Frank Noonan (Medic)

"I am really looking forward to the trip. It's an exciting opportunity and one I couldn't turn down. You always want to do something good in your lifetime and make a difference and hopefully as a team we can do that in the fight against Ebola."



Tpr Richard Fitzgerald (Medic)

"It's nice to be a part of such a big international effort. Working with the British medical units is a great opportunity and it's also fantastic to carry out a mission in a humanitarian role. It's one I doubt I'll not forget for a long time."

Prepared at ALL TIMES

BY CAPT STEPHEN MOLUMPHY,
ISTAR TF HQ, NBG 2015



ISTAR Coy Comdr, Comdt Keohane addressing the Coy in Sweden prior to deployment on 12-day exercise.

Ad Omnia Paratus ('Prepared at all Times'): NBG motto

Swiftly and stealthily in the darkness the terrorist group 'Nobok Movement', (played by elite Swedish recce troops), advanced through the eastern sector of the Änneberg spruce forest in diamond formation with weapons cocked. Using their thermal NVE, their objective was to find and capture or kill the Irish ISTAR Coy sensor teams operating in covert OPs dispersed throughout the snow-covered terrain.

These assets had been deployed by ISTAR Coy Comdr, Comdt Cathal Keohane, in response to the Battle-Group Commander's priority information requirements (PIRs) issued by OC ISTAR Task Force, Lt Col Paul Carey, located 100km away in ISTAR TF HQ at the Battle-Group forward operating base (FOB). The sensor teams, tasked to maintain continuous 24/7 surveillance on named areas of interest (NAIs), transmitted not only photographic and video data back to TF HQ but also live footage utilising new capabilities developed specifically by the ISTAR TF for the rapid transfer of encrypted information via 3G/4G networks.

The covert OPs closely observed the Nobok fighters as they searched for footprints and looked for broken twigs/bushes that may have indicated recent activity in this secluded part of the forest.

On this occasion the ISTAR Coy sensors were not compromised and the terrorists withdrew tactically from the forest. However, they would continue to conduct random, extensive search patrols for the duration of the 12-day exercise.

These search patrols were just a small fraction of the numerous daily activities that occurred throughout the exercise for the

Nordic Battle-Group (NBG 15). The exercise, designated Joint Action 14, conducted in Sweden in October and November, was one of the biggest to take place in Europe in 2014, comprising over 2,500 soldiers from Sweden, Norway, Finland, Latvia, Estonia and Ireland.

The purpose of the exercise was to evaluate the ability of the multinational NBG to operate together effectively and to certify NBG 15 as having achieved full operational capability (FOC), in order to go on standby on 1st January 2015.

For the Defence Forces, this was the first time to deploy an ISTAR TF to the NBG. The unit, from 1 Brigade, consists of TF HQ, ISTAR Recce Coy, Logs Sp Gp, Swedish Electronic Warfare (EW) team and a mixed Irish/Estonian Field HUMINT team (FHT) as well as a number of national enablers. This multinational element of the ISTAR TF was reinforced by the DCO being a Swedish officer and a number of Swedish officers and NCOs serving in the HQ.

During Joint Action 14 these attachments enabled the Irish-led multinational ISTAR TF to utilise a wide spectrum of assets to collect essential information from various sources, which were then transmitted to TF HQ to be collated, analysed and processed into intelligence products (INTSUMs/INTREPs). These intelligence products were sent directly to the Battle-Group HQ and proved pivotal in progressing the exercise scenarios and developing kinetic taskings for the remaining NBG land and air forces.

The accurate, up-to-date and near-real-time (NRT) information that was gathered by the ISTAR sensors proved critical to the



Force Commander's rapid decision-making process in determining the location of future NAIs and their possible development into TAIs (target areas of interest).

Overall, the Defence Forces' participation in Joint Action 14 proved remarkably beneficial to all elements of the ISTAR TF. The expeditionary logistical deployment of the Irish personnel and their equipment, which consisted of 20 containers and over 50 vehicles, including APCs, MRVs, LAVs, and a multitude of logistical vehicles, from Collins Barracks, Cork, to Hägshult Airbase, Sweden, was in itself an impressive feat of planning and organisation by ISTAR TF logistic personnel in conjunction with J4 personnel from DFHQ.

As well as testing the logistic capabilities of the DF, the ISTAR TF is adding to the DF's capability development through the IT infrastructure it has developed. This includes utilising a virtual private network (VPN) to send encrypted data, in particular

photos and video, from mounted and dismounted sensor teams on the ground to the ISTAR TF HQ and on to the BG HQ in NRT, thus facilitating a common operation picture (COP) across the ISTAR TF and Battle-Group HQ.

In addition to this new capability development, the ISTAR TF has taken the SITAWARE command-and-control software and significantly developed and enhanced its capabilities. Both of these developments have been tested in Ireland and Sweden and have worked flawlessly.

(These new capability developments have appli-

cability to other DF areas, particularly overseas missions, and will be the subject of a capability development paper to GOC 1 Bde.)

Joint Action 14 saw the staff officers and NCOs of the ISTAR TF HQ rigorously exercised and tested 24/7 over the 12 days. This involved dealing with a variety of multinational combat units, combat support units and an expeditionary air wing, which responded to the intelligence outputs produced by the ISTAR TF.

Taskings included ensuring all ISTAR information collected was streamlined to the appropriate cells for analysis; ensuring 9-liner medevac reports received resulted in the air assets getting to the casualty immediately; ensuring personal recovery procedures were implemented correctly and tasking the QRF Latvian Infantry Coy to provide support; analysing reports submitted by ISTAR EW assets, whose sensors picked up encrypted adversary communications, and processing this into actionable intelligence; and, crucially, providing logistical support to all ISTAR TF multinational assets located inside a high-threat environment.

It is important to mention that although the Irish ISTAR TF was

one of the smallest in number for this exercise, it was approached by larger nations for assistance relating to logistical, CIS and operational matters. This was best reflected when the NBG Comd, Col Larsson, requested Lt Col Carey to host the final planning brief inside the Irish ISTAR TF HQ for the purpose of developing the plan of action for a combined-arms offensive assault (involving 1,200 soldiers) on the adversary forces (terrorist training camp and an organised criminal organisation supply camp). This allowed the ISTAR TF to utilise not only its ability to produce live feed from the target site but also to provide NRT target packages, in digital format, on the opposition force, utilising the SITAWARE system. This

system was further developed by the ISTAR TF during its training period and fully utilised in Sweden, allowing the TF to operate in a digital environment as opposed to the old paper one.

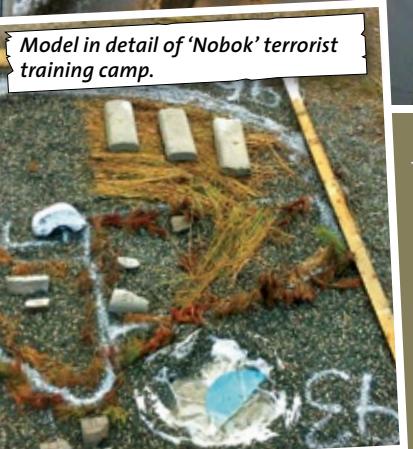
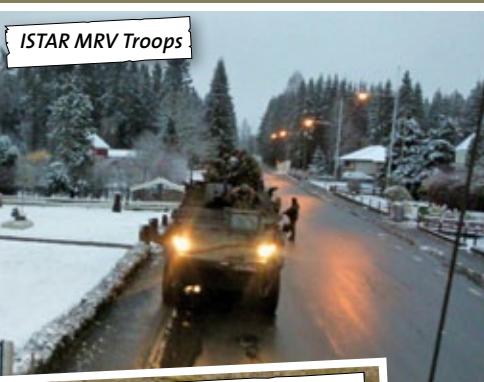
ISTAR TF staff briefed other commanders involved in the operation on the most current intelligence picture, which included live footage of the TAIs from covert ISTAR Coy sensors operating in freezing conditions on the snow-covered ground. The final assault was very impressive, as Swedish artillery and an infantry battalion, using Leopard 2 MBTs, broke through the defensive positions of the adversary forces with ISTAR Coy conducting continuous information gathering operations throughout.

In addition, elements of ISTAR Recce Coy deployed their Javelin missiles to take out an armoured threat that was identified moments prior to the Swedish battalion's attack.

During DV (distinguished visitors) day at the end of the exercise, ISTAR TF was visited by Minister of State at the Department of Defence Mr Paul Kehoe TD, D COS Ops, GOC 1 Bde, D Ops/Plans and a number of DoD officials, who expressed themselves extremely satisfied with the performance of the ISTAR TF, its professionalism, and its technical ability.

Nordic Battle-Group 15 is now on standby for any EU-designated missions until 30 June 2015. The ISTAR TF is on five days' notice to have its equipment and vehicles ready and all personnel are on four days' notice to report to barracks, and to be ready to deploy within 20 days.

