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“USE OF FORCE”

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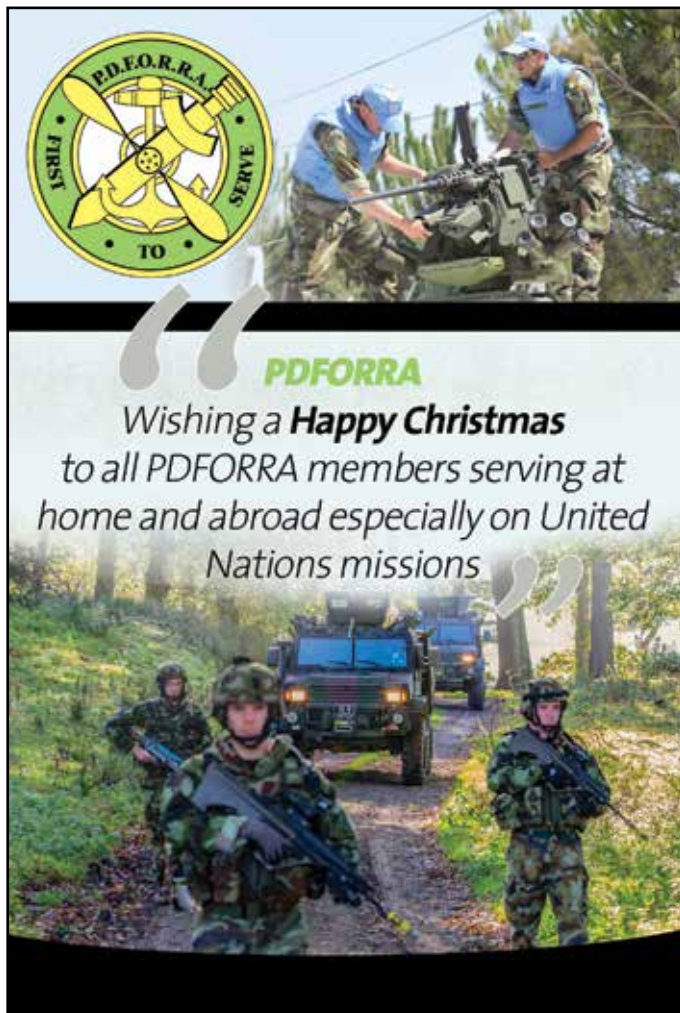


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Front Cover

A soldier on duty as part of an ATCP tasking. Photo by Armn Sam Gibney

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

Editorial

Hello, and welcome to our final issue for 2019; a bumper issue with 22 articles taking us from the use of force in ATCP operations, to looking at the structure of the Polish Army, to the stand down of the Air Corps' iconic Cessna fleet after many years of loyal service, and many other topics in between.

Our *In Focus* pieces look at a recent visit to Greece by the Artillery Club, and the presentation of the Tipperary International Peace Award to former Irish president, Mary Robinson. Our *Veterans News* covers the 59th annual ceremony held in honour of our comrades who lost their lives in the Niemba Ambush in 1960. Next, we have two short pieces, the 28 Inf Bn's participation in the Frontline Mo Bro's charity campaign, along with the ONE's Annual Convention & AGM 2019.

Our front cover feature focuses on the use of force in military operations in aid to the civil power (ATCP), looking at its origins and principles and where the Defence Forces' authority to use force comes from. This topic is addressed in an interview with Col Jerry Lane, Director of the Defence Forces Legal Service Branch. We also take a look at a typical soldier involved with ATCP duties on a daily basis. This is followed by an interesting piece on the 60th anniversary of St Brigid's Church in the Curragh.

We have a few Lebanon-themed articles this month. The first, by Capt Gerry Duff (114 Inf Bn) carries a report on an outbreak of shelling in the Irishbatt AO in September. The second feature, *Lebanon Bound / Kinsale Soldier Takes Command*, covers the ministerial review of 115 Inf Bn and profile's the battalion's OC, Lt Col Robert Hurley.

We stay in Lebanon for *The Boys are Back*

in Town: Polish soldiers return to Lebanon, written by Polish-born Irish soldier, Pte Lukasz Gancarz AR. Lukasz follows his Lebanon article with *Always Ready, Always Here*, which looks at Poland's changing military, and in particular its new Territorial Defence Forces.

In *Jumping for Joy*, Pte Eoin O'Shea (AR) shares his experiences of completing a parachute course in the Netherlands. Two following articles on the Army Reserve deal with Exercise 'Sabre', a 72-hour find-fix-and-strike exercise, and the preparation and drill rehearsals carried out in advance of a ceremonial event.

Next, Defence Forces veteran, Dr Gerry Waldron, director of Slándáil, briefs us on the launch of the first *National Security Summit Ireland*, held in September. We go back overseas for our next article, as Alison Bough from Sightsavers Ireland looks at *Combating River Blindness in Liberia* – a place familiar to the Defence Forces.

As the Air Corps recruits a dog to its ranks, Sgt Brendan Cruise presents us with *Cry 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war*, which looks at the history of military dogs. Staying with the Air Corps, we have an evaluation of the service of the Corps' Cessna Reims Rocket fleet as it is stood down after 47 years service. Two Air Corps-related history articles follow. *Flying in the Free State* looks at the Irish National Air Service, established in 1923; and *The Day an Air Corps Crew Deserted* relates an interesting story from the Emergency. Next, acclaimed US author, Joseph E. A. Connell Jnr takes us back to the *Universal Legacy of the Irish War of Independence in Shadow War*.

We also have our regular *Gear Review*, *Noticeboard*, *Book Reviews* and *What I Do* features.

Wayne Fitzgerald

Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald – Editor

APOLOGY AND OMISSION TO O.N.E.



I would like to apologise wholeheartedly to the board and membership of the Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel (ONE) on the printing of the incorrect article on their Annual Convention & AGM 2019 last month due to a printing error – it is republished on P11 – Wayne.





▲ ADULT EDUCATION SKILLS

Pictured are members of the 12 Inf Bn, Sarsfield Bks, Limerick who recently received their certificates on completion of their Adult Education Skills to Advance course. *Photo: Pte Michael 'Rama' Walsh*



▲ UIESAA PAYS RESPECT TO PEACEKEEPERS

Pictured are members of the United Irish Ex Services Association of Australia (UIESAA) with the Irish Consul-General Mr Owen Feeney, who paid their respects to all those that served, and those currently serving, with our peacekeeping forces around the world. *Photo: Ves Campion, UIESAA*



▲ 114 INF BN UNIFIL MEDAL PARADE

Pictured are members of 114 Inf Bn, UNIFIL who had their Medal Parade on Friday 25th October 2019 in Southern Lebanon as they were coming to the end of their six-month mission. Sector West Commander Brig Gen Bruno Pisciotta, of the Italian Armed Forces, presented the medals. *Photos: Cpl Lee Coyle, 114 Inf Bn*



▲ MARCHING FOR CHARITY

Pictured are members of the 12 Inf Bn, Sarsfield Bks, Limerick, who marched 16 kilometres over the mountains of Co Wicklow in full battle dress and raised €2,780 for the charity Pieta House, who provide a free, therapeutic approach to people who are in suicidal distress and those who engage in self-harm. *Photo: Pte Michael 'Rama' Walsh*



▲ NEW JUNIOR LEADERS FOR THE ARMY RESERVE

Pictured are the recently promoted Army Reserve (AR) corporals who passed out at a ceremony held in Collins Barracks, Cork on Saturday 2nd November 2019. Cpl Dylan Hennigan (AR) 1 Armd Cav Sqn won the 'Best Soldier' award, and Cpl Alan Cullen (AR) 3 Inf Bn won the "Laoch on Cursa" award. The "Laoch on Cursa" award is sponsored by the Reserve Defence Forces Representative Association (RDFRA) and was presented by Fiona Holohan, RDFRA Vice-President after a student vote; it is awarded to the student who best exhibited the Defence Forces values throughout the course. *Photo: RDFRA*



▲ 59 INFANTRY GROUP IN SYRIA

Pictured is an up-to-date image of Syria from a member of the 59 Inf Gp, UNDOF; A/B Marcus McKenna from Bandon in Co Cork who has recently returned home from Syria. Marcus was serving as a fitter with transport platoon and was the only person from the Naval Service on the mission. The image is from a patrol to the Jordanian border during the tour of duty where Marcus was on hand crewing the ambulance. *Photo: A/B Marcus McKenna, NS*



▲ NEW 3-STAR PRIVATES

Pictured are members of the 56th Platoon who had their passing out ceremony in Gormanston Camp on the 27th September 2019; as 3-star privates after their 16-week arduous training course. *Photo: Cpl Colin Delany, J4, DFHQ*



▲ FORMER APPRENTICE VISITS BALDONNEL

Pictured is Eddie Ryan, Chairman Shannon Aviation Museum who presented a Fouga Magister model to Brig General Rory O'Connor, GOC Air Corps following a visit to the museum in Baldonnel recently. A homecoming for Eddie who started his long and successful career in the Air Corps as an apprentice engineer some 69 years ago! It certainly stood him well as he went on to work on some of the most iconic aircraft, like the Nimrod, Lightning, Victor, Vulcan and his all-time favourite, the ill-fated TSR II. Great memories revived for him and a very interesting tour of this very fine collection of Irish aviation history! *Photo: Jane Magill, MD of AAV Aviation Services Training and Director of Irish Aviation Foundation CLG - Shannon Aviation Museum*



▲ FOND FAREWELL DAVE

Cpl Dave Roberts retired from the Defence Forces on Thursday 7th of November after 42-years of dedicated service. Dave originally served in the 5 Inf Bn, E Comd HQ, 2 Bde HQ, and his last two units were DFHQ Tpt Coy and DFTC HQ, where he drove for a number of senior members of the general staff. *Photo: Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald*



▲ NEW MINIBUS FOR VETERANS

On Thursday 7th of November 2019, The Irish United Nations Veterans Association hosted the presentation of a wheelchair-accessible minibus to IUNVA, by Dublin City Council and ParFit Ltd. The new vehicle is a very generous and thoughtful gift, which recognises, and values those who have served in the name of peace. *Photo: Cpl Colin Delany, J4, DFHQ*



▲ EDUCATIONAL SUPPLIES FOR LEBANESE CHILDREN

Pictured is the District Governor of Rotary Ireland William Cross, Conor and Denise Stakelum of Stakelum Office Supplies (Thurles) and OC 3 Inf Bn Lt Col Declan Crummy, who presented the 115 Inf Bn CIMIC team with educational supplies for the children of Southern Lebanon as part of "Literacy Aid To The Lebanon" campaign. Special thanks to Capt Salma Bedair, Sgt Alan O'Brien and Sgt James McHugh for all their hard work in making this project a success. *Photo: Lt Paul Murphy, 3 Inf Bn*

▲ DONEGAL VETERANS

Pictured are UN Veterans Frank McBrearty who presented Bobby Bradley with his IUNVA Post 19 jacket. Bobby is a 'Jadotville Tiger' with the 35th Inf Bn and Frank was with the 36th Inf Bn who relieved him. Both these two Congo veterans are members of IUNVA Post 19 Letterkenny, Co Donegal. *Photo: Daniel Toland, Post 19*



Artillery Club Visits Athens



BY THE ARTILLERY CLUB

The Artillery Club's 2019 foreign field trip took place in Athens from 6-11 October, with a group of 31 travelling, comprised of club members and spouses.

As with the successful trips to Madrid and Segovia (2015), Granada and Malaga (2016), Lisbon (2017), and Vienna (2018), Comdt Michael Flood (ret'd) was again the trip coordinator.

On arrival in Athens the group received a briefing from Comdt Flood in the Polis Grand Hotel, before dining in the hotel's rooftop restaurant.

On 7 October, with the kind permission of the Hellenic National Defence General Staff, and availing of military transport, the group travelled to Néa Péramos, Attikis, the location of the Hellenic Artillery Directorate and its Artillery School.

The commanding general, Brig Gen Periklis Doukas, and deputy commander, Col Georgios Toutouzas, received the visitors. Our liaison officer was Col Nikolaos J Pentsas, supported by Lt Col Argyrios Pontikeas.

During the reception, Brig Gen Doukas presented the Artillery Club with his directorate's plaque.

Following refreshments, Capt Ionnis Morfakidis provided a wide-ranging brief on the evolution of the Hellenic Artillery and the activities of the Artillery School.

The training director, Col Georgios Kotas, conducted an impressive tour of the facilities, which included the war memorial, St Barbara's Church, and the Artillery Museum. The group also observed impressive training demonstrations on various artillery systems including *Dias* (Zeus), *Iraklis* (Hercules), and *Keravnos*.

While the gunner officers were receiving the artillery brief and associated demonstrations, Lt Col Pontikeas escorted the spouses to Elefsina, where they received a conducted tour of the ancient sacred site, which is the birthplace of the dramatist Aeschylus and home of

the Eleusinian Mysteries.

The visit to Néa Péramos concluded with an enjoyable lunch hosted by the Artillery School in the officers' mess.

On behalf of the group, Brig Gen Paul Pakenham (Ret'd), President of The Artillery Club presented Col Pentsas with an engraved tankard, and Col Toutouzas with the Artillery Club plaque.

On 8 October, members of the group participated in a day-long Saronic Gulf cruise, visiting the islands of Agistri and Aegina.

Again availing of military transport, on 9 October the group visited the Hellenic War Museum in Athens, where we were formally welcomed by Col Christos Kyratsakis, who provided us with an overview of the museum's building and its history, and an insight into the numerous galleries, before conducting us on a comprehensive tour of the impressive displays on Greek history from antiquity to the present. (www.warmuseum.gr/en)

On 10 October, once again by military transport, the group visited the battleship *Georgios Averof*, where we were received by Lt Georgios Kyriocitis (Hellenic Navy), and escorted on a comprehensive tour of the vessel. Constructed in 1911, the ship's armament included two twin Armstrong 234mm guns and four twin Armstrong 190mm guns. With a full speed of 23kts, the battleship had a crew of 670 in peacetime and a wartime crew of 1,200. It was deployed during the Balkan Wars (1912 – 1930), and both the First and Second World Wars. (<http://averof.mil.gr>)

The 'hail and farewell' took place in the Kouvelos Restaurant, marking the end of a most rewarding and enjoyable trip, which along with activities described above allowed the group sufficient time to visit local attractions such as the Acropolis, the Parthenon, the Temple of Hephaestus, the Arc of Hadrian, the Acropolis Museum, Syntagma Square (for the Changing of the Guard), the National Library, and Plaka.

The Artillery Club is grateful to Comdt Flood for planning and executing the successful and memorable trip to Athens.

(For a range of photographs go to the Photo Albums section of www.artilleryclub.ie). ■



Former President Receives Peace Award

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD PHOTOS BY ARMN SAM GIBNEY



Seán Cosgrave, IUNVA Post 24 salutes former president Mary Robinson as honorary secretary of the Tipperary Peace Convention Martin Quinn accompanies her.

Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland (1990-1997), was presented with the Tipperary International Peace Award for 2018, at the Tipperary Peace Convention 2019, at a ceremony held in the Excel Centre, Tipperary Town, on 7 November 2019.

As Irish president she was also supreme commander of the Defence Forces, and as such would have inspected many Irish soldiers serving around the world and at home. An honour guard from Post 24 (Clonmel) and Post 4 (Tipperary) of the Irish United Nations Veterans Association (IUNVA) greeted Mrs Robinson. The honour guard was handed over by Seán Cosgrave (Post 24), who served 11 times in Lebanon during his lengthy service.

Mrs Robinson has held the positions of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (1997-2002), UN Special Envoy on the Great Lakes in Africa & Democratic Republic of the Congo (2013-2014), and UN Special Envoy on Climate Change (2014-2015), and is current chair of The Elders, an independent group of global leaders, established by Nelson Mandela in 2007, who work together for peace, justice and human rights.

