

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

AN COSANTÓIR

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STORM' UNIFIL**

RDF Recruits

**1916
Freedom
Tour**

CIVILIAN TO SOLDIER
Making the Change

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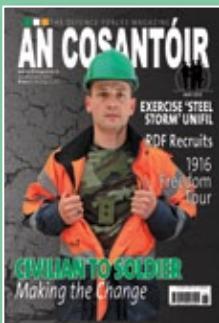
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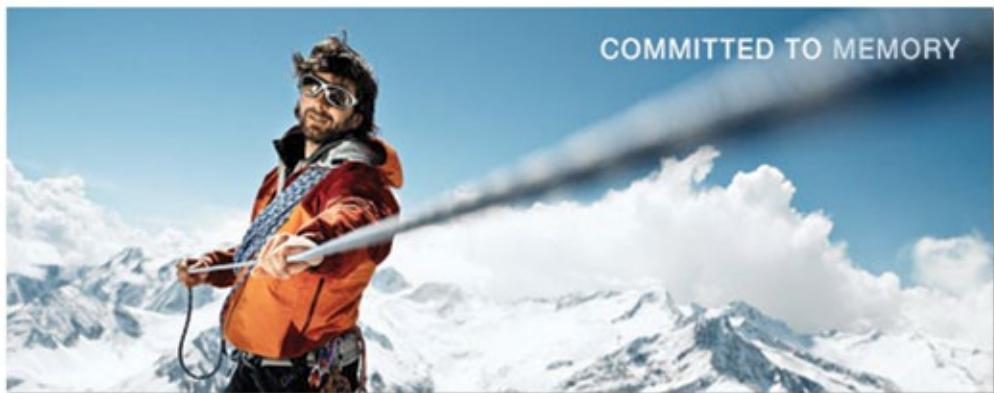
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Front Cover
Pictured is Lt Ronan Bonner RDF 1 Mech Coy, DFTC and a civil surveyor with Murphy Surveys by Cpl Neville Coughlan.

For more Defence Forces photographs, checkout:
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Editorial

Hello and welcome to our May issue, this issue marks my fifth year as editor and I'm very thankful for the opportunities this position offers.

On Parade is very busy this month, with many details attached to your photos. *In Focus* looks at two different colour parties, the first being an RDF all female and the second celebrating the 100th anniversary of Fermoy's men off to train for WW1 in Guernsey, next we have the account of General Dick McKee's portrait that hangs in McKee Bks NCOs Mess. *Veteran's News* has a very interesting story about a Garda Superintendent who speaks about his previous DF experiences at a UNFICYP medal parade on St Patrick's Day in Cyprus. The first main article by Lt Mark White, is about UNIFIL's Sector West element who took part in *Exercise 'Steel Storm'*, an inter-contingent capabilities display. On page 14, we have a piece on *US General David Petraeus Retd* visit to the C&S Sch, DFTC by Dr David Murphy from NUI Maynooth.

Then on page 15, myself and Cpl Lee Coyle had the pleasure of going down Dublin's memory lane with the excellent and highly enjoyable *1916 Freedom Tour*. In our front cover story we follow recruits of 1 BTC, Cork on their journey where they make the change from *From Civilian to Soldier*. Next we have Pln Cmdr Lt Ronan Bonner (front cover) with a similar tale with members of the *RDF's First Mech Recruits* in the Curragh Camp. In our *Strategic Review* feature Paul O'Brien continues to look around the world at current threats, this month it's *Blood on the Sun - Al Shabaab*, in Somalia. In our *In Reserve* section Eoin O'Shea looks at his prospects of *Joining the RDF*. Our *History* feature *The Irish Admiral of the South Atlantic* by Oliver Murphy looks at Admiral William Brown from Foxford, Co Mayo. In *Sport* we have a report on the latest DF Hill Run in Two Rock, Co Wicklow and the latest DF Hand Ball news. Plus we have all our regular features and reviews.

Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald - Editor

Winner! Winner! Winner! Winner!



Pictured on 2nd April 2015 in the NCOs Mess, Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel is Graeme Haughton, MD Mileata Military Watch Company who presented last Month's winner Sgt Robert Taylor, 401 Sqn, No 4 Spt Wing, Air Corps with his Mileata M1 Military Spec Watch worth €645.75. *Photo by: Sgt Karl Byrne, PR Branch*

ARCO Cheque Presentation

The Association of Retired Commissioned Officers (ARCO) presented a €2,000 cheque for the Defence Forces Benevolent Fund to Defence Forces Chief of Staff, Lt Gen Conor O'Boyle on 21st April 2015. Pictured are members of the ARCO Executive Committee (L/R): Capt Ray Bonar (Retd), Lt Col Richard Cummins (Retd), Lt Gen Conor O'Boyle (COS), Brig Gen Liam MacNamee (Retd) (President of ARCO), Lt Col Joe Ahern (Retd), Brig Gen, Paul Pakenham (Retd) and Brig Gen Colm Campbell (ACOS).
Photo by: Armn Billy Doyle



6 | ON PARADE



KFOR PERSONNEL ▲

DF members are pictured serving in KFOR HQ on St Patrick's Day in Film City, Pristina, Kosovo in March 2015. They are back row L/R: Flt Sgt S Bailey, Sgt A O'Connor, Cpl M James, BQMS A Behan, Coy Sgt R Reynolds and Flt Sgt J O'Brien. Front row L/R: Capt D Murphy, Comdt N Taylor, Lt Col CJ Cullen, Col W O'Dwyer (SIO Kosovo), Comdt R Condron and RSM Paddy Doyle. Photo: RSM Paddy Doyle



TEL AVIV MARATHON ▲

Pictured are members of the 46 Inf Gp UNDOF who took part in the Tel Aviv Marathon on 27th February 2015. Pte John Dillon ran his first marathon and came in at 3hr 9mins and finishing 56th. Ahead of him finishing an outstanding time of 3hrs 3mins was Pte Niall Kelly, who finished 35th. They were joined by Pte Adam Courtney who ran his first marathon in 3hrs 44mins and Pte Gavin O'Donovan who finished in 4hrs 3mins. The Tel Aviv Marathon was Israel's biggest sporting event in 2015 with over 40,000 runners enduring temperatures up to 30°C. The heat and distance proved too much for many competitors but the four members of the 46 Inf Gp were delighted that they completed this unique challenge. Pictured L/R: Lt Col Denis Harrington (OC 46 Inf Gp), Pte John Dillon, Pte Adam Courtney, Pte Niall Kelly, Pte Gavin O'Donovan. Also pictured is Sgt John Groarke NCO IC and Chef de mission. Photo by: Sgt Micheal McGrath, 46 Inf Gp (UNDOF)



A FOND FAREWELL ▲

Comdt Tom O'Keeffe who was heavily involved in Athletics and Orienteering in the Defence Forces and was Chairman of the DF Athletic Association (DFAA) for many years has recently retired from the DF. We thank him also for his continued help and expertise in planning and organising the *An Cosantóir* 10K. Pictured L/R: Col Sean O'Keeffe, SSO Sp DFTC, Rear Admiral Mark Mellett DSM, D COS Sp, Comdt Tom O'Keeffe, Mrs Carmel O'Keeffe and Mr Donal O'Keeffe. Photo by: Sgt JJ Ryan, HQ DFTC



CROSS-ORGANISATIONAL TRAINING ▲

On 25th March 2015, the 27 Inf Bn facilitated the Irish Coast Guard and local Fire Services in conducting a cross-organisational training day in Aiken Bks. The crew of Sikorsky Coast Guard Helicopter Crew 116 briefed both fire service personnel and members of the 27 Inf Bn on the capabilities of the helicopter and crew. Personnel were also briefed on correct procedures when approaching and embarking the helicopter. Cross-organisational training remains an important element of everyday DF activity in order to remain ready to respond to any request for assistance by either the Civil Authorities or Civil Power. Photo: Capt Joe Freeley, 2 Bde PIO



