

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

AN COSANTÓIR



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



MAR/APR 2023

MINDFULNESS & MEDITATION

[STRENGTHEN THE NATION]

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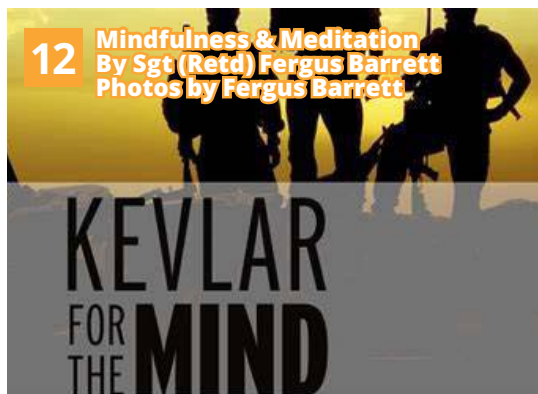
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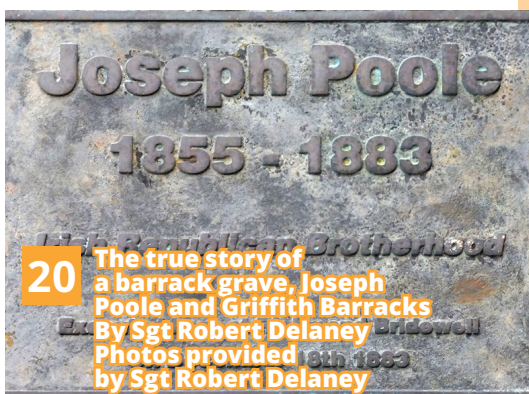
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WRITE FOR US AND GET A WATER BOTTLE

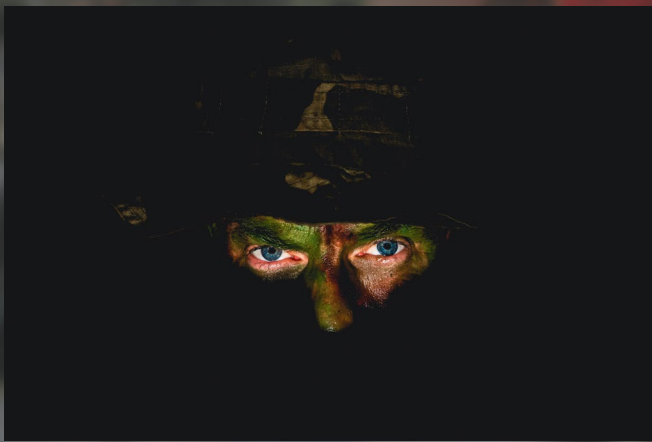
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We are looking for articles on all aspects of the Defence Forces



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Front Cover

By Pte Derek Feehan

Back Cover

By Airman Sam Gibney

Editorial

Hello, and welcome to our second issue of 2023, our 83rd volume of the *An Cosantóir* magazine.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition and will continue to enjoy reading all the other *An Cosantóir* magazines we will publish in 2023. As a team, we thrive on providing you with interesting and up-to-date content. We recently conducted a survey on IKON looking for opinions and ideas for the content of the magazine. Thank you to all who took part in the survey. If you missed it, you can still have your say by emailing us at magazine@military.ie.

We are looking for contributors to the magazine, whether it be an article, photographs for our On Parade section, or even a charity event that you might be organising. We would be more than happy to feature the event in the *An Cosantóir* along with the GoFundMe link. Contributors are in with a chance of getting some cool prizes, so why not contribute?

Our Noticeboard page features an advertisement for our *An Cosantóir* photo competition, which will come with one of these prizes.

Our main feature this edition is brought to us by Fergus Barrett on Mindfulness and Meditation. Fergus is a retired Sgt and explains that when he left the DF, he found it extremely hard to find his identity. After finally letting go of the Army, he took up the profession of mindfulness teacher, an area that he is extremely passionate about. This is a very interesting read that everybody could benefit from for their own well-being. Fergus also runs a mindfulness course for serving and retired members of the DF, and all proceeds go to O.N.E.

Lt Robert Sheehan takes us through the 1 Bde Arty Regt Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC). OCC is a NATO examination designed to gauge the degree of compatibility with NATO policy. For the drill, more than 100 soldiers from 1 Bde Arty Regt deployed to Kilworth with reinforcements from 2 Bde Arty Regt. The ability of the unit's UAV and FST asset to provide an intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance (ISTAR) element to the fire planning cell was evaluated in a number of scenarios, including IED and CBRN threats, the deployment and actions of an artillery battery, as well as the exercise.

'Ginger' O'Connell and The Military Archives is brought to us by Comdt Daniel Ayiotis. The Military Archives can be traced back to 1923, when Commandant General Piaras Béasla asked the Chief of Staff to allow the temporary establishment of a

"War Records Office." This was denied due to widespread demobilization following the Civil War. There was still a need for an archival service within the Army, so Colonel M.J. Costello established the Military Archives as a sub-section of the Intelligence Branch in 1924. Comdt Daniel Ayiotis is the author of the recently published *The Military Archives: A History* (Dublin: Eastwood, 2022), available from all good bookshops or directly from the publisher at wordwellbooks.com. We wish him continued success with his publication.

Our feature on sports is brought to us by Comdt Claire Mortimer, who takes us back 23 years to when DF Ladies Football (DFLF) was founded. She describes how GAA legends Col Pat Herbert Retd, Lt Sue Ramsbottom, and Cpl Ann Molloy Retd selected a panel from approximately 60 ladies who showed up to play in trials. This group of ladies demonstrated exceptional leadership both on and off the field, paving the way for those who would go on to represent the Defence Forces GAA team both at home and abroad. We look forward to seeing the DFLF continue its success.

Sgt Robert Delaney outlines "The true story of a barrack grave, Joseph Poole and Griffith Barracks". Joseph Poole was executed in 1883 for the murder of a Fenian informer and was buried in an unmarked grave in the prison hospital yard. At various stages over the next 100 years there were attempts to find the location of the grave which were unfortunately unsuccessful. The National Boxing Stadium now stands on part of the site of the old Barracks. Sgt Delaney outlines the intriguing history of Griffith Barracks in his article.

DF Sports and Clubs notifies all members of upcoming events along with contact details for all Reps.

As always, we have our regular features including PSS, continuing to provide vital mental health advice in 'Headspace and Timing' as well as our 'Internal Comms' piece for all the serving soldiers who read the magazine. From the archives brings us back to an "End of an Era" with the closing of 1 ADR, and not forgetting our book reviews on page 28.

Internal Comms provides us with an update from D Ordnance Office regarding upcoming changes and issues of equipment that is currently ongoing.

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." - Barack Obama

Sgt John Rossiter – Editor

ON PARADE



78th cadet class reunion which took place recently in Athlone



Collins Cup Winner 2022
Pte Kerry Ryan

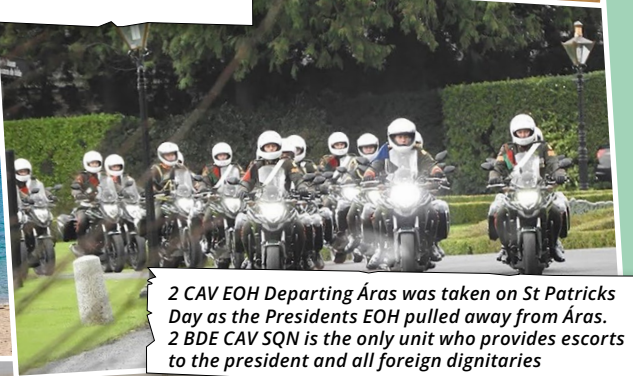


Passing Out Parade of Recruit Class McClintock in Haulbowline



Naval Divers joined Greek, Romanian, Belgian and US colleagues participating in the Greek Naval Mine Warfare Exercise "ARIADNE" 23 in Souda, Crete

Lt Col Sean Dunne, SSO G4 1 Bde, pictured at the recent Massed Bands Concert which took place in Cork City Hall with members of the local ONE who assisted on the night. The conductor for the wonderful night's entertainment was Lt Col Mark Armstrong who was holding the baton for the final time before his retirement



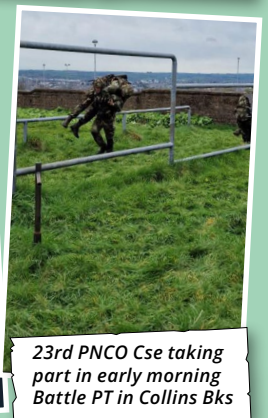
2 CAV EOH Departing Áras was taken on St Patrick's Day as the Presidents EOH pulled away from Áras. 2 BDE CAV SQN is the only unit who provides escorts to the president and all foreign dignitaries



Collins Bks in conjunction with Cork City Council recently commissioned a street installation in Cork City by Gareth Joyce



CONNECT App launch which took place recently in BTI 1 Bde with the Pot NCO's Course



23rd PNCO Cse taking part in early morning Battle PT in Collins Bks

ON PARADE

7



Recent visit of An Tánaiste & Minister for Defence Micheál Martin visiting the Naval Base



LÉ WILLIAM BUTER YEATS in the Netherlands for St. Patrick's Weekend, where Minister for State Ossian Smyth TD presented Shamrock to members of the ships company



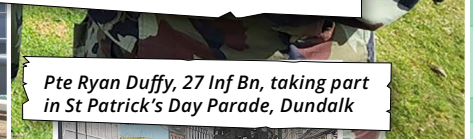
Major General Adrian Ó Murchú (DCOS SP) meets members of the 1st AR MP Prob Cse while out training

Deric Hartigan from Virgin Media recently visited the Air Corps and did his weather segment for the news



Official acceptance ceremony of the two Inshore Patrol Vessels (IPVs) from New Zealand to Ireland, which took place at Devonport Naval Base, Auckland. Pictured are: Minister Charlie McConalogue T.D., Irish Ambassador to New Zealand, Jane Connolly; Asst Sec (DOD) Eamonn Murtagh; Cdr Tony O'Leary INS, and Lt (NS) Cian Duggan

Pte Ryan Duffy, 27 Inf Bn, taking part in St Patrick's Day Parade, Dundalk



HQ Coy 27 Inf Bn Comdrs inspection



Clay Pigeon Shooting Club: Cpl Bannon, FQMS Reynolds and Sgt Caschera

ON PARADE

Crash Rescue Services carrying out vital aviation rescue training with new personnel in the fire crew training area in Baldonnell



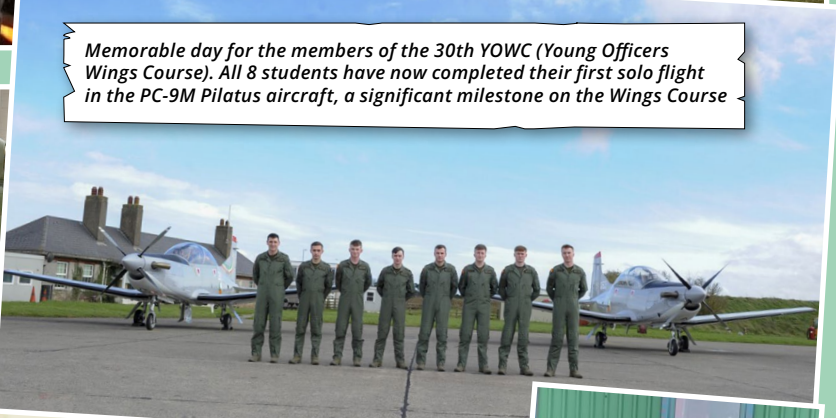
No 3 Ops Wing supporting Mayo Civil Defence as they installed an AED (defibrillator) box on Croagh Patrick



SFI winners Comdt Jay O'Reilly and their project Co-Pilot AI presented by Min. Micheál Martin and Min. Simon Harris



Memorable day for the members of the 30th YOWC (Young Officers Wings Course). All 8 students have now completed their first solo flight in the PC-9M Pilatus aircraft, a significant milestone on the Wings Course



Lord Mayor of Galway Cllr Lorraine Higgins inspects 1 CN COIS Honour Guard. NCO IC Sgt Stephen Flannery, Escort Comdt Áine Gilmore



Clay Pigeon Shooting Club: Cpl Arron Bannon, Capt Paul Fleming, Cpl Peter Cambell, Lt Dermot Langtry, Comdt George Balfe, Sgt Massimo Caschera, Capt Neil Dunne, Comdt Justin Barry

Most Revd Dr Michael G Duignan, inspecting 1 CN COIS Honour guard. NCO IC Sgt Stephen Flannery, Escort Comdt James Dunlea



Newly promoted CQMS Gunn after being presented his rank marking by Comdt Martin, along with students of the 1st AR MP Prob Cse