Guests at the convention included members of the Dáil and Seanad, EU and international diplomats, local county councillors, senior members of An Garda Síochána, Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM and Captain (NS) Brian Fitzgerald.

On entering the theatre Mrs Robinson, who was accompanied by her husband, Nicholas, was greeted with a standing ovation.

MC for the occasion, Martin Quinn, honorary secretary of the Tipperary Peace Convention, regaled the audience with stories Mrs Robinson's previous visits to Tipperary during her presidency.

In introducing this year's award recipient, Martin said that Mary Robinson had "rocked the system around the world over

the last number of decades". He referred to her work as a politician, becoming the first female president of Ireland, her many roles with the UN, her great charitable work, and her continuous efforts to highlight climate change around the globe.

On receiving her award, Mary Robinson said she was "very honoured and very humbled" to accept the award. She went on to name some of the previous recipients before adding: "There is something special about this award."

The former president also invited the members of the IUNVA honour guard to receive a round of applause from the packed auditorium, saying: "I inspected many a guard of honour as president – but this one was special as it was made up of Irish peacekeepers, of whom I am very proud."

For more information on the Tipperary International Peace Award and Peace Convention visit: www.tipperarypeace.ie ■



Mary Robinson inspects the IUNVA Honour Guard.

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

59TH ANNUAL NIEMBA CEREMONIES 2019

REPORT & PHOTOS BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

On Saturday 9 November 2019, the Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel (ONE) held their 59th Annual Niamba Ceremony in Cathal Brugha Barracks to honour our comrades who lost their lives in the service of peace at Niamba, Congo on the 8th November 1960. Following on from last year's ceremony, it was held indoor, starting with 12 noon mass in the Garrison Church. This was followed by a well thought out wreath laying ceremony. VIPs included the Deputy Lord Mayor of Dublin, military attachés, Defence Forces Assistant Chief of Staff Brig Gen Peter O'Halloran, Lt Col Seán Ó Fátharta, OC 7 Inf Bn and Cathal Brugha Bks, along with representatives from RACO, PDFORRA, RD-FRA, ONE, IUNVA, ARCO, with other veterans' associations, Congo veterans and the family members of deceased Congo veterans.

On 8 November 1960, an 11-man Irish UN Peacekeeping patrol from 33 Inf Bn who were serving with the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) were ambushed by over 100 Baluba tribesmen at Niamba. This was the first-time members of Óglaigh na hÉireann were involved in a battle since the founding of the state in 1922.



'A' Coy, 33rd Inf Bn. Photo: South Dublin County Libraries / WM_4713

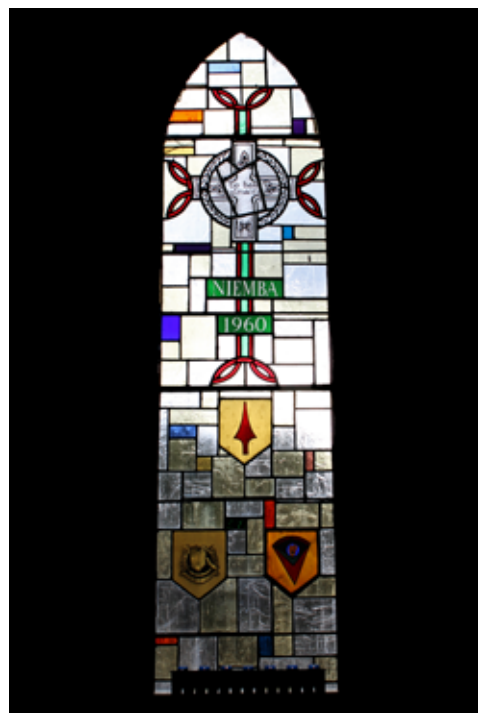
The patrol was under the command of Lt Kevin Gleeson (Carlow), accompanied by his NCOs of Sgt Hugh Gaynor (Dublin), Cpl Peter Kelly (Dublin), and Cpl Liam Dougan (Dublin), the rest of the patrol was made up of Pte Matthew Farrell (Dublin), Tpr Thomas Fennell (Dublin), Tpr Anthony Browne (Dublin), Pte Michael McGuinn (Carlow), Pte Gerard Killeen (Dublin), Pte Joseph Fitzpatrick (Dublin) and Pte Tom Kenny (Dublin).

It is believed that the Baluba tribesmen thought they were attacking European mercenaries who were hired by the breakaway Katanga province. The Baluba tribe had not supported the seces-

sion as several villages had been burned by the mercenaries. It is said that the small Irish patrol who were trying to keep the bridge over River Luw-eye open killed around 25 Baluba tribesmen, but it was destroyed. Pte Joseph Fitzpatrick and Pte Tom Kenny were the only two peacekeepers to survive the massacre, while Tpr Anthony Browne being posthumously awarded An Bonn Seirbhíse Dearsca (The Distinguished Service Medal - with Honour) for the heroic action he showed during battle.

In 2006, *The Irish Times* quoted the then Minister for Defence Mr Willie O'Dea saying he wholeheartedly recognised and acknowledged that, "both Pte Kenny, particularly in view of the serious wounds and injuries he sustained, and Pte Fitzpatrick survived a horrific encounter with hostile forces, displaying courage, fortitude and tenacity in order to survive until finally rescued." He commended them both, "for the selfless service they have given their country."

Cuimhnimis 'Let Us Remember' ■



Assistant Chief of Staff, Brig Gen Peter O'Halloran lays a wreath in memory of our fallen comrades.

FRONTLINE MO BRO'S

28 Infantry Battalion Finner Camp

BY LT PÁDRAIC AGNEW, 28 INF BN

This year the 28 Infantry Battalion have taken part in the annual Irish Cancer Society Movember campaign to raise awareness of men's cancers and suicide.

The battalion team is led by Lt Pádraic Agnew and 2/Lt Alex Doran. The 28 Battalion is part of the National Emergency and Security Services team called the 'Frontline Mo Bro's', which consists of An Garda Síochána, Dublin Fire Brigade, the National Ambulance Service, Irish Coast Guard, Civil Defence and all other Voluntary Emergency Services.

Last year the Frontline Mo Bro's raised €36,500, this year the battalion hope to help increase this figure to over €40,000.

Movember concluded in Finner Camp on 28th November with

a 'Shave Off' night in the NCOs Mess. On the night there was competitions to find the best and worst Member of 2019, as well as chest waxing to boost donations.

For the last 3-years the Frontline Mo Bro's have been the No. 1 team in the country for donations raised. Led by team captain Jonathon Forbes, a firefighter/paramedic with Dublin Fire Brigade and RDF member with

C Coy, RDF 7 Inf Bn. They are now the only team in the world to be awarded the title "International Team of Movember" and Jonathon Forbes the only Irishman to be named "International Man of Movember" in 2015.

You can still donate to the 28 Infantry Battalion and the Frontline Mo-Bro's, by following the link and select 'donate': <https://ie.movember.com/mospace/13983776> ■



Pte Jonathan Forbes, C Coy, 7 Inf Bn (AR)



28 Inf Bn members at the start of their Movember Campaign.



28 Inf Bn Officers (L/R): 2/Lt Alex Doran, Lt Brian Dunne, Lt Pádraic Agnew, Lt Daniel Mc Chrystal and Lt Cormac Nellis.



ONE ANNUAL CONVENTION & AGM 2019

BY OLLIE O'CONNOR, CEO ONE PHOTOS BY ARMN SAM GIBNEY



The Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel (ONE) held its 2019 Annual Convention and its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk on Saturday 28th September. Branch delegates attended where outgoing National President Tom James opened the convention by thanking all of the branches for the support he received during his two years in office and a special word of thanks to Presidents and Chairpersons of the three Area Councils for their loyal support and courtesy. Jim Fay was inaugurated as National President for the next two years.

ONE's CEO Ollie O'Connor presented his annual report to the convention, where he spoke of the work being carried out in the three hostels and eight Veterans Support Centres (VSC). He outlined the plan to increase the number of rooms available to homeless veterans in Brú na bhFiann from 30 to 35, the employment of a Veterans' Support Officer from January 2020, increasing the number of VSCs and the proposal to develop a 4-bedroom hostel and VSC in Cobh. He also thanked the professional staff and residents in the hostels for giving of their time above and beyond the call of duty, during the Sleeping Flags Campaign, which was the vision of the talented team of the Rothco advertising company. He also thanked the branches and their members for continuing to support the Fuchsia Appeal.

The Convention focussed on four briefings with the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Colm Campbell, presenting the first on ONE's Strategic

Plan, 'Building for the Future'. The plan has seven goals: Consolidating and Future Proofing; Enhanced support and awareness; Government Veterans Policy (in union with the other veterans organisations), Finances of the organisation; Strengthen and invigorate ONE, Develop a sustainable nationwide network of Veterans Support Centres and a nationwide network of Veterans Hostels.

Former PSS Director, and ONE Director Ollie Barbour presented the second briefing, which concerned Veterans Welfare, and addressed training of Welfare Officers in Mental Health First Aid and other welfare areas.

The third briefing was presented by the Chairman Colm Campbell and concentrated on the adoption of a new Handbook of Rules, which had been sent to every branch prior to the Convention and was accepted by a very large vote.

Recently retired Defence Forces Press Officer, Comdt Pat O'Connor, presented the fourth briefing as the guest speaker, 'Communicating on behalf of ONE'. ■



Brig Gen Colm Campbell (ret'd) ONE's Chairman giving a briefing on ONE's Strategic Plan, 'Building for the Future'.



National President Jim Fay (right) presenting the award for 'Best Branch' to Galway Branch Chairman Pat Nugent.

THE USE OF FORCE

INTERVIEW WITH COL JERRY LANE (DIRECTOR OF THE DF LEGAL SERVICE BRANCH),
CONDUCTED BY COMDT JAMES O'HARA (DF PRESS OFFICER)

Since the foundation of the state, the Defence Forces has been tasked with conducting domestic security operations. Examples in recent years that people would be aware of include the visits of Queen Elizabeth, President Obama and President Trump. These were Aid to the Civil Power (ATCP) operations. However, there are other routine Security Operations conducted under the Use of Force area, for example, routine security duties and Maritime Security and Defence Operations (MSDO). In such situations Defence Forces personnel may be legally authorised to use physical force, if necessary, to accomplish the mission. I recently met Col Lane to discuss the use of force, its origins and principles.



Col Jerry Lane, Director of the Defence Forces Legal Service Branch.

Comdt O'Hara: Where does the Defence Forces' authority to use force come from?

Col Lane: In broad legal terms article 15 of the constitution provides that the Oireachtas shall raise and maintain a military force; that is Óglaigh na hÉireann. We take that as our starting point. That article, and other regulations and instructions influence how we train, educate, rehearse and deploy on operations in the on-island application of the use of force. At the tactical operational level across air, sea and land, you are looking at a range of guidance documents; in particular CO/D6, and, in terms of ATCP, Defence Forces Regulation (DFR) CS1.

Comdt O'Hara: Can you give examples of where these guidelines and the training generated by them are, or have been, required?

Col Lane: If we look at the army, they were necessary during the wide range of ATCP operations that were mainly generated by the Troubles and involved large amounts of troops deployed on the ground. They also apply to the Naval Service in terms of ship protection and maritime law enforcement, such as boarding a vessel, where if a non-compliant situation arises that may require the use of force, our various principles and training, and in specific the Naval Service's specialised training, would cater for that. Domestic operations contrast sharply with our engagement in peace-support operations, in particular the two larger missions to which



Air Corps AW139, with a 7.62mm GPMG and an ARW sniper team providing ATCP protection during a VIP visit.



A Naval Service boarding party in action during a maritime law exercise.

we are deployed, UNIFIL and UNDOF, which are both covered by UN rules of engagement (ROEs). We don't have domestic ROEs. Some people would refer to CO/D6 and CS1 as, perhaps, on-island ROEs; but there is a sharp legal distinction. Consequently, our personnel need to be aware of a different methodology from on-island, which is influenced and directed by national law, to the international sphere of the UN's ROEs.

Comdt O'Hara: How do members of the Defence Forces become involved in ATCP operations?

Col Lane: The use of the military in domestic legal operations is an area that not a lot of constitutional lawyers would have been comfortable with; however, ATCP is exactly that. It is a request, by a particular rank in An Garda Síochána, that comes in a particular, agreed manner, for the deployment of armed personnel to assist in a particular situation. ATCP invokes the provisions of DFR CS1, the current version of which was published in 1967; and it has served us well.

Comdt O'Hara: What are the key use-of-force principles that DF personnel must follow when deployed on ATCP operations?

Col Lane: As stated in DFR CS1, para 5: justification, prevention, minimum force, and legal requirements.

Comdt O'Hara: How are these principles instilled into members of the Defence Forces?

Col Lane: There is no point in having these guidance documents and regulations, in particular CO/D6 and DFR CS1, unless they are communicated, and personnel are briefed on them, and regularly reminded of them.

Every day, personnel that are on routine security duties are briefed on the basic principles governing the application of force, and there is an aide memoire annex in CO/D6. That is the minimum briefing guidelines required for personnel before being mounted for duty.

In terms of application of the particular standard of behaviour that we require, that standard does not start with the NCO or the officer in charge, but with the individual member of the Defence Forces; a requirement to be aware of the fact: 'If I'm going to be using force I need to be confident not only in my firearm and weapon handling but also that the law is on my side, once I behave and act and operate within the law and as I have been trained.'

In a situation where the use of force is necessary, the decision-making process should not be hindered, or impeded by an individual lacking confidence in knowing what is required in the legal application of the use of force.



Members of the Defence Forces taking part in a riot-and-crowd-control exercise with members of An Garda Síochána in Gormanston Camp.



An Ordnance Corps EOD team putting their HOBOT robot into action during an ATCP exercise.

Comdt O'Hara: How are the principles applied and are they graduated?

Col Lane: The principle of minimum force means that "no more force is to be used than is absolutely necessary to achieve the immediate military aim".

The principle of prevention means that prevention must be the reason for using military force which must never be applied with punitive intent.

The principles of justification and legal requirements mean that there must be justification for each separate act ordered by the Commanding Officer. Any act carried out by the member of the Defence Forces throughout a situation must be justified with regard to the guidelines on the use of force and must fully comply with the law and with DF regulations.

These principles apply to personnel in many situations; for example, from operating as part of a crowd-and-riot-control group in a public order situation to carrying out cordon-and-search operations in a wooded area.

There are graduated response options in CO/D6 which include using firearms to discharge live ammunition, but it's not a series of individual options, each of which must be exhausted.

Comdt O'Hara: Historically speaking, has there been any significant examples of our guidelines really being put to the test?

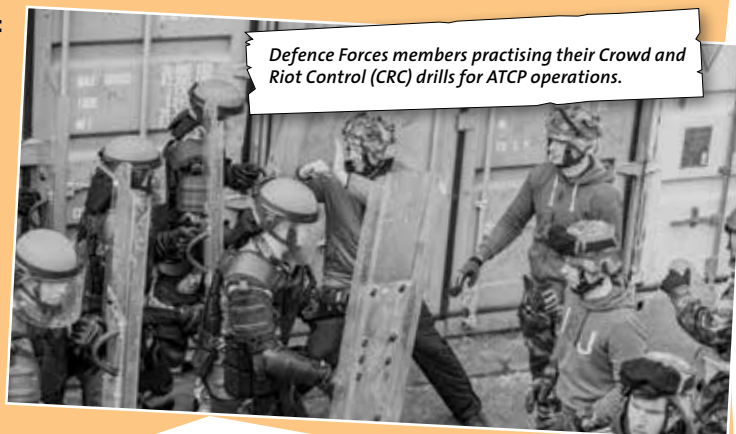
Col Lane: There have been a number of cases, particularly when the Troubles were at their height, that found their way to the Special Criminal Court.