ANTI ARMOUR WINNERS 2015 ▲

12 Inf Bn were crowned the 1 Bde 84mm Anti-Armour winners 2015. The competition was held on March 23rd. Pictured front row L/R: Pte McGrath, Cpl Stack, Lt Col Paul Carey (OC 12 Inf Bn), Comdt Donie McGrath (OC A Coy) and Pte Moloney. Back row L/R: Cpl Enright, Team Captain Lt Troy, Sgt Griffin and Pte O'Grady. Photo by: Sgt Davie Kerin, 12 Inf Bn



MICHAEL COLLINS REMEMBERED

Pictured at the 50th anniversary of the unveiling of the Monument to Michael Collins at Sams Cross, Clonakilty, Co Cork were piper Sgt Noel McCarthy and bugler Sgt Roy Kelleher, both from Collins Bks Cork. Photo by: Denis Boyle, RDF



BENHAFFAF TWINS ▲

On 7th April 2015, twins Hassan and Hussein Benhaffaf visited Collins Bks, Cork with their Mother Angie and their sisters Malika and Iman on the 5th Anniversary of their operation. Hassan and Hussein are pictured in a Mowag APC with Sgt John Hanley, 1 Cav Sqn. Photo by: Cpl Christine O'Leary, HQ 1 Bde



GALWAY'S FITTEST WORKPLACE ▲

1 Cn Cois entered a 4 person team into a local charity event in aid of MS Ireland. Prior to the selection to compete in the event, a 2-day competition took place on 10th/11th February in Dún Úi Mahoiliosa. Personnel from Sub Units of 1 Cn Cois competed against each other for a place on the team. All competitors took part in a challenging circuit, which was based on the circuit that they would complete in the final, which took place in NUI Galway Kingfisher on 28th February. 30 teams from different workplaces around Galway competed in front of a live audience. The 1 Cn Cois team were crowned the overall winning team with some time to spare. A total of €24,000 was raised for MS Ireland Galway region. Congrats to the winning team pictured L/R: Cllr Michael Crowe (MS Ireland), Lt Col M Carroll (OC 1 Cn Cois), Ms Mary White (Marketing Manager Kingfisher), Ptes Purtill (A Coy), O'Brien (A Coy), Halpenny (B Coy), Larkin (A Coy) and Mr Joe Cosgrove (Kingfisher). Not pictured were team manager Coy Sgt O'Hanlon, coaches Cpls Pilkington and Greene and sub Pte Carroll (B Coy). Photo: Capt Rory Quinlan, 1 Cn Cois



INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE ATTACHES' ▲

Group picture of the recent Military Defence Attaches' from 23 different countries who visited Custume Bks, Athlone on the 13th/14th April 2015, hosted by the 6 Inf Bn. The Attaches' attended a number of briefs and a dinner in the Officers Mess. Photo by: Pte Aiden Sherlock, 6 Inf Bn



LEADERSHIP PRESENTATION ▲

On 1st April 2015, the 12 Inf Bn held a Leadership Presentation on the 35 Inf Bn Opération des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC), most notable was the Battle of Jadotville with Comdt Noel Carey Retd, who served with the 35 Inf Bn ONUC. Front Row L/R: Lt Col Paul Carey, OC 12 Inf Bn, Capt Noel Carey Retd, Brig Gen Kieran Brennan, GOC 1 Bde and Col Patrick Flynn, EO 1 Bde. Back Row L/R: Capt A Mordaunt, 2/Lt P Ahern, Lt C Kirwan and Comdt D McGrath, all 12 Inf Bn. Photo by: Sgt David Kerin, 12 Inf Bn



ONE MARCH FOR ST PATRICK ▲

Pictured are members of the Fr James Gilmore Br, ONEt who took part in the Swords St Patricks Day Parade. They are L/R: Dessie O'Hara (Chairman), Alan Williamson, Ronnie Lewis, Dougie Doyle, John Whelan, Sean Shinnors and in front Jackie Devereux. Photo: Des O'Hara



ON TARGET ▲

Members on the Defence Forces Shooting Team took part in the National Championships held in UCD on 11th/12th April. Comdt Ray Kane won Silver in the 10m Air Pistol event and CQMS Sean Baldwin won Gold retaining his title as 10m Air Rifle Mens champion after a very tight final. Sgt Wearen and Pte Franklin also qualified for the final, coming 5th and 6th respectively. Comdt Ray Kane and CQMS Sean Baldwin are pictured with RDF Capt Liam Crawford, President National Target Shooting Association of Ireland (NTSA). Photo by: Joe Kinane

FIRST ALL FEMALE RDF COLOUR PARTY

BY 2/LT NEIL RICHARDSON, C COY, 6 INF BN

On St Patrick's Day 2015, the first all female RDF colour party took part in the St Patrick's Day parade through Castlebar, Co Mayo. Drawn from personnel from D Coy, 6 Inf Bn, the colour party was made up of 2/Lt Lisa Chambers, Sgt Rowena Gillespie and Cpl Geraldine Muldowney.

*"It was a humbling experience to take part in the first all-female RDF colour party", said 2/Lt Lisa Chambers, "and to march through the streets of Castlebar carrying the National Flag. Also, to be involved in commemorating the contribution of women to the Defence Forces over the years – it has certainly been one of the highlights of my RDF career to date. People were literally chanting *Mna na hÉireann* as we passed by."*



2/Lt Lisa Chambers, from Ballyheane, is a barrister by profession. She joined the RDF in 2003 and was commissioned in 2012. Sgt Rowena Gillespie from Castlebar works in the retail sector and has twenty-two years' service in the RDF – she enlisted in what was then the FCÁ in 1993 when women were first permitted to join – while Cpl Geraldine Muldowney from Rabawn, Swinford has served in the RDF for twelve years to date and is also a barrister.

Pictured L/R: Cpl Geraldine Muldowney, 2/Lt Lisa Chambers and Sgt Rowena Gillespie (all D Coy, 6 Inf Bn) ■

Fermoy's WW1 Links to Guernsey

The Irish Ambassador to the UK, Mr Dan Mulhall, and members of the Defence Forces participated in Guernsey's 100 year commemoration of their militia men leaving the Channel Islands to come to Fermoy to train for World War 1. Over 250 Guernsey men travelled to Fermoy to join D Coy of the Royal Irish Regiment (RIR), garrisoned in Fermoy, on the 4th March 1915. A Colour Party from 1 Bde Cav Sqn, currently headquartered in Collins Bks, Cork, participated in the commemoration due to their unit's link to Fermoy, having been based there from 1948 to 1998. Ambassador Mulhall noted that one of the important connections between Ireland and Guernsey, other than our membership of the British-Irish Council, was this intriguing historical link between Fermoy and Guernsey and the fact that their men fought side-by-side during WW1. This commemoration event helped to highlight the historical ties between Ireland and Guernsey and, in particular, the town of Fermoy. About one-third of the Guernsey members of the RIR died on the Western Front during WW1. The survivors were keen to retain their regimental links and after the war set up the Guernsey Sporting Club, which still exists.

Flag Party: Lt Eoin Carroll, Sgt Marcus Aherne and Sgt Martin Ormonde at St Peters Port, Guernsey. Photo: Peter Frankland/ Comdt Pat O'Connor, 1 Cav Sqn ■





THE PORTRAIT OF A SOLDIER

BY COY SGT RETIRED HARRY MULHERN
PHOTOS SGT KARL BYRNE, PR BRANCH

Brig Gen Richard 'Dick' McKee (4 April 1893 – 21 November 1920) had joined the Irish Volunteers in 1913. He served in G Coy, 2nd Bn of the Dublin Brigade during the 1916 Easter Rising and was later incarcerated by Crown Forces in Knutsford gaol and at the Frongoch internment camp in Wales. He was later killed along with Peadar Clancy and Conor Clune

Pictured is the NCOs Mess in McKee Bks, which was formally Marlborough Bks. This photograph is by Robert French, circa 1865-1914. © The National Library of Ireland



in Dublin Castle on Sunday 21st November 1920, a day known as Bloody Sunday. His portrait hangs on the wall of the NCOs Mess, McKee Bks Dublin, this is the story of its finding by the then Mess President Coy Sgt retired Harry Mulhern.