ON PARADE

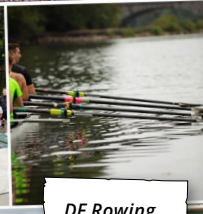
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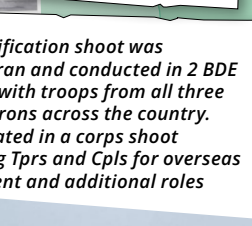
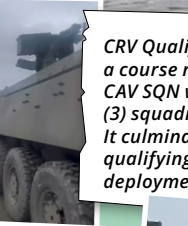
Defence Forces Rowing Club members with some silverware won in 2022



Some members of the Defence Forces Rowing Club pictures at the National Rowing Centre prior to seat racing



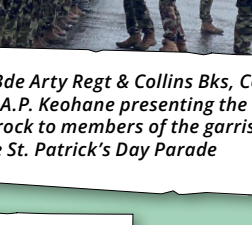
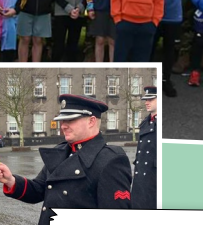
CS Tony O'Reilly who recently took part in the 25km DANCON march in KOSOVO



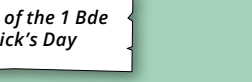
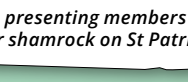
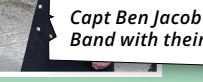
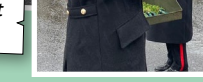
CRV Qualification shoot was a course ran and conducted in 2 BDE CAV SQN with troops from all three (3) squadrons across the country. It culminated in a corps shoot qualifying Tprs and Cpls for overseas deployment and additional roles



Cpl Mark Hughes, 2 MP, Pte Sean Hughes, Pte Kevin Brannigan & Pte Marcus O'Hagan 27 Inf Bn at Dundalk IT Junior Park Run



OC 1 Bde Arty Regt & Collins Bks, Cork, Lt Col A.P. Keohane presenting the shamrock to members of the garrison on the St. Patrick's Day Parade



Capt Ben Jacob presenting members of the 1 Bde Band with their shamrock on St Patrick's Day

27 Inf Bn Colour Party, St Patrick's Day Parade, Dundalk - Sgt Barry McKenna, Capt Pádraic Agnew & Sgt Riccardo Lucchesi



Cpl Stephen Butler and his daughter Fiadh Butler present with the EOH prior to departure on St Patricks Day. Cpl Butler has been in the unit for the duration of his career and is a stable pillar of the unit

1 BDE ARTY REGT

OPERATIONAL CAPABILITIES CONCEPT

BY LT ROBERT SHEEHAN

PHOTOS BY AIRMAN SAM GIBNEY

1 Brigade Artillery Regiment recently completed their second OCC block of 2022. Over 100 troops from 1 Bde Arty Regt, supplemented by members of 2 Bde Arty Regt, deployed to Kilworth for the exercise. The regiment was assessed in a number of scenarios including IED and CBRN threats, deployment and actions of an artillery battery, as well as the units UAV and FST asset's ability to provide an intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) element to the fire planning cell.

The Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC), is a NATO evaluation aimed at testing the levels of interoperability with NATO doctrine of partner nations or potential contributors, to work with NATO forces. Over the last two years of preparation, members of 1 Bde Arty Regt have been learning about NATO STANAGS (Standard Agreements) and ensuring that 1 Bde Arty Regt personnel understood them and could operate under them. This resulted in the updating of individual's battle books, as numerous tac-aides for various combat scenarios had to be updated, from ones used within the Defence Forces, to the NATO standard tac-aides for the purpose of the exercise.

1 Bde Arty Regt completed a self-evaluation in June. This evaluation gave 1 Bde Arty Regt a keener focus for the NATO evaluation which took place between 8th and 10th Nov 2022. The self-evaluation was a close reflection of the NATO evaluation (NEL). For the NEL, there were over 20 NATO assessors from various countries led by Chief Instructor Lt Col Sam Mason of the US Navy, with an additional number of NATO personnel, who were on their evaluator course.



1 Bde Arty Regt began an intensive eight week training block from 19th Sep 2022. This eight week training block focused on a number of key aspects that would occur during the evaluation. Throughout the eight weeks, all ranks were retrained and reassessed in gun drill, fire support techniques, C-IED drills, landing point commander training, heli drills, CIS training, medical training and CBRN training. Each



subject in this phase of training was tested through practical exercises and written assessments. A robust physical fitness routine was brought into the unit ahead of the exercise. The unit took part in physical training five times a week, split between circuit training, battle PT's and unit block runs.

The exercise scenario had an Artillery Battery (Bty) from 1 Bde Arty Regt, known as P Bty, deployed on a fictional UN mandated mission to Kilworth or 'South Dasnu' as it was known for the exercise. Dasnu was a country affected by corruption and ethnic tension, a bitter civil war had recently ended but IDP camps were still coming under attack from a separatist militia known as the Dasnu Union Front (DUF). It was P Bty's mission to deploy to South Dasnu and to act as a deterrent against attacks on civilians in IDP camps by the DUF. The Bty was commanded by Comdt Kevin Baston in the FPC with Bty Capt Paul O'Donoghue deployed in the battery echelon and Command Post Officer Lt Joe Everett, along with Bty Sgt Stephen Kiely and six detachment commanders over their respective guns.

The day before the exercise commenced, P Bty gathered in the gym in Collins Barracks Cork on 07th Nov 2022. This was the unit's first dealing with the evaluators as they conducted an in-depth kit and admin assessment. All personnel were checked for Army I.D., dog tags, soldiers book and all personal kit and mission essential equipment as per the ORBATT. Once the kit inspection was completed, P Bty was ready to deploy the following day.

The long convoy of P Bty departed Collins Barracks Cork on 08th Nov 2022. The HQ element deployed to the Fire Planning Cell in Kilworth Camp, the Command Post and gun detachments deployed to the FOB area in Kilworth and the Fire Support Teams (FST) and UAV detachment deployed to OP's throughout the area.

The first day was a busy day for all involved, as the guns

The 12.7mm HMG set up in the air defence role



Gnr King lays the 105mm onto a target

came into action, the OPs were set up and a defensive fire plan and target list were developed, a mobile FST and UAV team were deployed on patrol, where they discovered an emplaced IED. By carrying out their Vulnerable Point (VP) drills correctly, they were able to report it through the correct channels. That night, OPFOR were observed readying themselves to carry out an attack on the IDP camp; this was reported by the FST, who were able to call in an illumination mission to deter OPFOR.

The second day of the exercise was the busiest, one of the FST's got eyes on an enemy mortar position being established. An Inf Pl, supplied by 1 Cn Cois, were tasked with assaulting the enemy position. As the attack moved forward, they came under fire. The FST working with the Manoeuvre Arm Commander (MAC), conducted their FST drills on the move, calling in fire, which was simulated with dums supplied by 1 Bde Fd Engr Coy and managed to clear the area. As the battle progressed, a second FST moved through the MAC to establish a new OP.

On route to the OP, the IED, Medical and Casevac serial began. As the FST moved to the spot height in Glenatlucky, a gate had to be opened by a dismount, which triggered a victim operated IED. The medical training was put to the test here as the casualty was treated for a severe lower limb injury and internal chest injuries. The casualty was trained to conduct self-aid and applied a tourniquet to the wound, before he was casevaced from the area by the rest of the FST. The casualty was then transported to a pre-designated

landing site which was secured by the QRT (Quick Reaction Team) element and extracted by an AW139 helicopter. As everyone regrouped, more OPFOR activity was observed. Fast air was called in by an

FST located in the AO, on the OPFOR position where 2 PC9's from the Air Corps conducted an air strike and neutralised the target, followed by a battle damage assessment conducted by the UAV element.

On the third day of the exercise the bty prepared to deploy to a new gun area. A recce was conducted by the Gun Positioning Officer (GPO), however en-route to the new location, a neighbouring unit requested a fire mission from P Bty, resulting in P Bty conducting their quick action drills. The CPO and detachment commanders took control and got the guns into action, completing their fire mission within

The platform is made ready as the 105mm is brought into action



minutes. However just as the guns were taken out of action, "GAS, GAS, GAS" was called as a CBRN threat was encountered. A simulated fire at a chemical plant was the cause. The troops got into Dress Cat 4 Romeo and proceeded to a

decontamination area established by 12 Inf Bn troops. The troops were put through the decontamination line as per the CBRN training conducted.

This brought the end of the NEL and OCC for 1 Bde Arty Regt. Chief evaluator, Lt Col Mason of the US Navy thanked all personnel for their hard work throughout the exercise and in the build up to it, certifying 1 Bde Artillery Regiment as interoperable.

Ireland signed up to the OCC in 2016 and quite a number of corps have been tested to date. The Engineer Corps will be the next corps to be assessed as part of the OCC. For 1 Bde Arty Regt, the OCC process was a success, not just in terms of being certified as interoperable by the evaluators, but it allowed the unit to refocus and relearn skills that had been lost due to skill-fade. The OCC process allowed all ranks to operate together in a tactical environment and has improved cohesion within the unit as personnel got to work together in teams and detachments for a sustained period of time.



A 105mm howitzer is pulled onto its platform by the gun crew as it comes into action

Mindfulness & Meditation

BY SGT (RETD) FERGUS BARRETT
PHOTOS BY FERGUS BARRETT

I made some very good decisions in my life; one was to join the Irish Defence Forces and another, was knowing when to leave. I had an amazing career, I got to do what every young soldier wants to do in the army. I experienced travelling on overseas deployments on seven occasions, I was extremely grateful to be part of the sniping, SERE, and CTI communities. I received excellent training, was privileged to train many others, and learnt from plenty of mistakes along the way. But the greatest part of my military life, was the lifelong friendships I made.



Fergus on patrol in CHAD

Now saying all that, it wasn't without its physical and mental challenges. Yes, we were tested physically in the military, but when do we learn about our thoughts and what is going on in our heads? I have met a lot of physically strong people in my life, seriously fit and strong people, but at the same time some of them were silently suffering because of what was going on in their heads. During the latter few years of my career, I started to look at my mental health and on how much time, energy, and focus was being given to the negative stuff or the stuff that didn't nourish me, but depleted me. The more I studied this, the more I found out that if I wanted to change my life, I would have to start taking more responsibility for my mental health. I started to read my first few books about mindfulness, these were from the world-renowned author and teacher Jon Kabat-Zinn (JKZ). I was hooked straight away. I loved everything the books were teaching me, so I started to practice short meditations daily. Unfortunately, the meditations didn't go to plan. I thought I was supposed to get into some kind of altered state, or clear my head of all thoughts, even a bit of levitation would have been nice, but to no avail. I remained firmly stuck to my seat, my head was still full of thoughts, and the only 'altered state' was me being extremely frustrated. It was from this experience that I realised I needed professional training. I enrolled into a mindfulness and positive psychology teacher training course with Carmel, from the Irish Mindfulness Academy.

Over the next 15 months I learnt all about mindfulness, meditation, and positive psychology. I loved every minute of the training, it changed everything. The plan was not to become a teacher, I did all the training because I wanted to learn the tools, skills, and coping mechanisms to live a happier, mindful, more balanced, and authentic life. I wanted to reduce the amount of time I was stuck in my head, replaying the same old thoughts over and over, and worried about the things that could happen in the future. It was from this training, I learnt that if I was to change my life, I would have to change my relationship with my thoughts. I'll be summarising everything from here on in, I wouldn't be able to explain everything fully, as I would take up the whole magazine. Also, when I say 'mindfulness', this means both mindfulness (informal practice) and meditation (formal practice). Since my initial training I went on to do a masters in Mindfulness Based Wellbeing in UCC, and numerous other international courses. When I did decide to become a mindfulness teacher after leaving the DF, it was in response to talking to other people about what I had learnt. Their reaction was that they would love to learn more about mindfulness. I then decided that this was the path I would follow.



Fergus instructing on a SERE course

It's also important to say that when I left the army, I had a huge issue with my identity. I would always have said to people, when asked what I do, that I was in the army. When I did leave, I found myself saying that I was ex-army, still holding onto that identity. But that wasn't me anymore, I am more than an ex-soldier. Eventually I decided to say that I was a mindfulness teacher, and after some time, I let go of that attachment with the DF. The DF was just a part of my life, a fantastic part, but it can be unhealthy to believe that it was everything. By letting go, I freed myself up so I could go to college to do foreign courses and go on retreats to learn and experience so much more in life. I only say this because it might resonate with some people when they leave or have retired already.

What is mindfulness?

Meditation is the 'formal practice' in my daily mindfulness practice. So, if I meditate for 20 minutes every day, I then have the rest of the day to practice living mindfully; this is my 'informal practice'. Meditations are like gym work. If I wanted to build muscles in my body, I would go to a gym and lift weights, starting small and working up through the weights (repetitions train muscle). But how do I train the brain to be more aware, to pay attention, and to concentrate on what I am doing in the present moment? This is done through my meditations. If the word 'meditation' brings up an image of a monk in a cave dressed in a purple robe, having lived there for 5 years, don't use the word "meditation". Instead, call it "brain training". From an early age we are so pro-active in looking after our bodies, diet and nutrition through all types of

On sniper duties in CHAD



physical training, yoga etc., but when do we learn about our thoughts, about what is going on in our heads? Through meditation, we look inwards, we gain insights into how we 'operate'. This gives us clarity, awareness and space, so we can respond better to what happens to us in life.