During the standby period the ISTAR TF will continue to run courses for its own personnel and also 1 Bde. In addition, two major exercises are planned for the TF in March and June, both of 12/14 days' duration in order to keep up the skills developed during training in 2014. It is expected that the NBG FC will visit the final exercise in June to thank Irish personnel for their valued contribution. ■



Brú na Bhfiann

HOME OF THE BRAVE

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

PHOTOS/MAIN IMAGE BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD



"The road is long, with many a winding turn, that leads us to who knows where, who knows when. But I'm strong, strong enough to carry him, he ain't heavy, he's my brother.

So on we go, his welfare is of my concern, no burden is he to bear, we'll get there. For I know, he would not encumber me, he ain't heavy, he's my brother."

If you read the first two verses of “He Ain’t Heavy, He’s My Brother” the hit song by The Hollies in 1969, then hopefully it will help you understand the ethos behind Brú na Bhfiann (Home of the Brave) and the Organisation for Ex-Servicemen and Women (ONE).

On 31st January 2015, Defence Force Veterans who are not members of ONE visited Brú na Bhfiann for an open day where they would learn about what the home provides for former members of the DF.

The idea for the home, which is run by ONE, came about during the bad winter of 1988/1989, when a number of destitute ex-servicemen were found dead on the streets of Dublin, along with many other homeless people. As a result of this, ten members of ONE raised money (some by mortgaging their own homes!) to purchase a 20-bedroom house in Queen Street, Dublin, for ex-servicemen and women who needed accommodation.

After a number of years of successful operation, ONE was approached by developers who wanted to redevelop the area. A deal was struck that saw the old building demolished and the home moving to a custom-built, six-storey building on North King Street and Queen Street, where it was officially opened by President Mary McAleese in 2005.

The home is managed by Sgt Maj (retd) Richard ‘Dick’ Dillon (5 Inf Bn) with assistant manager Sinead Black and nine other members of staff, most of whom are ex-military - 6 are part-time and 4 full-time.

The home, which has a 40-bedroom occupancy, is open 24/7, 365 days a year and currently has 29 residents, with two bedrooms ready at all times in case they are required urgently. Residents are served three meals a day. A further eight bedrooms are available to rent at reasonable rates – see advert on page 11.

Brú na Bhfiann also houses the offices and conference rooms of ONE. The building is compliant with all building, health-and-safety and fire regulations, and is fully alarmed and secured.

Residents stay in Brú na Bhfiann for many reasons, including marital breakdown, financial difficulties, or one of many other problems that can lead to someone finding themselves in need of a home.

Funding for Brú na Bhfiann comes from a number of sources. The primary funding comes through an annual grant of €180,000 from the Homeless Section of Dublin City Council, with whom the home works very closely, while residents pay between €130-150 weekly, depending on their income, and occasional monies come in from the overnight accommodation rooms. The remainder comes from donations.

In addition to an annual audit, Dublin City Council also carries out a quarterly audit before releasing funding for the next three months.

In some cases, former members of the DF who require assistance from Brú na Bhfiann may be elderly or suffering with a long-term, or even terminal, illness. In such challenging situations the staff work well with government departments and agencies such as the Dept of Social Welfare, the HSE, etc. To this end, Brú na Bhfiann has service-level agreements with a number of organisations, including the HSE, the Central Mental Hospital, and other local health services.

Continuing to speak about the challenges faced by some former servicemen and women, Dick said: “Our residents don’t have the finances to stay in private accommodation, and it’s not feasible for people on social welfare to pay for private ac-

commodation in Dublin City. Also, due to the Alien Act 1935, anyone who has lived outside of Ireland for over two years has to make an appeal to get listed for social housing and welfare; this has affected a number of former DF members who went to live in the US, Canada or Australia – so they are assessed and we help them if possible. We also assist the Homeless Section of Dublin City Council when asked."

Following the success of Brú Na bhFiann, two smaller homes have been opened by ONE: Beechwood House, Letterkenny (2004), and Custume House, Athlone (2006). These homes and two drop-in centres in Limerick and Dundalk receive no government funding and rely solely on ONE fundraising to keep them open.

Dick says he held this open day to show the truth about the home, its work and its residents and to discredit baseless rumours on social media sites that the home housed 'wasters, drunks and hobos' and that some of the staff were on excessive wages. "There's no one working in any of the homes on anything above the average industrial wage, let me tell you," he says.

Since opening, Brú Na bhFiann has accommodated over 6,000 visitors (B&B) and has housed 140 ex-service personnel (not including the current 29 residents) on both a long- and a short-term basis. The home is well thought of within the international military veteran fraternity and recently hosted a visit from members of the Royal British Legion, who say that nothing similar is in place in the UK.

Dick and Sinead both agreed that fundraising in current times is hard. Dick says, "The guys and girls of ONE still put on their blazers and go out and do it anytime they can!"



ONE's main fundraising effort comes through its annual Fuchsia campaign. The fuchsia was chosen as the campaign emblem because for many it is a reminder of home when seen overseas. Also, in the West of Ireland the fuchsia is also known as deora De ('God's tears').

The fuchsia initiative, first launched in 2009, involves the sale of a €2 badge inscribed with 'Cuimhnímis' ('let us remember') - in remembrance of those who have served in the Defence Forces.

While the Fuchsia campaign raised €52,000 last year, it is sobering to know that the UK's Poppy appeal raises €250,000 annually in Ireland.

Since 1986, it is estimated that 4,700 have retired on pension from the DF, so there is a large amount of veterans out there who could potentially help fund these ONE initiatives and help spread the word by wearing a fuchsia. If even a fairly small percentage of those who have retired from the DF and those still serving purchased one €2 Fuchsia badge a year Brú Na bhFiann and the other homes would be funded without worry. Let's hope 2015, is a better year for the Fuchsia campaign.

Most of us will feel better or humble if we help those who have worn the uniform before us and who have now fallen on hard times or are without a roof over their heads. So I ask you, never look down upon someone unless you are helping them up. ■



ONE has been in existence since 1951 when it was established following the amalgamation of a number of ex-servicemen's organisations. In 2002 it was registered as a company limited by guarantee, as ONE, and has since been granted charitable status.

In the near 65 years since its foundation the organisation has gone from strength to strength and today has 42 branches. Membership is still growing, not only throughout Ireland, but in the UK, the US and Australia.

ONE's main objective is to look after the welfare of ex-servicemen and women by providing accommodation and other supports to homeless, elderly or disabled members who may have fallen on hard times. It also offers a range of social, cultural and sporting activities to its members in order to develop a spirit of comradeship between serving and retired members of the services.

ONE's website www.oneconnect.ie and newsletter 'ONE Connect' enable former members of the Defence Forces to keep in touch with news and developments in the military world.



TESTING TIMES

for LÉ Samuel Beckett

BY LT CDR CAOIMHIN MAC UNFRAIDH, FLEET WARFARE OFFICER, FLEET OPERATIONAL READINESS, STANDARDS AND TRAINING SECTION PHOTOS A/S DAVID JONES

The Naval Service's anti-surface gunnery mission is the focus of all routine gunnery training but it is also developing a limited fire-support capability in conjunction with the Artillery Corps and the Air Corps, in support of joint Defence Forces objectives.

The NS has consistently made the case that 76mm is the minimum calibre naval armament consistent with the proper execution of its mission, as it enables the engagement of targets from close-in to stand-off ranges and is of sufficient calibre to penetrate and disable a steel hull, giving the NS a stopping power that it lacks with its secondary armaments.

The complex, modern fire-control systems required to make full use of these weapons demand a significant effort from technicians and impose a training burden on officers and gunners. However, these challenges must be met in order to ensure that the NS maintains a fighting capacity and deterrent, and that it can properly defend, protect and support Ireland's interests at sea.

The OTO Melara 76mm is the primary armament on five ships of the current NS fleet, including the latest addition, LÉ Samuel Beckett.

In June 2013 the Flag Officer Commanding Naval Service (FOCNS) directed the Standing Naval Warfare Group (SNWG) to design a surface gunnery trial for the gun and fire-control system on P61 (LÉ Samuel Beckett), which was then under construction, in order to 'confirm that the new fire unit is functioning satisfactorily and meets the fleet standard for accuracy and consistency'. Accordingly, a planning cell was formed and set to work.

This was an opportunity to deliver a financial saving, as otherwise a trial would have to have been contracted from a private company at significant expense. It was also a chance for the gunnery specialists within the NS to deliver a practical return on their training.