In 1985 the Camp Commandant McKee Bks Lt Col JJ Costello, tasked me to fit out the old canteen building as an NCOs mess, our existing mess was to be handed over as a men's mess and canteen. The building had been extensively refurbished, with a new roof and other structural improvements, but without light fittings, decoration, carpets or furniture - at the time the Canteen Board did not have the financial resources required to finish the job. This move was to cost many thousands in punts, together with the loss of many tens of thousands of punts already invested in the old mess, so not every NCO was happy with the move for those reasons.

However, I was happy enough and went about convincing the other NCOs of the new buildings potential. I had a survey of light fittings arranged and subsequently had the main downstairs rooms fitted out tastefully. A carpet (shaped like a fifty-pence piece) for the main foyer was purchased from Clerys of O'Connell St, costing over £3,000. A new bar and a floor-safe were installed, along with many other fittings. The Quartermaster General gave us two obsolete howitzers, from Depot Artillery Corps and placed in front of the new mess.

During the course of preparation of the new mess, military archivist Comdt Wally Young advised me of the availability of a painting of Brig Gen Dick McKee, which had come to the attention of the national archives and had been authenticated.

I went to see the painting with Sgt Tony White from 2 Gar S&T Coy, at the house of the owner, who was an elderly man who lived at Camden Court - in conditions I could only describe as squalor. We had to trawl through all sorts up an old stairway to view the painting, which was covered with a dirty blanket. On our return to barracks we had to wash down, such was the extent of the squalor - Tony and I remember that trip every time we visit the NCOs Mess and gaze up at the picture.

With the approval of the mess body and the permission of the Camp Commandant, we purchased the painting for £1,000 - a lot of money at that time. The painting was cleaned and I purchased a new, more suitable frame for it. The painting was delivered to me

on the morning of the official opening of the new mess by the Chief of Staff Lt Gen Gerry O'Sullivan. Earlier that day Lt Col JJ Costello and Brig Gen Vincent Savino (GOC East) had inspected the mess without the painting and were pleasantly surprised to see it hanging there just one hour later.

Sometime after the opening of the new mess, I arranged for an acquaintance, Ms Eileen Kane, a lecturer in the history of art at UCD, to view the painting, which was signed 'McBride'. She made some enquiries and found an artist of that name listed in Belfast at the time of painting, although it was never established whether he was the actual artist.

The painting has hung in pride of place for the last 30-years for all to view, should the NCOs Mess move to another location or from McKee Bks, I hope the mess members bring it with them and that the painting and its story be remembered by following generations. ■



A commemorative plaque in memory of the three Irish Volunteers killed on 21st November 1920, was erected by the National Graves Association above the door of the guard room at Dublin Castle. Photo: Creative Commons

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

IN THE SERVICE OF PEACE UNFICYP

BY SUPERINTENDENT FERGUS DWYER, UNPOL S4 COMMANDER

Speech on St Patrick's Day 2015 by Superintendent Fergus Dwyer, UNPOL S4 Commander and Garda contingent commander in Cyprus serving with UNFICYP, to an international audience which was attended by the Irish Ambassador to Cyprus, Mr Nicholas Twist, and the Chief of Mission, Ms Lisa Buttenheim. Superintendent Fergus Dwyer draws on his previous Defence Forces service with the 5 Inf Bn, in Collins Bks, Dublin and his overseas service in Lebanon with A Coy, 56th Irish Bn, UNIFIL in the early eighties before embarking on a career in An Garda Síochána.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Irish Police contingent, I have the honour to speak to this distinguished assembly as we celebrate Ireland's national day and the presentation of the UN peacekeeping medals to the Irish Police contingent. We are delighted to be able to welcome so many of you from all over the world to join in our celebration today.

St Patrick came to Ireland in the 5th century preaching Christianity. In his work St Patrick used the shamrock, our national emblem that we wear today, to explain the holy trinity. The three leaves representing the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

As our President once said, "St Patrick's life was one defined by a great spirit of friendship, generosity and concern for his fellow citizen. It was that great spirit which led to him becoming our patron saint and a man whose name is synonymous with a version of Irishness of which we remain very proud."

I would like take this opportunity to pay tribute to my colleagues in UNPOL for their hard work, dedication to duty and friendship. It is interesting to note that today the UNPOL component here in Cyprus consists of eleven different nationalities. With our combined cultures and experiences UNPOL here in UNFICYP is truly representative of the international community working in the service of peace under the blue flag of the United Nations. It is indeed an honour for my Irish colleagues and I to serve in such a police service. I previously served with this mission some fifteen years ago and the improvements over that time are clearly evident. In particular I note the easing of restrictions at the crossing points which enables people to move freely across the divide. Freedom of movement, as we know, is one of our basic fundamental human rights. The joint communications room in Nicosia is another notable achievement.

Thirty years ago on this very day I was serving as a young soldier with the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL). I served in the hills of south Lebanon less than 300km from where I stand today. The names of the villages where I served Haris, Scribien, Yatar and Tibnin will forever be ingrained in my mind. It was a difficult time as the efforts of the Israeli Defence Force to consolidate their position in the region were constantly being hampered by the Amal militia a precursor to today's Hezbollah.

But my one abiding memory of that time was the sight of the small school bus that used to pass through our check point each morning taking the local children to school. The children were always smiling and waving as they passed. Over the last thirty years as Lebanon endured many wars and much suffering, I always thought of those children and what became of them. I had cause to think of those same children again recently when my UNPOL colleagues and I encountered difficulties at the site of an unauthorised construction in Pyla. The site is situated adjacent to a local school and over the days as we attempted to resolve the dispute I would often see the children coming and going to school. As they did so, I could not help but think of the many generations of children who attended that school and grew up in an environment vastly different to the environment experienced by the children I saw in Lebanon.

The environment of peace and stability being experienced by the children who attend that school in Pyla today and the generations that went before them was brought about thanks to the commitment of the two communities on the island and the hard work and determination of UNFICYP.

As we carry out our duties each day on this mission it is imperative that we never become complacent nor should we ever lose sight of the task at hand. And, most importantly, we must be ever mindful of the very very thin line that divides peace and conflict... ■



An Garda Síochána members with UNFICYP Chief of Mission, Ms Lisa Buttenheim and Superintendent Fergus Dwyer front right.



Fergus Dwyer in Haris, South Lebanon circa 1980s.



UNPOL patrol in Cyprus.





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Exercise STEEL STORM

BY LT MARK WHITE, PIO 47 INF GP

UNIFIL's Sector West element recently took part in Exercise 'Steel Storm', an inter-contingent capabilities display. Each contingent taking part in the demonstration was exercised in their respective fire-support procedures in both mounted and dismounted weapons systems. The FinnIrish battalion was among those taking part. Although the exercise is not a competition per se, it did present an opportunity for the contingents to 'flex their muscles' in front of Sector West Commander Brigadier General Stefano Del Col who oversaw proceedings from a viewing stand to the rear. The exercise i/c was Lt John Ryan, S7 (Training), 47 Inf Gp.





A vast array of light mechanised APCs waited patiently for the direction to move to the firing point to unleash an onslaught of 7.62mm and 12.7mm rounds at floating targets in the sea just outside of Naqoura, home of UNIFIL HQ in South Lebanon. Italbatt and the Sector Mobile Reserve (Italy) fired first from their IVECO VTLM followed by MALBATT (Malaysia) with their RPZ CONDOR and ROKBATT (Republic of Korea) with their own armoured APCs. The 40mm grenade machine gun (GMG) used by the Italians was one of the more impressive pieces of weaponry early on in the display; firing 40mm TP-T rounds quickly and accurately at targets over 300m away. Even more impressive were the black capercaille feathers on the helmets of the 'Bersaglieri', the light mechanised infantry corps who are renowned for the fast paced jog that they keep on parades.

Four Irish vehicles rumbled into position on the firing point overlooking the navy blue Mediterranean. The targets were attached to anchors that held them floating in position for the firers. First to open fire was the GPMG mounted LTAV. The long, deliberate bursts of 7.62mm were soon intermingled with the short and sharp thud of the .5' bursts from the two MOWAG Infantry Variants. The beating zones of both weapon systems kicked sea water high into the air which provided confirmation to the crews that they were on target. After the vehicles had expended all rounds in the targets at 300m, the CRV MOWAG moved into position and, with the help of one of the MOWAG Infantry Variants, engaged targets at 600m. So accurate was the display of firing from both crews that word got down to the firing point that if the vehicles continued to fire directly onto the target there was chance that the chains holding the targets afloat would break and the targets would float out to sea! The crews began strafing fire and moved fluidly between the targets. Having been immensely impressed by the capabilities of the Irish vehicles, Brig Gen Del Col was eager to have a more in depth look at the weapon systems and technical equipment. He joined the crews at the firing point and commended them on their high quality gunnery skills.