My daily mindfulness practice – a formal practice of a sitting meditation, where I sit on a chair for 20 minutes (or sometimes just 1 minute) a day with my eyes closed, becoming aware of each inbreath and each outbreath, feeling the air come in through the nose or the mouth and back out again. This sounds like a simple practice, but to be honest, it can be very hard to keep doing. You see, the mind just wants to wander off to the future and the past, through no fault of its own, that's how minds work. But in our meditation practice, when I notice that my mind has wandered off the breath, I simply bring it back with a sense of kindness and curiosity to the next inbreath. That sense of kindness is extremely important. If we are harsh and give out to ourselves every time our mind wanders, then that becomes our practice, we get better at being harsh on ourselves. If I practice being kind to myself through the process, then I get better at being kind to myself. Being curious is also important; when I'm being curious about my present moment experiences, I'm starting to learn more about myself. Considering that the most important relationship you will ever have in your life is with yourself, isn't it worth investing the time to learn about how you operate?

We brush our teeth every day, we wash and shower our bodies. We don't wake up thinking about where we will find the time to do these things, we just know that it's important to clean ourselves. But how do we look after our mental hygiene? What time do we put aside to look after our mental health? One really good way is to meditate. To let the brain/mind settle into calmness and stillness. We operate far too much out of our 'driven' and 'threat' systems; it's important to spend more time in the 'soothing system'. If we are constantly living in our heads and we can so easily get caught up in the worrying,

ruminating, analysing, judging, brooding etc, we can activate the stress (fight or flight) response (sympathetic nervous system). When we take more responsibility for our own health, we realise that if we abuse our bodies with junk food, alcohol, drugs etc, the body will break down. The same goes for our mental health. When we practice mindfulness, we become more aware of what we let into our heads, we can reduce the negative stuff, and increase the positive stuff. A bit like a bouncer at a nightclub, "you're not coming in tonight", while at the same time, letting in the good. Your awareness is your security guard. When we spend more time in the present, aware of what is going on internally (thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations) and what is going on externally (where we are in the moment and what is going on) we can, with the right attitudes of kindness, curiosity, and non-judging, spend more time in the relaxation (relax and digest) response (parasympathetic nervous system). Is it easy? No, it takes practice. That's why we call it a mindfulness practice. Whatever you practice gets stronger - for the positive or the negative.

So, when we spend more time being present, we spend less time in our heads. And it's when we spend all that time in our heads, that we can so easily go to the future, worrying (what if this happens?), or to the past ruminating (if only I did this). When we are in the present, using all our senses to be present and aware of what is going on, we reduce so much stress, worrying, rumination, anxiety etc. This has many benefits for an individual, but also for an organisation (social mindfulness – it's not just about 'me', it's about the 'we'). We become more aware of our actions, we begin to see what is nourishing us and what is depleting us. Some people will think that mindfulness will make you soft. The reality is, with practice you will develop more compassion, for yourself and for others. There are two sides to compassion, the yin, and the yang. The yin is the softer side, and the yang is the tougher side. This (yang) is where we learn to say 'no' to inappropriate behaviour, we have the courage to be strong and stand up for ourselves. As Jon Kabat-zin says, 'we should meditate like our lives depend on it, because the quality of our lives does depend on it'.



Fergus after leaving the Defence Forces

How does this all show up in your day?

When you're driving your car and your mind wanders off to something in the past or the future (which is often something that you will worry or ruminate about – our negativity bias in action), using a mindfulness practice will help you notice that you are in your head worrying or ruminating. You can then decide to return your attention to driving. The same goes for when you are at work, home etc. Your formal practice of meditation is where you strengthen the attention muscle so you can notice this mind wandering. Then throughout your day you can practice mindfulness, live in the moment with awareness of what is going on for you and with the attitudes of kindness, curiosity, and non-judging. And like anything in life, the more you practice it, the better you will get at it. So, it's not about not having all these thoughts, it's more about increasing your capacity to becoming aware of the thoughts, so you can decide if you want to stay with that thought process, or just let it go. You're taking back control from your thoughts.

If you decide to start a mindfulness practice, I would recommend finding a course where you will learn from an experienced teacher.

One of the best relaxation tools I teach on my courses is, the 4-7-8 relaxation breathing technique. This is where we intentionally change the way we breathe, so we can move into a state of relaxation. This is a brilliant tool to have in the toolbox for when you are in a state of stress, can't sleep, about to go in for an interview, inside an MRI machine, etc.

I will give a brief description, and it is explained in more depth in my video course, or if you look up Video: Dr. Weil's Breathing Exercises: 4-7-8 Breath (drweil.com)

When we are stressed, we breathe in a rapid shallow way and when we become aware that we are in a stress response (being mindful), we can use this tool to move from a stress response to a relaxation response. The 4-7-8 works like this:

We breathe in through the nose for the count of 4 (getting plenty of oxygen into the body)

Hold the breath for the count of 7 (oxygenating all the blood around the body)

Breathe out through the mouth strongly for the count of 8 (helping to activate that relaxation response)

Please note that the count doesn't have to be a count in 'seconds', it can be slower than that until you get used to the practice. The goal is not to get light headed. You can do this as many times as needed, depending on your situation.

I would use the 4-7-8 relaxation breathing technique

before I do my formal practice of meditation. This helps me become more relaxed and to settle into my meditation. I would strongly recommend practicing this every day, so when the time comes that you really need it, you are ready.

A mindfulness practice can support you in so many ways in your life, and the only way to truly know if it works, is to practice it. It has changed my life. That doesn't mean I wake up every morning with a smile on my face and run around the house high fiving all my family. My practice has supported me on focusing on the good in my life, by putting my energy into the positives, I can grow all that is good in my life. You only have so much energy every day.

What do you focus on? What do you give your energy to? Does it nourish you or deplete you?

A mindfulness practice supports you in gaining clarity, awareness, and space, so you can respond instead of reacting to what happens to you in life.



Fergus on his graduation day

I would like to leave you with some simple tips to support your health and wellbeing.

1. Practice gratitude. "If you are breathing, there is more right with you than wrong with you, no matter what is wrong with you". (Jon Kabat-Zinn)
2. Take one minute every day to sit and just 'be'. Feel your breath coming in and out of your body, this can be through the mouth or the nose. (meditate)
3. Practice the 4-7-8 relaxation breathing technique.
4. Become aware of what you let into your head. All that bitching and moaning comes at a cost.
5. Practice being kinder to yourself. You're doing the best you can. Be aware of how you speak to yourself, the tone of voice you use. Be kinder to yourself, life is hard enough.

There's just not enough room to cover everything or to explain what I have mentioned in depth. There are different types of meditations, and different ways to do them.

Please check out my video mindfulness course:

[Video Mindfulness Course for serving and retired members of the Defence Forces - €10 \(all proceeds go to the O.N.E.\) - Inward Bound Mindfulness](#)

I have it reduced from €99 to €10 and all proceeds goes to the O.N.E.

[Video course ad.](#)

HEADSPACE & TIMING

BY LT COL JOHN MARTIN, PSS

Gambling is an Irish institution!

Gambling has been a part of Irish life for as long as anyone can recall. We all remember friends and relatives getting excited about the one pound bet on the Grand National, or visits to the greyhound track or the local racecourse. More of us will recall the amusement arcades of our holidays, with the one-armed bandits lined up in blinking noisy rows, ready to relieve the young and the old of their stash of coins. This paints a picture of gambling as a normal part of life, which people enjoy in moderation, and which causes little or no damage in our community.

The truth for some people however is very different! Gambling can be a highly addictive activity and can cause serious



problems in all areas of our society. When someone has an addiction to gambling that is left untreated, the effects on the individual and family and friends can be catastrophic.

So what are the facts about gambling in Ireland?

It may surprise you to know that over €5 Billion is gambled in Ireland every year, which is €10,000 every single minute. 12% of all Irish adults bet in a bookies shop every year, while 2% of us bet online. The evidence is clear however that gambling is moving more and more online. This makes it much more difficult for us to recognise when someone we know or love has a problem with gambling and may need our help. It is also interesting to note that the Institute of Public Health believes that problem gambling is almost 2-3 times more prevalent among younger people than their older counterparts. The bottom line is that approximately 7% of all gamblers are in danger of developing a gambling problem at some time in their lives (Freyne, 2015).

How will you know if a friend or loved one has a problem with gambling?

If someone is unable to stop gambling even when they are losing friends and family and are causing significant damage to their lives, then they have developed a gambling problem. It is important that we are all aware of the possibility that someone we know, either a loved one, a friend or a work colleague, may be developing a problem like this. There are many simple signs that we can look for:

- Using money for rent or other purposes for gambling
- Having unexplained debt
- Too much time on phones or tablets
- Talking excessively about gambling
- Change in personality or behaviour

- Mood swings, especially after gambling
- Absence from work, being late for work or poor performance at work
- Loss of interest in people or activities
- Borrowing or even stealing

There are many other signs that we might be able to see. The important thing is that we are able to take action if we realise that there is a problem.

What should you do if you think you or someone else has a gambling problem?

The good news is that there are many supports available for people who develop a problem with their gambling – sometimes the biggest and most difficult step is the first contact. Here are some of the supports that are available if you or someone you know or care for is in the grip of a gambling problem:

- **SPUNOUT** (Support for young people): Text SPUNOUT to **50808** for 24 hour anonymous text support
- **Gamblers Anonymous (GA)** at <https://www.gamblersanonymous.ie> and **01 87 21 133**
- **Extern problem gambling** at <https://problemgambling.ie> and Call back helpline (Monday to Friday) **089 24 15 401**
- **HELPLINK** Gambling problem counselling service at **0818 99 88 80**

The earlier that contact is made with these services the better! There are lots of other services which can help with some of the wider issues associated with gambling, including MABS, the money advice and budgeting service, and the Samaritans.

Finally

Gambling will always be a part of our society. To many it is simply an enjoyable pastime that has no negative effect on family, on finance or on mental health. However, for some of us it is a serious and destructive problem that can do a lot of damage. The good news is that there is a lot of support available when someone wants to do something about it. The first step in recovery is the most important. Serving members of the Defence Forces and their families, and our veterans, can contact pss@defenceforces.ie for guidance and advice on how to access services to defeat problem gambling. As with everything else, we are stronger when we work together.



'GINGER' O'CONNELL AND THE MILITARY ARCHIVES

BY COMDT DANIEL AYIOTIS

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY COMDT DANIEL AYIOTIS

The story of the Military Archives is the story of the people who made it what it is. It is a story that goes back one hundred years, featuring some very well-known historical names. The seeds of the Military Archives were planted in 1923 when Commandant General Piaras Béaslaí, who had been the IRA and National Army Director of Publicity, requested that the Chief of Staff permit the temporary establishment of a 'War Records Office' in order to collect and collate files that he and Captain JJ Burke had gathered in connection with Béaslaí's government-appointment as biographer of the recently deceased Michael Collins. These records, he said, 'would be of great value for reference as a complete history of the Irish Volunteers, IRA, and the starting of the Regular Army, as well as the Anglo-Irish and Irregular Wars.'

The request was denied due to the large scale post-Civil War demobilisation that was going on at the time. However, there remained a requirement for an archival service within the Army, and the Military Archives was established as a sub-section of the Intelligence Branch in 1924 by its director, revolutionary veteran Colonel M.J. Costello. This was necessitated largely by the requirement to manage records, particularly for the purpose of verifying the pre-Truce service by claimants under the 1923 Army Pensions and 1924 Military Service Pensions Acts. The day-to-day running was the task of Capt 'Fonsie' Blake and Mr Thomas Galvin, a civilian clerk, whose

work, by its nature, also documented for posterity the history of Óglaigh na hÉireann and the independence struggle.

When Blake and Burke left the Army in 1926, the Archives were generally neglected until 1932, when a new Director of Intelligence, Colonel E.V. O'Carroll, rejuvenated the archives as the 'historical' sub-section and in 1933, initiated the Anglo-Irish Conflict Project. This attempt to collect testimony of revolutionary veterans had the support of both the Chief of Staff (Michael Brennan)

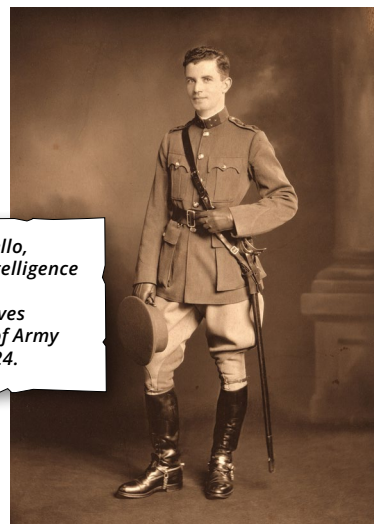
and the President of the Executive Council, Éamon de Valera. While its success was very limited, it was a precursor to the much more successful Bureau of Military History, established in the 1940s and which collected 1,773 witness statements that are accessible on the Military Archives website.