The SNWG conducted a joint advanced naval gunnery exercise (JANGE) in August 2013 as a precursor to the acceptance trial. Using P42 (LÉ Ciara) as the firing ship, the JANGE developed the techniques necessary for fall-of-shot observation and over-the-horizon targeting by helicopter to ranges up to 16km. (As a point of interest, it is believed to have been the longest range shoot in Defence Forces' history, as the Glen of Imaal does not allow for the full capabilities of the artillery's 105mm guns to be exercised.)

The trial was to be conducted over three days and in accordance with statistical principles. The trials data - with factory/harbour acceptance trials that had already been completed - would allow



certain conclusions to be drawn about aspects of performance that could not be fully tested within the given time frame. A tentative plan was briefed by the trials team to the Director of Ordnance who assigned a senior officer to oversee the project. Planning meetings were then held between the Air Corps, the Artillery Corps and the NS trials team. The trial at this point was given, perhaps inevitably, the title Operation Godot and warning orders were issued.

The plan may be summarised as an anti-surface warfare trial, biased to the medium - and long-range characteristics of the fire-unit, with a live-firing element, in three phases: bedding-in, statistical trial and an operational shoot, with fall-of-shot to be recorded for analysis.

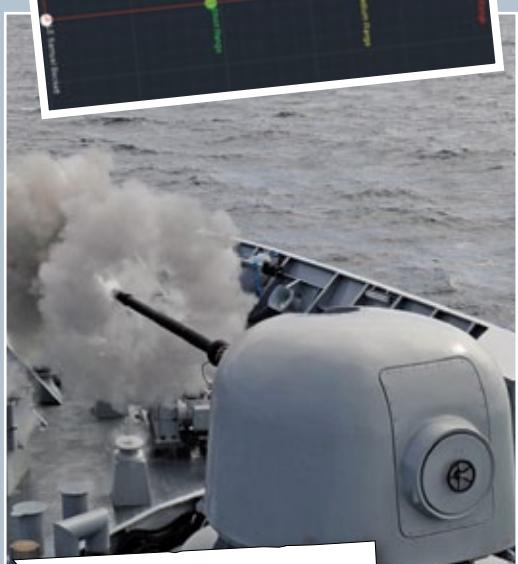
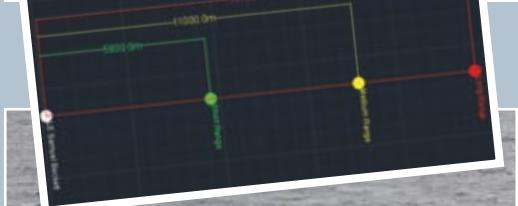
The trial also had to stand up to the scrutiny of the contractors who had tendered and fitted the gun and the FCS (OTO Melara and General Electric respectively), each of whom would have representatives present throughout.

LÉ Samuel Beckett proceeded to Danger Area D-13 off the South Coast and layed three Danbuoys 5,800m, 11,000m and 15,100m from a gunline: 35%, 75% and 95% of the system's maximum range. (Danbuoys are moored metal buoys whose original purpose was to mark a swept channel through a minefield. In fact, the Danbuoys used on this occasion originally belonged to LÉ Grainne, a coastal minesweeper commissioned in 1971.)

The Danbuoys served as references for the aerial observers, visible targets for the electro-optical fire-control system and as conspicuous marks for the radar operators. Laying multiple Danbuoys at the precise locations called for by the plan was a precision navigation and seamanship evolution and it was pleasing to see this old skill displayed by the new ship's team.

Ten rounds (LÉ Samuel Beckett's first) were fired at various bearings and elevations, maximizing vertical and horizontal stresses to induce the latent deflection that might remain in the installation (eg deformation of the gun deck). These deflections were then measured by a delicate tilt-and-alignment check and factored into the fire-control computer prior to the trial.

Such adjustments are normal in a new-build but they must



76mm OTO Melara main armament, rate of fire: 85 rds/min - range: out to 14kms

be measured and accounted for or there will be an adverse affect on the fire-control solution. Periodic tilt-and-alignment checks will be carried out by the Naval Ordnance Section throughout the life of the ship and the error will be reduced and refined.

The bedding-in shoot was also used to validate the operation and timing of the loading, recoil and ejection mechanisms. LÉ Samuel Beckett then returned to the Naval Base where NS ordnance personnel conducted the tilt-and-alignment measurements and tabulated the results.

The three Danbuoy ranges then became the next focus of the trial which consisted of 24 firing 'runs' at three ranges. Warmers were fired at intervals as necessary to eliminate cold-barrel correction requirements. For each of the three ranges, eight rounds of 76mm HE were fired. (HE was selected to maximise the plume at impact for observation purposes.) All rounds were from the same lot, which had a muzzle velocity of 898m/s (measured by the Ordnance Section during ammunition acceptance tests at purchase).

The choice of range for each run was randomised in order to minimise uncontrolled factors. (It would have been unsound, for the purposes of the statistical trial, to conduct all the runs at one range, prior to moving to the next.) Each run was fired as a single shot and no corrections were applied, since correcting fall-of-shot at this stage would have militated against the purpose of the trial. The gun was 'parked' between each run, although the servos and hydraulics were left running.

The statistical trial was designed to test the consistency with which the fire unit would solve the fire-control problem. To this end, the fire unit was not permitted to retain point-of-aim information but required to re-calculate it, coming from the low-port to the firing position, for each shot.

The targets were presented randomly at three different ranges. It was not grouping that was of interest here but rather, the stability, rapidity and reliability of the solution of the problem for each individual round.

Each impact therefore represented an initial ranging shot, calculated from zero with no corrections applied.

Fall-of-shot was reported over the net and recorded by observers and by radar on both LÉ Samuel Beckett and LÉ Roisin (positioned down-range at 90° to the line of fire). Shots at the furthest range, beyond the visible horizon, were recorded by AW139 on SeaFlir.

The operational shoot, unlike the statistical trial, involved changing range and bearing. As the ship closed on the target an initial salvo of five rounds was fired from 3,420m, which impacted correct for line but over the target. Two subsequent single shots were corrected onto the target (from 3,130m and 2,790m), followed with a three-round burst for effect from 2,200m.

The operational shoot demonstrated that the initial solution (assessed during the statistical trial) could be corrected while the range and bearing to the target was rapidly changing. As a combat shoot it provided reassurance of the system's operational capabilities.

Comprehensive coverage of the range was achieved using the navigation radars of P61 and P51. The moment of impact for each trial round was captured by four X-Band and S-Band radar 'screen grabs' and by the AW139's camera. These were ranked in order of clarity and the best for each run were enlarged and printed. The distance and bearing between target echo and splash echo was also measured. Records were maintained of all elements of the trial including the fire-control data, gun totes, voyage data, weather, positions, observation forms, navigation traces and ballistics. Tables were populated with data such as times of flight, MPIs, ranges, and bearings, and all data was collated and presented in the final report.

Operation Godot was a fine joint effort by the ships, Naval Ordnance Section, FORST, D Ord, the Air Corps, the Artillery Corps, and DoD, and on foot of this trial the NSWG recommended acceptance of the system to FOCNS. ■

NEXT Generation Stealth

The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter

BY ROBERT TARRANT PHOTOS COURTESY OF LOCKHEED MARTIN WWW.F35.COM



The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is the most expensive military aircraft and one of the most ambitious defence programmes ever embarked upon. As it stands, the project is over-budget by more than \$150 billion and behind schedule a staggering seven years. With deployment due later this year, can the flaws be ironed out or will it be the most expensive 'white elephant' in military history?

The Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) programme was initiated to develop a next-generation fighter to fulfil the role set out by the US Dept of Defence 'to develop networked, integrated forces capable of attack-in-depth to disrupt, destroy and defeat adversary forces'.

The scale and size of the project is unprecedented in US history, locking three military branches, the US Air Force, the Marine Corps and the US Navy, into one programme. Furthermore, the programme has been developed jointly with nine tiered partners contributing to the system design and development, who are privy to any technological gains and discoveries. The top tier includes the US and the UK, while other partners include Norway, the Netherlands, Italy, Australia, Canada, Denmark and Turkey.

The promise of the JSF programme is to deliver not one, but three, highly sophisticated supersonic, stealth, multirole fighters; one conventional, one short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL), and one aircraft carrier-capable.

The contract for the futuristic fighter was awarded to Lockheed Martin in 2001, beating off competition from Boeing. The designated 'F-35 Lightning II' is seen as a replacement to aircraft developed in the late 1960s and 1970s, such as the F-16 Fighting Falcon, A-10 Thunderbolt, F/A-18 Hornet and AV8-B Harrier.

The development of these earlier aircraft focused on two aspects: speed and manoeuvre. These features increased the pilot's ability to win dogfights, provide close air support and intercept high-speed intruders. The transformation from reliance on these characteristics towards 'stealth' demonstrates a remarkable evolution in airpower doctrine.