Next up were the Finnish contingent with their HMG mounted on the formidable SISU. Our battalion partners certainly packed a punch as they laid down wave after wave of 7.62mm and .5' from their three APCs and four dismounts. They carried out the practice with extreme precision showing their professionalism and competence from a force made up primarily of young soldiers on National Service. Finally, sniper teams from all contingents gathered at the firing point to demonstrate their sharpshooting talents. The Finnish and Irish teams engaged a variety of targets at 600m with accuracy and diligence, maintaining their high standards while rubbing shoulders with the members of Sector West Commander's Close Protection Team (CPT) and MALBATT.

The exercise was topped off by a fabulous outdoor barbecue prepared by the Finnish catering staff. The exercise was a resounding success with all aspects of the shoot in a manner that portrayed the professionalism and dedication of both Irish and Finnish troops. The importance of fire support procedures and knowledge of the capabilities of other contingent nations cannot be over stated. Increased interoperability between contingents and intra-operability between Finnish and Irish troops was one of the main aims of this exercise and we can only hope for the continuation and prosperity of these relationships that the Irish Defence Forces has worked so hard to build. ■





Retired US General Visits C&S School

BY DR DAVID MURPHY, CENTRE FOR MILITARY HISTORY & STRATEGIC STUDIES, NUI MAYNOOTH
PHOTOS BY ARMN ADAM MURPHY, GROUP PHOTO: CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN

In late February 2015, I was extremely glad to facilitate an interview at the Command & Staff School at the DFTC with General David Petraeus, a previous US commander in Iraq and Afghanistan and also former director of the CIA. General Petraeus has been referred to as one of the most influential figures of the 21st Century and it is a measure of the increasing international reputation of the Irish Defence Forces that such a high-profile speaker was willing to attend an event of this kind.

The process that led to this interview began in October 2014, when Comdt Gareth Prendergast, a graduate of the Command & General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, made an initial overture to General Petraeus. On receiving a positive response, the planning began in earnest. The format was established with the general and Comdt Prendergast asked if I would be interested in chairing the event and acting as the interviewer. As December approached and tentative plans concerning the visit began to look more real and imminent, Gareth and I trawled through books and other literature relating to the general's varied career so as to formulate appropriate and useful questions to ask him.

This research took in a wide range of sources. Petraeus has a reputation as a 'warrior academic' and was hugely influential in the formulation of current US COIN (counter-insurgency) doctrine. This was embodied in the Counterinsurgency Field Manual, often commonly referred to as just FM 3-24. The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have spawned a huge literature and useful publications included Thomas E Ricks's *The Gamble: General Petraeus and the untold story of the American surge in Iraq* (2009) and the RAND publication *Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2003-2006* (2008), among many others.

The audience consisted of the staff and students from both the current C&S and JC&S courses. There were also officers and NCOs present who had previously served in Afghanistan as part of Defence Forces' missions there.



Given the ethos of the C&S School, the final list of questions focused on issues of training and education and the development of leadership skills appropriate to complex, conflict situations. After being introduced by Commandant of the Military College, Colonel Eamon Caulfield, the questions I put to General Petraeus included:

- As the divisional commander of 101st Airborne, how did you prepare yourself for your initial deployment in Iraq?
- How did you prepare yourself to take over command in Afghanistan following the unexpected departure of General Stanley McChrystal?
- How important is a 'whole of government' approach to COIN in political-military campaigns such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan?
- How important is a declared, visualised end-state in modern military campaigns? Can it be replaced by a politically conceived end-date?

During the course of the interview on 27th February, General Petraeus answered all of the above questions at length and with great frankness. Towards the end of the interview, Comdt Prendergast invited further questions from the audience and the resultant lines of inquiry proved to be extremely thought-provoking. Ultimately, General Petraeus offered the audience fascinating insights into his own experience in planning and commanding during some of the most difficult military campaigns of recent times.

Dr David Murphy is a lecturer with the Centre for Military History and Strategic Studies, at the Department of History, NUI Maynooth. His courses include the "Irish Soldier at War", "the Development of Modern Warfare" and "Unconventional Warfare". He is currently supervising five Ph.D. candidates and six MA students and is the convenor of the centre's War and Security Seminar series. His current research is focused on



WWI and he is completing a book on the failed Nivelle Offensive of 1917, which will be published in 2015. ■

1916 Freedom Tour

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD
PHOTOS BY CPL LEE COYLE

With the 1916 centenary celebrations fast approaching, three friends and businessmen, Shay Bowes, Martin Durcan and Brendan Homan (one a serving member of the RDF, one a former member of the RDF and the last a retired PDF member) felt that the opportunity for people to visit the important sites connected with the Easter Rising in a structured way was lacking and they decided to do something about it.

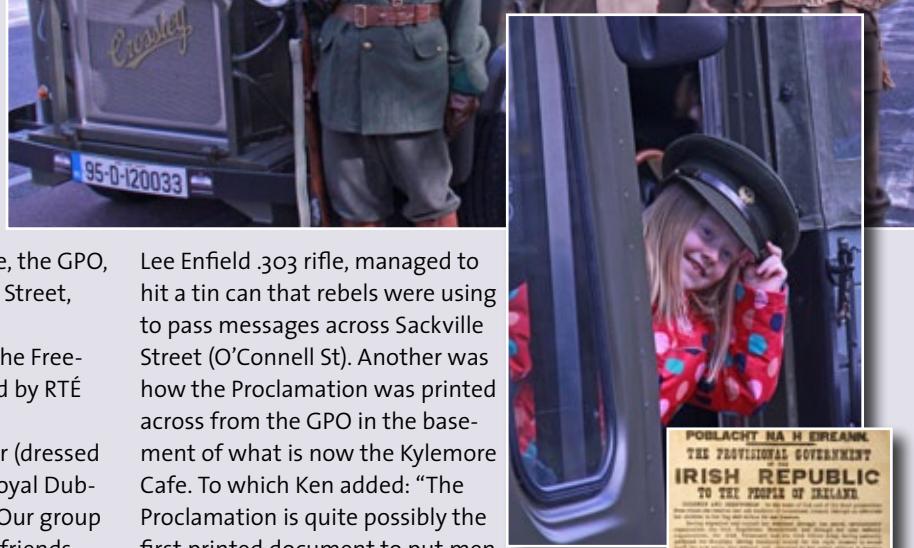
As a result, from an initial idea from Shay, the 1916 Freedom Tour was born, despite facing massive amounts of paperwork and red tape, which thankfully the three entrepreneurs were able to overcome to get the project over the line. Customers will be taken on a tour bus that has been modified to look like a vintage Crossley Tender military truck. The bus, which is kitted out with remarkable memorabilia and photographs from the period, will take its passengers on a one-hour journey down Dublin's 1916 memory lane, taking in the key sites of the Rising, starting with St Stephen's Green and moving on to Dublin Castle, City Hall, Trinity College, the GPO, Parnell Square, the Custom House, Boland's Mill, Mount Street, Beggars Bush Bks, and many more.

An *Cosantóir* was invited to take part in a trial run of the Freedom Tour on Tuesday 24th March, which was also filmed by RTÉ and was aired on *Nationwide*.

The tour started with a warm greeting from the driver (dressed as an Irish Volunteer) and our guide, Ken (dressed as a Royal Dublin Fusilier), who also gave us a health-and-safety brief. Our group comprised of a selection of the organisers' families and friends, representatives of veterans associations, Anne Cassin and her RTÉ film crew, and ourselves.

As we set off Ken told us that the tour would be non-political and would cover both sides of the conflict, and that it was aimed at whetting the appetite and encouraging people to learn more about our heritage.