Also, throughout years of maritime operations, NS ship's captains, on occasion, would have had to make judgements in relation to the employment of Boarding Parties while carrying out their maritime law enforcement duties.

Comdt O'Hara: Is our use-of-force legislation still relevant or does it need to be reviewed?

Col Lane: Since 1998 and the Good Friday Agreement the island has been at peace. However, in uncertain times it is possible in the future that we may have to return to the type of training and operations that served us well in the past. If so, the laws that we have, and the regulations that we have are sufficient to meet certain threats, and the current operations guidance documents that we have, should see us through. This area has been kept under active review by the Defence Forces.

Disclaimer: The advice in this interview does not constitute legal advice. ■



Defence Forces members practising their Crowd and Riot Control (CRC) drills for ATCP operations.

AIDING THE CIVIL POWER

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

PHOTOS BY CQMS MICHAEL BARRETT (AR) & SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD



Members of AGS cordon off an area around Christ Church while awaiting the DF EOD team.

Members of 2 Bde's stand-to duty secure the area for their EOD colleagues to deploy their robot for bomb disposal.

Cpl Wayne Casey, 7 Inf Bn with the Ordnance Corps EOD truck in the background.

On Monday 21 October 2019, An Garda Síochána (AGS) requested the support of the Defence Forces in dealing with an incident involving a suspected improvised explosive device (IED) in the Christchurch area of Dublin. A DF explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team was immediately deployed to the scene.

EOD teams, comprised of highly trained Ordnance Corps technicians, are on call 24-hours-a-day, 365-days-a-year, around the country. When called on by AGS in aid to the civil power (ATCP) they are provided with an armed security detail from the relevant brigade's stand-to guard.

The stand-to is also a 24-hour, 365-days-a-year duty, on call for operational and aid to the civil power tasking, which could include high-security prisoner escorts, explosives escorts for quarries or demolitions, ammunition escorts, among others.

The three-star course qualifies soldiers as fully trained private soldiers, ready for both conventional military operations and ATCP operations. An important part of this training, taught in conjunction with weapons handling, are the guidelines governing the use of force. These range from employing non-lethal force, to issuing a verbal warning of the intent to fire, right up to the firing of live ammunition, initially as warning or containing shots, before firing for effect if the legal criteria covering this are met. (*See the interview with Col Jerry Lane, Director of the Defence Forces Legal Service Branch, on this subject in this issue.*)

Every time a soldier is issued with live ammunition, they must be aware of their obligation to comply with these use-of-force guidelines, particularly on ATCP operations where they may be interacting with civilians.

Another high profile ATCP tasking for DF personnel over the years would be in helping to secure Portlaoise Prison, Ireland's high-security prison, which caters for most people convicted at the Special Criminal Court and includes those linked with subversive activity.

The Irish Prison Service runs the prison, with members of AGS and armed DF personnel securing the perimeter wall. The use of force is part of the daily briefing for these soldiers; sometimes twice daily, depending on shift rotations.

Recently we met with personnel on duty with 2 Brigade's stand-to, to get an idea of the kind of soldier that would be available to respond to a potential ATCP emergency.

Cpl Wayne Casey joined the Defence Forces in 2003, undergoing recruit training in Gormanston before being posted to 5 Inf Bn in McKee Bks, Dublin. He completed courses on the GPMG SF (sustained fire); 5" HMG; 60mm mortar; chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (CBRN) operations; fighting in built-up areas (FIBUA); and computer appreciation (CAPs and ECDL). He also completed driving courses for military cars, minibus, trucks, and the Mowag Piranha Mk III APC.

In 2009 Wayne completed a Potential NCOs course in 2 BTC. Promoted to corporal, he underwent a Crowd and Riot Control (CRC) Instructors course and trained new recruits.

Wayne also completed a FIBUA Instructors course and 81mm mortar YE and Instructors courses, and the Techfire Instructors course.

With the amalgamation of 5 Inf Bn and 2 Inf Bn to form 7 Inf Bn in 2013, Wayne served with B Coy, training recruits, before moving to Support Coy as an 81mm mortar corporal.

Wayne is currently Signals Cpl where he's part of a team looking after the unit's radio equipment.

Wayne has served overseas on a number of occasions: as a rifleman in Kosovo in 2005, a stores corporal in Chad in 2010, and as a Mowag APC driver with the UNDOF QRF on the Golan Heights in 2014 and 2018.

During his service Wayne has been involved in numerous security duties at vital government installations and barracks around the country. ■

CURRAGH CHURCH at 60

BY MICHAEL KELLY

On Sunday 8 November 1959, Bishop Thomas Keogh (RIP) blessed and dedicated St Brigid's Catholic Church, Curragh Camp.

In 1885 there were two churches built in the Curragh, east and west of the Clock Tower. The one to the east, St Brigid's, was Catholic and was situated where the Girls National School now stands. The west church, St Paul's, was Protestant, and was situated where the present Catholic church stands.

In 1923 the Catholic Church was destroyed by fire and the Protestant church, which had been closed for some time, became the new St Brigid's, until February 1948 when it was closed due to deterioration and dry rot. A new location beside the old gymnasium was used to house the Catholic church for the next 11 years, until the present St Brigid's Church was built.

The sacristan in the old church, the late Peter Hickey (RIP), became sacristan in the new church when it opened.

Around 1957 I became one of upwards of 50 altar boys around that time, and every Friday afternoon we would report to the headmaster in the Boys School, Mr Breen (RIP), who would allocate the Masses for the coming week. There was also Rosary and Benediction on Sunday nights and there would be nine altar boys serving at these.

During Lent there would be Rosary and Benediction and Stations of the Cross on alternate nights from Sunday to Friday on alternate nights, and I remember the military mission that was held each year during the first week of Lent, during which every barracks would parade to Mass in the morning, and again for Rosary and Benediction in the afternoon.

In 1957, the Curragh Male Voice Choir was formed comprising Men's and Boy's sections, with Mrs Maura Butler as choir mistress and practice taking place initially in the Band Hall, and later in a lecture hall in Ceannt Bks.

As well as singing at Mass, the Boys Section of the choir entered and finished second in a Feis Ceoil in Dublin and sang at a recording of *The School Around the Corner* in the dining hall in



St Brigid's Catholic Church, Curragh Camp, 1950s. © www.curragh.info

Plunkett Bks in 1962.

The Men's Section also entered the Cork Choral Festival around that time, and, as I remember, performed very well.

Today, there is an excellent church choir in the Curragh, as is evidenced by the Family Mass, the Vigil Mass, and the carol service held in the church on Christmas Eve.

The church was filled to capacity for the official opening on Sunday 8 November 1959, and I remember the day very well. At the

consecration Mass the choir sang *The Mass of St John The Baptist* in four-part harmony (tenor and bass for the men, and soprano and alto for the boys. The organist on the day was the late Denis Mellick (RIP), who was the musical director with the Curragh Army Band.

The 8ft teak statue of St Brigid over the main entrance to the church was carved by Oisín Kelly (RIP), and the new altar and altar furniture that are a feature of the recent refurbishment of the Church were constructed by carpenters from the Engineer Group, McDermott Barracks. The church organ was built by RE Meates, and is still serviced regularly by his son, Richard Meates Jnr. The Stations of the Cross, also carved from teak, were designed by Imogen Stuart. One of the main features of St Brigid's are the flags proudly hanging from the church pillars. These are from units with which countless men and women from the Curragh have served while on peacekeeping duties with the United Nations around the world.

This is an abbreviated version of an unpublished piece by Michael Kelly. ■



CURRAGH BOYS CHOIR - 1958/1959
OLD CHURCH, CHITTINGS ROAD

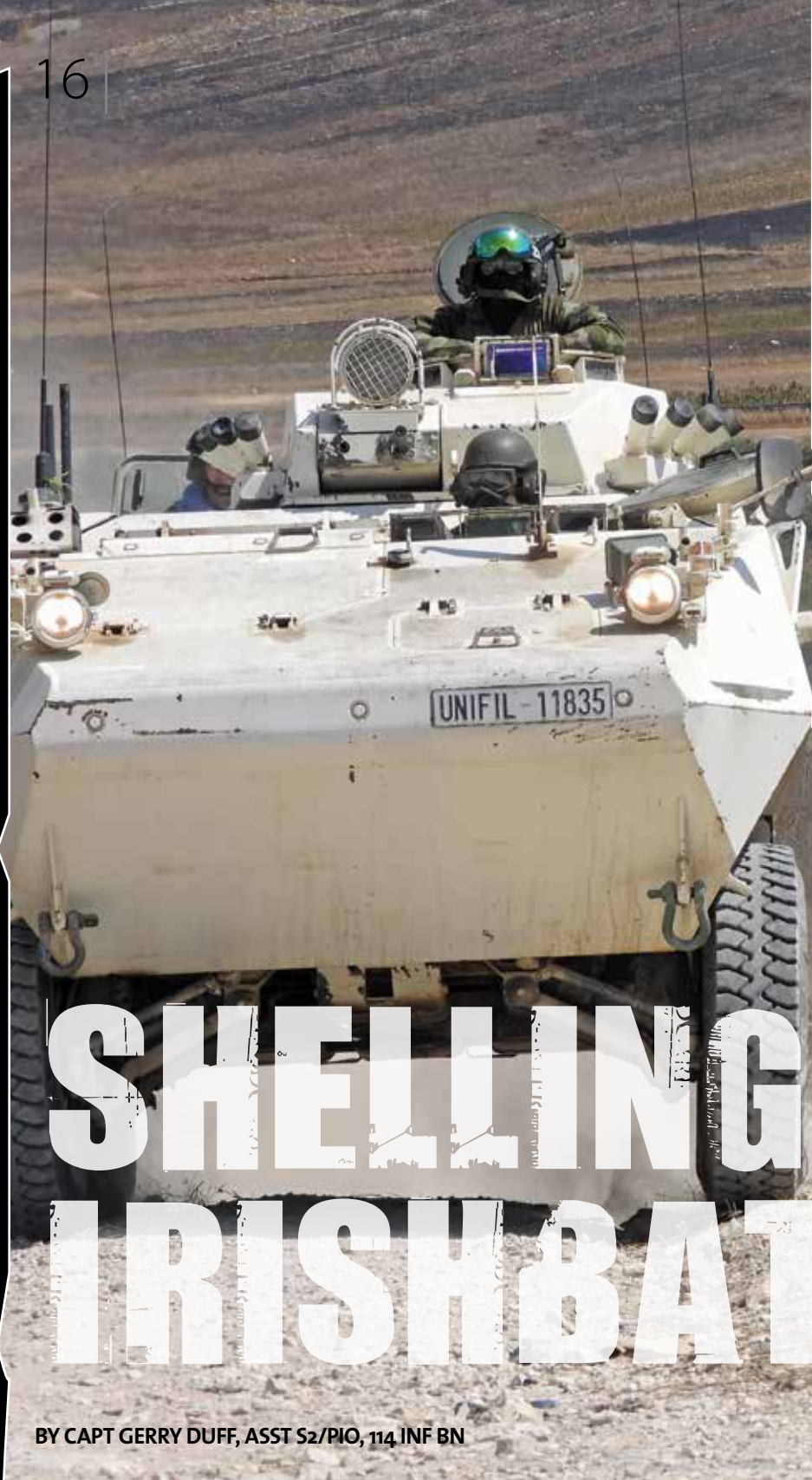
Front Row - Left to Right:
Don McIlwain, Seamus Conboy, Tony Dwyer, Peter Delahunt, Tony McIlwain, Vincent Cullen, Eddie Stone, Seamus Power, Charles O'Neill, Junior Tyrrell
2nd Row - Left to Right:
Don Flynn, Phil McIlwain, Michael Kelly, David Douglas, Peter Sheehan, Michael Lyden, Michael Quinn (R.I.P.), Michael McNeill, Tony Power, Christy O'Neill
3rd Row - Left to Right:
Dick Kough, Tommy McNeill, Arthur Farrell, Gus Kelly, Dominic Heaney, Seamus Murphy, Tony Carron, James Dillon, Sean O'Brien, Paddy Phillips, Vincent Phillips, Francis O'Leary
4th Row - Left to Right:
Michael Power, Philip Tether, George O'Neill (R.I.P.), Christy Coyne, Eddie Dillon, Raymond O'Leary, Joe Dunne, Noel O'Donnell, Andy Hann, Pat Seamus, Sean Quinn
Back Row - Left to Right:
Billy Mulvey (R.I.P.), Dermot O'Leary, Michael Campbell, Barry O'Brien, Joe Quinn, Peter Mulvey, Pat Hayes, Sean Callaghan, Johnny Ruddy, Sean Carron, Sean Thomas



Curragh Male Choir 1960: Front Row L/R: Joe Fahy, Chubby Geary, Mattie Roche, Des Hogan, and J Finnigan. Middle Row L/R: J Mullins, Unknown, Jim Farrell, J O'Brien, and M O'Brien. Back Row L/R: J Campion, Ger Mc Cutcheon, Capt M Mhaon, Kit Kearney, Jim Clohessy and Jim Keogh.

St Brigid's Memorial Garden.





On Sunday 1 September, a 'groundhog' was called for personnel of 114 Inf Bn in response to an outbreak of hostilities in the battalion's AO (area of operations), which had been expected after escalating tensions over the previous weeks.

SHELLING IN IRISH BATT AO

BY CAPT GERRY DUFF, ASST S2/PIO, 114 INF BN

The Defence Forces have been an integral part of the history of Lebanon since 1958, when Irish officers were deployed there with UNOGIL (United Nations Observer Group in Lebanon). We were one of the first troop-contributing nations to UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) when it was established in 1978, and we have maintained a consistent presence in the mission ever since. Sadly, 47 members of the Defence Forces have paid the ultimate price in the service of peace during this time.

There is no love lost between the various belligerents in the region. The last open conflict occurred in 2006 when the IDF (Israeli Defence Force) conducted air and ground operations in Lebanon as

a result of a Hezbollah raid into Israeli territory that resulted in the deaths of Israeli troops. This 'July War' caused massive devastation in South Lebanon and cost 1,109 lives.

In the run-up to the latest hostilities, a number of incidents occurred in Lebanon and the wider region that led to September's events.

On 24 August air strikes were carried out in Syria against pro-Iranian forces, during which two Hezbollah operatives, Lebanese nationals, were killed. Then in the early hours of 25 August, two quadcopter drones, each carrying an estimated 5.5kg of explosives, were observed in southern Beirut; the first was brought down by

stone throwing, while the second exploded in the air, causing considerable damage to a Hezbollah media centre. Although no one has admitted responsibility for the drones, Hezbollah blamed the IDF for both. Later that evening, in a scheduled televised address, the general secretary of Hezbollah, Hasan Nasrallah, stated that reprisals for these two incidents would take place against Israel.

There was widespread condemnation of the drone incidents by all members of the Lebanese government. President Aoun considered the incident as an act of war against Lebanon, and Prime Minister Hariri appealed to the permanent representatives to the United Nations to intervene. The UNIFIL force commander and head of mission, Maj Gen Stefano Del Col, offered UNIFIL assets and locations to both sides in an attempt to de-escalate tensions.

Notable changes occurred in the AO from 26 August: the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) appeared on duty wearing body armour and helmets; there was increased drone activity over UNIFIL's area of responsibility (AOR); and the IDF withdrew approximately 5-10kms south of the Blue Line. These indicators led to heightened awareness within Irishbatt in the conduct of our operations.

On Sunday 1 September, while Irishbatt personnel awaited the start of the All-Ireland Football Final between Dublin and Kerry, the 'groundhog' alarm sounded in our HQ at UNP 2-45. Rockets had been fired across the Blue Line at an IDF vehicle patrol from locations in the Irishbatt AO. The IDF responded immediately with rounds fired from Merkava tanks beside UNP 6-50. This was closely followed by indirect fire from an M109 155mm battery, which included high explosive, smoke, and air-burst anti-personnel rounds. Extensive damage was caused to farmland in the area of UNP 6-52, with crops catching fire.