The ability to guarantee air dominance through technological superiority and advanced weaponry mirrors this change, as well that in Western strategic thinking. It also demonstrates a reaction to the continuing sophistication of anti-aircraft systems like the S-400, the Buk and the Bavar 373.

Skunk Works, a division of Lockheed Martin, located in Palm-

dale, California, continues its proud history of creating some of the world's stealthiest aircraft with their F-35 concept. Previous developments included the F-117 Nighthawk, the F-22 Raptor and the legendary spy plane the SR-71 Blackbird.

At the core of the F-35 is its ability to fly undetected into enemy territory to identify and destroy targets, whether ground, air or infrastructure, without enemy forces being able to see it or strike back. This is achieved by the installation of stealth panels and coating as well as continuing advancement in the design of radar reflecting technology.

One of the most flaunted components of the futuristic aircraft is the customised helmet-mounted display and sight system (HMDS), made up of two primary components, the Distributed Aperture System (DAS) and the Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA). The DAS allows the aircraft to track aircraft or enemy missiles from a considerable distance and its 360° display allows the pilot to 'see' through the fuselage of the aircraft, day or night. The AESA is an advanced radar system developed by Northrop Grumman, which received the David Packard Excellence in Acquisition Award in 2010. It represents a major leap forward in the detection and mapping of aircraft and targets 'over the horizon'.

Such an integrated system is expensive and the HMDS, each of which is fitted and customised to the pilot's preference, costs over \$500k per unit.

What exactly is displayed on the pilot's visor is classified, but the technology seems to resemble advanced versions of Google Glass crossed with the famed Google driverless car.

Akin to the generational advance in design and technology, is the revolution in communications and networking. The F-35 is adept at working in 'packs', allowing it to share live information with other F-35s, while also being networked to information gathering systems, such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), ground forces or satellites. This gives a particular advantage in penetrating the 'fog' surrounding the battlefield and enables them to co-ordinate attacks or manoeuvres with the added advantage of increased situational awareness, which is particularly important given the F-35's close air support role.

Another system, the Autonomic Logistics Information System (ALIS), advances the diagnostics fundamentals of aeronautics through its high reliance on artificial intelligence in an uncondi-



tioned maintenance environment. The ALIS schedules upgrades and configurations, it records and monitors the aircraft during flight, and allows the global transfer of data to the connected technicians and maintenance planners using one platform.

Although the F-35 represents immense advances in aerospace engineering, it has not been without its problems, setbacks and criticisms. In 2011 former Republican presidential candidate and member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, John McCain, alluding to the cost and time overruns, called the JSF "one of the great national scandals", suggested cancelling the project, and demanded that Lockheed Martin pick up more of the tab on alterations.

Senator McCain's criticisms may be well-founded. A 2012 report to the US Congress by military aviation specialist Jermiah Gertler gave a damning appraisal of the programme. Simple issues, such as an ill-designed tail-hook for carrier landings and landing lights inconsistent with FAA rules, as well as more serious matters such as the 'excessive shaking of the aircraft during flight', were identified. The investigating team also claimed it demonstrated a 'low design maturity', with more retrofits and changes than planned.

Some of these issues stemmed from a practice known as 'acquisition concurrency'. This allows the development and production phases of a project to overlap and permits new techniques to be incorporated and research completed on highly sophisticated technological parts during the production phase.

The practice contrasts with methods employed for previous generations of aircraft such as 'fly before you buy', where a finished, tested model is delivered. If anything the acquisition practice employed has contributed to the bad press the F-35 has received.

The aircraft has performed remarkably well in recent testing, with the F35-C surpassing expectations on carrier landings. The project's advanced manufacturing techniques are picking up some of the highest awards in the field, such as the DoD's Joint Defence Manufacturing Technology Achievement, which it won for developing innovative and cost-saving methods for making advanced cockpits. Accomplishments like these are bound to have positive additional spin-offs for the US economy.

While Congress has scrutinised the project's every delay, the DoD plans on buying a lot of F-35s; over 2,000 of them at last

estimate. With a revised-down figure of 35 ordered for this year, cost-saving results have become a priority to attract overseas orders from non-NATO nations such as Japan and Israel.

The F-35 will be joining the F-22 Raptor, the advanced tactical air superiority fighter, in the arsenal of next-generation, air weapons platforms. The present rivals on the market are the Russian-made Sukhoi PAK FA and the Chinese J-20, both of which are currently in test and design phases and due for commissioning later in the decade. Whether the F-35 can match, or supersede, these aircraft, is still an open question among most military analysts.

The F-35's success or otherwise will not only be seen as a judgement on the aircraft's design, but also its central principle that stealth alone can create superiority.

The US Marine Corps is hoping to reach an initial operating capacity with the aircraft by December 2015, and it's slated to appear on the decks of the British Navy's newest carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth, by 2020, and to be at operating capacity with the US Air Force by 2017.

However further transition still remains: training pilots to man its advanced avionics, retiring the older fighters, and developing an advanced payload. These processes could take up to and beyond the year 2030, ensuring that the F35 Lightning II will be around for quite some time, into and beyond mid-century.

Robert Tarrant is a graduate of the University of Aberdeen (Msc) Strategic Studies programme. He is a regular contributor to An Cosantóir, with interests in the areas of technology, strategy and international affairs. ■



COMMAND and Control

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

As we arrived at Finner Camp we found a hive of activity, just inside the gates we came across four Mowags with troops coming and going, gear and equipment being packed and stowed, ammo being bombed up, rations being traded to suit individual tastes, and camo cream being applied generously.

The troops were prepping for a 72-hour deployment on a combined exercise involving two Mowag courses, a command course and a dismount course.

The courses were being run in conjunction with each other so they could learn and work together as part of a mechanised infantry company, and to give commanders a chance to exercise their new skills with mech troops. The command course commenced on 12 January and was conducted over a three-week period, incorporating the 72-hour exercise in the Barnesmore area. The course had nine students from 28 Inf Bn, 6 Inf Bn, 7 Inf Bn, 27 Inf Bn, and 2 Arty Regt.

The aim of the command course is to familiarise students with the tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) associated with the Mowag Piranha IIIH APC operating as part of a mech inf coy, so that commanders at all levels can fully utilise the vehicle as a resource.

The course familiarises students with the layout, configuration and safety features of the Mowag Piranha III (all

variants); gives them an overview of the tactical employment of APCs in all phases of mech inf operations; and familiarises them with the Rovis intercom system. It also helps to ensure uniformity of TTPs at unit level.

The majority of students on the command course were junior NCOs hoping to deploy with 48 Inf Gp, UNDOF, and who had never been deployed as mechanised infantry before. However, they easily grasped the concept of the role over the duration of the course.

This is the fifth command course to have been conducted by 28 Inf Bn to date and Finner Camp appears to be an ideal area to conduct these type of courses, with access to ample training areas, including the use of an unused runway ideal for practicing rolling replenishments, and contact- and dismount-drills, to name but a few; and not forgetting the beaches and mountains in close proximity to the camp.

The dismount course started a week after the command course. This had 30 students from 2 Arty Regt, 28 Inf Bn, 6 Inf Bn, 7 Inf Bn, 27 Inf Bn, 2 Bde Fd Engrs and 2 Bde Tpt Coy, with ranks ranging from private to sergeant major, most of whom were also seeking qualification to deploy with 48 Inf Gp.





The aim of the dismount course is to introduce students to the Mowag Piranha III APC; the TTPs required in carrying out APC-mounted operations; the vehicle's systems and safety features; and a working knowledge of its radio systems.

We followed the two courses for two days of the 72-hour exercise, nicknamed 'Golden Heights'. During that period the students carried out countless patrols, mimicking those that would be carried out overseas and the problems and issues they could come up against. They also did rolling replens (replenishment of fuel, rations, water and ammo on the move) and recovery techniques. The instructors trained their students for every eventuality and we were left in no doubt that they had given the students sufficient knowledge of the TTPs for not only overseas missions but also any deployments they may carry out at home, whether training or operational.

Despite, or maybe because of, the challenging nature of the course, feedback from the students was very positive. Exercise Golden Heights was deemed a great success, with everyone getting the opportunity to perfect the skills they had been taught over the previous weeks.

We wish the members of the two courses that are heading to UNDOF the best of luck and hope their new skills won't be put to the test. In saying that, after only two days spent following the courses we have no doubt they will be able to deal with anything they may face. ■





Army Diving Group

Dive Course – 11 May – 22 May 2015

This course is available to anyone with previous diving experience who may wish to refresh their skills and gain new qualifications through CFT.

The Dive Course runs for twelve days and is designed for all divers, including those divers who wish to crossover to CFT. A number of specialised diving related courses are available during the twelve days. You may be able to undertake one, or two of the following courses depending on your experience and time: Coxswain, Advanced Coxswain, Coxswain Instructor, Diver First Responder, Rescue Diver, Nitrox, Advanced Nitrox, VHF and Crossover.