As well as the main information about each of the sites we visited, Ken also regaled us with some interesting anecdotes, such as the story of the Crown Forces' Australian sniper located in Trinity College, who from a distance of 400m, using his



Lee Enfield .303 rifle, managed to hit a tin can that rebels were using to pass messages across Sackville Street (O'Connell St). Another was how the Proclamation was printed across from the GPO in the basement of what is now the Kylemore Cafe. To which Ken added: "The Proclamation is quite possibly the first printed document to put men and women on and even footing in that it begins 'Irishmen and Irishwomen: In the name of God...'"

The organisers of the 1916 Freedom Tour have chosen ONE and IUNVA as their designated charities and both will receive a generous donation each year.

Shay, Martin and Brendan have already started looking at expanding the tour, with two more buses coming soon. They may also branch out to cover other sites around the country as well. We wish them success with their new venture, which is well and truly worth the price of admission. Speaking of which, ticket prices are: adult €20, child €12, teenager €15, student/OAP €16, family €60. There are also special ticket concessions for military personnel at €15.

The tour departs from the Defence Forces Memorial, Merrion Square West, every two hours, with the first tour starting 9am and the last at 5pm. Online booking should also be available now. Check out www.1916tour.ie or email bookings@1916tour.ie. ■



From Civilian to Soldier

With the Recruits of 1 BTC

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD PHOTOS BY SGT MICK BURKE, SGT KARL BYRNE AND CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN

An Cosantóir was invited to visit and follow 135/136 recruit platoons from enlistment to passing out: here is their story...



On 20th October 2014, 80 young civilians took the Oath of Allegiance to the state, as has everyone who has served with Óglaigh na hÉireann, going back 90 years to when General Eoin O'Duffy and the General Staff took their oaths in front of the president and government in Government Buildings at 3:30pm on Thursday 9th October 1924 (An t-Óglách, 25th October 1924).

These 80 civilians were the successful ones from thousands of applicants. However, the real test of their suitability to be soldiers in the Defence Forces awaited them on the training grounds of Cork and the surrounding counties.

In his opening address, Comdt Fiachra Keyes, OC 1 BTC, said to the families of the successful applicants: "I'll make soldiers out of them. At times they will call you, and seek your love and support, as this training won't be easy... In line with the tradition of the 1913 volunteers I congratulate you for supporting your sons and daughters in attaining enlistment."

Comdt Keyes also spoke about the transition of the Defence Forces over the last 20 years and how the health and welfare of its soldiers was now a top priority. He then asked his instructors to briefly introduce themselves, which they did, and their wealth of experience and eagerness to start training these recruits was clear for everyone to see.

AT THE OUTSET



Rebecca Barry (19) from Cork: "I heard about the Defence Forces at a careers day I had gone to during my leaving cert and it's my first time applying. I think my parents are more nervous than me. I know it's going to be tough but everyone will be going through the same. I'm fit, and play basketball, which has small teams so everyone has to pull their weight. I also like mountaineering. My strength is my only doubt!"

Her parents said: "She just wants to get started."



Katie Twohig (24) from Cork: "I served with 12 Inf Bn RDF in Mallow for the last four-and-a-half years. My uncle is retired from the DF and I have a cousin serving in Kilkenny. It's my first time applying. I play football with Mallow Ladies, and I like running to keep fit. I recently completed the Coy Group Exercise with the RDF which has helped me prepare. I'm hoping my RDF experience helps me. I'm used to doing my boots and uniform and weapons handling. Building up my fitness will be tough. Meanwhile, I've just started my Green Cert to inherit the farm, which I hope to be able to do alongside my military career."



Ciaran Behan (23) from Kilkenny: "It's my third time applying and I'm third generation military - my grandfather and uncle both served. I did some interview preparation this time and I'm delighted to finally get in. I play hurling for Fenians GAA in Kilkenny and I like going to the gym, playing soccer and boxing, so I'm physically fit and a team player. I've been away before at college but I'm still apprehensive; going into the unknown."

His family said: "He's very positive, and has a few friends serving already. He'll handle discipline very well and will be great; very focussed."



Brendan Murphy (22) from Offaly: "It's my second time applying and I'm following my granduncle into the Defence Forces. I'm a sporty person and play hurling for the Birr senior team. I studied health and fitness in college. I'm used to living away from home and I think it will be hard, especially the discipline."



Chloe McMahon (20) from Limerick: "My dad served in the British Army, and one of my granddads served in the RAF and the other in 12 Inf Bn - so I'm third generation military. I was born in RAF Akrotiri (Cyprus) and grew up on military bases in Germany, Cyprus and the UK. I'm focused and I'm used to working as part of a team. I have a good fitness level so hopefully I can keep up."

Her father, Mark, said: "Chloe surprised me by joining up, as she never showed an interest before. Now it's all she talks about and appears to be relishing the challenges ahead. I think fitness will initially be a problem for Chloe; however I believe she will overcome this issue quickly. She has completed a first aid course and she hopes this is an area she might pursue with the forces."



Kiev Dollard (22) from Laois: "My brother served in the DFTC and my brother-in-law is serving too. I studied sports and fitness in Portlaoise College. Living away from home will be hard. I play football for Laois and was recently awarded a GAA All Star. I also box. I think the words of command will be hard to learn."

Vox Pops



Shane Black (20) from Kildare: "I'll definitely do well and pass out - I'm very focused and fully motivated. Saying that, hopefully everything goes well. I have two cousins who have been in the DF about a year now and I'm looking forward to getting started!"

His mother Linda said, "He's very focused; it's his second time applying. He loves Gaelic football and plays for Ballykelly in Monasterevan."



Daniel O'Rourke (21) from Kildare: "It's my second time applying. I'll be the third generation of my family serving in the DF. I'm most apprehensive about completing tasks on time. I'm fine with commuting and fitness should be fine too; I play soccer for Newbridge Town. I would like to eventually go for an apprenticeship; panel beating maybe."

His parents said: "He's very positive but apprehensive. He would go and serve anywhere and he's looking forward to it."



The change from civilian to military life involves a major cultural transition for a young recruit. Their freedom to go out or plan for anything changes dramatically to that of an organised, structured and regimented environment, where the working day is laid out from breakfast to bed-time. Embracing this change takes time and demands careful monitoring by the officer commanding the training unit and the training staff.

The recruit training syllabus is of 17 week's duration and is now accredited with a certificate in leadership management and defence studies from Carlow IT.

Subjects on the syllabus include: arms drill, foot drill, sentinel drill and guard mounting, rifle marksmanship, the GPMG, grenade, basic unarmed combat, physical education, occupational first aid, tactical training, field craft, operating in a field environment, communication information services (CIS), C-IED introductory training, hygiene and sanitation.

The recruits are under continuous assessment from their instructional staff and are required to pass all star tests in order to become two-star privates.

Outdoor training includes basic field techniques like cold weather survival and shelter construction, how to avoid exhaustion and dehydration, and how to prepare meals using the ration pack system.

Their tactical training includes the organisation and armament of the infantry section and platoon, how to function as a rifleman and as a member of a fire-support group (FSG) in an infantry section, the basics of offence and defence, foot patrolling, and personal admin in a tactical environment.

After approximately ten weeks training in sentinel drill, guard mounting, guard room security and, most importantly, learning the circumstances when a soldier may fire live ammunition, the recruits are introduced to their first 24-hour regimental guard duty.

During their rifle marksmanship training, nine of the recruits received a 'marksman' qualification after achieving an accuracy of over 93% in their firing practices.

In training they start to work in sections and learn how sections work together as a platoon, how platoons form companies, and how companies form battalions. This helps build cohesion, morale, and esprit de corps. The bond that develops between the members of the platoon is an essential characteristic and a dynamic of recruit training and establishes friendships that can continue for a lifetime.