After a number of hours, the 'stand down' was given and personnel exited the bunkers. Irishbatt resumed operational activities almost immediately, conducting patrols after our engineer's specialist search team had conducted route clearance in the area affected by the shelling.

The incidents in the lead up to and including 1 September were a timely reminder to everyone in the mission area that even though the region has seen relative peace for the past 13 years, hostilities can erupt at a moment's notice. It was also a reminder to Irishbatt troops that a high level of vigilance must be maintained at all times in this mission area. ■



LEBANON BOUND

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD PHOTOS BY ARMN SAM GIBNEY

On Friday 25 October Minister with Responsibility for Defence, Mr Paul Kehoe TD, reviewed 115 Inf Bn in Stephens Bks, Kilkenny, accompanied by Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM. The ministerial review was the culmination of the training period ahead of the battalion's six-month operational deployment to South Lebanon with UNIFIL.

The battalion, commanded by Lt Col Robert Hurley, is comprised of 338 personnel drawn from the Army, Naval Service and Air Corps. While 3 Inf Bn from Kilkenny is the main contributing unit, the members of the battalion come from 24 different countries. 115 Inf Bn also includes nine Maltese soldiers; Malta's third contribution to UNIFIL.

For the review 115 Inf Bn formed up on the square in Stephens Bks, where the unit colours were marched onto the parade ground for the first time. This was followed by an inspection of the troops, the ministerial address, and the march past, where Minister Kehoe took the salute, accompanied by the Mayor of Kilkenny City, Cllr Martin Brett (FG).

Addressing the troops, Minister Kehoe said: *"Participation in UNIFIL is a continuation of our honourable tradition of supporting the United Nations in the cause of peace and security; a tradition spanning over 60 years. In particular, there is a long and proud tradition of Irish participation in the UNIFIL mission since its establishment in 1978. You, the men and women of 115 Infantry Battalion are the latest to continue this tradition."*

UNIFIL is Ireland's largest single overseas deployment, and as 115 Inf Bn takes over the Irishbatt AO from 114 Inf Bn they will be joined by a contingent from the Polish armed forces and a small group from Hungary, who will serve with the battalion.

Referencing this, the minister said: *"This is a very welcome development, which we look forward to, and which marks a new chapter of our peacekeeping role in Lebanon. Partnership with other states is an important element of peacekeeping operations."*

We wish the battalion a safe and successful mission. ■



KINSALE SOLDIER TAKES COMMAND

BY JJ HURLEY (PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN THE CARRIGDHOUN NEWSPAPER, CORK)

Lt Col Robert Hurley, from Kinsale, took command of 115 Inf Bn in the third quarter of 2019, when the unit formed up in Stephens Bks, Kilkenny. A member of 63 Cadet Class, he was commissioned in 1988 and posted to 3 Inf Bn.

Throughout his career he has served in a wide variety of infantry line, staff, and instructional appointments including: A/OC 4 Inf Bn; OC 1 Bde Arty Regt & Collins Bks, Cork; Comdt Instructor, Infantry School, Military College; and staff officer, D Ops, J7 Branch, DFHQ.

Lt Col Hurley graduated from NUIG in 1992 with a BA degree and completed a masters in Leadership, Management & Defence Studies in Maynooth University in 2009. In addition, he is a graduate of the Defence Forces Command & Staff School.

Lt Col Hurley has completed five tours of duty with UNIFIL in Lebanon (74 Inf Bn, 79 Inf Bn, 105 Inf Bn, and 38 and 39 IrComps), as well as serving in Bosnia with EUFOR and Côte d'Ivoire with ONUCI. He and his wife, Alison, have two children, Matthew and Christian.

The Irish/Polish battalion that he is in command of comprises troops from four countries: Ireland, Poland, Malta and Hungary. It is a mechanised battalion with a strength of 600 personnel and will provide robust patrolling support to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and assistance to enhance the LAF's operational capability. IrishPolishbatt will monitor the cessation of hostilities and provide a safe and secure environment for the local population, from their primary headquarters location in UN Post 2-45. In addition, IrishPolishbatt will occupy and secure two platoon-size OPs along the Blue Line. ■



THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN

POLISH SOLDIERS RETURN TO LEBANON

BY PTE LUKASZ GANCARZ (AR), D COY, 7 INF BN
PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE POLISH ARMED FORCES



Troops of the Polish 12th Mechanised Brigade are joining the Irish peacekeeping contingent in Camp Shamrock this November. The Polish Army served in Lebanon continuously from April 1992 to December 2009, providing contingents of engineering (1994-2002), logistics (1994-2004), medical (1992-2005) and operational (2007-2009) with strengths ranging from 100 to a maximum of 650 personnel. Soldiers were mainly stationed in garrisons of Jwayaa, Mardz Ujun, An-Nakura (Naqoura) and Tibnin.

The main tasks of the new 250-strong contingent will be protection of civilian communities, monitoring the Blue Line area and providing training for Lebanese government organisations. All the operations will be carried out under the command of the Irish contingent, where Polish soldiers will have a unique opportunity to exchange experiences and knowledge gained during Iraq and Afghanistan stabilisation missions.

The Polish 12th Brigade carries the military heritage dating back to 1673 and will bring an array of equipment from APV Rosomak (a Polish modified version of AMV Patria), HMMWV's,

and various types of logistics support vehicles.

Historically, the Polish mission in Lebanon was relatively uneventful with only two major incidents occurring during this period. The first was the Israeli operation 'Grapes of Wrath', which began on 18 April 1996. During this 16-day campaign against Hezbollah and Lebanese-based fighters, Israel conducted air raids (over 1,100), artillery shelling and ground operations. Polish EOD units, medics and transport elements came under small arms fire from the Israeli side on several occasions, and medics had to render aid to UN and civilian personnel while still under attack. Polish and Nepalese EOD engineers working on landmine removal also came under small arms and mortar fire. After substantial loss of civilian life and major infrastructural damage a ceasefire was brought about by UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1052.

The second major incident was the Second Lebanon War in 2006. (This occurred six years after Israel had withdrawn its forces from South Lebanon, which led to a temporary stabilisation in the region.) During this 34-day conflict, the Israeli



Defence Forces (IDF) launched a full ground offensive against Hezbollah locations and imposed a naval blockade of Lebanon. Throughout the hostilities UN troops were regularly fired upon, resulting in four unarmed United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) observers from Austria, China, Finland and Canada being killed in a UN OP. Other incidents included a Nigerian UN civilian worker also being killed and 12 other peacekeepers being wounded.

With Hezbollah using guerrilla tactics and avoiding direct engagement with a much more technologically advanced Israeli army, the conflict fell heavily on the civilian population, forcing nearly one million Lebanese and up to 500,000 Israelis to seek refuge.

A new resolution (UNSCR 1701) was passed by the UN aimed at ending this conflict. The war ended after Lebanon and Israel approved the resolution, which included a provision for the enlargement of UNIFIL.

By 2009, due to engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan, all Polish forces were withdrawn from Lebanon, handing over to the Danish Logistics Battalion. This November, upon their return to Lebanon, Polish soldiers will be relying on the experience and expertise of their Irish colleagues, and both parties are looking forward to their joint peacekeeping mission.

About the Author: In 2002, Lukasz Gancarz started his active army reserve service in Poland and served in Specialised Armed Security Forces until 2007. Later in 2007 he settled in Ireland, and in 2012 he started his application process to serve in the Irish Reserve Defence Forces (RDF). He started his training in May 2018, and is currently serving with D Coy, 7 Inf Bn, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin. In his fulltime employment Lukasz works as a Flight Lead Officer for Aer Lingus and holds a Private Pilot's Licence (PPL) and is an accomplished photographer. ■

'Always Ready, Always Here'

POLAND'S CHANGING MILITARY

BY PTE LUKASZ GANCARZ (AR), D COY, 7 INF BN
PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE POLISH TERRITORIAL
DEFENCE FORCES



The Polish Army has a proven record with peacekeeping and stabilisation missions across the world, sending over 84,000 troops to serve in over 70 missions since their first participation in 1953. Deployments have ranged from Korea in the 1950s, through the Balkans conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to various peacekeeping missions in Africa, to Iraq and Afghanistan. In November this year, Polish troops are rejoining the UNIFIL mission in Lebanon after a 10-year break.

With the peacekeeping experience accumulated by the two countries over the years it is certain that both Polish and Irish personnel will benefit from this cooperation.

Poland's history is full of conflict because of its location, and the country suffered a major blow in 1772 when it was simultaneously invaded by the armies of Russia, Prussia and Austria, and was effectively erased from the map for 123 years.

During the three-way partition of the state there were many uprisings against the occupiers, and many Poles joined foreign armies, often to try to gain support for their country's struggle for independence. Included among these expatriate soldiers were Napoleon's Polish legions and Tadeusz Kosciuszko, who fought with the revolutionaries in the American War of Independence.

After years of struggle victory finally came in 1918 when Poland finally reappeared on the map. Led by national heroes such as First Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, the state and its citizens could finally breathe again. The country bloomed with economic growth and became one of the fastest growing countries in the world.

History, however, proved itself not to be on Poland's side yet again when, in September 1939, the country was invaded by Nazi Germany and Stalin's Red Army and torn in two. During WWII, expatriate Poles fought in every corner of the world with the Allied forces. (This author's uncle fought in Africa and Italy, and was one of the first soldiers to enter the infamous Monte Cassino monastery.)

After the war, Poland found itself under Soviet control until 1989.

Today the Polish armed forces consist of five branches: Land Forces, Air Forces, Navy, Special Forces, and Territorial Defence Forces (TDF). The last branch bears many similarities to our Army Reserve.

The concept behind the establishment of the TDF, formed in January 2017, was to equip each of 16 voivodships (Polish administrative areas) with a formidable, well trained and very well-equipped army formation, mostly comprising volunteers, serving on a part-time basis. While this voluntary reserve concept is very well known in Ireland, in Poland it was always the main armed forces who were tasked with not only being combat ready but also being available to cover civil support duties. With constant modernisation of the army and an unstable situation in the region due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it became apparent that a new branch of the army was needed that would be able to organize itself into a fully capable local fighting force.

The TDF's creation comprises four overlapping stages. The first (2016-2018) involved the creation of the TDF Command in Warsaw and three full-size brigades in neighbouring voivodships. The second stage (2017-2019) comprised the creation of three more brigades and the Mobile Training Department, consisting of three separate training teams. The third stage (2018-2020) will cover the formation of seven more brigades, while the fourth stage will see the formation of four more brigades on Poland's 'west wall'. The formation of the last units should begin in 2021, with the TDF reaching full strength (50,000) and operational numbers by the end of 2025.

Currently, the TDF is in its most intensive development stage, with 15 brigades undergoing constant training designed to ensure a balance between quantity and quality.

The TDF now comprises 17,000 volunteers and 3,600 full-time personnel. It is planned that by the end of 2019, TDF strength will be 26,000.

The territorial character of the formation means that its members

are being recruited from their home regions. The TDF is open to veterans, army reservists and civilians (there is no requirement for volunteers to have previous military service). Similarly, to our Army Reserve, the TDF offers training schedules that help soldiers to achieve a balance between army, family, and civilian career time. The government also actively encourages employers to embrace the benefits of hiring a 'territorial' (a common name given to TDF troops).

The TDF's main mission is supporting and defending local com-

munities. The first year of recruitment proved that there is a huge interest in this form of service.

Weapons of the TDF, which is classified as light infantry, consist totally of Polish-made systems.

The core weapon of the Polish Army is the 'Beryl', Assault Carbine, Pattern 1996; a very advanced evolution of the famous AK-47. The main difference from its predecessor is that the Beryl uses the standard NATO 5.56x45mm round. It is also much more accurate and,



munities. During peacetime they are deployed to assist the civil authorities in dealing with state emergencies, such as the hurricane-strength winds that hit eastern Poland in May, or the widespread flooding in June.

In a conflict, the TDF would be immediately mobilised and deployed to support the army within the combat area; outside it, the TDF would be the primary fighting force.

In an unprecedented move, the TDF is utilising the potential of veterans and retired members of special forces and police counter-terrorism units to provide complex training to TDF NCOs, who are then joining the Forces' mobile training units. A big part of this training programme emphasises the TDF's resemblance to the National Army (Armia Krajowa) that led underground combat operations during the Second World War occupation, and the legacy the TDF inherits from it.

New recruits undergo either a 16- or 8-day full-time basic training course: the longer is designed for civilians and the shorter for active army reservists. This is followed by a three-year training cycle, during which they learn the military skills necessary for today's battlefield and other useful skills such as first aid, driving, using heavy machinery, and many more.

The TDF also provides territorial military duty service in which volunteers serve on an army base during their days off work, or are placed on stand-by duty, available to be immediately called in should they be required.

One benefit of the part-time volunteer system is it increases the number of trained soldiers within the armed forces by utilising civilians who always wanted to serve but couldn't do so due to their

thanks to the installation of tactical rails, can be equipped with a full array of additional equipment.

Eventually, however, the Polish Ministry of Defence felt that a new, modern design, Polish-made weapon was needed, and the establishment of the TDF gave the MoD a great testing ground for a brand-new weapon system. Enter the MSBS Grot.

The Grot is a 5.56mm modular firearm system, with many similarities to our Steyr AUG. It is a reliable, accurate and fully modular rifle that can be quickly modified to meet various mission profiles. Thanks to its deployment in the TDF, the Grot is now slowly being introduced in other branches, and to date the Polish armed forces have received over 26,600 Grots from 33,000 on order, and in September this order was increased by another 18,000.

The TDF is also equipped with another successful Polish design, the VIS100 9mm handgun, and the fire support group employs the GPMG UKM-2000P, which is an evolution of the Russian PKM, adapted to fire a standard NATO 7.62x51mm round. By the end of this year, the TDF will also receive the Polish-made, light infantry mortar system, LMP2017. To complement the unit's combat capabilities, the Warmate combat drone is being introduced, as well as the FlyEye reconnaissance UAV.

The Polish Territorial Defence Forces continuously work with other branches of the armed forces, police, border control and customs, to improve its SOPs. The main aim of this is to be always ready to assist other agencies of the state in an emergency. Poland is also sending TDF soldiers to cooperate with similar formations around the world, including the US National Guard. ■

Jumping for Joy

PTE EOIN O'SHEA (AR), D COY, 7 INF BN



At 4,000ft the instructor opens the door at the side of the plane and as wind suddenly swirls around the cabin I find myself in pole position, first at the door, as instructed, ready to push squarely into the wind while exiting the aircraft. Now seated on the floor, legs hanging outside, I turn to my right as the instructor shouts “Ready?!”; I keep eye contact, nod, and respond “Ready!” In the next moment, I’m gone...

I had decided some months earlier to travel to Teuge, Netherlands, to complete one of very few European courses run specifically for ex- or current military personnel. Located near the town of Apeldoorn, Skydive Teuge operates a military static-line course, which has been undertaken over the past 40 years by those personnel – Dutch or otherwise – wishing to complete ground school and five subsequent jumps. They do this both for personal enjoyment and in pursuit of their ‘wings’ (the emblem worn by those who’ve completed the minimum requirements for airborne personnel).

Static line refers to the method of skydiving whereby the chute is automatically deployed shortly after exiting the craft. It effectively removes any real period of freefall, while still requiring the skydiver to manoeuvre their flight and land. Static-line skydivers exit the aircraft at only 4,000ft compared with 10,000-12,000ft for their freefalling peers.