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
DEFENCE FORCES IRELAND

DEFENCE FORCES

Triathlon Training & Event Programme 2015



Defence Forces Triathlon Association





28 Jan 2015	Training Day	Custume Bks	1000hrs start
04 Feb 2015	Training Day	Custume Bks	1000hrs start
11 Feb 2015	Training Day	DFTC	1000hrs start
11 March 2015	Training Day	Dundalk	1000hrs start
08 Apr 2015	DF Duathlon	Baldonell	1000hrs start
29 Apr 2015	Training Day	Haulbowline	1000hrs start
TBA May	Training Day	Lough Ennel, Mullingar	1000hrs start
27 May 2015	Try a Tri	Haulbowline	TBC
03 June 2015	DF Triathlon	Lough Ennel, Mullingar	TBC
20-24 Jul 2015	Open water swim camp - Galway		TBC

Training days will be coached by Triathlon Ireland qualified coaches in swimming biking and running each day. All levels catered for. Beginners welcome.

For more information contact
 Training Officer - Sgt Jackie Wykes - jackie.wykes@defenceforces.ie



FIELDCRAFT – PART 6

Observation

In order to locate the enemy, whom it is to be assumed are adept at the skills of camouflage and concealment, the soldier is required to learn how to observe by scanning and searching. It is important, therefore, that every soldier is skilled in the art of observation, which when perfected can improve a soldier's accuracy at locating the enemy.



Aim: To teach the soldier how to systematically observe an area of ground.

Preparation: Recce the training area and select an area of ground to divide into foreground, middle distance and background. Position a number of demonstrators and equipment so that they provide varying degrees of contrast in colour, tone, surface, shape and shadow. This is best done as close to the lesson start time as is possible.

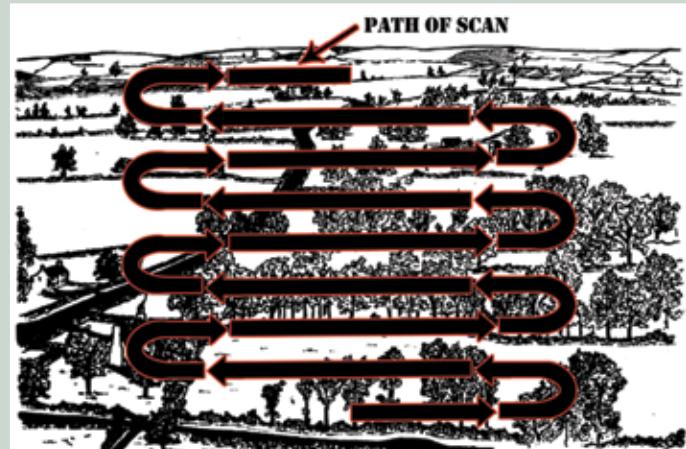
Miscellaneous: Rehearse the demonstrator's in their actions prior to sending them to their locations. Some equipment need not be too well concealed but all demonstrators should provide realistic battle-type targets. Visual training films like 'Finding the Enemy' are a useful supplement to this lesson but should not be considered as an alternative to the outdoor period. During practice, ask the section what they have observed and how they identified the objects. Let them confirm locations using an aiming rest.



Explain and demonstrate Scanning and Searching:

Scanning is a general and systematic examination of an area to detect any unusual or significant object or movement. Searching is a thorough examination of certain features in the area. Both require complete concentration combined with a knowledge of why things are seen and the principles of camouflage and concealment.

Scanning: Divide the area into foreground, middle distance and background. Scan each area horizontally starting with the foreground. To obtain maximum efficiency, move the eyes in short overlapping movements. Moving the head will minimise eye fatigue. The speed at which scanning is carried out will depend upon the type of country being observed and the amount of cover it affords to possible targets. Search across hedgerows or a row of trees, not along them.





MAJOR GENERAL EMMET DALTON

From the Somme to Béal na Bláth

BY LIAM MURRAY

As a 12-year-old caddy at the Hermitage Golf Club in Lucan, Co Dublin, I encountered a famous Irish military man who was also a renowned golfer. I came to know him on the well-cultivated fairways and greens where the money earned by a caddy like myself was most welcome in the straitened times of the early 1950s, a time when it was not unusual for caddies to walk the course in their bare feet. Basically there are two kinds of golfers, those interested in playing to a high standard, and those more interested in the company and having fun. Caddies preferred to carry the bag for the good players: they hit the ball straight, concentrated on their game, and completed the round much earlier. The slow playing groups were called 'funerals' in the caddie community.

The distinguished sportsman I caddied for was Emmet Dalton, who had served as a major general in the newly formed National Army in 1922, the forerunner of the Irish Defence Forces.

Memories of this amazing man came flooding back to me when I read a fascinating account of his life and times in the recently published biography by Sean Boyne, *Emmet Dalton: Somme Soldier, Irish General, Film Pioneer*.

It was not difficult to carry Dalton's bag because he was a scratch golfer who won several single and team competitions while a member of the Hermitage. He also played soccer for Bohemians. Other than his sporting prowess, I had no knowledge of the other aspects of his life at the time.

The main reason I remember him so clearly is because of the respectful attitude shown towards him by his fellow players, who always addressed him as 'General'. In later years I came to understand how important a person he was in the struggle for the formation of the Irish state.

My older brother caddied for Dalton in the late 1930s when he stood out even more because he was always accompanied by two 'minders', who I assume to have been Garda bodyguards, who followed the golfing party at a distance. When he arrived and departed the clubhouse he was accompanied by a security car that drove in front of his.

Emmet Dalton spent almost ten years on active service in the Great War, the War of Independence, and the Civil War. Although born in America he was reared in Drumcondra, Dublin. At 17 he joined the Royal Dublin Fusiliers (Dubliners) even though his family had strong nationalist sympathies and his father and brother were active in the Irish Independence movements. However, it was not unusual at the time for one

brother to be active in the IRA and another to be in the British Army: Ernie O'Malley fought in the Easter Rising while his brother was in the British Army.

Dalton and his father's friend, the poet Tom Kettle, took part in the Battle of the Somme, where, sadly, Kettle died when both men went over the top together during the attack on Ginchy. Just a few days before his death, Kettle had read a poem to Dalton that he had composed for his daughter: one of the finest poems to come out of the great conflict, the last four lines of which are quoted to this day.

**Know that we fools, now with the foolish dead,
Died not for the flag, nor King, nor Emperor,
But for a dream born in a herdsman's shed
And for the secret scripture of the poor.**

After the war Dalton returned to a changed Ireland where the struggle for independence was gaining strength. His younger brother, Charlie, had joined the IRA in 1917 and was active in Michael Collins's intelligence department.

Dalton became involved in republican activities. He was appointed to train IRA men in map reading, the use of arms and other skills, and then became the IRA's Director of Training.

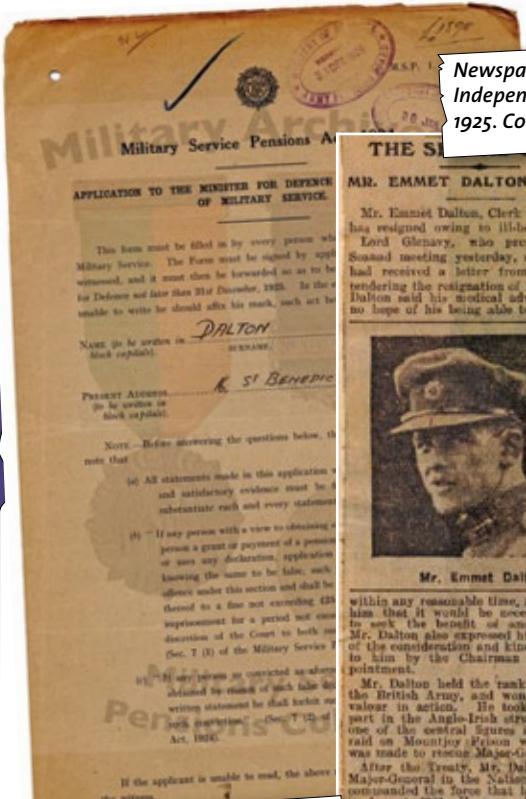
Soon after he joined the IRA, Dalton met Michael Collins, a man who was to have a profound effect on his life. His next meeting with Collins resulted in Dalton taking a lead role in one of the most dangerous episodes of his career, the attempted rescue of IRA leader Sean MacEoin from Mountjoy Prison where he was facing trial by military court and an almost certain death sentence.

The plan was to steal a British armoured car and use it to gain entry to the prison with one of the group impersonating a British officer. Because of his military background Dalton was seen as the ideal man to carry off the bluff. It was a dangerous, audacious plan and Dalton must have thought his chances of surviving such an operation rather slim.