It was in 1935 that the first Officer-in-Charge of the Military Archives was formally appointed - Colonel J.J. 'Ginger' O'Connell. O'Connell had well established revolutionary credentials, having been a senior member of the Irish Volunteers and later IRA, mainly known for his role as Director of Training. As Deputy Chief of Staff of the National Army, his kidnapping by anti-Treaty IRA in the Four Courts in June 1922, had triggered the decision to deploy 18 pounder guns to dislodge the occupying troops. O'Connell also served as GOC of the Curragh Camp, and was famously pictured raising the tricolour over the Water Tower at its handover by the British. Demoted to the rank of Colonel during the post-Civil War demobilisation, a necessity he accepted, he was never promoted again above the rank of Colonel. While he was understandably resentful of this, it did not affect his absolute industriousness and zeal for the job as the Archives' first director. O'Connell's 9-year tenure represented the zenith of the Military Archives' fortunes during its first phase of existence.

O'Connell was appointed on 4th June 1935, and immediately set about establishing precisely what duties this new position entailed, and equally important, where exactly those duties were to be performed. On Saturday 8th June, O'Connell inspected the office accommodation at the Red House - Intelligence headquarters at Infirmary Road, Dublin - as a potential location. Although the Archives would be based there at a later stage, Griffith Barracks was identified and chosen as a more suitable location.

O'Connell spent a lot of time and energy during the first year engaged in internal wrangling to put the Military Archives in the best position possible to carry out its mission. His appointment had come about without any specific direction as to what exactly it entailed. Resources, both personnel and financial, were thin - in this regard O'Connell had to fight to secure part-time access to a single typewriter and was regularly incurring fines from the library of the Royal Dublin Society (RDS) for overdue books, as he was borrowing titles on his personal membership for the purpose of the work of the Military Archives.

Colonel M.J. Costello, the Director of Intelligence who established the Military Archives as a sub-section of Army Intelligence in 1924.



Colonel J.J. 'Ginger' O'Connell, one time member of IRA GHQ and Deputy Chief of Staff of the National Army. 'Ginger' was demoted to Colonel as part of the demobilisation and restructuring of the Army post Civil War. In 1935 he was the first to hold the new appointment of Officer-in-Charge of the Military Archives.





Commandant Peter Young (left) and Capt Victor Laing (right) working at the Military Archives. Laing would take over as Officer-in-Charge following Young's death in 1999 and remain so until his retirement in 2012. Laing guided the Archives into the twenty-first century and the important national centenaries that began in 2012. In 2016 he was awarded a well-deserved honorary doctorate from UCD for his significant contribution to public life in the context of the Decade of Centenaries.

Despite this, O'Connell remained undeterred and set about expanding the Archives' collections from various



The new Military Archives building opened in 2016. One of the state's 'permanent reminders' - capital projects funded by government to mark the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising.



Regarded as The Father of the Military Archives, Commandant Peter Young campaigned to have the Military Archives re-established in 1982, it having been removed from the establishment of the Intelligence Branch in 1959.

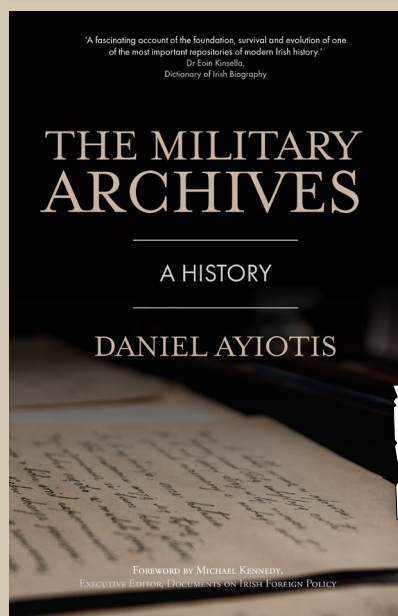
sources both within and outside of the Army. He expanded on O'Carroll's work, collecting and compiling historical sources and dossiers on a wide range of organisations including Fianna Éireann, the UVF and British Army. While O'Connell's success was greatly due to his very significant organisational and intellectual aptitudes, his personality also contributed to both his individual success and to that of the Military Archives under his leadership. It is widely noted in various history books that O'Connell's popularity was partly the reason why he was kidnapped by the anti-Treaty IRA at the beginning of the Civil War. He never lost this popularity either - on 4th July of 1939, he was invited to give a radio talk on George Washington during a special Independence Day broadcast, and on the 12th, he gave one on the Battle of the Boyne. Archiving is a uniquely human practice, and the human factor is critical to the successful management of an archive. In modern professional archival practice, understanding the archival profession is inextricably linked to the practicalities of archival management and the understanding that it is a profession characterised by several uniquely human and interdisciplinary facets. Decades before archival academics were publishing articles on this, O'Connell understood it intrinsically.

Following O'Connell's sudden death in 1944 the Military

Archives endured neglect and were eventually removed from the establishment of the Defence Forces in 1959. O'Connell's passionate enthusiasm would only be matched again during the tenure of Commandant Peter Young, whose advocacy over several years resulted in the Archives being re-established in 1982. Following his untimely death in 1999, Young's deputy, Commandant Victor Laing, succeeded him as Officer-in-Charge. Laing brought the Military Archives to the cusp of the Decade of Centenaries, poised to achieve its mission in a manner O'Connell could only have dreamed about, but about which he would no doubt have been immensely proud.



Commandant General Piaras Béaslaí, the National Army's Director of Publicity and official biographer of Michael Collins, who initiated the collection of Civil War records with the assistance of Captain J.J. Burke. Béaslaí proposed the establishment of a temporary War Records Office in 1923 but his request was refused as untenable given the large-scale demobilisation and reduction of the Army that was taking place in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War.



Commandant Daniel Ayiotis is the author of the recently published *The Military Archives: A History* (Dublin: Eastwood, 2022), available from all good bookshops or directly from the publisher at wordwellbooks.com

The Military Archives: A History, by Commandant Daniel Ayiotis, recently published by Eastwood.

DF LADIES FOOTBALL

HOW IT STARTED, HOW IT'S GOING

BY COMDT CLAIRE MORTIMER

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY COMDT CLAIRE MORTIMER



Lt Tara Khan fighting to keep possession of the ball

Throw back 23 years, it was the turn of a new millennium and the turn of a new era in ladies' football. Other than those who were involved in the sport, it had, to this point, garnered little interest. Waterford, Laois and Monaghan were the dominant teams of the previous decade with Mayo having just won their first All-Ireland and the last of the 20th Century. The 21st Century was about to see an explosion of interest and participation in ladies' football and this, inevitably, would spill into the Defence Forces.



Cpl Dawn Hannon giving it her all to win the ball

Just as the scene was bubbling with talent outside of the DF, inside there was a goldmine of talented ladies' footballers. Trials were conducted where GAA legends Col Pat Herbert Retd (Limerick Hurler and then Secretary of Defence Forces Athletic Association), Lt (now Comdt) Sue Ramsbottom (a legend of the game, having at that time already, 7 All Star awards playing for Laois) and Cpl Ann Molloy Rtd (one of the first females in the DF, two time All Star and Captain of Offaly) had the arduous task of selecting a panel from approximately 60 ladies who had turned up to play.

"The trials were nerve-wracking enough if I recall, I hadn't seen as many DF women in one place before! I was delighted to see Ann Molloy there on the day. We're from the same club in Offaly and when I was playing senior and contesting county finals, Ann was a constant on the side-line and in the dressing room, with great encouragement, a great role model." — Sgt Rena Kennedy

This panel of ladies brought with them exceptional

leadership both on and off the pitch, the likes of which has not been replicated since; players such as Caroline Burke, Therese O' Keeffe, Louise Conlon, Bridget Clarke, Rena Kennedy, Ann-Maire Larkin, Sue Ramsbottom, Deirdre O' Rourke, Niamh O' Mahony - the whole team could be listed! This group of ladies had a willingness to break down barriers and finally be afforded the opportunity to represent the Defence Forces in a GAA jersey. It was this group that paved the way forward for those who would be lucky enough in the future to represent the Defence Forces GAA team at home and abroad.

"It was great for comradery; it was great for all the different ranks to mix. It was great to get to know all the other females within the Defence Forces because we are scattered right throughout the country. It was a real step forward for developing sport for women in the Defence Forces." — Comdt Sue Ramsbottom, TG4 Laochra Gael

Soon, the ladies' team would be part of the yearly Inter-Brigade competition with the first being held in 2002. 2 Eastern Bde took the honours under the steadfast leadership of Team Captain Rena Kennedy. From then on, out of this competition, the DF Representative Team was picked to play two annual fixtures; Bank of Ireland and what felt like 'our' All Ireland, the fixture against An Garda Síochána. This would always be a battle, not just for the win, but a battle of pride. It was a day that nothing would be left in the tank and that spirit has been passed on to this day.

Each year as players retired, the goldmine kept providing with players such as Aoife Herbert, Jackie Kelly, Kim Turner, Siobhán O' Sullivan, Emma Hannon, Áine Gilmore and Lorraine Whelan coming through. In November 2007, the team played in their first significant venue, Parnell Park, to mark the 25th Anniversary of Defence Forces Representative Games against Bank of Ireland. It would be one of the high points for the team, displaying their ability in style in front of a stand (with people in it!). Unknown to the team at the

DF team and coaches before their match against An Garda Síochána





First Ladies Gaelic team

time, the real high for this generation of players was about to come. A representative tour to New York in February 2008 was in the pipeline. The ladies team felt that their contribution to the DF through sport was finally being valued. Equality in the GAA was still a long way off but the leadership of GAA in the DF at the time, particularly the late Lt Gen Dermot Early (RIP), Col John Courtney (Retd) and Col Pat Herbert (Retd), recognised the ladies' contribution and the need for equality. This level of support was invaluable to the morale of the ladies' team and is regularly commented upon to this day.

The hard work began almost straight away as the manager at the time, Shane Conlon, and his backroom team of stalwarts, Caroline Burke, Therese O' Keeffe, Louise Conlon, Gillian Martin and Niamh O' Mahoney were tasked with cutting the panel to meet numbers allowed to travel.

A number of fixtures were organised, and each player went to battle!

If Parnell Park was a high point, then the Gaelic Grounds of New York was cloud nine! The facilities alone were on a professional level new to many of the panel. Few players had played a football match on astroturf at that time and playing a county standard team on their home turf would be a tough challenge. The National Anthem was played, and the players paraded around the pitch. To many, this was the closest to an All-Ireland Final that they would experience. Unfortunately, the home team pipped the ladies at the post but that didn't deter the spirits and the team went on to enjoy the New York experience! Unknown to a lot of the ladies at the time, the New York game would see the last of those inaugural leaders bow out of DF football after years of hard work to get the team to this significant point, sharing parity with their male counterparts.

"In a time when ladies rarely ever got the opportunity to play in a county's ground at home, I remember the sheer excitement of playing on a fabulous all weather floodlit facility." — Comdt Siobhán O' Sullivan

Whilst the team continued on, the void of losing a number of core leaders and mentors was a blow to those who remained. This, coupled with a decline in a commitment to sport across the DF due to the intensity of training and operations, left a steep hill to climb after being on top of the world so recently, in New York. The few years that followed lacked any passion and even 'the craic' that was enjoyed over the previous years. Players were finding it increasingly difficult to be released from their units and this had a secondary effect on the morale of those who were available to play, due to numbers for training being so



25th Anniversary 2007

low. No training or operation can function without support and ladies' football was no different.

In 2015, refreshed again by the introduction of the relentlessly hard working and talented duo of Shelly and Stacy Kehoe, along with Siobhán Tierney, Cíobh Dollard and Gráinne Kennelly, the DF team began to grow in strength and spirit again. Comdt Pdraig Murphy saw the footballing talent that was within the team and inspirationally began to take a leadership role, coaching and managing and relentlessly trying to improve all aspects in order to create a well-gelled group of girls. His loyalty and selflessness to the team revived a lot of enthusiasm and brought a fresh and inspiring energy. A number of games were organised with various clubs in order to build esprit de corps among the

girls and to promote the DF externally amongst Ladies' GAA circles. Murphy's results came and momentum in DF ladies football began to grow once more. There were now whispers of a GAA Tour, similar to New York but this time it would be the UK. The team continued to work hard and improve knowing that places could be at stake for such a trip. Unfortunately, bad news came at short notice; the men's team would be the only team

that would travel. After years of building up parity with the counterparts, this was a big blow to morale for the ladies' team and resulted in the loss of some players that would not return again.