Having arrived the first morning, following a stay in a hostel in Amsterdam, I joined the group: five in total, with all the others having French military origins. They included Yoad (a 19-year-old Air Force attack-and-search dog handler), Iljak (a 63-year-old Croat ex-Legionnaire), Phillipe (an ex-paratrooper, also in his 60s), and Olivier (a 51-year-old former Naval NCO). Our lessons consequently took place through both French and English, although the group composition favoured the former. Suddenly I wished I had paid more attention to French in secondary school!

The entire first day focused on ground school, which involves detailed introduction on the equipment used, basic principles

of skydiving, and also the procedure for deploying your reserve chute if the primary fails for any reason. This latter, somewhat nerve-tingling, aspect of the training reminded me that while skydiving may be quite safe statistically, the potential for chute failure warrants a full day of procedural training.



We repeatedly rehearsed the procedure to follow if the unthinkable happens and yelled our way through a series of checks to make after falling from the aircraft: (1) ‘Count! 1001, 1002, 1003’; (2) ‘Check! has the chute deployed at all?’; (3) ‘Is the chute square?’; (4) ‘Are you flying straight ahead?’; (5) ‘Is there a tangle/twist in the chute?’ (If so, bicycle kick and try to untangle)

the straps yourself); (6) 'Has the slider descended fully?'; (7) 'Are both ends of the chute fully opened?' (8) 'Orientate yourself to others and the ground'; (9) 'Plan the method of landing following direction changes at 500 and 300ft.'

We finally rehearsed landing by flaring the chute – pulling and holding the straps down fully to stall your descent – when about 2m from the ground.

While there's fun to be had during the training sessions, compared to military courses, the staff's approach leaves nothing to chance in terms of the importance of familiarity with the above procedures.

During the course I began to reflect on what drew me to something like this. Much like military training, I was once again sharing a bunkhouse with strangers, quickly getting to know how individuals responded to stress and mistakes as we each grappled with what we needed to know. And much like the appeal military training has for me, we were preparing to follow procedures correctly, under conditions of stress, with the result that performance and safety were maximised – a kind of baptism of fire giving way to a growing sense of competence and mastery. People relate at levels beyond small-talk when preparing to do challenging things together, and the social aspect of our training grew a life of its own as we saw each other make progress.

On the day of our jumps we were slotted between groups undertaking other training courses; some more advanced, as we observed from their ground-based practice of dauntingly coordinated moves to be completed mid-air.

We also completed our practical test, a rather chaotic experience involving being strapped to a rig fastened to the roof of one of the training rooms. As each of us progress through the test, the instructors shouted specific predicaments at us, observing our awareness of when to deploy the reserve straight-away (if steps 2-4 above had gone awry) versus when to take a little time to work on any challenges before reserve deployment (as per steps 5-7). The obvious, but nonetheless vital, practice of regularly checking our wrist-strapped altimeter was emphasised. Less than 2,000ft, you may still have time to work through the problem before having to deploy the reserve. Less

1,000ft and we check that our altimeters are set accurately. Approaching 4,000ft the cabin light turns green and the instructor opens the door. First up sits by the entrance – legs out but allowed to move with the direction of the wind; each hand grips the floor and rear side of the doorway. You turn your body to the right, ready to fall into the wind squarely once you've pushed off.

I was briefly struck by what makes this so challenging: you're *rational* aware that you're quite safe, you know it is little more dangerous than going for a swim in choppy water, or any number of slightly risky activities. However, while we are rational humans who 'know' we are quite safe, we are also apes at some level; apes about to jump off a so-much-higher tree than our evolutionary ancestors ever climbed. The effect is a combination of a sense of controlled fear and an innate fight-or-flight response. The feeling is difficult to describe.

Then the instructor shouts "Ready?!", and with the echo of your own "Ready!" in your ears you jump. For a few seconds the air wallops you as you drop with stiffened arms drawn backwards behind your body. After 3-4 seconds, your chute deploys and you frantically scan above for an unopened, ragged, or otherwise dysfunctional chute opening.

Of my five jumps, two involved less-than-ideal outcomes – though none even nearly warranted deployment of my reserve. I had to spend about five seconds untangling a twisted set of straps on one jump. On another, two 'flares' were required to fully deploy both air compartments at either side of the chute. The sense of relief, and gratitude, following a normal chute deployment – particularly during the first jump – is palpable.

Landing is nothing to be trifled with – my first jump saw me land in a farmer's field a few hundred meters from the proper landing zone – and flaring at the right time, i.e. the very last second or so, is vital in staving off a sprained ankle or anything more serious.

Following our five jumps we were presented with our static line licences, a certificate, and our Dutch 'para wings'.

The sense of fun, confrontation of fear, camaraderie, and achievement from just two simple days of training cannot be recommended enough. So why not take the plunge? There's



than 1,000ft? Don't even cut the primary chute; just deploy the reserve and hope for the best!

Our first flight and jump reminded me of my two tandem jumps completed in Ireland. There's an initially boisterous atmosphere, slowly quietening down as the plane approaches

only a 1 in 250,000 chance you'll, *briefly*, regret it!

Pte Eoin O'Shea serves as an Army Reservist in D Coy, 7 Inf Bn. He also works as a psychologist for a social care organisation and the Irish Red Cross. ■

EXERCISE 'SABRE' WHEN CAVALRY STRIKES

BY COMDT IAN STEWART (AR), 1 ACS



Exercise 'Sabre' is a 72 hour 'Find, Fix and Strike' exercise conducted in the fourth quarter of each year, by the Army Reserve (AR) Squadron of the 1 Armoured Cavalry Squadron (1 ACS). The Cavalry Corps is one of the 'teeth' Corps of the Defence Forces, and as such has a long and proud tradition of service to the State, with the fleet evolving over the last number of decades to today's fleet of MOWAG Piranha III, with two variants entering service in 2008, the Medium Reconnaissance Vehicle (MRV) and the Close Reconnaissance Vehicle (CRV).

The exercise concentrates squadron reserve personnel from throughout the Defence Forces Cavalry Corps, along with members of the 1 Mechanised Infantry Company (1 MIC) and school personnel in the Defence Forces Training Centre (DFTC).

This year also saw the inclusion of members of the AR Potential Officers' Course, while Operational Forces (OPFOR) were provided by the current DFTC AR Recruit Platoon.

Exercise serials included construction and manning of sub-surface Observation Posts (OPs) and multiple Close Target Recces (CTR), culminating in a dawn strike followed by casualty evacuation (CASEVAC). Cavalry assets deployed included Mowag CRV from 1 ACS and the Foxtracker ground surveillance radar system as part of the 2 BCS run radar operators' course.

Capt Glynn McKenna (AR), SO HQ 1 ACS said, "*The training outcomes from this year's exercise underpin the importance of combined arms training and the benefits accruing to participating Units from pooled resources, logistics, shared learning and retention.*" ■

Reservists from 1 ACS, 2 BCS, 1 MIC, Cav School, UNTSI, Potential Officers Course and DFTC Recruit Platoon on Exercise 'Sabre' November 2019.



Ceremonial Tasks

REPORT & PHOTOS BY CQMS MICHEAL BENNETT (AR), 7 INF BN

Sunday 10th November 2019 was Remembrance Sunday - the day when most countries remember their military personal who died in the line of duty.

In Dublin's Cathal Brugha Barracks it was also the day that Reserve Defence Forces (RDF) units based there held their annual mass to honour their deceased members.

The day in question was fine and sunny; several retired members associations were also invited to this yearly event, which takes place in the Garrison Church and the adjoining Niemba Square. Many former RDF members always take this annual opportunity to meet old friends and colleagues.

For this year's event 7 Inf Bn tasked the battalion's C Coy (RDF) with providing a Honour

Guard for the ceremony. The preparation by C Coy began several weeks earlier, with arms drill practice taking the fore, service dress uniforms were worn and inspected to make sure they were up to standard.

The Company requested and were granted the use of ceremonial steyr rifles for the drill, these very clean and presentable rifles were used before in past honour guards by our comrades in D Coy (RDF), but this was the first time that C Coy soldiers would use them in a ceremonial task.

Well over 100 guests turned up on the day, and afterwards refreshments were served in the dining complex.

This type of ceremonial tasks are part and parcel of been in a military organisation, indeed foot drill is probably the first ever type of training undertaking by any soldier who joins any army or other military service.

The original purpose of drill was to enable a commander to move a body (unit) of soldiers from one battlefield location

to another, while holding its most efficient fighting formation.

Drill itself, be it foot or rifle drill, develops discipline and teaches attention to detail, both as an individual and as a member of a team.

Drill instils a sense of unity by requiring soldiers to obey orders as one unit of troops.

During a drill ceremony a soldier may spend what feels like an eternity standing motionless to attention, sometimes in very cold or damp weather. But this motionless non moving drill also provides the basis for a tactical battlefield use - it teaches a soldier to remain quiet still and motionless for long time periods, which can minimize the chances of been heard or seen by the enemy.

Good drill also enhances unit pride; it makes troops look well trained and efficient, and will always impress the public watching the drill movements.

Good units carry out good drill, and all units should aspire to be their best at this age-old skill.

enhances unit pride, it makes troops look well trained and efficient, and will always impress the public watching the drill movements.

Good units carry out good drill, and all units should aspire to be their best at this age old skill. ■



Little Nalukena has only ever known pain...

© Sightsavers/Jason J Mulikita

We urgently need your help to reach children like two-year-old Nalukena from Zambia.

She has suffered with trachoma her entire life. It makes her eyelashes turn inwards, scraping against the eye with every blink. If left untreated, trachoma can cause irreversible blindness, which could destroy her future.

Sightsavers has been fighting trachoma for decades and now, at last, the end is in sight. You can help us provide the vital antibiotics to treat more children like Nalukena – and eliminate the disease for good.

Will you give €30 and help end the agony of trachoma – for good?

It costs just €0.17 to provide the antibiotics needed to treat one child for trachoma.

Return your form, visit **sightsavers.ie** or call **01 663 7666** to make your gift today. **Thank you.**

Sightsavers is committed to the highest standards of transparency, governance and accountability to ensure we deliver maximum value and impact with your generous donations. Sightsavers is fully committed to the Charities Regulator's Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public and also fully adheres to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messaging. Your donation will be used to support our work wherever the need is greatest. Thank You.
Registered Charity Number 20053246

**Yes, I'll send a gift and help
end the agony of trachoma**

Here is my gift of: ☐ €15 ☐ €30 ☐ €50 ☐ €100

☐ Or surprise us! € -

Title _____ First name _____ Surname _____

Full home address _____

Postcode _____

Are you happy to receive updates on the work you are helping to make possible by email or telephone? If so, please fill in your details below.

Telephone number _____

Email _____

We'll contact you from time to time using the details you've provided, which may include correspondence about claiming tax back, but we'll never sell or share your data. If you'd rather not hear from us, please let us know by emailing info@sightsavers.ie or calling 01 663 7666.

I enclose a ☐ cheque ☐ postal order (payable to Sightsavers)

OR I would like to pay by ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa

Please do not send cash by post.

Card number

Valid from /

Expiry date /

Name on card _____

Signature _____ Date /

Please return your completed form to **Sightsavers, First Floor, Spencer House, Spencer Row, Freepost FDN5241, Dublin 1.**

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THE NATIONAL SECURITY SUMMIT IRELAND



slándáil
NATIONAL SECURITY SUMMIT IRELAND

BY DR. GERRY WALDRON, DIRECTOR SLÁNDÁIL

The National Security Summit Ireland was launched in September 2019 with a series of interesting and provocative presentations and a panel discussion on 'Protecting Democracy in the age of disinformation'. The speakers at the launch included The Hon. Mr Justice John L. Murray former Chief Justice of Ireland, Deputy Eamon Ryan Leader of the Green Party, Mr Ben Nimmo Head of Investigations at Graphika, Ms Liz Carolan Executive Director of Digital Action Ireland and Dr Jane Suiter Head of the DCU Institute for Future Media and Journalism. The panel examined the prevalence of disinformation and fake news and the readiness and ability of government and state agencies including the Defence Forces to respond to that threat. The event was a warm up for 'Slándáil 2020' Ireland's inaugural national security summit which will take place on the 25th and 26th February 2020.

Slándáil is the Irish language term for security and its broader meaning includes concepts of

and interested members of the public. The conference aims to highlight current Irish capabilities and examine the future direction, roles and needs of all our security services. Within the wider summit there will also be forums examining global security, cyber security and emergency preparedness.

The summit aims to provide an independent platform for members of the defence and security community to engage with senior leaders in government, the civil service and academia and to increase engagement with the Irish public on security issues. This event is a unique opportunity for leaders in the Defence Forces to engage directly with their peers in other services, valued colleagues in academia and the wider public.

The summit is organised by volunteers on a not-for-profit basis. Tickets are free for members of all uniformed and emergency services in Ireland but registration is required. For more information check out our website on www.nssi.ie, the Slándáil LinkedIn page or @slandai_nssi on twitter. ■



safety, protection and future stability. The summit will connect government, academia, the public and the business community in order to encourage discussion and debate of our national security needs and requirements. In the age of climate chaos, emerging disruptive technologies, and greater connectivity in cyber space, Ireland's geographical position no longer guarantees the safety and stability that we have become accustomed to. The time to discuss and debate our future security needs is now and members of the Defence Forces, Gardaí and other services need to be part of that conversation.

The summit will take place in the iconic Helix venue on DCU campus and includes Ireland's first defence, intelligence and security conference. This conference is aimed at Defence Forces and Garda members, government officials, academics



COMBATING RIVER BLINDNESS



BY ALISON BOUGH,
COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC
ENGAGEMENT MANAGER,
SIGHTSAVERS IRELAND



A Sightsavers project screens children for Onchocerciasis in Liberia. Onchocerciasis (also known as oncho or river blindness) is a parasitic infection that can cause severe skin irritation, itching and, over time, irreversible blindness. It's spread by the bite of infected black flies that breed near fast flowing rivers. Copyright John Healey Photography

Almost two decades ago, Sightsavers made a long-term commitment to eliminate River Blindness in all regions of Liberia. Despite the international charity's tireless work being intermittently interrupted by the continuation of the Liberian civil war, their sight saving projects were restored in 2005, scaling up from the North West to the South West and South East regions of the African country from 2006 onwards.

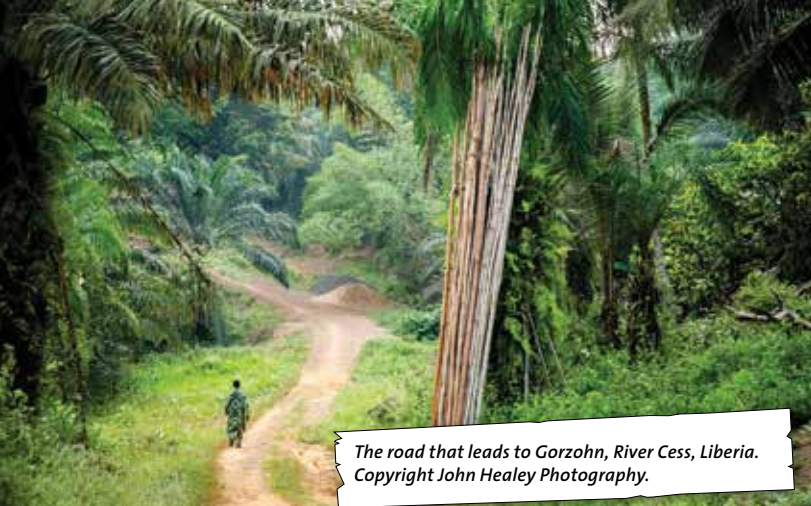
The Irish Defence Forces share a similar timeline in their history with Liberia; having had UN led peacekeeping operations stationed in the country from 2003 to 2007. The HQ of the Irish contingent, Camp Clara, was established in the grounds of an abandoned hotel 10km north of Monrovia.