Although he succeeded in bluffing his way into the prison the attempted rescue did not succeed. However, it established an important, close bond of trust and friendship between Collins and Dalton, overcoming any reservations Collins may have had about Dalton's previous service with the British Army.

Collins increasingly made use of Dalton's expertise and knowledge. While proving to be a demanding task master, Collins greatly appreciated Dalton's bravery and his talents as a military strategist and tactician. He thought so highly of Dal-

Newspaper clipping from the Irish Independent dated 13 November 1925. Courtesy of Military Archives



Major General Dalton's Military Service Pension Application from 1924. Courtesy of Military Archives



Emmet Dalton pictured with Michael Collins in 1921



Emmet Dalton amongst others pictured taking the salute as Irish Free State soldiers march in to Portobello Bks (now Cathal Brugha Bks) in 1922.



Emmet Dalton and Michael Collins on the faithful day to Béal na Bláth

HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY

ton that he included him in important missions such as the Anglo-Irish peace treaty negotiations in London in 1921.

Dalton never liked the idea of Collins going to London as he knew how dearly the British had wanted to get their hands on Collins. Now 'the Big Fellow' was emerging from the shadows and Dalton was concerned about his security, fearing that the talks would break down, giving the British an excuse to arrest the man they unsuccessfully sought for so long.

Dalton's plan was to immediately fly Collins out of London if the talks failed. An aircraft was purchased for this purpose, with two Irishmen who had served in the RAF recruited as pilots.

Finally, after two months of talks terms were agreed in late 1921. (In January 1922, divisions caused by the narrow majority ratification of the Treaty set the country on the path to civil war.) Within a year the Irish Free State would be established and Dalton's next big job would be as the IRA's Chief Liaison Officer, dealing with the departing British. Still a young man, he showed the maturity and tact required to oversee the evacuation of military and police barracks by the British and their take-over by Irish forces.

In the split that followed the ratification of the Treaty, Dalton took the view that a decision by the majority of the people's elected representatives had to be respected. As Ireland drifted inexorably towards civil war, Dalton began preparing for yet another military campaign, this time against former brothers-in-arms.

The Civil War broke out in June 1922 with the bombardment of anti-Treaty forces who had occupied the Four Courts in Dublin.

In early August, Major General Dalton led an important seaborne offensive that took Cork city and county from the anti-Treaty forces - their last major stronghold. Collins came south to his home county, and against Dalton's advice they went on a tour of West Cork where the anti-Treaty IRA was still active. On 22nd August 1922 their convoy was ambushed at Béal na Bláth. Collins was fatally wounded and died in the arms of a traumatised Dalton. Later that year Dalton left the army. (He stated in later years that he resigned because he had concerns about legislation authorising military courts to execute republican prisoners for certain offences.)

After leaving the army he obtained the prestigious post of Clerk of the Senate but didn't hold this position for long, resigning in 1925 because of family financial difficulties.

An opportunity for a new career presented itself to Dalton while playing golf at the Hermitage, when he met an executive from Paramount film studios who recruited him as a salesman for the company in wartime England.

This interest in film eventually led to him opening the Ardmore studios in Bray, Co Wicklow, in 1958. Ardmore continues to produce films to this day and its success is a testament to the vision of this soldier, patriot, sportsman and public servant.

With military-style precision, Emmett Dalton died on the day of his 80th birthday on 4th March 1978, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Robert Emmet, the patriot after whom he was named. ■

Tiberias Marathon



BY PTE NIALL KILCRANN PHOTOS BY COY SGT TONY GREHAN,
CAPT J QUINN, PIO 46 INF GP

On 9th January 2015 three members of 46 Inf Gp, UNDOF, participated in the Tiberias Winter Marathon, the lowest altitude marathon in the world. In this article Pte Niall Kilcrann gives his account of the day.

In January, three members of 2 Platoon, 46 Inf Gp, UNDOF, participated in the Tiberias Winter Marathon, which took place not far from where we were stationed in the Golan Heights. For Pte Stephen Healy and Pte Tommy O'Donnell it was their first marathon, while for me the chance to run a marathon in the mission area was always appealing, having run seven marathons previously. I also plan to run the London and Toronto marathons for the Croí charity on returning home.

The three of us began training gradually, building our mileage up from small 8km runs to 30km runs.

Our training was also affected by operational requirements. A month into the mission we were tasked with deploying to Position 80 in the Area of Separation. The difference in training was vast. In Camp Ziouani we had a 2km track on the inner perimeter of the camp, which was good for long runs, compared to shorter runs in other camps, and in bad weather was sometimes not fit for training on. So while we got our long runs in Camp Ziouani, in Post 80 we kept up what we called a 'maintenance phase', which entailed doing whatever training we could.

As the time passed the weather changed, from being close to 30°C when we first arrived to -3° with three feet of snow on the day of the marathon. However, the lower altitude in Tiberias meant little or no snow for the race, thankfully.

With the Golan Heights and areas close to the camp covered in snow on the day of the race, we were on the road at 0615hrs in order to be on time for the 0900hrs start.

As the roads were not as bad as we expected we arrived in Tiberias well ahead of schedule at 0710hrs. However, our earlier than planned arrival was very fortunate as we were greeted by a lot of runners already warming up and it appeared that the timings we had received were wrong. Consequently, after a quick change and photo we were on the road, with 42.2km of road ahead of us.

The route was mostly flat with very few hills and it also was an out-and-back route (21km out, 21km back).

As we all had different time goals we soon split up in the race. Pte Healy crossed the line in 3hrs 22mins, which was a fantastic time for his first marathon. I came in with a time of 3hrs 29mins, improving my personal best by 15 minutes. Pte O' Donnell finished the Irish line-up with a time of 4hrs, another good time for a first marathon.

After the race we met up with our support team for the day, Sgt Maj Derek Lambe, Coy Sgt Tony Grehan and Tpr Frank Black, and we all went to McDonald's for some post-race refreshments, a rare occurrence out here! Still, it wasn't a normal day in the life of a soldier serving in the UNDOF mission area and won't be forgotten for a while. ■

Tiberias Marathon 2014 – Top 5 Results

<http://tiberias-marathon.co.il/>

Place	General location	Club/Country	Category	Time
1	Tariku Jufar Robi	Ethiopia	General Men's Marathon	2:10:32
2	Ketema Bekele Negasa	Ethiopia	General Men's Marathon	2:11:17
3	Ernest Kiprugut Kebenei	Kenya	General Men's Marathon	2:11:58
4	Joel Kipsang Kositany	Kenya	General Men's Marathon	2:12:07
5	Chala Lemi Demie	Ethiopia	General Men's Marathon	2:13:30



The Tiberias Marathon finish line



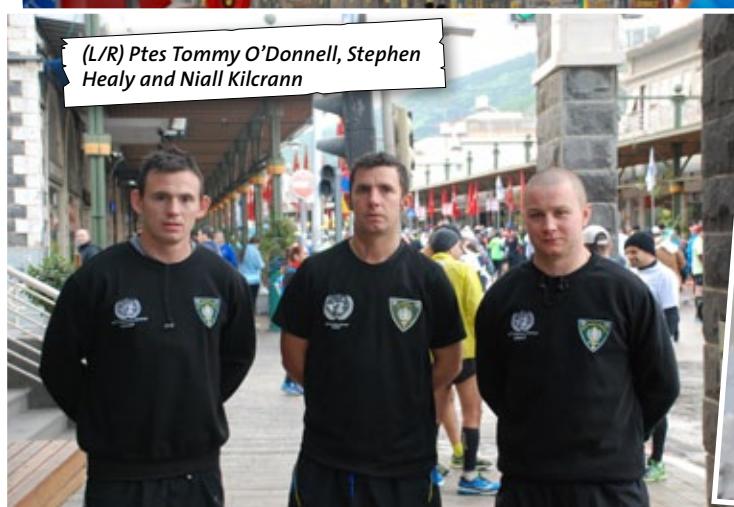
Pte Kilcrann after the finish line celebrates a new personal best



(L/R) Ptes Tommy O'Donnell, Stephen Healy and Niall Kilcrann



Pte Healy finishes in an outstanding time of 3hrs 22mins



Lt Col Denis Harrington and Coy Sgt Grehan congratulate the runners on their return to Camp Ziouni

COLLECTOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Retired Defence Forces Sergeant Brendan Burke (5 Inf Bn, 1974 - 1994) is currently visiting barracks and posts around the country to record their posterity.



These photos are available to purchase and come in a 8"x12" and in a 12"x16" picture mount and placed on an appropriately sized backboard, and are individual sealed in a presentation bag.

www.facebook.com/brenburkephotography

Patrick Cuddihy - January 2015

"I received my set of brilliant B&W pictures of Collins Barracks. To say I'm pleased would be putting it mildly, thrilled doesn't even cover it. Every picture evokes memories of time spent there, some happy for the friends found there, some sad for brothers lost but never forgotten. I can highly recommend the works, and as many of you know, Brendan is a 5 Inf Bn Vet, his soul is in those pictures."