THE FINISH

On 6th March 2015 the recruits h
citement was palpable as the re
ready for the big day, a day that
of rigorous training, 17 weeks of
weeks with only a few weekend

PI Sgt Alan Walsh, 135 Rec Pl, sa
great success. Having the membe
wide dispersion of counties it ma
together but they worked hard a
tough and we lost eight of our re

During the parade members o
to read out qualities and attribu
training. Rec O'Higgins read from
"it binds the recruit to all orders"
to dignity in the workplace" as em
Rec Twohig spoke about duties a
selflessness, integrity, physical an

While delighted to now bear t
soldiers know their training is no
in intensity as they face into the





ENDED SOLDIER

held their passing-out parade. The ex-recruits rushed around to get everything ready to mark the end of 17 long weeks of early mornings and late evenings, 17 days off in between.

aid: "This was a first for 1 BTC and a few of the platoon coming from such a small town may have meant they took longer to gel and put in a great effort. Training was tough for recruits along the way."

of both recruit platoons came forward to test the recruits had learned during the Oath of Allegiance, saying how Private Rec Murphy spoke about the "right principles enunciated in the Dignity Charter, and the values and responsibilities, including "loyalty, honour and mental courage".

the rank of two-star privates, the new recruit is not over yet, and in fact is due to step up to their three-star training.



AT THE END



Shane Black: "Tougher than I was expecting, challenging but very rewarding considering all we did. Definitely the life for me! Up at 4am, spending all day in a trench – it's different, hard to explain how good it was after it was done! My long term goal is to try the ARW selection course and also recce and sniper training and to go cavalry."

Vox Pops



Daniel O'Rourke: "It was tough, especially the Platoon Commander's Challenge – a tough physical challenge of battle PTs. I learned a lot of life skills, like discipline and time keeping. I'm going to 1 Cn Cois in Galway – there are 19 or 20 going to Galway so I'm in good company. I'd like to get to the Curragh eventually with either the Medical Corps or Transport Corps."



Rebecca Barry: "It was tough, but looking back we got through by going day by day and we made great friends. I had it in my mind to finish the training and it really was mind over matter! I'm being posted to 1 Cn Cois in Galway – I can't wait!"



Katie Twohig: "It was good but hard and at times I didn't think I'd be standing here today! I found the trenches hard and also it was difficult to adjust at first, losing contact with family and friends. I'm used to it now though and now I'll miss having breakfast with all my friends. I'm going back to 12 Inf Bn in Limerick, where I started in the RDF with D Coy."



Ciaran Behan: "I found it challenging and there were a few times when I thought 'Will I get through?' But it was very rewarding and I'm really glad I did it. You build friendships here that you won't get in civilian life – and we all kept one another going."



Brendan Murphy: "Mentally and physically tough, more mentally for me as I didn't realise it was going to be that tough. This group of soldiers are probably the closest friends I'll ever make – the things we went through – you couldn't do it without your friends..."



Chloe McMahon: "It was hard work; I didn't think I could do it but I'm delighted I did. Especially after the trenches, I now appreciate the comforts in life that we all take for granted! The major part for me was the friendship, the bonds we built – they will last forever."



Kiev D'Lord: "Tough but very rewarding – and looking back it's hard to believe we did it and got through – especially today! I'm going to 3 Inf Bn in Kilkenny, I want to get as many courses done and to go overseas. I made great friends during training – especially the girls!"

RDF'S FIRST MECH RECRUITS

REPORT & PHOTOS BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

On 29th March 2015, 24 cheerful members of 1 RDF Recruit Platoon, 1 Mech Coy, celebrated the completion of their training on a dull and wet Sunday morning in the Curragh Camp, Co Kildare.

These recruits started their training back in August 2014, under the new RDF syllabus, which encompasses the single-force concept. The training was conducted over numerous weeknights, seven weekends, and a final two weeks of fulltime training and exercises.

The recruits had to develop strong discipline and learn military skills such as field craft, arms and foot drill and weapons training. Not everyone made it through the physically and mentally demanding training, as ten empty lockers, left by those who didn't finish the course, testify.

Family and friends gathered to applaud the successful young soldiers for the hard work they had undergone and the determination they had displayed to get to this parade. MC for the event was RDF Cpl Mark Lande, 1 Arm Cav Sqn, who, despite the downpour, kept everyone informed as the ceremony progressed.

Platoon Sgt Sarah-Jane Craddock called the platoon onto the parade, accompanied by piper Tpr Brian O'Connor (Tpt Gp, DFTC). Sgt Craddock then handed over to Platoon Commander Lt Ronan Bonner, who called on the Brigade colours carried by Lt Slattery. Lt Bonner then handed over to Comdt Declan Crummey, OC 1 Mech Coy.

Presentations were made by Comdt Crummey to 'Best Shot' Pte Luke Healy, and 'Best Soldier' Pte Ger Bryan.

Comdt Crummey congratulated the new soldiers and especially commended them on their volunteer status, before he was joined by Lt Col Cyril Whelan, Bde Adj't DFTC, and RDF Lt Col Maguire, DFTC, in presenting the new two-star privates with their rank markings.

Finally, Lt Col Whelan addressed all those present, welcoming the new privates into the ranks of the Defence Forces and thanked their families for supporting them through their journey from civilian to soldier.

The RDF training staff for the course comprised of Lt Bonner, Sgt Craddock, Sgt Mick Carroll, Cpl Aidan Massey (1 Sec Comd), Cpl Mark Lande (2 Sec Comd) and Cpl Garrett Corcoran (3 Sec Comd), who were assisted by their fulltime colleagues Capt Mark Brogan, Lt Danny Graham, Sgt Eddie O'Neill and numerous corporals and privates from 1 Mech Coy.

Over the coming months the new privates will undergo further training while completing their three-star course – we wish them every success in their military careers.



1st RDF Recruit Pln, 1 Mech Coy including training staff





Vox Pops

Cathal O'Brien, Co Kildare:

"I joined up because I had an interest in the DF, and I want to go on to be a Cadet, following some of my other family members. We did hours and hours of foot drill. The 24hr exercises were a real enjoyable experience. It was a fantastic decision to join up."



Ryan Mann, Co Wexford:

"I joined to get an experience of military life, as I would like to go and join the PDF. An immensely enjoyable experience, NCOs and Officers were excellent. I work fulltime and found military life helped me. The 24hr exercises were fantastic, they were wet, cold but what we expected them to be. I encourage anyone interested to join up."



Ciara Conaty, Co Kildare:

"I joined the RDF to get a taste of something different, I'm an outdoors person. I'm a medical student in NUI Galway. I live close to the Curragh so I see the military quite regular. It took a while to get used to male ratio work environment, but we worked well as a team."



Blood on the Sun AL SHABAAB



BY PAUL O'BRIEN

Somalia has in recent decades been a country in turmoil. Famine, religious strife, the failure of successive governments and the emergence of warlords have led to the rise of a number of insurgent groups in the region.

One of these, Al-Shabaab (Arabic for 'the youth'), has emerged in recent years and has claimed responsibility for a number of attacks against the UN-backed government in Somalia, and also against targets in neighbouring Kenya.

Formed as part of the radical youth wing of Somalia's Union of Islamic Courts, which once controlled Mogadishu, Somalia's capital, it was forcibly removed from the city in 2006 by the Somali Transitional Federal Government and its allies.

The group began waging *jihad* (holy war) against those it considered enemies of Islam. Al-Shabaab advocates the Saudi-inspired Wahhabi version of Islam, while most of the population of Somalia are Sufis. It has imposed a strict version of *sharia* law in areas under its control, including the stoning to death of women accused of adultery and the amputating of limbs of those suspected of breaking the law.

The organisation's senior positions are dominated by Afghanistan- and Iraq-trained Somalis and foreign fighters. The group's leadership has undergone a number of changes in recent years with many commanders having been killed in drone strikes or imprisoned. With this continual change in its command structure, the group has been weakened but is still active in certain areas. The majority of its rank-and-file members are locals, many of them recruited by force and taken from their families.

Al-Shabaab's forces are estimated as numbering from 4,000 to 6,000 and a breakdown in their former alliance with Al-Qaeda in recent years has weakened the

Kenyan security forces have also launched attacks into Somali territory, targeting Al-Shabaab personnel and camps, with some successes.

In December 2009, The

UN Security Council imposed sanctions on Eritrea, accusing the Horn of Africa



Soldiers from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) drive their APC past the scene of a suicide car explosion in front of the SYL Hotel, Mogadishu - January 2015. © Reuters/Feisal Omar

Al-Shabaab fighters march during military exercise on the outskirts of Mogadishu, Somalia. ©AP/ Mohamed Sheikh Nor



country of providing arms, financial aid and personnel to militia groups, including Al-Shabaab, in southern Somalia's conflict zones. While the Eritrean government has denied these allegations, UN officials have stated that 'plane loads of weapons originating in Eritrea have landed in Somalia and have been distributed to anti-government forces.'