In November 2004, serious rioting erupted in Monrovia and the Quick Reaction Force was deployed, playing a significant role in quelling the violence. In addition to their military tasks, all of the Irish contingents serving with UNMIL (United Nations Mission in Liberia) also became heavily involved in humanitarian and civil-military co-operation projects. Through funding from the Departments of Defence and Foreign Affairs and fund-raising efforts by personnel on the

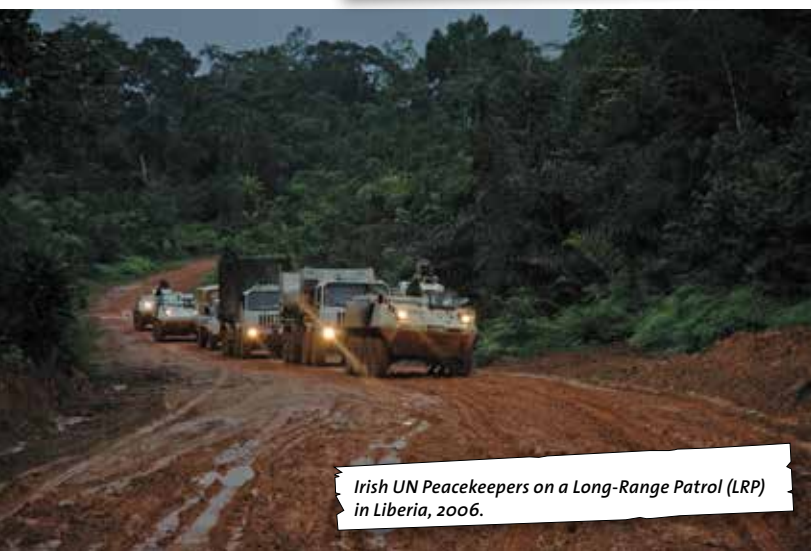
ground many projects were undertaken. These included the construction of a major extension to a HIV/AIDS hospice in Monrovia run by the Sisters of Charity, support for leprosy and polio centres, and numerous schools.

Five years ago, news of a deadly Ebola outbreak in West Africa shook the world. Liberia was one of the countries worst hit. At least 10,675 people were infected, 4,809 died, and an already weak health system came under immense strain. Today the country is rebuilding this system. In 2015, with the devastating Ebola crisis brought under control, Sightsavers began supporting survivors through the Redemption Hospital, providing screening for Uveitis and other eye conditions.

Blindness remains a public health concern in Liberia; with an ageing population, an increasing number of people will be at risk of visual impairment from cataract. The country's cataract surgical coverage is less than half of the required level and the number of eye health professionals ready to address the situation is limited. However, through Sightsavers' support, the Liberian Ministry of Health has succeeded in setting up eye outreaches in clinics in five Southeast counties, and continues to provide quality eye care services to the



*The road that leads to Gorzohn, River Cess, Liberia.
Copyright John Healey Photography.*



*Irish UN Peacekeepers on a Long-Range Patrol (LRP)
in Liberia, 2006.*



*Irish UN Peacekeepers
conducting helicopter
operations, 2009.*



*Salomie stands with
her son, Anthony,
aged 6, after he
was screened for
Onchocerciasis in
Gorzohn, Liberia.
Onchocerciasis (also
known as oncho or
river blindness) is a
parasitic infection
that can cause severe
skin irritation, itching
and, over time,
irreversible blindness.
It's spread by the
bite of infected black
flies that breed near
fast flowing rivers.
Copyright John Healey
Photography*

people in that region, with at least 600 cataract surgeries performed every year.

Sightsavers is now the only NGO supporting Onchocerciasis (commonly known as river blindness) elimination in Liberia. This painful disease is a parasitic infection that causes severe skin irritation, itching and, over time, irreversible blindness. It is spread by the bite of infected black flies that breed near fast flowing rivers. It can be treated with medication called Mectizan, or Ivermectin, given to entire communities annually or biannually in a process called mass drug administration (MDA). After repeated MDA over many years, transmission of the disease can be broken and eliminated. In Liberia, onchocerciasis is present in all 15 counties of the country. Sightsavers began their nationwide MDA treatment in 2006 and have made significant progress, now reaching over 80% of targeted communities.

The current phase of the Liberia eye health project runs from 2017 to 2021 with Irish Aid being the main funding agency. CEO of Sightsavers Ireland, Charlie Lamson, says the charity's continued aim is to ensure universal access to eye health by all in Liberia.

"In 2017, we received a five-year development funding grant from Irish Aid to support our programmes in West Africa. The grant supports work in four countries – Cameroon, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Liberia – and enables us to save sight and change lives while delivering measurable results and accountability."

In Liberia, we continue to achieve this by strengthening the overall health system and investing in eye health human resources, the rehabilitation of eye facilities, equipping health facilities with the necessary eye equipment and the provision of adequate eye health products and supplies. We are also implementing affirmative advocacy actions aimed at promoting the inclusion of eye health and disability in national health plans and policy. Both Irish Aid and the Irish public are key in supporting this vital work."

Ray McAvoy, from Athlone, is a retired member of the Defence Forces (4th Hospital Company) and long-term supporter of the charity's work. Having served in the Medical Corps from the age of 19, Ray points to the lifelong impact that saving someone's sight can have: *"When you really think about people – adults and children – needlessly losing their sight, if you imagine your own family or children or grandchildren, it would be life shattering. We have health problems here at home but if you think about a child going blind in a developing country and the permanent effect that would have on the rest of their life... that can be avoided for what is really very little money so I will continue to support Sightsavers' brilliant work."* ■

Sightsavers is an Irish registered charity CHY15437 currently working to restore sight, prevent blindness and fight for disability rights in Liberia and more than 30 countries in Africa and Southeast Asia. To find out more about their work, log on to www.sightsavers.ie or chat to a member of the team on 01 6637666.

CRY "HAVOC!" AND LET SLIP THE DOGS OF WAR AIR CORPS RECRUITS A DOG TO ITS RANKS

BY SGT BRENDAN CRUISE, AIR CORPS COLLEGE



Finnegan's handler Cpl Aidan Brosnan and Sgt Major James Scanlon, No 5 Sp Wing.

Caseement Aerodrome has recently seen a new recruit added to its strength, a red/white setter called Finnegan who follows in the paw-prints of Fionn, the 4-year-old Irish Wolf Hound mascot of 3rd Infantry Battalion. These canines bring a certain uniqueness to each of their respective units.

Traditionally military dogs are awarded the rank of an NCO, with the thought being that this was to prevent handlers from mistreating their dogs; hence, a dog is always one rank higher than its handler.

Dogs have a long tradition of being part of military units with ancient cave drawings depicting dogs hunting alongside humans. Archaeological digs have also discovered armour worn by dogs. There are recorded documents of Persian and Assyrian deploying dogs during battle, and Napoleon used guard dogs as sentries, chaining them to the walls of Alexandria to ward off any potential attackers.

Today, military working dogs are trained in a variety of different roles, from detecting explosives or illegal drugs to searching for missing comrades or targeting enemy combatants. It is the dog handler's objective to maximise the dogs' natural gifts for focus and aggression to their advantage. Not only are dogs active on the front lines they also serve as therapy dogs, service dogs, and loyal companions. History has seen numerous examples of dogs being utilised in military operations, in 1518 King Henry VIII dispatched around 400 English Mastiffs issued with protective iron collars to the aid of Charles V Spanish Army. These dogs were trained to lunge at the enemy horses, latching onto their noses causing widespread panic.

During World War I both Germany and the United Kingdom implemented dog-training programs. Germany utilised around 30,000 dogs for attack and courier purposes while dogs belonging to British forces were trained to deliver messages by navigating the trenches whilst braving bullets, bombs and gas exposure. Aside



GOC Air Corps Brig Gen Rory O'Connor meets Finnegan.

from these sentry and messenger duties dogs also aided the Red Cross in helping locate incapacitated wounded soldiers on the front lines these were known as "mercy dogs" they would alert their handlers by bringing back a piece of clothing or displaying other signals. This type of canine search and rescue was later witnessed in the aftermath of the New York terrorist attacks conducted on 9/11. The first rescue dog, Apollo, arrived a mere 15 minutes after the attacks had commenced, and an additional 300 specially trained dogs would be used during this massive search and rescue operation. Sadly, the last of these dogs, Bretagne was laid to rest in June 2016.

During World War II dogs were utilised to recognise incoming shellfire before human ears could hear it. German forces amassed a staggering 50,000 dogs, the biggest and most highly-trained group of war dogs throughout history. This consisted mainly of Rottweilers, Sheepdogs, and German shepherds. Since WWII, the use of dogs in warfare has diversified along with the evolution of new technology and tactics. In Vietnam, they found safe passage for American GIs through the dense jungles as well as alerting their handlers to snipers and booby traps. In Iraq and Afghanistan coalition forces made their deployment safer and somewhat easier by exploiting their dogs' extraordinary sense of smell outpacing every technological advance made in the detection of IEDs. It is not just combative roles in an operational theatre that dogs are deployed in, therapy dogs were first introduced in the war zone in Iraq in 2007 to replicate the psychological benefits the troops gain from US homeland care facilities employing specially trained dogs, while Combat Stress Control dogs are also deployed in medical detachments across different regions of Afghanistan.

There are cases where dogs that may have started out their "career" in one role later transferred into another such as the case

of Sergeant Stubby of America's 102nd Infantry Regiment who went from mascot to hero during WWI after being smuggled into battle by Private Robert Conway. Sgt Stubby sniffed out enemy gas, barked out warnings when enemy troops were near and located the wounded on the battlefield. Sgt Stubby remains a symbol of military bravery and heroism and he also forged the way for canine soldiers who followed with some dogs even becoming members of elite special forces teams such as Cairo, a Belgian Malinois who took part in Operation Neptune Spear, which is more commonly known as the killing of Osama Bin Laden.

Not all dogs can become the next Sgt Stubby, for example, the suitability rate within the US military runs around 50%. In other words, to produce 100 serviceable dogs, the program will attempt to train about 200. Dogs are extensively tested for aggression,



9/11 SAR Dog Riley.

weapon shyness and basic search behaviour, once a dog has been approved both temperamentally and physically then the main training begins.

The training is based on positive reward or praise, the epitome of the classical conditioning model developed by Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov. When the dogs manoeuvre through one obstacle successfully they are rewarded. Then, they manoeuvre two obstacles and are rewarded, so training builds upon previous lessons where hopefully the dog will do the entire obstacle course without a reward until the end, which is how trainers develop the dogs' instincts to want the reward. During the initial phases of training the dog is never permitted to ignore a command or fail to carry it

out completely. If a dog fails to execute a command properly the reward is withheld, then the dog is placed in the desired position where the warranted praise is given.

The military dog is never allowed to suspect that there is any correct response except for total obedience towards their handler.

A service dogs' loyalty to their handler means that they will gladly deploy to areas of conflict. A terrier called Boxer, who was always steadfast by the sides of his fellow troops of 11th Hussars, even embarked on the infamous charge of the light brigade against Russian guns at the Battle of Balaklava in 1854. Boxer thankfully survived this onslaught and would later become a decorated hero also becoming a regular sight in the Curragh Camp and Portobello Barracks around that time. Naturally what goes up the dog's leash also goes down the dog's leash, the connection of troops towards their mascot cannot be underestimated. The black Labrador mascot of the RAF 617 Squadron, more famously known as The Dam Busters, was killed in 1943 on the day of the dam raid such was the troops affection for the dog it was decided that most of the flight crew would not be informed of his death until after the operation for fear that it might be regarded as a bad omen. During the 1967 Six-Day War a Jordanian Captain fighter pilot looked for clarification if the runway at the bombed Mafrak airbase was serviceable for landing. A voice, which he did not recognise, replied that it was serviceable and suspecting that something was amiss the captain asked the controller what was the name of his dog, everyone at the airbase knew the name of the Captain's popular dog. When no answer was forthcoming the captain diverted to Amman as it was a ploy by the Israelis in an attempt to damage more Jordanian Air Force aircraft.

While militaries have utilised a dog's agility and physical prowess as an advantage over the enemy's forces for hundreds of years, it should be remembered that military dogs are exposed to the same risks as the ground troops, suffering injuries and sometimes death on the battlefields. There have also been reported cases of military dogs suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder after they have finished their service.

While the heroics of dogs in combat operations are unquestionable, the role of mascot dogs such as the Air Corps Finnegan for military personnel are just as important although their output is unquantifiable, they are part of unit history and their loyalty is unwavering and omnipresent.

The fearless dedication of military dogs was best described in a 2008 address by General David H. Petraeus, the then commanding general of Multi-National Force in Iraq, when he stated that *"the capability that military working dogs bring to the fight cannot be replicated by man or machine. By all measures of performance, their yield outperforms any asset we have in our inventory."* ■



World War I hero dog Sgt Stubby.



World War I 'Mercy Dog'.



Cave markings showing a dog.

CESSNA STAND DOWN

BY LT EOIN BLAKE PHOTOS: ARMN SEAN CASSAN

On 4 October the Air Corps retired the last of its remaining Reims Rocket FR172H aircraft. A familiar sight in the skies over Ireland, the fleet has completed just under 64,000 hours of flying over 47 years of unwavering service to the state.

Based on the Model 172, originally manufactured by Cessna Aircraft Co, the Reims Rocket was constructed under license by Reims Aviation for delivery throughout Europe and the Middle East.

Although originally developed for civilian flying, the Reims version of the 172 was a capable and adaptable, multi-role, military platform. Powered by its 210hp Continental engine, the Reims Rocket boasted a higher cruise speed, higher fuel capacity, and short field take-off and landing capabilities. Notably, the Reims Rocket featured a strengthened hard point under each wing that were capable of carrying a Matra rocket pod, each of which housed twelve 37mm unguided air-to-ground explosive projectiles.

The original eight aircraft were ordered by the Department of Defence in response to rising tensions and activity in Northern Ireland throughout 1970. Four aircraft were delivered on 4 October 1972, with four more arriving within nine days. The aircraft were registered 203-210 respectively.

Initially, all were assigned to the Advanced Flying Training School, Casement Aerodrome, but in 1973 were posted to Air Station Gormanston to replace the aging de Havilland Chipmunks.

It was in Gormanston that the aircraft began to really prove

their worth. A new pilot-training syllabus was developed, with army cooperation at the forefront of operations. From their base in Gormanston the fleet became renowned for its roles in border patrolling, Garda co-operation, and regular escorts of cash, explosives and prisoners.

In addition, the Reims Rockets were utilised in a target-towing role for ground-to-air firing by the army and Naval Service. This took place in the air-firing range, off the coast of Gormanston, where a large orange drogue was towed on a 1,500-metre cable behind the aircraft, with the tow winch and control unit installed in the rear of the cabin. An electronically operated missed-distance indicator, which was attached to the cable, could show the operator how close a round had passed to its target. This information could then be relayed to personnel on the ground or onboard a naval vessel, who were involved in the firing exercise.

Many military personnel who underwent parachute training courses found themselves jumping out of a Reims Rocket, as these aircraft could be prepared for parachuting by removing the rear seats and the right-hand control column, and replacing the right-hand front seat with a rear-facing seat. Lightweight seats were then fitted in the rear of the aircraft and the right-hand door was removed. A small platform fitted on the right-hand main landing gear strut allowed for parachutists to position themselves outside the aircraft, while ensuring that the starboard wheel was ad-



equately covered so as not to prove hazardous.

Of course, the fleet's roles were many and the aircraft built a strong reputation for reliability and operational capability. By the time the aircraft were reposted to Casement Aerodrome, following a structural reorganisation of the Air Corps in 2001, they had become well known around the country by military personnel and civilians alike.