The photos are in B&W, but colour ones are available on request. You can contact Bren by email: brn.burke@gmail.com or mobile: 087-6384862

World War One Walk

15-17th May 2015

With Myles Dungan, Historian and Broadcaster for RTE.

Fundraising for Cystic Fibrosis Ireland



Join this unique walk in Flanders, Belgium some 100 years on from WWI, to get a better understanding of "The Great War" from an Irish perspective. The 14km walk will take place along the Messines ridge where soldiers from Ireland (North and South) fought together in the battle of Messines in 1917. By joining this walk, your fundraising will help the Cystic Fibrosis Transplant Fund and a new post in the Mater Hospital, where lung transplants are undertaken in Ireland.

To help raise vital funds to support people with Cystic Fibrosis in Ireland and experience a unique opportunity to find out more about World War One with Charity Ambassador for Cystic Fibrosis Ireland - Myles Dungan, Historian and Broadcaster for RTE.

The cost of the walk is €900 - €450 cost and €450 donation towards the Cystic Fibrosis Ireland Transplant Fund. A non refundable deposit of €450 and a copy of in-date passport by Friday March 27th.

For more information please contact: Peter Minchin, CF House, 24 Lower Rathmines Road, Rathmines, Dublin 6. t:01 496 2433 | e: pminchin@cfireland.ie | f:01 496 2201



Looking for a Challenge? March the Marathon in aid of Bumbleance - a first for Limerick.

A group of serving and retired members of the RDF are doing a 'March the Marathon' to raise funds and awareness for the BUMBLEance in the Great Limerick Run on

3rd May 2015.

The group is looking for more walkers to join them!



Aishlinn Quaid, pictured with her mum and dad, the 1st girl in the world to use the BUMBLEance.

Mission: To March the Marathon and raise much needed funds for the Charity BUMBLEance.

Register with the Great Limerick Run www.greatlimerickrun.com or we will do it for you on receipt of your registration fee and your details, we will then send you a BUMBLEance sponsorship card. If you are unable to march or attend then please volunteer to take a BUMBLEance Sponsorship Card, just send us your name, address, e-mail and phone number and we will do the rest. Training is on every Sunday @ 09:00 in Arthur's Quay Park, Limerick, we will be delighted to see you there and who knows - we might just get fit!

Please feel free to email us marie.quaid@gmail.com or savetotraining@gmail.com if you want to do this or help in any way. Thank you and we look forward to your support.

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE AN COSANTÓIR 2015 Diary



AN COSANTÓIR

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DEFENCE FORCES IRELAND

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taken out during the month of
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The diary being advertised is a sample and the logo colours may vary.

GEAR UP



Sponsored by Team Alpha.ie

5.11 RUSH 24 BACKPACK

PRICE: €119.99

COLOUR: BLACK, FLAT DARK EARTH, MULTICAM, SAND-STONE & TAC OLIVE DRAB

Our most popular purpose built tactical backpack, the RUSH24™ is designed to provide superior storage capacity and organization without slowing you down. The roomy main compartment offers three interior mesh organizer pockets to keep small accessories organised, a padded hydration pocket keeps you moving, and a fleece-lined sunglass pocket keeps your eyewear within easy reach. Dual side storage compartments offer double-zip access, a large stuff-it pocket with an integrated draw cord provides expandable storage when you need it, and contoured compression straps ensure a stable, comfortable carry. A wrap-around web platform is MOLLE/5.11 SlickStick® System compatible, allowing you to customize your storage options as you see fit. Easily the best tactical backpack choice for a wide range of applications, the RUSH24 combines superior mobility and enhanced storage with customisable functionality that excels in any environment.



Overview: Quite simply the best tactical backpack on the market, Roomy main storage area, Dual zipping side pockets, Hydration pocket, Stuff-it pocket with integrated draw cord, Reinforced grab-and-go handle, Wrap-around MOLLE/SlickStick web platform, Three mesh admin compartments, Zippered fleece-lined eyewear pocket and a Hook and loop nametape and flag patches.

Specifications: Durable 1050D nylon, Water-repellent coating, 20" H x 12.5" L x 8" D main compartment, 2070 cubic inch capacity, Adjustable height sternum strap, Two external compression straps, Contoured yoke shoulder strap system, Twin drainage grommets, Self-repairing YKK® zippers and Glove-friendly pull tabs.



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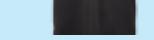
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COMPETITION

For a chance to win the Backpack featured above worth €119.99, kindly sponsored by www.team-alpha.ie, answer the following question:

How much is a 5.11 Rapid Assault Shirt (OD Green) on team-alpha.ie?

Send your answer along with your name, address & contact number to An Cosantóir's address or by email to subs@military.ie by the 20th March 2015. Winner will be the first correct entry drawn.

Last month's winner was: Tony Bonnie, Kildare Town

NOTICEBOARD

THE FRIENDS OF BRÚ NA BHFIANN

A new support group, **The Friends of Brú Na bhFiann** was formed recently with its main aim to help raise the necessary funding needed to support Brú Na bhFiann. It is purely a voluntary group and can be joined by any like minded person military or civilian. The group decided to support the houses in Dublin, Athlone and Donegal on a project by project basis, with two projects being identified, one requiring immediate attention and one in the near future. The first priority is the need to purchase replacement mattresses for the thirty beds in Brú Na bhFiann, the existing ones are the originals. It was decided to help out in this regard and they have got off to a great start by finding a decent proportion of the money required through our own funds and agreed to run a fund raising raffle. To date €1,300 was raised and more pledged to fund the entire thirty mattresses, although whatever is raised will be a great help.

www.facebook.com/groups/975276365833542/975907092437136/?notif_t=like



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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.

Q&A MARCH

WHAT YEARS DID SGT BRENDAN BURKE SERVE IN THE DF (ADVERT THIS ISSUE)?

Post your answer along with your name and address to us or email 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 Pte Liam O'Dwyer, McKee Bks, Dublin. Closing date is 20th March 2015.



Edged Weapons

V	C	S	E	F	I	N	K	U	J	D	V	B	J	O
R	I	B	L	A	D	E	A	K	U	Z	M	S	T	N
E	O	W	T	G	W	K	X	E	T	T	I	G	E	R
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HELP THE HOMELESS

A Golf Classic in aid of Haven House Homeless Accommodation will take place on Friday 8th May in Luttrellstown Castle Golf Club, Castleknock.

Shotgun start @12pm; 4 Ball Teams €400 per team (incl. dinner)
"It will be a day full of Great Food, Great Fun and Great Prizes!"
To book contact: Gemma 086 0233576 or Una 087 1372518
Team entries to be confirmed and paid by 31st March
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Buggies are available at members rate call Luttrellstown reception to book: 01 8609600

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KILMICHAEL: A BATTLEFIELD STUDY

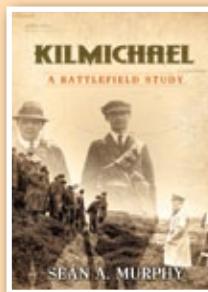
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Pages: 250

On November 28th 1920, in the desolate countryside between Macroom and Dunmanway, Tom Barry's West Cork Flying Column wiped out an 18 strong patrol of Auxiliary police. Though the action was over after an intensive forty minute gun battle, the controversy of what happened during that short engagement was just beginning. Tom Barry wrote his own account of the battle in his book, *Guerrilla Days In Ireland*, claiming that the Auxiliaries, knowing they were outgunned and surrounded, feigned surrender in order to get the Volunteers to leave cover. Once out in the open, the Auxiliaries drew their weapons and shot dead two Volunteers. Barry ordered his remaining Volunteers to open fire, killing all the police Cadets. Did the Auxiliaries really pretend to surrender or did Barry use the story of a false surrender to justify and subsequently cover up the massacre of a group of men that had officially surrendered?

Kilmichael, A Battlefield Study by former Commandant Seán A. Murphy is a detailed analysis of the events that took place that day. Using a military analysis tool known as METTS, the author examines the events of that day, breaking down the myths that have arisen and puts forward a new and gripping theory about the Battle of Kilmichael.

How was it possible that an elite unit of the British crown was wiped out by an untrained civilian force? Did the Auxiliaries die fighting to the last man or did Tom Barry order the executions of his prisoners? Were all the republican casualties shot by the Auxiliaries or were they the result of defective weapons planted by British intelligence?