Al-Shabaab, similar to Somalia's other insurgent groups, has a variety of sources of funding. One of

these is cuts taken from ransoms that Somali pirates receive from international shipping companies who pay to have their ships and crews returned to them after they have been hijacked in the Indian Ocean.

Since losing control of the vital port of Kismayo, Al-Shabaab has lost one source of revenue that it received from a cut of the country's lucrative charcoal trade.

The group also raises money through the illegal ivory trade and it has been accused of being responsible for killing elephants in Kenya for their ivory and for killing rangers hired to protect them.

The insurgents lost popular support in some regions when they threatened and kidnapped foreign aid workers and refused permission for food aid to be distributed to those in need. However, this ban on foreign aid has been lifted, allowing some relief through.

Al-Shabaab's forces are mobile, using a variety of SUVs, and are armed with GPMGs, RPGs and AK assault rifles. They have also used suicide bombers to attack targets. Though the group does not possess any heavy weapons their tactics are hit-and-run attacks against mostly soft targets. The group's deadliest operations were the recent attack on the university in Garrissa, Kenya, which killed almost 150 students, and the attack on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi in 2013, which killed over 60.

Other audacious raids by the group include a surprise attack on the presidential residence at Villa Somalia, in Mogadishu on 21st February 2014. A vehicle-borne improvised explo-

sive device had breached the concrete barrier surrounding the palace allowing ten armed insurgents to penetrate the compound. The attackers, who were all wearing suicide vests, fought a lengthy gun-battle with presidential guards before the assault ended when Somali government troops and their allies from the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), reinforced the guards and retook several key buildings.

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was unharmed but five palace guards were killed along with the deputy intelligence chief, Mohamed Nur Shirbow, and Mohamed Abdulle, a close aid to the prime minister. The government forces killed all the attackers during the operation.

This attack was followed by a ground assault by Somali government forces supported by Ethiopian troops that seized El Garas in the Galguduud province, an important and significant insurgent stronghold, as the village was used both as a forward operating base to launch attacks and a supply storage area.

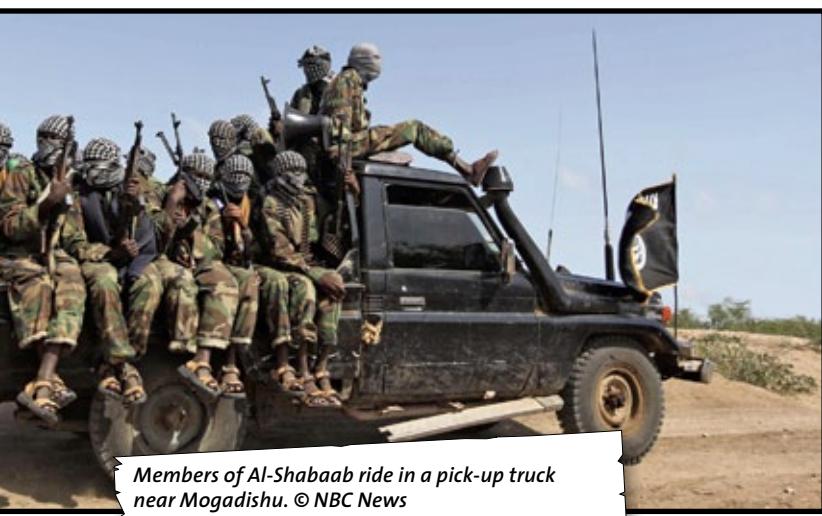
In September 2014 a US drone attack killed Al-Shabaab's leader, Ahmed Godane. It has been reported that French intelligence had identified the vehicle Godane would be in and also the route he was taking. (The French government personally held Godane responsible for the abduction of two French agents in 2009, which ended in the execution of the operatives, after an unsuccessful rescue attempt by commandos in 2013.)

With the help of US intelligence, neighbouring African states such as Kenya and Uganda have foiled major Al-Shabaab terrorist attacks in their countries, resulting in the capture of militant cells and the recovery of suicide vests, explosives and small arms.

While the organisation has been driven from many of its strongholds by a combined offensive launched by African Union forces along with the Somali army, and supported by a series of US drone strikes that have killed some of the group's leaders, Al-Shabaab have still managed to wage their insurgency campaign.

They have increased their hit-and-run attacks, recently targeting Somali lawmakers in an attempt to topple the Western-backed Mogadishu government and impose *sharia* law. While some military analysts believe the insurgent group are a spent force, attacks such as this and the awful slaughter of Christian students at the university in Garrissa prove otherwise. Meanwhile, the people of Somalia are trying desperately to leave behind decades of war and bloodshed. ■

Members of Al-Shabaab ride in a pick-up truck near Mogadishu. © NBC News



Al-Shabaab fighters display weapons as they conduct military exercises in northern Mogadishu, Somalia. © AP/Mohamed Sheikh Nor



My interest in joining the Reserve Defence Force can likely be traced back quite a few years. Shortly before sitting the leaving certificate in 1999 I had given some serious consideration to joining the PDF (or trying to, at least) as a cadet. While the idea appealed to me in various ways, I ultimately decided to opt for the more frequently travelled route of university and on to what I saw as a broader set of opportunities for employment. With that decision made, I ended up studying psychology and made my way into that same career some years afterward. All in all, I've been pleased with that decision and the rewarding career that it ushered into my life to this day.

However, my interest in the Defence Forces never seemed to totally give way. In my career I found myself increasingly drawn towards psychologically supporting those who – by virtue of their own lines of work – found themselves confronted with what could fairly be described as extremes of human experience. Over the past few years, in particular, I found myself working with gardai, reporters, and various members of humanitarian organisations, many of whom had faced experiences of a traumatic nature. These men and women had actively chosen jobs that required them to run towards, and into, the very situations from which most people would (quite understandably) flee. What drove these people to put their lives on the line for others? What kept them at this work, all the while often receiving average salaries and – in the case of the Gardai in particular – a lack of full gratitude from the general public? This suggested there was motivation to do this work that went far beyond putting food on the table.

For many people – and perhaps men in particular – being part of a military organisation probably holds a certain interest. Many of us have been raised on a steady diet of films and other depictions of military lives and activities. It's probably fair to say that military forces in general have come to be culturally associated with strength, courage, determination, and a sense of duty to something beyond oneself and one's personal concerns. To the extent that this is true, I began to consider if my involvement – even on a part-time basis – in the Defence Forces might be challenging as well as deeply rewarding for me.

Having come across an advertisement online for an RDF recruitment drive, I began to wonder if this might be an opportunity to become involved while also retaining the career I had worked hard to get into over many years. I gave



BY EOIN O'SHEA

it some thought, all the while trying to balance my desire to join with a questioning of myself as to my actual motives. Was I kidding myself by thinking that I could do this? Would I be fit enough? Further still, would I – at the ripe old age of 34 – stick out like a sore thumb when training with fellow recruits the ages of whom seemed to range between 18-25? In the end, I decided to do what has often worked well for me on numerous occasions in the past – I decided to give this my best shot and take whatever might follow.

The first step I took was to attend an open day at Cathal Brugha Barracks at which a number of RDF privates showed groups of attendees around the barracks where RDF representatives of the various corps were based for the day. It may seem daft but I can recall a particular moment when having placed some body armour over my head I caught myself fully realising that the PDF personnel who wear these in combat settings do so to withstand attempts by others to kill them. On an intellectual level, of course, this



is obvious. But it struck me that, ultimately, this is what such training would be undertaken with a view to; preparing to defend by force when others would try to stop you by any means.

I found the Cavalry Corps to be of greatest interest; they seemed to undertake a lot of the infantry training while also training and certifying on various vehicles. Transport, also, appealed to me as did the Medical Corps. Leaving the barracks that day, I felt more

alike is fairest. This same step may also be one taken towards a more fully integrated RDF as time passes.