Unfortunately, however, the 172's career was not without its mishaps, with four aircraft written off in separate accidents between 1978 and 2004. On 20 September 1978 aircraft 204 crashed into the Shannon Estuary while conducting a wildlife survey; both occupants survived with minor injuries.

On 1 March 1990 aircraft 207 was forced to land in the sea off the coast of Gormanston following an engine failure. Luckily the crew were uninjured, but the aircraft suffered considerable salt-water corrosion, which proved uneconomical to repair.

Aircraft 209 was written off following a hard landing in Finner Camp, Co Donegal, which resulted in extensive damage to the wing, undercarriage and propeller, on 10 November 1993.

On 6 May 2004 aircraft 243, an attrition replacement, was lost in an accident at Clonbullogue airfield, Co Offaly, when the pilot, 2/Lt Raymond Heery, who had been conducting parachuting operations, lost control of the aircraft while taking off. The aircraft came down close to the runway, sadly resulting in the first and only fatality throughout the Reims Rockets' long career.

Many pilots, air crew, technicians, air traffic controllers and various other support personnel will look back fondly on the memories they have of operating the fleet, whether from Gormanston and Finner camps or Casement Aerodrome. The aircraft proved



an excellent platform for pilot training and myriad operational roles throughout their lifetime.

The official stand-down ceremony for the Reims Rockets, held in Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnell, on 4 October, was overseen by GOC Air Corps, Brig Gen Rory O'Connor. Also in attendance were a large number of past and present members of the Corps, who reminisced about their time spent with these iconic aircraft.



The two remaining airworthy 172s conducted one last formation flight before the five remaining airframes were hangared and inspected for the final time.

However, the stand down of one aircraft type breathes life into the introduction of a replacement, and in Q2 2020 the Air Corps is due to take delivery of three Pilatus PC-12 NG Spectre aircraft. These state-of-the-art, multi-role aircraft will bring a new level of capability to the organisation and will be primarily deployed in the roles of ISR, air ambulance and logistics. ■



Flying in the Free State

BY RAYMOND MOLONY



Captain Hannon, Irish Air Service and Air Corps.

An Irish DH 9 bomber, serial no 2, landed at Baldonnel aerodrome on 13 March 1923, with Lt WI Hannon at the controls, accompanied by his observer, 2/Lt T Comba. Both men were members of the recently established Irish National Air Service, whose 400 servicemen provided the air component for the National Army of the Irish Free State. William Ignatius Hannon's

life illustrates how politics and technology developed in the early part of 20th century Ireland.

William was born in Limerick on 7 June 1888 to a family of grocers. His father's death and his mother's remarriage to PJ Molony, who owned a medical hall in Tipperary town, provided financial security, three stepbrothers, and a stepsister.

After education to intermediate level with the Jesuits, William began an apprenticeship in various medical halls with a view to following in his stepfather's footsteps.

This was also a time of political upheaval, and young William gained his first military experience with the Irish Volunteers in 1913.

The outbreak of WWI in 1914 saw William desperate to join an Irish regiment. Initially rejected, he used every contact he could to advance his desire to serve as an officer, and was eventually taken on for officer training with the Royal Irish Regiment in August 1916.

After a deviated septum and subsequent illness led to his discharge at the end of 1916, William persevered and was appointed as a probationary 2/Lt in the same regiment in February 1917. Training courses in Cork followed, in drill, small arms and gas defence, before deployment to Egypt, Palestine, and eventually Salonika in July 1917.

Sometime after this, he joined the Royal Flying Corps as a flying officer, which is how he was described when the RAF was formed in April 1918. By January 1920, he was listed as

having a short-service or permanent commission in the post-war RAF.

Ireland had changed during his military service and his family had played a significant part in the process. His stepfather was imprisoned after the Rising in 1916, was elected as a TD in 1918, and was one of the 27 TDs who attended the first Dáil on 21 January 1919. The IRA's Third Tipperary Brigade was formed in his stepfather's house, which was burnt down in a subsequent reprisal raid, and one of William's stepbrothers was shot dead in 1921. The remaining stepbrothers, Con and Jim, along with their sister, Mary, played an active part in the War of Independence.

The Treaty of 1921 permitted the setting up of an Irish air service and July 1922 saw the arrival of three aircraft, including the one known as 'The Big Fella'. These aircraft, and subsequent machines, were either ex-RAF or direct purchases from the Aircraft Disposal Company. There was, however, a shortage of pilots, observers and technical aircrew. By the end of December 1922, 12 ex-RAF pilots had been taken on by the Irish National Air Service. These included William Ignatius Hannon, who enlisted on 5 December 1922 as a flying officer, on a salary of £5 a week.

Planes purchased in Britain took two days to fly from Croydon to Baldonnel, often against prevailing winds. This, and the average three-hour sea crossing, made it a risky business. For example, a DH9 crashed during delivery at Baldonnel on 1 January 1923. It would be March before Lts Hannon and Comba would fly the repaired aircraft.

William was kept busy during the early days of his service. There is a record of a flight in a Bristol fighter on 11 December 1922 with Major General W McSweeney, OC of the Irish National Air Service, and we can see Lt Hannon's signature on many Air Service aircraft records. By June 1923 there was enough aircraft to nearly make up two squadrons, but there was still a shortage of pilots and observers. At this time William was promoted to captain in charge of training.

Three months earlier, on 7 March 1923, William's two stepbrothers, Con (adjutant general of the anti-Treaty forces), and Jim (director of communications), had been captured by Free State forces. However, the Civil War was coming to an end at this stage and after it ended there was no longer a need for a 58,000 strong army. The subsequent reduction in the size of the National Army was one of the factors leading to the army

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mutiny of 1924. Nonetheless, the cuts continued, with some 800 officers leaving, including officers from the Aviation Service, which had been renamed the Irish Army Air Corps.

A problem arose for Capt Hannon around this time when it emerged that he and another officer, Lt O Heron, were on

Sadly, he did not have a long retirement, dying on 6 June 1943. He was buried in Glasnevin Cemetery and the mourners at his funeral included his widow, Sarah Hannon; brother, Rev J Hannon SJ; stepbrothers Con and Jim Molony; stepsister, Dr Mary O'Neill; Major W Delamere (OC Air Corps); and

Glass plate negative of various bi-planes being serviced inside a hangar. Included are a Bristol Fighter F2B, an Avro 504K and two De Havilland DH9s, one of which appears to be serial number 6. Military Archives Collection (IE-MA-ACPS-GPN-306)



the RAF's reserve list, in contravention of their oath to the Free State. However, this matter was resolved by the intervention of the chief of staff.

In October 1925 Capt Hannon was charged with handing over a Martinsyde Scout fighter to A/Capt W Delamere in an unflyable condition. At the subsequent court martial Capt Hannon was honourably acquitted after a two-day trial. Nevertheless, Col Russell, OC Air Corps, suspended him from flying in November 1925.

William remained in the Air Corps as an adjutant and technical officer until 1930 when he was remustered as an observer due to the manpower shortage: in 1931/32 the Corps' strength amounted to 23 officers, 48 NCOs, and 143 privates.

Further appointments followed for William, in the Aero-nautic School in 1932, followed by an appointment as a photographic officer in 1937.

At this time the Air Corps ordered small numbers of more modern aircraft, such as the Gladiator fighter and the Anson patrol aircraft, in view of the threat of a possible European War. In 1938 William was appointed as a staff officer at Air Corps Headquarters, as the procurement of more modern, technological aircraft was desperately accelerated. His final appointment, in 1941, was as an armaments officer.

Suffering from progressive deafness, Capt WI Hannon was medically retired from the Air Corps on 6 September 1941.



De Havilland DH9 Serial DII: Glass plate negative showing a Bristol F2B Fighter on the ground at Baldonnel. An Avro 621 Trainer is visible in the background. Military Archives Collection (IE-MA-ACPS-GPN-306)

former colleagues from the Air Corps.

William Ignatius Hannon's resting place is marked by a simple granite Celtic cross beneath a yew tree. Overhead, his successors in today's Air Corps continue to fly in the sky above, following the footsteps of those early airmen who started to fly at the same time as the fledgling Irish Free State took flight.

I would like to acknowledge the following who helped with the research for this article: Christine Beggs of the RUR Museum, Belfast, National Archives, London, the helpful staff at Military Archives, Dublin, Glasnevin Cemetery, and Harry Havelin. ■



The grave of Captain W. I. Hannon late of the Irish Air Corps, Glasnevin Cemetery. Photo: R. Molony.

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THE DAY AN AIR CORPS CREW DESERTED

BY PAT POLAND

On Friday 9 January 1942 at the height of the Emergency, a debriefing conference took place in the Officers' Mess at Rineanna Aerodrome (now Shannon Airport), where the Reconnaissance and Medium Bombing Squadron of the Irish Air Corps was based. In the chair was OC 1 Southern Division, the formidable, but widely-respected, Major General MJ (Michael Joseph) Costello, and the debriefing concerned recent night attack exercises.

As speaker after speaker droned on in the warm, smoke-filled mess, several officers struggled to keep their eyes open. Then, precisely at noon, the din of a Bristol Pegasus engine filled the room as a Walrus seaplane roared overhead.

The Air Corps officers present knew immediately that this was an unscheduled flight and indicated to the 'top brass' that something was amiss. All ran from the mess in time to see the aircraft heading downwind in a south-easterly direction. A quick roll-call confirmed that three airmen and an officer, Lt AJ Thornton, were missing. At the time, Thornton was under open arrest for being AWOL, having overstayed his leave while on a date with a young woman. On return to the base, he was 'carpeted' before the CO; his actions considered 'prejudicial to good order and discipline'.

Baldonnel was quickly notified and a single Westland Lysander took off in pursuit of the stolen aircraft. The Walrus's head start, however, was too great, and the Lysander gave up the chase.

At the time the Second World War was entering its third bloody year and the United States had entered the war the previous month, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in Hawaiian. In neutral Éire, the Defence Forces had been considerably enlarged to counter any perceived threat from the belligerents, and now contained many young people who craved action, but the only action they saw was the occasional exercise, incessant routine patrols, and, worst of all, mind-numbing bar-rack duties.

By January 1942 one officer in particular, the above-mentioned Lt Thornton, was becoming increasingly frustrated with his lot and decided to join the fray by taking an aircraft and flying it to Jersey in the Channel Islands, occupied by German Forces since the summer of 1940. The aircraft he 'borrowed' for his unauthorized flight was a Supermarine Walrus amphibian, with the Air Corps designation N18. Three airmen also colluded in the escapade.

Walrus N18 had entered service with the Air Corps rather ignominiously. On 3 March 1939 – six months before the outbreak of war – a group travelled to England to take delivery of three aircraft (N18, N19 and N20) with the object of flying them from

Southampton to Baldonnel. However, as they crossed the Irish Sea weather conditions deteriorated rapidly, forcing the formation into unscheduled landings. One turned back and headed for the safety of Milford Haven in Wales, another put down in Dún Laoghaire harbour, while the third, N18, came down in rough seas off Carnsore Point in County Wexford, suffering some damage. This was only the beginning of N18's uninspired track record with the Air Corps.

With the hue-and-cry in full swing, the Walrus continued on its lumbering way down the east coast of Ireland. At 1230hrs the military look-out post at Helvick Head, Co Waterford, logged: 'A biplane, altitude 6,000ft, moving south in good visibility.'

Thornton now crossed the Irish Sea, intending to fly down, past Cornwall, to begin his ascent to Jersey, about 30 minutes flying time away. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, a flight of Spitfire fighter aircraft from RAF St Eval in Cornwall appeared on his port side, indicating 'down', and that he should follow them.

Thornton had been unable to respond to the British aircrafts' radar-based IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) interrogation signals as Irish aircraft were not fitted with the appropriate transponders.



A computer-generated Air Corps Supermarine Walrus amphibian.



A Walrus taking off in Killiney Bay. Military Archives Collection

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Thornton and his co-conspirators' 'flight to freedom' had lasted precisely two and a half hours. But, for him, the war was far from over.

Alphonsus Joseph Thornton, known as 'Alan', from Rathgar in Dublin, joined the Air Corps in 1939, in his late teens, along with 11 other cadets (including the late Captain Tommy McKeown who would fly Pope John Paul II into Ireland in 1979). He gained his 'wings' as a second lieutenant in April 1940 and was posted to Rineanna.

Thornton and his comrades recalled the aerodrome as a god-forsaken place 'in the middle of marshlands, four miles down a dirt track off the main Limerick-Ennis road'. They described it as purgatory on Earth, with their only respite from the monotony being the odd visit to a hostelry called 'the Honk' located several miles away across the fields.

Their main job was to patrol the 12-mile limit off the west coast, flying their Walrus's to several thousand feet, and taking meteorological readings. All the young officers were bored stiff, but none more so than Thornton, who resolved to do something about it.

where they were handed over to Irish military police. A court martial in Cork followed.

Thornton was dismissed from the forces and sentenced to 18 months in Maryborough Gaol (now Portlaoise), while the other ranks were acquitted; Thornton insisted that they were acting on his orders. His father, a senior civil servant (and one-time member of Michael Collins' intelligence section), was instrumental in having him released after serving only four months.

He later joined the RAF, wearing both his Irish and RAF wings on his uniform, and saw action in Greece, Yugoslavia, and northern Italy, mainly attacking transport and trains. On one occasion, as he recalled on the Marian Finucane show, while on active service in the Balkans he was captured by the notorious Chetnik guerrillas, who switched, as it suited their needs, between collaborating with the Axis and Allied forces.

"They took me out three mornings and I thought I was going to be shot," he said. "However, when they 'clicked' their guns there were no bullets in them. You 'died' each morning; you know? They took my revolver, about \$80, and then just let me go."

Thornton was lucky; the Chetniks had an unenviable reputation for unspeakable forms of torture.

He described himself to Marian as something of a soldier of fortune, who later looked back on his unauthorised flight with 'deep regret'. ■



'Wings' Day 1939. Lt AJ Thornton, back row, third from left. Military Archives Collection



Walrus N18, in Fleet Air Arm livery, now preserved at the FAA Museum in England.

Interviewed on the Marian Finucane Show in March 2005, some of his fellow-officers remembered him as being 'different'. One recalled him 'always going on in the mess about flying Spitfires in action and engaging an enemy'. On the day they were issued with their service revolvers, there was a bang: Thornton had discharged his, the bullet (fortunately) lodging in a window frame.

Air Corps historian, Donal McCarron, who knew Thornton, described him as 'a fine chap, a nice man, an outstanding athlete, and a natural and very good pilot, way above average'.

When the Irish crew landed at St Eval, the RAF didn't quite know what to make of them. At first, they thought they must be part of a Free Dutch squadron, stationed further up the coast. However, it soon became evident who they were and they were placed under open guard, under Flight Lt Hugh Shackleton (later Lord Shackleton) the son of the famous Antarctic explorer from Co Kildare, while a call was put through to the Irish authorities. Soon, they were on their way under police escort to Holyhead,



RAF Spitfires.

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THE SHADOW WAR

Universal Legacy of the Irish War of Independence

BY JOSEPH EA CONNELL JNR

However spontaneous and idealistic it may appear, guerrilla warfare can be understood as a science, calling for objectivity on the part of its practitioners, and giving guerrilla struggles a tendency towards universality. But, as with most guerrilla wars, and certainly the few successful ones, the Irish tactics, techniques and procedures in the 1919-1921 War of Independence do not appear to have been part of a plan deliberately contrived and constructed in advance.

All wars are unique but guerrilla wars have similarities, and successful fighters learn to use the best strategies and tactics from the last wars to fight the next war¹. The Irish learned from the past, and guerrilla fighters who followed learned from the Irish. When insurgents succeed it is worth sitting up and paying very close attention².