Once again, the ladies found themselves with gaps to fill and morale to build. As history repeated itself, the ladies' games came and went with little interest or excitement. The fixtures appeared to have become a 'tick the box' exercise on the sporting calendar, and this was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, one leader steeped in GAA passion began the ball rolling again (no pun intended!). Comdt Áine Gilmore had retired her gloves and trademark ankle support, and swapped them for a clipboard and stopwatch! Gilmore could have taken the easy route and left her legacy on the pitch, but she was mentored by the greats of the inaugural team, those who led the team to New York, and now it was her duty to do the same for the current generation. **"I wanted to give back and ensure that the club continued to exist and grow." — Comdt Áine Gilmore**

Over the past three years Áine Gilmore has been re-building



Ladies team in NYC



Match days always good fun getting together



The more recent ladies' team

the ladies GAA team with support from the ever-reliable Lorraine Whelan and Gráinne Kenneally working selflessly in the

background. Together, they have achieved a team which represents all services of the Defence Forces; Army, Naval, Air Corps and Reserve Forces, an achievement which few teams have achieved. Inclusivity of all services has been one of the notable key components of this current team.

“The DF Ladies Football team is very proud of the fact that we are inclusive of all branches of the DF, with representatives from all Corps of the Army, personnel from Naval Service, Air Corps and Army Reserve.” — Comdt Áine Gilmore

Players from the various services bring a heightened sense of pride as they represent their own service as well as the DF team. This is particularly the case for Naval Service player Zoe Gallagher and DF Reserve player Lisa O' Halloran. Lt Lisa O' Halloran (AR) oozes loyalty and commitment when it comes to playing football for the DF. A Clinical Midwife Manager, O' Halloran's work life is busy and stressful. However, this does not impinge on her commitment to the team. She ensures that she is not scheduled for a shift if there is a training day or a match. If she is, she swaps it with a colleague recognising the sense of pride to represent the DF, the importance of team commitment and also, the positives of having a focus outside of her routine work. The combined services team facilitates cohesion and esprit de corps amongst services, corps and units which enhancing the conduct of work off the pitch through reliable and well-established relationships.

“Being involved in a DF sports team as a reservist offers the opportunity to meet people from other units and backgrounds, but also enhances the single force, with permanent and reserve members working together as a team.” — Lt Lisa O' Halloran (AR)

Despite her high operational commitments with the Naval Service, A/B Zoe Gallagher is very enthusiastic about representing the Naval Service while playing with the DF. She alludes to the fact that whilst it is difficult to balance DF football with sports, the support of her unit has been instrumental in her commitment to the team. This support is critical to the existence of ladies' sport

in the DF, as the same players often play multiple sports in order to ensure that the DF is represented highlighting parity, inclusivity and promoting the DF as a positive team environment.

“The Navy has always been very facilitating and are extremely supportive of the passion I have for playing with the Defence Forces.” — A/B Supply Zoe Gallagher

Morale has returned and whilst the old guard now consists of NY 'Veteran's' Jackie Kelly, Shendah Moran and Siobhán O' Sullivan, they are re-enforced by the young guns of Tara Khan, Dawn Hannon, Saoirse O'Reilly, and Chloe Farrell, to name but a few. The highlight for this team to date was the most recent representative match against the AGS - The 'All Ireland'. Meticulous detail of player analysis and performance was conducted as Comdt Gilmore prepared her team. Not knowing much about the opposition of the day, the group were enthused and apprehensive at the same time to see players such as Mo Nerney (Laois All Star), Martha Carter (Mayo All Star) and Johanna Connolly (Galway All-Ireland winner) as well as a host of other talented sportswomen take the field for the Garda Team. To say that both sides gave an exhibition of football is an understatement and it set the scene for what was a fantastic triple header in University of Galway, Connacht GAA Air Dome. The unique setting was a real novelty for the girls to play on and facilitated an extremely fast-paced, high-quality game.

The DF Ladies' Football Team has proved over the years that success comes with resilience; the ability to break down barriers and build in the face of obstacles, the ability to rebuild again and again when fractures are appearing. This requires a management team of experienced leaders who will plan, organise, train and manage teams. Key to this leadership is the ability to mentor players so that, in time, the clip board and stopwatch will be taken on by the next generation with a sense of pride and duty to create opportunities for players who now fill their boots on the pitch.

The DF Ladies' Football Team would like to thank all those who have been involved in the coaching and management (both player and logistical) of the team since its foundation in 2000 and to all those who have provided support in any shape or form.



Ladies team performing passing drills



Team fitness drills



Performing kicking drills in training



Pre session warm up

PLAYER PROFILE

NAME

LISA O'HALLORAN

RANK

LT (AR)

UNIT

D COY 1 CN COIS



What is your profession?

I have been a registered nurse for over 14 years, a registered midwife for over 10 years, and I recently qualified as a nurse/midwife prescriber. I am currently working as a Clinical Midwife Manager on the labour ward in University Hospital Galway.

When and why did you join the DF RES?

I joined the DF Reserve over 15 years ago. Members of the DF visited our school as part of a recruitment campaign. I joined with a group of friends; we were excited to try something different. We travelled to Dún Ui Mhaoilfosa for a night parade, and from the first day I loved it. The mixture of physical training, tactical and weapons training was completely different to anything I had ever experienced.

How long have you been playing football for the DF and how did you get involved?

I started playing football with the DF in 2022. I was talking to a member of the management team in my home unit about playing football with my local club Killannin when he mentioned an upcoming training day for the DF ladies' football. He asked if I would be interested in playing and I jumped at the opportunity!

What was your first experience of playing with the DF team like?

Like joining any new team, nerves were very much present. I didn't know anyone else on the team, and I was worried that my fitness wouldn't be up to par. As we got started with the warm-up and got a few kicks of the ball, the nerves quickly settled, and I began to enjoy the session.

What does it mean to you personally to represent the DF in football?

I have had a very positive experience over the years in the defence forces, I have always been proud to wear the uniform. To have the opportunity to play football with the defence forces has certainly enhanced that sense of pride. At the age of 36, I'm not sure how many more years I will be fit to play football. To have the opportunity to wear the defence forces jersey, to be out on a pitch playing football under the guidance of an All-Ireland winning Galway player, and to play alongside other inter-county and experienced players is incredible.

Do you think it is important for RES personnel to be involved in a DF sports team? If so, why?

Yes, absolutely. I believe any opportunity to be involved in an integrated event is of benefit to all members of the DF. Teamwork is a core component of training in the DF. Being involved in a DF sports team as a reservist offers the opportunity to meet people from other units and backgrounds, but also enhances the single force with permanent and reserve members working together as a team.

How do you balance your busy work schedule with DF football?

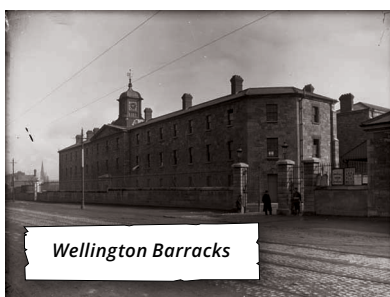
I'm fortunate with my work schedule as I work shifts, and I also have wonderful colleagues that will always swap a shift if needed! So, I can usually schedule my work days to be available for training and matches. My work can be stressful at times, so it is important for me to have a focus outside of work. Training with the Reserve and playing football have always been a great switch off from work for me, to be able to mix the two has been fantastic.

THE TRUE STORY OF A BARRACK GRAVE, JOSEPH POOLE AND GRIFFITH BARRACKS

BY SGT ROBERT DELANEY

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY SGT ROBERT DELANEY

There are probably only a few members of the Defence Forces still serving who spent time in Griffith Barracks on Dublin's South Circular Road, though it is likely that those who did can recall hearing stories about the site's darker past when it was the capital's remand prison. Two executions took place there before the Richmond Bridewell, as it was then known, was adapted to become Wellington Barracks during the 1890s. Decades later when it had been renamed Griffith Barracks and was the home of the 5th Bn, the family of Joseph Poole, one of those executed, made the unusual request to the barrack CO to be allowed to search for his remains.



Wellington Barracks

Poole was a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, who was hanged for the murder of a Fenian informer in 1883. It was believed at the time and is now widely accepted that he was innocent and was sent to the gallows by a packed jury, a victim

of the Crown's unjust legal system, because he was a Fenian. Poole was buried in an unmarked grave in the prison hospital yard in a place that was used later as a WC. Just four years after the execution, the prison was handed over to the War Office to become an army barracks and the first troops were quartered there almost immediately, though a programme of building works was undertaken in 1898 to make it more suitable for the military. The site was extended to the west to create a parade ground and prison buildings were knocked or converted to become stores, canteens, messes, and billets. The work was carried out by a Dublin builder named William Foley who was contracted to build or modify many of the buildings that served the Defence Forces until 1988 and have been preserved since on the campus of what is now Griffith College, and those in the grounds of the neighbouring National Boxing Stadium. At the time Foley knew there were burials on the site but must still have been surprised when his workmen discovered the grave of Poole whilst preparing the ground to build a company stores at the end of one of the old prison blocks.

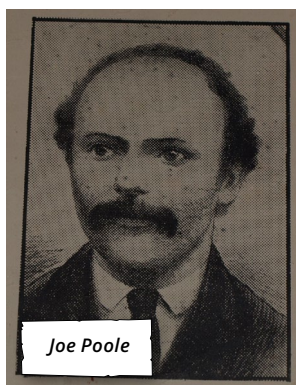
Work was halted and the Royal Engineer officer over the project, sought guidance from the authorities in Dublin Castle who wanted the

matter dealt with quickly to prevent Nationalist Ireland taking advantage of the situation. A request by Poole's mother to have him reburied with his father in Glasnevin was ignored. The assistant commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police at the time was John Mallon, a man who played a leading role in the conviction of Poole, and he was particularly keen to have the remains reinterred quickly in a deeper grave elsewhere on the site. Contemporary newspapers show that the press was making much of Poole's innocence and they called to have the remains returned to the family. But Mallon got his way and on the 21st of September – a week after the grave was first discovered – the remains of Joseph Poole were reburied in secret, after dark, in an area of the barracks that was outside the old prison grounds.

When Poole's elderly brothers approached the barrack OC to search for his grave in 1955, they were acting on information that was given to them by one of the labourers who was present that night in 1898. They dug in a corner of the barracks, south of the drill shed which was built by Foley more than a half a century earlier, but found nothing. This part of the barracks was separated from the bank of the Grand Canal and the public road beside it, by an iron railing, so it was visible to the public. It would have been almost impossible to conduct a burial in secret there. The evidence suggests that Poole's remains were reinterred in a corner of the barracks to the north of the drill shed in a secluded area that had become part of the National Boxing Stadium by 1955. A newspaper article



The Company Stores



Joe Poole

from 1898 supports this theory. It describes the scene as a box with the remains placed in a small square grave by labourers. They were watched by a party that included representatives of the police, the military, and the prison authorities. The only light was that cast by a lamp hanging from a nail that had been hammered into the red brick west-wall of the barracks.

During the years that followed, the grave site, which was unmarked, was left untouched. Contemporary maps show that ladders were stored along the brick wall to be used with the fire engine which was parked in a shed nearby. This meant that access was important and the only object to appear on maps of the area before the 1920s was a long jump which was part of a British army obstacle course. It seems the intention of the Royal Engineer officer to have Poole buried in a place away from the trampling boots of marching soldiers, was unknowingly upheld by the Free State Army when it took over the barracks in 1922 and the site remained clear even after this part of Griffith Barracks was handed over to become the National Boxing Stadium in 1938. In fact, it is only in recent years that a concrete building was erected there. Unfortunately, this means the resting place of Joseph Poole will remain undiscovered for another while.