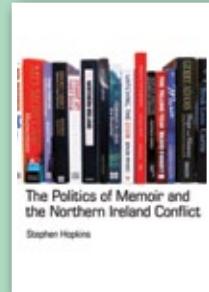
These are some of the questions posed in this objective study and the author's forensic analysis of the pros and cons of the engagement make highly informative and thought provoking reading. www.kilmichaelbattlefield.com PO'B



THE POLITICS OF MEMOIR AND THE NORTHERN IRELAND CONFLICT

Author: Stephen Hopkins
Publisher: Liverpool University Press (reprint May 2014) www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk
ISBN: 978-1846319426
Price: €100
Pages: 252

The Troubles in Northern Ireland have produced a wide and diverse range of memoirs from across both the political spectrum, but also from former paramilitaries and security forces personnel, both police and army. This excellent compendium by Stephen Hopkins for the first time brings together an analysis of these memoirs and the collective lessons that can be distilled from them in trying to come to terms at this remove with the events of the Troubles that led to such loss of life and devastation. Hopkins argues that it should not be forgotten the period of relative peace that now exists in Northern Ireland rests on an uneasy calm, and that the peace process will inherently remain a work in progress.



Hopkins goes to great pains to differentiate between those memoirs that seek to act as a self justification for the actions or perceived lack of same from some authors with others that have been genuinely self-critical. He views memoir writing as fulfilling an important role absent the Irish equivalent of a 'truth and reconciliation' process. This study goes some way in providing the first comprehensive analysis of a major resource for readers in helping comprehend not only the causes of the conflict but also its almost stubborn endurance over the course of some twenty-five years. RF

SEAL TEAM SIX: A NOVEL #6

Author: Chuck Dixon
Publisher: Dynamite Entertainment (July 2014)
Sold by: Amazon Digital Services, Inc.
ISBN: 978-1606905586
Price: €2.84 eBook
Pages: 212

Book #6 in Chuck Dixon's action packed US Navy SEAL Team 6 series sees them sent in to the current boiling pot that is the Syrian Civil War.

Tasked with retrieving a biological weapon, its location unknown, but if unleashed could change the rules of war. The team go disguised as foreign fighters as they make their way through the shattered towns and cities left in the wake of this unsympathetic chaos. Their contact is dead, lost to the war, but his young teenage son, now older than his years after spending his last childhood years on the battlefield playground aids them in their search. The team meet the unlikeliest of allies in search of a common goal, whilst an enemy agent is hell bent on retrieving it for himself. Shortly after entering an enemy stronghold to retrieve the WMD, they get compromised - what ensues is an action-packed no holds barred battle for survival as the team makes their escape - heavily outnumbered and against all odds. A good enjoyable read about a special-forces mission in probably the bloodiest civil war battle in modern history. WF



NAME
KERN O'NEILL

RANK
SERGEANT

UNIT
J6 BRANCH DCIS,
ATTACHED TO DFHQ CIS COY



I joined 20 Inf Bn FCÁ in Cathal Brugha Bks in 1991 and served there for three years before enlisting with the PDF in 1994. After recruit training with 38 Pl in CTD E, I was posted to Sp Coy, 2 Inf Bn, back in Cathal Brugha Bks. As the first new personnel in the unit for four years we were kept busy, gaining a lot of experience in a short time: I underwent training on the 84mm anti-tank gun, 81mm mortar and the .5" HMG, and also served overseas with 78 Inf Bn in Lebanon, during which the 16-day Israeli bombardment, 'Grapes of Wrath', took place.

Back home, I did a Regimental Signallers course and then moved to Sigs Pl, HQ Coy, where I did cash-in-transit escorts, Comcen duties, exercises and operations.

In 1999, I underwent a Potential NCO course in the CTD E. Shortly after, I transferred to 2 Fd CIS Coy, who sent me to the School of Signals in the Curragh for a five-month Commop course, which included line work, voice procedure, Morse code, IT networks, setting up a comcen and rebro station, comcen procedures and rigger training.

In 2000 I served in Kosovo with 3 Tpt Coy, KFOR, as Sigs Cpl, where I maintained a rear-link to our convoys travelling around the Balkans. Our unit also delivered and collected the ballot papers for the first ever municipal elections in Kosovo.

In 2001 I began to study software engineering, including computer languages, java script, visual basic, system analysis and web design. I also began instructing on Regimental Signallers courses.

In 2004 I did my Standard NCO course in the Curragh and went back out to Kosovo in early 2005, as an acting/sergeant with HQ Multinational Brigade Centre (MNB C). This was a tough

job with busy 12-hour shifts in the Tacti- cal Ops Centre (TOC), maintaining situational awareness, passing info between the infantry companies and higher HQ, giving out EOD/IED taskings, and preparing and giving ops briefs to senior officers/ops staff.

In 2006 I instructed on a Potential NCO course in the BTC as a section commander, which was a great experience.

In 2008 I travelled overseas again, this time to Chad, with 97 Inf Bn. We were the first Irish battalion on this mission, taking over from the ARW, who had deployed there a few months earlier. I was acting/seargeant in the CIS Tech stores as well as doing long-range patrols in the bush.

Returning to 2 Fd CIS I worked in the Tech Stores before being promoted to sergeant in the Directorate of the CIS Corps (now J6) in 2009 where I worked in the general office and Procurement Cell, involved in pur- chasing equipment and looking after tenders.

I went overseas again in 2010, this time to Bosnia i Herzegovina (EUFOR BiH), where I in- structed mem- bers of the multinational military and police forces on tactical sat- ellite (TACSAT) communica- tions.

"I got the chance to travel extensively around the Balkans on my leave. It really is a spectacular place"

I got the chance to travel extensively around the Balkans on my leave. It really is a spectacular place.

My next trip overseas was as CIS Pl Stores Sgt with 106 IrishFinn Bn, UNIFIL, during which we moved camp from Tibnine to At Tiri: a big job but one we did well.

In 2013 I was attached from J6 Branch DCIS to work in the new Information Knowledge Management (IKM) Cell, where we worked on designing and implement- ing a new enterprise content management system to replace the DEFNET intranet platform. The new system, called IKON, is based on Microsoft SharePoint. I have recently returned from Germany where I completed an IKM course in the NATO School in Oberammergau and I am now involved with the day-to-day running of IKON and providing tech support. ■



IN THE DIGITAL AGE, SOME FUNDAMENTALS NEVER CHANGE



CAOGA Group Life Assurance Membership is of fundamental importance to Defence Forces' Officers. Comdt Pauline O'Connell the Secretary/Treasurer of CAOGA points out the ever increasing relevance of our Life Assurance Schemes to members needs today.

In 2013 in America, for the first time Life Insurance was sold from Internet Kiosks to cater for the needs of the time poor "sandwich generation", with the emphasis on blended products catering for premiums for both excellent health and poor health customers, with modest death benefits. Recent feedback would indicate that kiosk selling has not been successful and that unlike most industries, online sales of life insurance haven't taken off because competitive rates depend on the applicant's health and require a review of medical records and a blood sample.

The traditional approach works best and requires a level of engagement with the needs of members and commitment to a service catering for both young and old to which CAOGA is steadfastly committed.

CAOGA was originally set up some 67 years ago by Captains Bill O'Carroll and Jerome Counihan, after seeing the plight of the widow of an officer in Cathal Brugha Bks, forced to raise a family on a pension that was quarter of her husband's salary. Their aim was to ensure that officers have the means to look after their families in the event of their untimely deaths.

Officers of the Defence Forces now join COAGA in Cadet School and become members of two Life Insurance Plans, the CAOGA Friendly Society Plan managed by the CAOGA Committee and the Group Life Insurance Plan, provided by Friends First.

CAOGA's primary goal is to provide members with the means to protect the long-term security of their family in the event of the death of a key family member.

Over the past three years CAOGA has paid out almost five million euro to the families of 21 deceased CAOGA Members, both serving and retired.

The Friendly Society Act caters for the immediate needs of the family following bereavement, by the payment of a benefit of approximately €20,000 on foot of a valid Nomination Form, which has a legal status equivalent to that of a will.

Our Friendly Society pays, (in the event of the death of a policy holder) a nominated beneficiary €10,000 which is delivered by our Liaison Officer within 48hrs, once the death certificate and nomination form are complete. Another €10,000 is provided following a CAOGA Committee meeting within the following month.

Recent feedback from members would indicate huge satisfaction with the early receipt of this money to cater for funeral expenses. *On a purely emotional level many bereaved spouses and dependents express appreciation at being members of an organization, which is proactive and engaged in catering for their needs at the most challenging and vulnerable time of their lives.*



This article is continued in full in our online edition - www.dfmagazine.ie/

For queries or concerns or if you are considering joining CAOGA, please contact Comdt Manus Ward who has now assumed the role of Secretary/ Treasurer at 01-8042785/2786 or Ms Judy Farrell, CAOGA Administrative Officer at 01-8042785/2786, or visit: www.caoga.net or e mail info@caoga.net

The office has recently relocated to McKee Bks, Dublin and you can call in and check your personal records at any time.

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