Colin Gray put it thus: *'One should not suggest that the judgements drawn from the Irish war can serve as a general paradigm or template for the conduct of all insurgencies that followed, but when those judgements are reviewed and translated into 'lessons' it is tempting to suggest that if one understands the belligerents in the course of, and the outcome to, the Irish war, then one has the lessons to learn for the conduct of future insurgencies or counterinsurgencies.'*³

The 'how to' requires an examination of what worked and what didn't. For example, both sides in the War of Independence used coercion, and resorted to terror: murder, executions, or extra-judicial killings. Such actions on the part of the insurgents deterred others, but more importantly provoked official and unofficial reprisals by the British; exactly what Michael Collins wanted. It

makes no sense to isolate such actions from the record of the war, as they were integral to it and its results.

The war in Ireland presents an interesting variation of what is now called 'compound war theory', and as a result is relevant far beyond its historical interest.

In an age of world-wide communications and a pervasive media, with conflicts often muddled by conflicting moral and ethical claims, it is difficult for a democracy to wage a counterinsurgency campaign. Politicians and soldiers would do well to examine the Anglo-Irish struggle to identify the traps that ensnared both sides and eventually led to a British withdrawal.

Often, military actions required to quell an insurgency will provide the insurgents with the other elements needed to ensure success, such as a lack of political will on the part of the larger forces, and the effects of propaganda on that political will. In

reality, the purpose of the IRA was not so much to defeat the British army as to force Britain to negotiate a settlement based on the Irish claim to independence.

Lessons learned from the Anglo-Irish conflict worked for the Special Operations Executive in World War II, were of limited value in Malaya, inspired the Israelis in their war of independence, and were used heavily by Che Guevara in Cuba.

All warriors must improvise and adapt, and guerrilla warriors more so than most. Later revolutionaries sought to learn from the Irish experience what to do and not do, what to avoid, what is possible, probable and profitable, and how to exploit their opponent.

Historian Max Boot elaborated: *'In the 21st century we've become used to ragtag rebels beating military superpowers. Armed with little more than the will to carry out shocking acts of terrorism and the savvy to cultivate*



Troops of the British Occupation Forces watch over Dublin City during the War of Independence, 1920.



General Michael Collins

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worldwide sympathy through the media, the little guy has come out on top more often than you'd expect. The paradigms are the 1962 French defeat in Algeria, America's 1975 withdrawal from Vietnam, and Russia's disaster in Afghanistan in the 1980s. The United States was similarly dealt defeats in Beirut in 1983 and in Somalia in 1993. It almost happened in Iraq—and may yet happen in Afghanistan.

What few remember is that the script followed by groups as diverse as the Vietcong and the Taliban was written in Ireland during its 1919–1921 War of Independence, the first successful revolt against the British Empire since the creation of the United States of America.⁴

In retrospect, it is clear that Collins and the Irish leaders realised that the three-cornered approach of military action, politics, and propaganda, all augmented by intelligence, was required to achieve

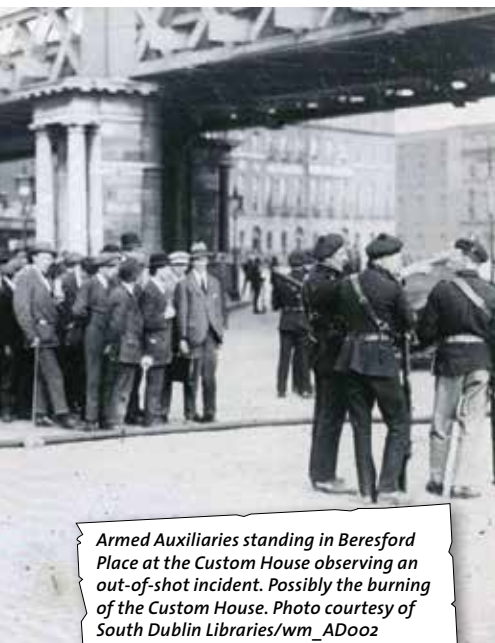
English government in Ireland. Here, then, we are face to face with an abiding principle of insurgency. Evil memories may be transient, withered by time or effaced by gratitude, but hatred of a fact persists so long as the fact continues.⁷

Ultimately, the Irish strategy was based on the fundamental principal that superior political will, properly employed, could defeat a greater economic and military power. Collins and the Irish organised to ensure political rather than military success. The strategic function of the Irish guerilla war was to defeat the British psychologically and politically. As the ultimate pragmatist, Collins realised that since he could not win a military campaign, his prime mission was to keep the IRA vital and active. He had to prevent the restoration of order and he sought to keep the IRA's military forays going until the British government decided that it had had enough of the violent disorder in Ireland, and the negative publicity that entailed. Collins did not seek an unattainable military victory, but a dignified British withdrawal.

Learning to adjust is key to success in any insurgency, and the Irish adjusted and improvised their military and political strategies better than the British.

Bernard Fall, one of the most respected writers on guerrilla warfare of the 20th century wrote that 'A government which is losing an insurgency is not being outfought – it is being out-governed.'⁸ The British did not govern Ireland well. The Irish did not 'win' the war – but they succeeded by defeating British political will. The British never learned that the more force you use in counterinsurgency action, the less effective you are, whereas Collins recognised that the war would not be won militarily; the IRA would play an important role, but it would not be decisive.

The Irish War of Independence demonstrated that given some favourable circumstances an insurrection has a fair chance of success.



Armed Auxiliaries standing in Beresford Place at the Custom House observing an out-of-shot incident. Possibly the burning of the Custom House. Photo courtesy of South Dublin Libraries/wm_ADooz

victory. It was this realisation that led to the campaign that culminated in the Truce of July 1921.

Charles Townshend wrote: 'The means were dictated by circumstance. Slender resources created the style of warfare, rather than a conviction that it held a real hope of success.'⁵

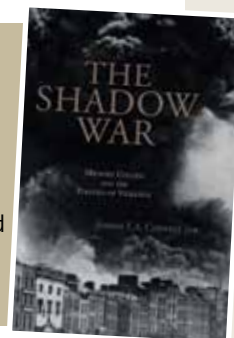
While deeply conscious of the sufferings of the Irish, Collins realised that these harsh guerrilla tactics must continue. With few men and little ammunition, he knew he couldn't beat the British by force, but he could defeat them through their retaliatory conduct and the political pressure the resulting propaganda brought to bear.

A series of favourable circumstances (mass imprisonments, the threat of conscription, British overreaction and reprisals, and international opinion, among others) contributed to the Irish being able to control the course of the war. The possibilities quickly became evident and ensured that guerilla warfare could be utilised to the full.

Florence O'Donoghue summarised: 'The seeds of all subsequent growth and expansion would appear to be contained in the vital decision not to repeat the pattern of earlier risings, not to commit the national destiny in that day to the hazard of a single blow.'⁶

The Irish nationalists of 1919–1921 took little account of the history of British rule, but rather the fact of British rule. In 1920, Richard Dawson wrote: 'Our nationalism is not founded upon grievances. We are not opposed to English misgovernment, but to

About the Author: Joseph EA Connell Jnr is the author of *Dublin Rising 1916* and *Who's who in the Dublin Rising 1916*, published in 2016 by Wordwell. He writes a regular column in *History Ireland* and is a regular contributor to Newstalk's *Talking History* programme. His latest book *The Shadow War: Michael Collins and the politics of violence*, published by Eastwood Books in November 2019, is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. ■



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⁴ Max Boot Kick the Bully: Michael Collins launches the War of Independence www.historynet.com/kick-the-bully-michael-collins-launches-the-1921-irish-rebellion.htm

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"Stepping together" – a history of the Reserve Defence Forces 1929-2019 by Comdt Lar Joye AR.

FRIDAY 17TH JANUARY 2020 AT 8PM:

The arrival of fire and manoeuvre on the battlefield, the early battles of the Boer War 1899 by Liam Kenny.

FRIDAY 14TH FEBRUARY 2020 AT 8PM:

Construction of a legend – the Irish Wild Geese in Louis XIV's Army 1689-1714 by Dr Padraig Lenihan.

FRIDAY 13TH MARCH 2020 AT 8PM: Egypt saved – the first battle of El Alamein, July 1942 by Christopher Dorman-O'Gowan.

FRIDAY 3RD APRIL 2020 AT 8PM: An empire in search of subjects. Catholic Irish and the British Army in the 18th century – Macdara Dwyer.

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WEDNESDAY 15TH

JANUARY

2020 AT 8PM:

Dr. Mary McAuliffe will speak on 'Experiences and contributions of women during the War of Independence' to the Greystones Archaeological & Historical Society in the Holy Rosary Centre adjoining Holy Rosary Church, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. All welcome – admission charge.

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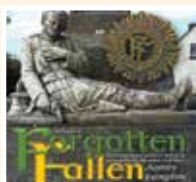


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THE FORGOTTEN FALLEN

Author: James Langton
Publisher: Kilmainham Tales Teo (November 2019) www.kilmainhamtales.ie
ISBN: 978-1-908056-39-9
Pages: 400
Price: €30 HB plus P&P

As we approach the centenary of the Irish Civil War, we as historians, must examine all aspects of this brutal conflict in order to understand its causes and outcome.



The Forgotten Fallen is a comprehensive and invaluable work on National Army casualties during this period. Historian James Langton has trawled through archives, newspaper reports and official documents to list in detail the names, the deaths and burial places of National Army soldiers who lost their lives in action and other circumstances during the Civil War. This is the first time that such a detailed book has been written listing these casualties.

Sergeant John Byrne was shot and killed by a sniper as he moved out from Limekiln Lane near Harold's Cross Bridge on 8th July 1922. Many of these soldiers lost their lives in places that are familiar to us all and such deaths bring home the ferocity of this conflict that affected every county in Ireland. The book is complemented throughout with black and white photos of the conflict.

Langton is to be commended for this work, both his research and his writing, for recording these casualties and presenting them in a way that the reader has easy access and an understanding of how they were killed and where they are interred. The book has a few extras, such as a plan of graves as well as a list of soldiers who died on UN service.

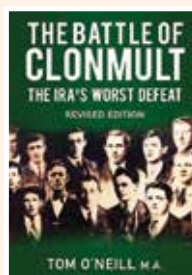
An excellent read as well as a great reference book, this work is also beautifully produced by Kilmainham Tales and with Christmas just around the corner this book would make an excellent gift. Part 2 is due in out in 2020 and will deal with anti-treaty forces, while Part 3 is expected in 2021 and will cover the non-military deaths.

The book is highly recommended and is available directly from the publisher. **PO'B**

THE BATTLE OF CLONMILT THE IRA'S WORST DEFEAT (REVISED EDITION)

Author: Tom O'Neill M.A.
Publisher: The History Press (October 2019) www.thehistorypress.co.uk
ISBN: 978-0-7509-9222-0
Pages: 160
Price: €12.30 (RRP: €17.50)

'The Battle of Clonmilt: The IRA's worst defeat' centres around the IRA's East Cork flying column who were surprised when they came across a British Army patrol at the village of Clonmilt near Middleton in County Cork on 20th February 1921. Tom explains, "*this was the IRA's greatest loss of volunteers in a single engagement against the Crown Forces*". The British Army patrol was later reinforced by Auxiliary Police, resulting in twelve IRA men being killed, seven after they had surrendered, and another two from the eight that were captured being executed later. Only one IRA man managed to escape.



This revised edition contains an extra 40-pages, after exhaustive research by Tom. This new primary source material including the original prisoner statements in the military court files from 1921. This added information makes this edition more accurate and allowed Tom to analyse the battle more. He looks at the events leading up to the battle, the battle itself including the aftermath, the trials, executions and reprisals.

Highly recommended reading, for the Irish historian in all of us during this decade of centenaries.

Comdt Tom O'Neill served 32-years with the Irish Prison Service and 34-years in the Army Reserve. While in the military he completed courses in the military college, which enabled him to analyse the battle from a military perspective. He has prepared and presented lectures of a military nature to historical societies. He lives in Middleton, Co. Cork. **WF**

THE SHADOW WAR: MICHAEL COLLINS AND THE POLITICS OF VIOLENCE

Author: Joseph E.A. Connell Jnr
Publisher: Wordwell Books (October 2019) www.wordwellbooks.com
ISBN: 978-1916137509
Pages: 528
Price: €18.99

Michael Collins could be considered one of the great guerrilla leaders of the last one hundred years. He understood that political and psychological warfare became more important than the traditional terms of warfare. After generations of failed rebellions, this came to the fore in the War of Independence. The IRA's primary tasking's during the war was to cripple the British governments ability and will to govern in lieu of gun-to-gun and hand-to-hand combat.



This is a great read by Joseph, he has written a number of books and articles on this period, on Michael Collins, and the guerrilla tactics used by the IRA. With that in mind we delve into what lessons could be taken from past failures, not just for the Irish but also military leaders from the Caribbean to operations in World War II. Highly recommended reading.

Joseph E.A. Connell Jnr is the author of *Dublin Rising 1916* and *Who's who in the Dublin Rising 1916*, published in 2016 by Wordwell. He writes a regular column in *History Ireland* and is a regular contributor to Newstalk's Talking History programme and *An Cosantóir* magazine. **SG**

NAME

RORY COMERFORD

RANK

AIRMAN

UNIT

NO 1 OPS WING

REPORT & PHOTOS
BY SGT WAYNE
FITZGERALD

Rory Comerford grew up in the South Dublin suburb of Greenhills. Educated in St Pius NS, Terenure, and Templeogue College, Rory was a keen soccer player, playing for Greenhills FC in the Leinster Senior League.

After school, Rory, then 19, was undergoing a PLC course in Computer Networks and PC Maintenance when he joined the RDF.

Rory's unit, D Coy, 7 Inf Bn, allowed him to complete his college exams during his training and he served for two years with the unit, completing his recruit and three-star training and really enjoying his time with the reserves.

At that point he applied for the Permanent Defence Force, using the on-line application system, which he said was "seamless" and allowed him to navigate and complete the psychometric tests on line.

Although he had applied for the Army, during the application process Rory was offered the opportunity to serve in the Air Corps, which he gladly accepted, and the now 21-year-old was thrust into full-on recruit training with the Military Training School.

One of six former RDF members in his recruit platoon, Rory says his RDF service gave him a great advantage during recruit training. During their induction phase the recruits were shown the various parts of the Air Corps, and how the different units operated independently and then combined together to carry out their Air Corps' roles.

Rory says: "Unsure what I wanted to do after training, I chose No 1 Ops Wing as I liked the idea of working in the hanger with the fixed-wing aircraft."

On completion of his training Rory spent a short time working in a few different areas of No 1 Ops Wing to get to understand the different offices, stores and the hanger area. He was then employed in the Tool Stores alongside two NCOs and another airman.

"We look after all consumables for the maintenance of the aircraft," Rory told us: "tool calibration gauges, torches, spanners – we have

hundreds of tools. We also deal with external companies for the likes of specialist tools and the roll-on toolboxes."

"Aircraft technicians come to the stores to sign out a toolbox or any specialist tools needed for a job and then return them when the maintenance is complete.

"We also work hand-in-hand with the Main Tech Stores and the Safety Stores, which deals with immersion suits, life rafts, and the HEED 3 air bottles that provide lifesaving air while egressing a downed aircraft submerged in water."

During his three-years' service to date, Rory has completed a number of computer-related courses, and a driver's course.

Rory recently served overseas as an infantry rifleman with 59 Inf Gp, UNDOF, on the Golan Heights. "Our main role was providing the quick reaction force (QRF)," he says, "but we also performed area domination patrols from Camp Faour.

"There was no place out there untouched by the war and we were kept on our toes, with 'groundhogs' and close firings, and watching rockets and anti-aircraft fire pass above our heads."

Rory wants to serve overseas again, maybe in Lebanon. He would also like to complete a potential NCOs course and if possible to train as an aircraft mechanic.

He also says that all of the Air Corps is "looking forward to the arrival of the PC-12s to replace the Cessna fleet in 2020." ■



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