The site of Poole's first burial place was in the centre of the barracks. The billets that overlooked it became offices for the National Army's Finance department in the 1920s and training rooms for the Chemical Defence section by 1939. Later the building was used by the Cavalry and Observer Corps and the

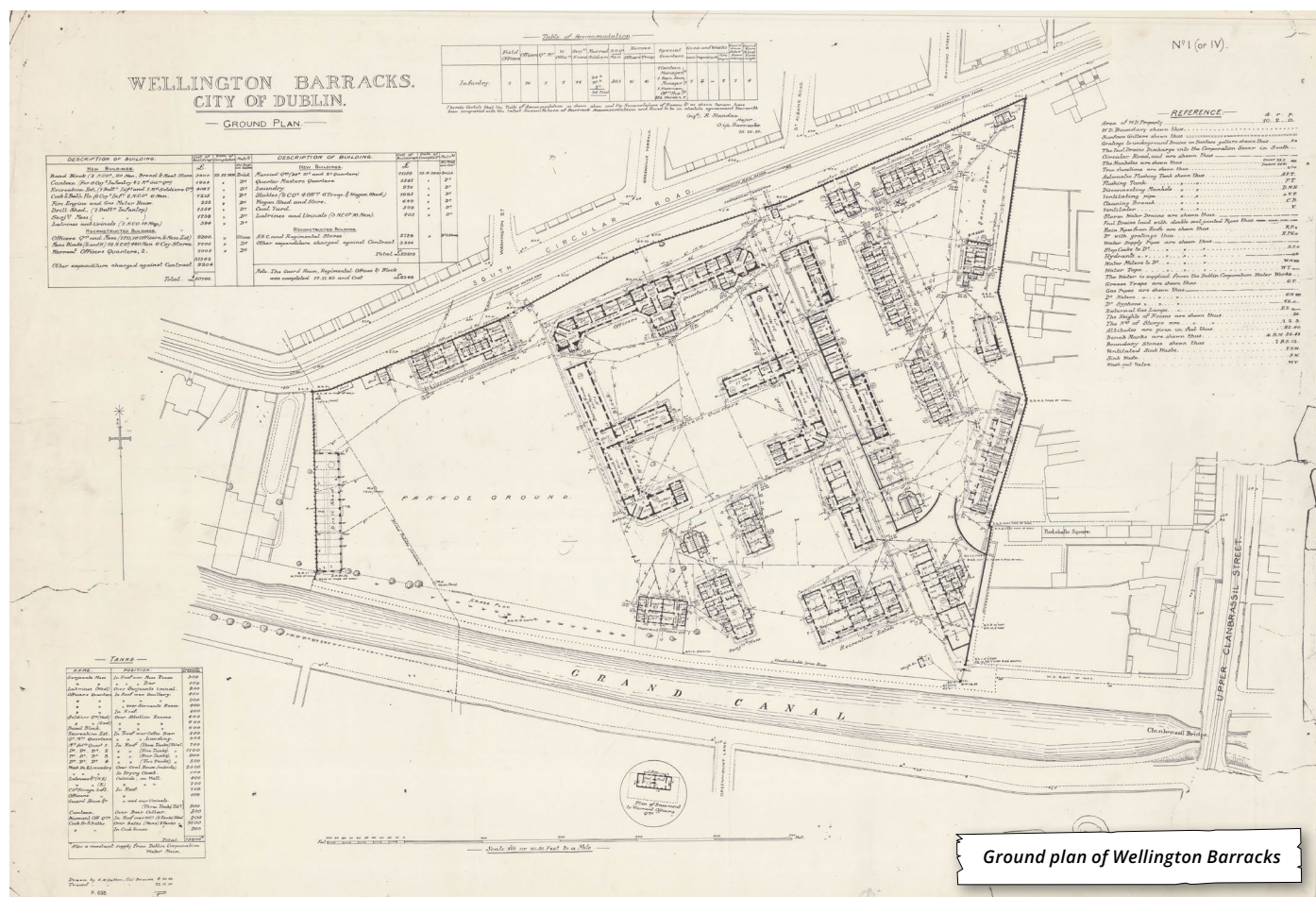


The building of the National Boxing Stadium which was built on the site of Poole's grave

company stores that was built there became a transport office and a store for radios. For almost a century, soldiers passed by oblivious to the macabre discovery that was made beneath their feet, though the arrival of Poole's brothers to search for his grave in 1955 probably reminded those stationed there about the site's grisly history. It ensured his story got a mention in An Cosantóir in 1979.

We have all heard countless stories about the barracks we serve in; most of them we disregard as tales invented or embellished by the 'old-sweat'. The story of Poole proves that quite often there is more to the tale than we realise.

If you have a story about the barracks you serve in, we'd be very happy to publish it in the magazine - please email magazine@military.ie



DF Sports & Clubs Update

FOR REGULAR UPDATES ON ANY OF THESE CLUBS, PLEASE LOG ONTO THE CONNECT APP

DF Ladies Soccer

Next Camp 24-28 April in Lynch Camp Kilworth - Focus on preparation for representative game versus UKAF 04-08 June 2023 in UK.

DF women's soccer recently welcomed CQMS Casey McQuillan, a UEFA A qualified coach with LOI and previous DF men's team experience back to the fold as the women's team manager. CQMS Darren Cody moves away from the role in the highest esteem. His role in the development of the women's game in the DF can never be repaid.

06 - 10 Mar: Camp in McKee Barracks Dublin

The second camp of 2023 with lots of new faces trying out for the team. A challenge game versus RCSI/DCU Combined Team, final score 2-2. A really good performance probably didn't get the result it deserved with the DCU keeper pulling off numerous top class saves. Senior players Shannon Thomas, Saoirse O'Reilly and Katherine Meaney led by example throughout setting standards. DF goals were from new Recruit Beatty (3 Inf Bn) and Pte Sands (27 Inf Bn). Well done to both.

The new management team is full of experience, made up as follows:

CQMS Casey MacQuillan, Sgt Shane Desmond, CQMS Dave Lockyer, Sgt Ash Griffin, Sgt Steve Cullen, Cpl John Sharkey, Sgt Devon Roche.

Hurling

DF Hurling will begin with the All-Ireland Chaplins Cup (11 aside) and Parsons Cup (7 aside) hurling competitions involving each barracks against one another with all three Services (Navy, Air Corps and Army) involved. This will take place in Liam Mellows GAA field beside Renmore Bks on April 27th with the DF Camogie teams also playing in the same location on this day. Please contact your barrack hurling representative to join.

Camogie

Defence Forces Camogie is relaunching after a hiatus of more than 10 years. There is a lot planned for 2023, starting with the official relaunch and inaugural match on 27 April in Galway. The plan is to work closely with the male hurling team and to support each other and combine events where possible. New kit and equipment have been ordered through DF Fitness and Sports Section, ready for April. We want to encourage all women of the Defence Forces to get involved, regardless of ability and experience, in particular, we want to encourage ladies who have maybe stopped playing the sport to get back into it.

DF Rugby

The 2023 Military Rugby World Cup is being hosted in France in August and the DF have been drawn to play Fiji, New Zealand and Uzbekistan in their group.

The Irish provinces have been very supportive with training camps in Munster's High Performance Centre in UL as well as a day in Connacht Rugby where their Director of Rugby, Andy Friend, talked to the players about team building and preparation. Leinster Rugby facilitated management to shadow them in their build up to a URC game to gain an insight into how the DF can best prepare for the games in August while also facilitating the running of a coaching course. UL also provided facilities for detailed fitness and performance metric testing that will assist the coaches in developing the team over the coming months.

The DF will host An Garda Síochána in the 50th meeting of the sides in the Gordon Wood Trophy in Killaloe/Ballina on 9th May 2023.

The coaching team consists of Capt Philip Dowling, Capt Derek Farrell and Capt Billy Henshaw. Former DF players and new players alike are very welcome to get in touch. It's not too late to get involved in what promises to be a unique experience representing the Defence Forces and Ireland at a World Cup in France. Beir Bual!

DF Clay Pigeon Club

The DFPCP is currently taking part in the Leinster League Clay Pigeon Shooting Competition. We are competing in 9 events with these being held across Leinster in various shooting grounds.

The DFPCP is constantly looking for new members so if people are interested, they can reach out and join the Club via IKON, follow us on CONNECT where we post regular updates or Sgt Massimo Caschera (Club Secretary).

Next open Club shoot will be held in April but the range is TBC.

Athletics

The DF cross-country championships were held in the DFTC in Nov 2022 across four race categories (Senior/Junior and Masters Men & Ladies). A DF (men and women) cross-country team participated in a regional (European level) CISM cross-country event in Belgium on 01 Dec 2022 finishing in an excellent 3rd place in the team competitions in both categories (see photo). Also, shot puts, throw weights and a shot-put circle were purchased as part of Comdt Tom Bouchier's drive to expand field events across the DF. The next athletics event planned is a 5-mile road race in Baldonnell on 10 May followed by the DF 10-mile road race in Haulbowline on 08 June. There are also plans for an outdoor track and field grand prix in the summer months (date TBC).

DF Rowing

The Irish Defence Forces Rowing club has recently affiliated with Rowing Ireland and are recruiting new members for social and competitive races regardless of your experience and geographic location, for further details please contact CQMS Dave Williams on dave.williams@defenceforces.ie or robert.diffley@defenceforces.ie

French

The Spring Semester of French Language Courses continue through April and May. Course levels A1, A2, B1, B2 & C1 are conducted online and through blended learning in Alliance Francaise Cork and Alliance Francaise Dublin. DELF examinations will be hosted in Alliance Francaise in May for DF candidates that apply.

Further opportunities to visit the French Armed Forces on two-week language immersion visits will be socialized over the summer months.

The next entry point for courses is September; these will be advertised in July.



Taking aim during a DF Clay Pigeon Shooting Club event



Pte Lorraine Carr in action



Pte Danny Scanlon of 1 Bde Transport undergoing his mandatory Flip test in the pool DFTC

L-R: Gnr Nathan O'Leary (1 BAR), Cpl Conor Tiernan (AC), Pte David Redmond (27 Bn), BW Laoighse Styles (DFSM), Lt Tahira Khan (6 Bn), Lt(NS) Tahlia Britton, Pte Paul Buckley (6 Bn), Sgmn (AR) Joshua Elliot (1 CIS), Cpl Paul Mitchell (2 BTC), Comdt Noel Conway (Head of Mission). [Not pictured: Cpl Mark Bulman (1 Tpt Coy), coach]

	CHAIRPERSON	ALT POC
DFCAT		
Adventure Racing	Capt Diarmaid Collins diarmaid.collins@defenceforces.ie	Comdt Mark Brogan mark.brogan@defenceforces.ie Comdt Eoghan Carton eoghan.carton@defenceforces.ie
Diving / Sub Aqua	Col Mark Browne (President) mark.browne@defenceforces.ie Capt Anthony Duffy (Chairperson) anthony.duffy@defenceforces.ie	CS Kenneth Murphy (Dive Officer) kenneth.murphy@defenceforces.ie Cpl Killian Byrne (Training Officer) killian.byrne@defenceforces.ie
Kayaking	Comdt Conor Hurley conor.hurley@defenceforces.ie	Lt Ben Nolke ben.nolke@defenceforces.ie
Mountaineering	Capt Richard Griffiths richard.griffiths@defenceforces.ie	CQMS Noel Shannon noel.shannon@defenceforces.ie
Parachuting	Comdt Rory Esler rory.esler@defenceforces.ie	Comdt Ruarigh Mc Dermott ruarigh.mcdermott@defenceforces.ie Capt Keefe Meehan (Admin Offr) keefe.meehan@defenceforces.ie
Sailing	Lt Col Brian Mathews brian.mathews@defenceforces.ie	Lt Col Shane Keogh shane.keogh@defenceforces.ie
SPORTS TEAMS		
Angling	Sgt Thomas O'Neill thomas.oneill@defenceforces.ie	
Athletics	Comdt Noel Conway noel.conway@defenceforces.ie	CQMS Pat Byrne pat.byrne@defenceforces.ie
Field Athletics	Comdt Thomas Bouchier thomas.bouchier@defenceforces.ie	Comdt James Ledingham james.ledingham@defenceforces.ie
Basketball	Lt Col Jayne Lawlor (Chair) jayne.lawlor@defenceforces.ie Comdt Padraic Kennedy (o/seas) padraic.kennedy@defenceforces.ie	Comdt Gemma Fagan gemma.fagan@defenceforces.ie
Boxing	Comdt Adrian Watson adrian.watson@defenceforces.ie	Comdt John Moody john.moody@defenceforces.ie Cpl John Molloy johno.molloy@defenceforces.ie
Clay Pigeon	Comdt Justin Barry justin.barry@defenceforces.ie	Capt Neil Dunne neil.dunne@defenceforces.ie
Cricket	Capt Cillian Browne cillian.browne@defenceforces.ie	Lt James Northover james.northover@defenceforces.ie
Equestrian	Comdt Danielle Murphy danielle.murphy@defenceforces.ie	
GAA football - men	Comdt Alan Courtney alan.courtney@defenceforces.ie	Comdt Tony Bolger anthony.bolger@defenceforces.ie
GAA football - women	Comdt Áine Gilmore aine.gilmore@defenceforces.ie (until Jun 23) Comdt Lorraine Whelan lorraine.whelan@defenceforces.ie (from Aug 23)	Comdt Siobhan O'Sullivan siobhan.osullivan@defenceforces.ie Comdt Sue Ramsbottom sue.ramsbottom@defenceforces.ie
GAA hurling	Comdt Stephen Molumphy stephen.molumphy@defenceforces.ie	
GAA camogie	Capt Cathy Barrett catherine.barrett@defenceforces.ie	Capt Michelle Kelly michelle.kelly@Defenceforces.ie
Golf	Comdt John Fitzgerald john.fitzgerald@defenceforces.ie	Comdt Dave Farragher david.farragher@defence.ie
Martial Arts		Lt Eamon Hennessy eamonn.hennessy@defenceforces.ie
Orienteering	Comdt Kevin O'Reilly kevin.oreilly@defenceforces.ie Comdt Danielle Buckley danielle.buckley@defenceforces.ie	Comdt Maeve O'Grady meave.ogrady@defenceforces.ie
Rowing	CQ Dave Williams dave.williams@defenceforces.ie Comdt Jim Murray (OIC) jim.murray@defenceforces.ie	Pte Rob Diffley (Eqpt Mngr) robert.diffley@defenceforces.ie Capt Marie Piggott (Pres) marie.piggott@defenceforces.ie
Rugby- men	Comdt Rory McCann rory.mccann@defenceforces.ie Lt Col Damian Carroll damian.carroll@defenceforces.ie	Capt Phillip Dowling phillip.dowling@defenceforces.ie
Rugby- women	Lt Col Jayne Lawlor jayne.lawlor@defenceforces.ie	Lt Meabh O'Brien meabh.obrien@defenceforces.ie Cpl Orlaith Kiely orlaith.kiely@defenceforces.ie
Soccer- men	Capt Richard Barber richard.barber@defenceforces.ie President: Brig Gen Campion V. President: Lt Col O'Hara	Capt Kenneth Deegan ken.deegan@defenceforces.ie Capt Colm Kavanagh colm.kavanagh@defenceforces.ie
Soccer- women	Capt Margaret Hogan margaret.hogan@defenceforces.ie	Lt Brian Dunne brians.dunne@defenceforces.ie
Triathlon	CQ Jackie Wykes jackie.wykes@defenceforces.ie	Cpl Conor Tiernan conor.tiernan@defenceforces.ie
Volleyball	Comdt Padraig Murphy padraig.murphy@defenceforces.ie	
Swimming	Col M. Moran mick.moran@defenceforces.ie	Comdt Deirdre Newell deirdre.newell@defenceforces.ie

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

BY CAPT. AUSTIN DOYLE OF PR BRANCH
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CAPT. AUSTIN DOYLE

If there are Defence Forces Internal Messages you wish to have on CONNECT, published here or on military.ie please email internalcomms@military.ie

CONNECT – Internal Comms app

For many years our internal communications has not been to the standard we should expect of ourselves as a modern Defence Forces. In particular, our communication to those who are not desk based and who have no access to IKON or secure email.

This message has been clearly communicated to the General Staff by our members.

Purpose and Benefit: Through your personal devices, CONNECT will provide Serving members of the PDF with timely and equal access to information regarding what's happening in your unit, barracks, brigade, formation or service and the Defence Forces as a whole. In doing this, the General Staff want to give you a better opportunity to manage your careers and work life balance.

You will **not** be able to be directly messaged through CONNECT, you **cannot** be detailed for work through CONNECT. **You are in control** of what spaces you follow from your barracks to over 20 interest groups (DF Soccer, DF orienteering etc). **You are in control** of your notifications of the spaces you follow from push and email notifications to no notifications.

Having analysed your feedback, the App will prioritise information regarding **career management, courses, overseas opportunities, medical services, personnel support services, sports facilities and training opportunities.**



At time of writing the platform is now open to personnel to register in the Air Corps, Naval Service and 1 Brigade. We are launching to 2 Brigade, DF TC and DF HQ in the coming weeks. The Internal Comms team are visiting all locations throughout the DF holding briefs and looking for feedback. Look out for the posters and banners in your location with the QR code to register.

The Colonel Michael Hefferon Memorial Scholarship

The Colonel Michael Hefferon Memorial Scholarship in Irish History in UCD will be awarded to a student registered to the MA in Irish History. The scholarship has been proposed as a result of a generous bequest from the Hefferon family to support the research of modern Irish history and specifically to promote the use of archival sources in the Irish Military Archives.

Colonel Michael Hefferon had a distinguished military career. He was commissioned into An Chéad Cath in 1933. His later roles included the Aide de Camp to President Seán T. O'Kelly and Commandant of the Military College at the Curragh. In 1963, Col Hefferon was appointed Director of Military Intelligence and in that capacity, he had overall responsibility for the Defence

Forces journal An Cosantóir. He was a key witness at the Arms Trial in 1970. He died in 1985 at the age of 75.

More information about the Scholarship can be found here: <https://www.ucd.ie/history/study/postgraduateprogrammes/colonelmichaelhefferonmemorialscholarship/>

2023 Cadetship

The 2023 Cadetship Competition is open for online applications. Eligible serving members should consider applying. Visit the careers page on www.military.ie and select the Cadetship Competition to find links to each service terms and conditions.

Serving members are eligible for bonus points at the interview stage. Use the practice psychometric test link to assist with preparing for this competition.

Update on the High Level Action Plan

Update on the High Level Action Plan for the report on the Commission on the Defence Forces was published on the 23rd of March 2023. The report can be accessed through CONNECT, IKON or military.ie.

To date, 80% of the early actions have been completed, with substantial progress made on the remainder. This provides the building blocks for the development of a detailed implementation plan up to 2028.

The development of the detailed implementation plan is currently at an advanced stage.

DF Coaching and Mentorship

Coaching and Mentoring are critically important to the military, in order to better equip its personnel to negotiate the challenges of the 21st century operating environment.

DF personnel are encouraged to engage with this programme; Coaching and Mentorship application forms can be found on CONNECT and IKON.

D Ord – Uniform Update

Uniforms and Clothing

- Operational and Service Dress Footwear – Tender Ongoing
- Service Dress (SD1) Uniforms – Tender Ongoing. The Prior Information Notice (PIN) was published on the Official Journal of the EU (OJEU) in Q1 2023 with the Request for Tender due to be published in Q2 2023.
- Operational Uniforms – Pre-Tender Market Engagement is ongoing. It is anticipated that the PIN will be published in Q2 2023.

Capability Development

- Integrated Modular Body Armour System (IMBAS) – Tender ongoing. The Tender has progressed to stage two with the Request for Tender (RFT) issued and the assessment scheduled for Q2/3 2023.

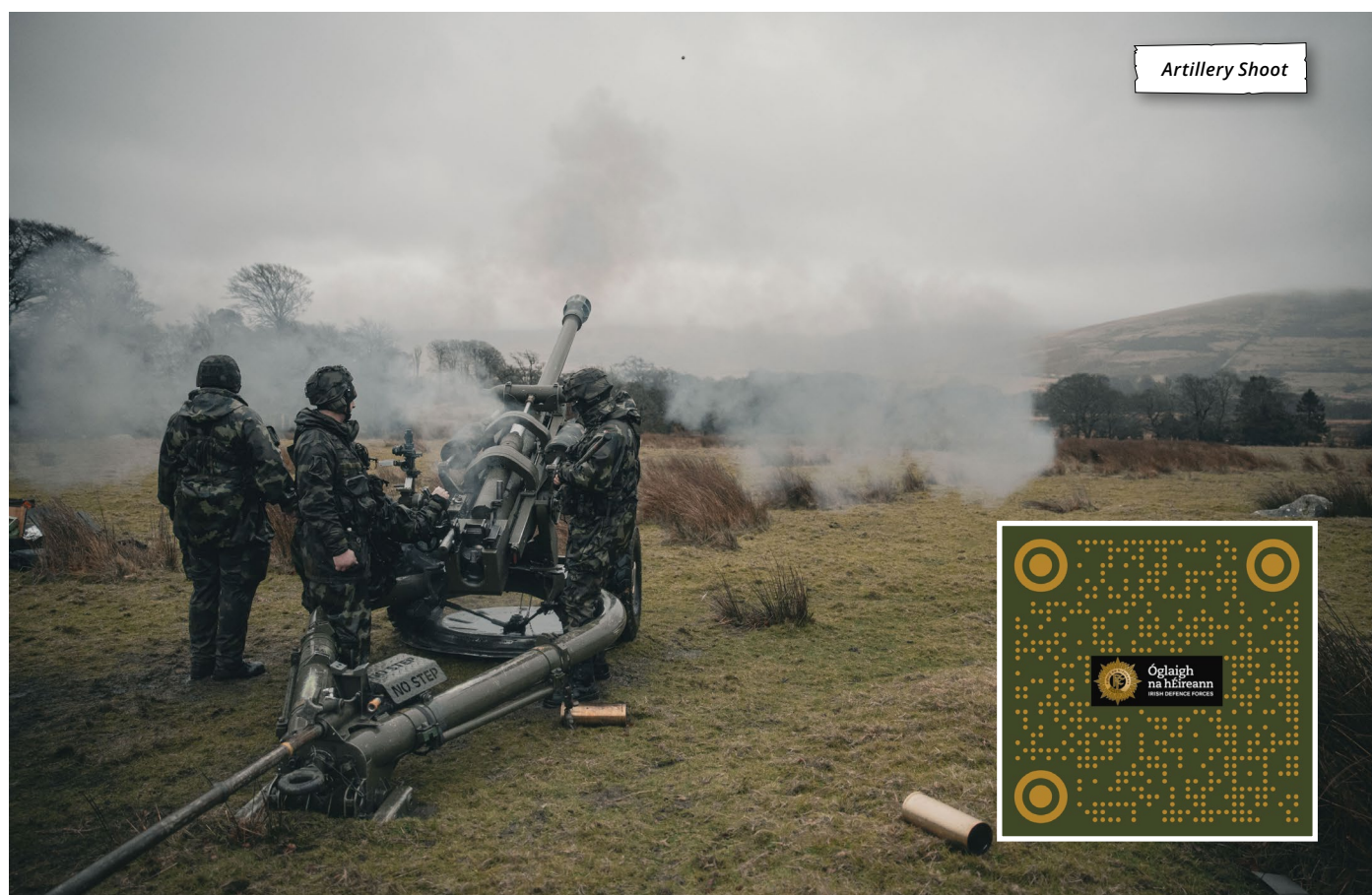
Projects complete/roll out ongoing

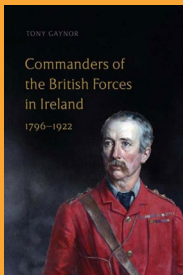
- Ballistic Eye Protection Glasses (ESS Crossblade – Terrain Tan) procured with rollout continuing.
- Lightweight brown boot (Haix Black Eagle athletic 2.0 N mid brown) procured and nearing end of roll out phase.
- Tactical Glove (Mechanix M-Pact 3 Coyote) procured and nearing end of roll out phase.
- Green webbing tactical belt (Cobra AustriAlpin Buckle) procured and nearing end of roll out phase.
- Subdued Flashes procured and roll out complete.

Ongoing Projects

- An olive green merino wool warm weather beanie (Woolpower) has been procured with roll out estimated in Q3/4 2023.

- A new integrated pace counter and whistle has been procured with roll out estimated in Q3/4 2023.
- A new toiletry bag has been procured with roll out estimated in Q3/4 2023.
- Paracord has been procured with the intention of it being available for issue from CQ equipment stores from Q3/4 2023.
- Trials are ongoing for multiple items of camp field equipment including new bivvy poles, improved specification head torches and replacement bag liners/dry bags.
- Tactical IR combat identification flashes undergoing trials in Q2/3 2023.
- New Steyr Blank Firing Attachment (BFA) testing ongoing.
- New CBRN Suit with improved specification undergoing Testing.





COMMANDERS OF THE BRITISH FORCES IN IRELAND 1796 – 1922

Author: Tony Gaynor
Publisher: Four Courts Press (2022)
ISBN: 978-1-80151-037-0
Pages: 400
Price: €54.00

On the afternoon of Monday 16th January 1922, the Irish Provisional Government took overpower from the British administration at Dublin Castle. It was an event rich in history as Dublin Castle, since the Norman conquest and the consolidation of British power during the Tudor period, had a natural symbolism as the epicentre of British rule in Ireland. The Freeman's Journal noted that "the black old fortress of iniquity has fallen...the Castle as a garrison is gone; the Castle as a centre of Government has fallen." It was also the beginning of the gradual withdrawal of the British army garrison in Ireland. Although its roles have often proved controversial in the whole series of wars and conflict that have characterised the Anglo-Irish relationship, the army had also provided an important social and economic function in Ireland. For many young sons of the Irish Ascendancy class, it provided a career progression within the milieu of English society. Indeed, many of the army's most celebrated commanders, including Field Marshall Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, victor of Waterloo and Viscount Alanbrooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) during the Second World War were Irishmen born and bred. Lady Butler's painting, "Listed for the Connaught Rangers," a work of immense power and great artistry, set in Kerry, evocatively captures how for the poor urban and rural Catholic class, the army was a means of employment during times of hardship, particularly in the post-famine period. Even at this remove, many Irish families have a strong lineage with the British army stretching back generations.

Tony Gaynor, Director of Governance at Maynooth University (MU), in his meticulously researched book, "Commanders of the British Forces in Ireland: 1796-1922," focuses with a gimlet analysis on the role of these commanders of the British army in Ireland who were at the nexus of the Anglo-Irish relationship throughout a series of crisis that marked the era.

Where Gaynor's work particularly excels, is in describing the often-fractious relationship between the army and the civil authority in Ireland and as to how Government policy was to be implemented. The Abercromby Affair, on the eve of the 1798 rebellion, revealed a British army commander who had genuine empathy for the Catholic populace and bemoaned the indiscipline of the Militia Regiments which he felt contributed to provoking the subsequent orgy of violence. General Arthur Paget was involved in the 1914 Curragh Mutiny 'incident' and inadvertently provoked a constitutional crisis when he advised that officers could 'absent' themselves if told to march on Ulster to enforce

Home Rule.

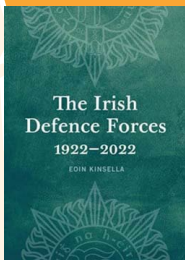
From the rebellion of 1798, through to the suppression of the Young Ireland Revolt of the 1840's, followed by the Fenian/IRB revolt of 1867, the army played a central role in maintaining the status and hegemony of the Crown. Much of this was predicated in maintaining a superb intelligence network based on informers that was critical in suppressing many of these nascent revolts.

But it was in the Anglo-Irish War of 1919-21 that saw the army attempting to defeat the new generation of Irish republican militancy with the IRA at its spearhead. Here they encountered Michael Collins, who fully understood the importance of intelligence and more importantly counterintelligence, as the events of Bloody Sunday in November 1922 witnessed when the British army intelligence structure was significantly disrupted. General Macready, the British army commander, was the man assigned the task of crushing the IRA insurgency and its urban guerrilla component. It was sobering that Macready advised the then Government, that unless effectively all-out war was persecuted in Ireland, the insurgency could not be defeated. Telling Lloyd George in June 1921 to "go all out or get out" of Ireland was a defining moment and ultimately was a key enabling factor that led to the subsequent Treaty negotiations. The role of King George V is less well known, who in the same month before travelling to Belfast for the opening of the Northern Ireland Parliament at Stormont, voiced his anger at government policy in a tense meeting with Lloyd George. "Are you going to shoot all the people in Ireland?" asked the King. "No, your majesty," replied the Prime Minister. "Well then you must come to some agreement with them. The thing cannot go on. I cannot have my people killed in this manner."

Following the signing of the Treaty in December 1921 after a presence that had lasted centuries, the British army 'footprint' which had been inextricably woven into the socio-economic DNA of town and cities across Ireland, was abruptly ending, whereby the military withdrawal from the 26 counties that became the Free State was effectively over in a matter of months, drawing a curtain over echoes of history that still reverberate today.

Provide by Dr Rory Finegan (Comdt Retd.), Maynooth University (MU)

BOOKS BOOKS



THE IRISH DEFENCE FORCES 1922-2022

Author: Eoin Kinsella
Publisher: Four Courts Press (2022)
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Pages: 304
Price: €30.00

The echoes of history are never far away and have been brought to the fore by the recent series of commemorations to mark the revolutionary period in which the new state was born in a veritable crucible of fire. It is therefore fitting that a major new work; *The Irish Defence Forces 1922-2022* by Eoin Kinsella has been published to mark the centenary of the foundation of the Irish Defence Forces (DF). Kinsella as an author is immersed in Irish historiography, with a number of previous publications and also being Managing Editor of the Royal Irish Academy's Dictionary of Irish Biography. This extensively researched work is further enhanced by an assistant editorial team convened by the Defence Forces with the additional active support of Military Archives and the extraordinary treasure-trove of historical records contained within.

Following the Truce in July 1921 and the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty on 6 December the nascent state was effectively constituted under the Provisional Government in January 1922. In effect, the pro-Treaty IRA were now reconstituted as the National Army of the Irish Free State, with a lineage dating to the original foundation of the Irish Volunteers in 1913. A bitter Civil War ensued from June 1922 to May 1923. There were atrocities committed by both sides but the actions during the Month of March 1923, the penultimate month of the Civil War, saw some of its most brutal acts when "Kerry Command" of the National Army under Brigadier General Paddy O'Daly perpetrated the extrajudicial killings of republican prisoners at Ballseedy outside Tralee and other locations in Kerry; in what became known as "the terror month." These were amongst the many visceral scars that were to psychologically haunt Irish society and engender bitter political debate in the following decades. Following the Civil War Kinsella charts the failed Army Mutiny of 1924, partly predicated on the significant reduction of the army post the Civil war, entailing a reduction of 30,000 personnel. The threatened mutiny resurrected interrelated conflicts within the Government and Army, and also exposed a struggle between civil & military powers which took the identifiable form of a clash between Kevin O'Higgins, Minister for Home Affairs and later Justice and vice-president of the Executive Council and Richard Mulcahy, Minister for Defence. Kinsella sets in historical context how this often overlooked event was of paramount importance in establishing the democratic pillars of the state and ensuring that the army was always subordinate to the duly elected government, or O'Higgins declaration to the world that "neither he nor the institutions of the State would ever again take their stride from a soldier's boot."

The historian Theo Farrell has argued that the Irish army post the revolution became arguably 'feeble' in two senses; politically it attracted exceptionally low level of government support & resources. Defence spending essentially collapsed from £11M in 1924 to £1M in 1932 and strategically, in that the state sought to defend itself in a manner that even its own planners advised against. Despite this a pivotal moment in the professionalization of the Defence Forces was the Military Mission sent to the United States in 1926, as a result training was placed on a proper footing with the establishment of a Military College, Corps and Service Schools.

The Emergency Period of WW II saw an expedient increase in the military to deal with the threat of potential invasion. Under the leadership of Lt. Gen. Dan McKenna, Chief of Staff, two Divisions were raised, 1 Division ('Thunderbolt') under Maj. Gen. M.J. Costello

and 2 Division ('Spearhead') under Maj. Gen. Hugo O'Neill, both combining to a force of 40,000 by early 1942. Parallel to this by 1941 the Marine and Coast Watching Service was established consisting of 10 craft (6 motor torpedo boats plus 4 assorted vessels) and about 300 active personnel. In 1942 the Service was renamed the Marine Service. It was in 1946 the Irish Naval Service as we now know it was formed. The Irish Air Corps also sought to develop its capacity but had a very limited capacity.

Like the current conflict in Ukraine, the Emergency reminds us of how territorial threats can materialize. Britain, Nazi German and US all had plans to occupy Ireland at various stages-like Iceland. Kinsella notes how Military Intelligence (G2) with Col. Dan Bryan as Director of Intelligence played a pivotal counter-espionage role during the crisis. Here again the historian Eunan O'Hallpin has acknowledged that G2's security and counterespionage success during the Emergency were considerable. They were due very largely to the men who successively ran the organization, firstly Liam Archer and then Dan Bryan. Both had the benefit while young men of working on the other side of the clandestine fence against the British, and Bryan had then become a consummate agent runner against the republican movement until the army was pulled out of domestic intelligence gathering in 1926.

After the Emergency the DF underwent a 'managed decline.' The new Republic finally joined the UN as a member in 1955 and following this the 'discovery' of the Peacekeeping role from 1958 fitted with Irish Foreign Policy values and identity-and still does. Following the deployment of Military Observers to South Lebanon in 1958, our first major troop deployment was part of the UN ONUC mission to the Congo from 1960-1964. The author narrates the tragic events of the Niemba ambush of November 1960 and the subsequent valiant defence of Jadotville by Comdt. Leo Quinlan and his troops of A Coy 35th Battalion. The author also charts the evolving DF involvement with subsequent peacekeeping missions in the following decades including the UNIFIL mission in South Lebanon from 1978 which became a core motif within our peacekeeping tradition, before moving forward to the modern era with the Kosovan, Liberian and Chadian deployments. The evolving role of the Navy and Air Corps is also outlined and the former's involvement in humanitarian mission in the Mediterranean is highlighted. The period of the Troubles was particularly challenging for the DF in their role of Aid to the Civil Power (ATCP) in dealing with the nascent terrorist threat presented by the conflict in Northern Ireland. Parallel to this the lamentable state investment in infrastructure and facilities throughout this period is also explored and its often-detrimental effect on morale.

This review has only allowed a brief segue into this comprehensively researched and richly illustrated work. To paraphrase Othello, Kinsella has done the Defence Forces some service in bringing to the uninitiated reader the noble and steadfast role that the men and women of Óglaigh na hÉireann has performed in the service of our republic of whom its citizens can be justifiably proud

Provided by Dr Rory Finegan (Comdt. Retd)

End of an Era

1 Air Defence Reg Colours

BY WESLEY BOURKE
PHOTOS BY CPL COLUM LAWLOR,
CPL PAUL MILLAR, ARMN JASON
BYRNE AND SGT JJ RYAN

The recent reorganisation of the Defence Forces has resulted in the disestablishment of many proud units with exemplary service, many stretching back to the foundation of the state. For units such as 4 Inf Bn in Cork, 5 Inf Bn, 2 Inf Bn and 2 Fd Arty Reg in Dublin, 4 Fd Arty Reg and 4 Cav Sqn in Athlone, or 1 ADR in the DFTC, the months of November and December saw them fly their colours, standards, and pennants for the last time. For members of these units this was a time of great poignancy and significance.

On January 24th 1923 GRO 16 authorised a new establishment for the Army that listed 65 infantry battalions stationed throughout a number of military divisions such as the Donegal Command, the Athlone Command, the Dublin Command, and the Claremorris Command, to name a few.

Over the intervening decades the Defence Forces has evolved and reorganised on several occasions to meet different security threats and other operational requirements. In 1998 the command structure gave way to the brigade structure that is still in place today although after the latest reorganisation there are now only two brigades in addition to the DFTC, the Naval Service and Air Corps.

Although for the members of these units it is a time of sadness it is also, as Brig Gen Derry Fitzgerald GOC 1 Bde commented, "an opportunity for us to remember and celebrate all that has been achieved by a truly remarkable collection of men and women." He went on to add that

these ceremonies were "a tribute to the service, commitment, and sacrifice of those men and women."

Indeed, the units being disestablished have rich histories that do not tell the story of just the Defence Forces but also that of the state at home and abroad.

Many of these units, such as 4 Inf Bn, were originally established during the Civil War and helped bring peace and stability to a fledgling nation. Others, such as 2 Fd Arty Reg and 1 ADR, were born during the Emergency. (1 ADR has the distinction of being the only unit of the Defence Forces to fire shots in anger during the Emergency as it responded to the Luftwaffe's bombing of Dublin.)

Over the decades every one of these units has provided unstinting support to the state and the Irish people through countless aid-to-the-civil-power (ATCP) and aid-to-the-civil-authority (ATCA) operations. These operations covered everything from cash-, prisoner-, and explosives escorts, to intense border patrolling and operations during 30 years of the Troubles, to providing assistance to the general public at times of flooding, heavy snowfall and industrial unrest.

Overseas these men and women never hesitated to deploy to some of the most dangerous conflict zones in the world to help and protect the dispossessed and the poorest of the poor. Privates, troopers, medics, signalmen, engineers, gunners, and MPs from these long-standing units have seen peacekeeping service throughout the





Last Shoot of 2 & 4 Fd Arty Regs

world from the Congo to East Timor, from Western Sahara to Uganda, Lebanon, Somalia, Kosovo, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Chad, Liberia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and even the Arctic Circle with the EU Battlegroup.

Many members of the Defence Forces paid the ultimate sacrifice while serving on peacekeeping missions overseas came from these units. At the stand down parade held to mark the disestablishment of 5 Inf Bn a wreath-laying ceremony was held in tribute to the five members of the unit who gave their lives while on peacekeeping duties overseas.

In addition to these sacrifices the men and women of these units often also displayed exemplary bravery on these often dangerous missions. Indeed, 4 Fd Arty Reg has the honour of being a highly decorated unit in the Defence Forces. During their stand-down ceremony on December 4th (St Barbara's Day) at Ballinamuck, Co Longford, the regiment paid tribute to three of these men, the late Capt Tom Boyle, Sgt John Quirk and Cpl Bill Allen (who was the guest of honour on the day), all of whom were awarded DSMs for their leadership, courage, and devotion to duty while serving with ONUC in Katanga, Congo, in December 1962/January 1963.

While the units may be disestablished and their colours may be laid up, these units will live on in their histories. We can also be sure that, steeped as they are in the traditions and ethos of the Defence Forces, the members of these units will carry on their proud and honourable service in their new postings. ■



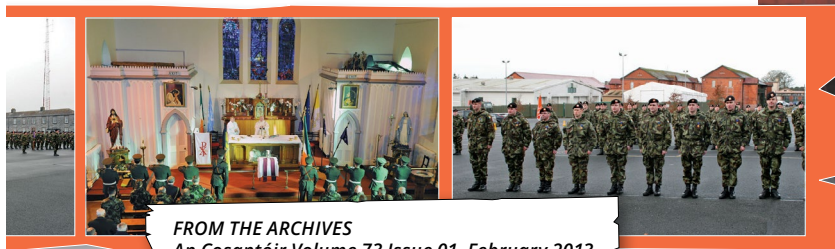
4 Fd Arty Reg at Ballinamuck



4 Inf Bn Colours



5 Inf Bn, In Remembrance



FROM THE ARCHIVES
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Óglaigh
na hÉireann
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

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