Having trained beforehand to ensure that I could pass the various components of the test, I showed up on the day and became introduced to a well-known slogan throughout militaries the world over: 'Hurry up and wait!' Over a number of hours BMIs were checked, push-ups were pushed, unusually strict sit-ups were executed, and a 1.5 mile run ended (for me) after 10 minutes and 20 seconds. At 34 years of age perhaps it's no surprise that I wasn't the fastest by any means. However, despite the fact that later training will require greater levels of fitness than at intake, I must admit to having felt proud to pass the tests on the day along with a substantial majority of the other applicants.

The fitness test also gave me the chance to meet other applicants, many of whom came from diverse backgrounds and interests. There was one young lad whose father had served in the PDF for some 25 years or so: despite being nervous beforehand, the boxing training he had previously undergone clearly stood to him as he was one of the first to cross the line. There was a civil servant, close in age to myself, who had considered serving in the Garda Reserve but had opted for the RDF instead. Many younger applicants seemed to be hoping to 'test the waters' of military service to see if the PDF might be for them. Others, such as myself, wanted to spend some of their time outside of work and family commitments serving the state as well as taking part in various features of later training that interested them personally.

The interview that followed a few weeks afterward was quite straightforward. Three commissioned officers and NCOs asked some standard questions regarding teamwork, reasons for joining, and so forth. Garda vetting forms had already been completed and, with the interview passed, the medical now awaited.

St Bricins Hospital – itself a building of substantial history, dating back to its original title of King George V Hospital – is an imposing, red-brick structure, and its interior reminded me of depictions of WWII hospitals. Throughout the testing that day, it was clear that the staff is kept busy with a substantial number of injured and unwell, or simply those undertaking their routine medicals. We applicants must have stood out against the DPM-dressed majority.

The EMTs and nurses, in particular, were both professional and friendly; one EMT discussed my ECG (electrocardiogram) with me as I mentioned I would be completing an EMT training course myself quite soon. I ended the day with a medical finding of 'Fit Pending Bloods'.

With no legal issues in my personal history to date, I imagine that security clearance will not be an issue for me from here. I await the announcement of arrangements for attestation as well as confirmation of the upcoming full-time training (FTT) this summer.

Age-wise, this is literally the last chance I have to make whatever contribution I can within the Defence Forces. As the weeks tick by I await the next email detailing entry into an organisation I first thought about joining some 15 years ago. Wish me luck! ■

determined than before to complete the next step.

Next up was completion of the online application. Quite shortly thereafter a date was announced for the fitness test, which has been introduced quite recently to the RDF as an identical requirement to that which prospective PDF recruits must pass. In my limited knowledge of the Defence Forces, I can only assume that this has been a well-advised decision; at the very least, it would seem that requiring the same level of basic fitness from both PDF and RDF recruits

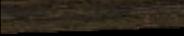


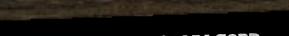
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KERRY CHALLENGE



WHAT
WALK OR RUN 25KM
A DAY OVER THREE DAYS

WHEN
19TH - 21ST JUNE 2015

WHERE
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KILKENNY
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BUBBLE SOCCER

Bubble soccer is the latest craze to hit Ireland's activities industry and you can play it now in the heart of Kilkenny at the Kilkenny Activity Centre. Just like soccer it is a team game played on a football pitch with the object of the game to score more goals than the opposing team. That however is where the similarities end because in this game the participants are protected by a big, inflatable bubble which covers them from head to waist with only their legs free to move meaning any efforts to actually play soccer bring hilarious results.



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FIELDCRAFT – PART 8

Indication of Targets Continued

When a target is indicated, the soldier has to be able to recognise it quickly so that it can be effectively engaged. Also, on occasions, when alone and has seen the target, the soldier has to be able to indicate it to the remainder of the section.



Aim: To teach how to recognise and indicate targets.

Clock Ray Method: To indicate more difficult targets a reference point together with a clock ray is used. During indication, it is imagined that there is a clock face standing up on the landscape with its centre on the reference point. To indicate a target, the range, the reference point and whether the target is to the left or right of it, and the appropriate hour on the clock face are given, e.g. "300 - base of tower - Right - 4 o'clock - small bush".

To indicate an extremely difficult target or to indicate a target to an AFV, tracer ammunition is a useful aid. The range and area of the target is indicated, tracer is fired and the strike is used as a reference point.

Hand Angles: Difficult targets at longer ranges may be indicated by using a reference point together with a hand angle, e.g. "300 - copse - Left 60mils".

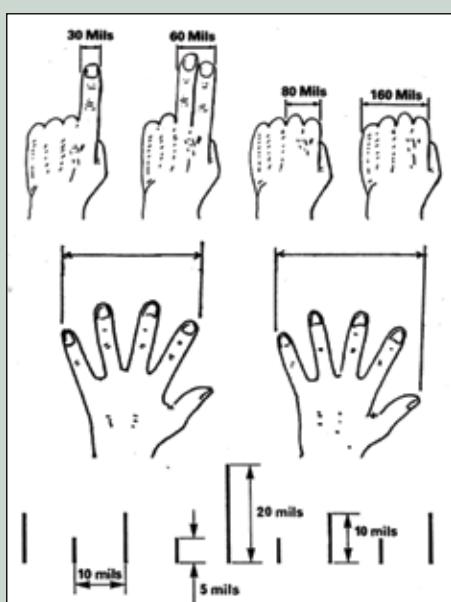
To read hand angles the left arm should be outstretched from the shoulder and one eye closed. However, individuals vary in their physical measurements and it is essential that every soldier knows his own measurements and it is essential that every soldier knows his own hand angles. Hand angles with the fingers and thumb opened vary greatly and it is best to obtain personal measurements of these in the field, using a compass.

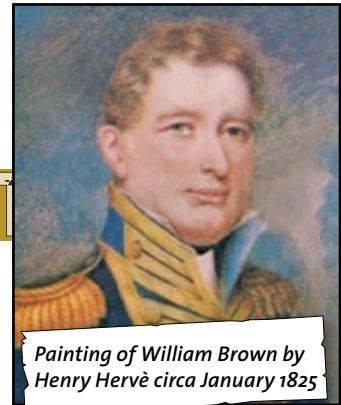
The Hand Angle Scale: Sub-divisions are 100mm apart and, when viewed from 10m, equate to 10mils.

Binoculars: The binoculars' graticules are spaced at intervals of approximately 10mils across a field of view of about 80mils and these may be used when appropriate to assist in indication, e.g. "300 - copse - Left - 30mils" (or "Left three graticules").

Wide Target: When a wide target is indicated, the Right and Left limits are defined using any of the methods already taught, e.g. "300 - Red barn (reference point) Right - 4 o'clock - small bush - Left limit - Right 60mils along hedgerow - gate - Right limit" (the target extends along the hedgerow from the "bush" to the "gate").

NOTE: When indicating targets, the range given is the distance to the target.





Painting of William Brown by Henry Hervé circa January 1825

THE LIBERATOR OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

BY OLIVER MURPHY

William Brown was born in Foxford, Co Mayo, in 1777 and at the age of nine he crossed the Atlantic to America with his parents, who were seeking gainful employment and a new life. Unfortunately, his father contracted yellow fever and died shortly after arrival.

Young William Brown secured a position as a cabin boy aboard an American merchant ship. For ten years he sailed in similar ships, becoming a sailor and in due course obtaining a master's ticket.

He was impressed into the Royal Navy and served in their Atlantic Division for 12 years until his ship was captured by a French man-of-war and he was imprisoned in Metz. He escaped but was recaptured and jailed again, this time in Verdun, from where he also escaped and travelled to England. On reaching England he went to sea again, employed by the Merchant Navy, where he befriended a man called Walter Chitty, whose sister Eliza he married in 1809, in Bromley, Middlesex, England.

The couple sailed to Buenos Aires the following year in a ship belonging to Brown and although this ship was lost to a privateer, Brown secured the finance to purchase another and commenced trading on the River Plate.

The Argentine War of Independence had been underway for some time and the small, weak patriot navy had been decimated by the royalist fleet on the Plate. In 1814 Brown accepted the offer to organise, rebuild and command the patriot navy fleet, and engage the Spanish naval forces. Brown undertook these tasks with great energy and leadership, and in recognition was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Brown incorporated his flag, which consisted of a blue Saint Andrew's cross on a white background (in fact this was an old Russian flag from its previous registration), on his flagship the *Hercules*.

In early March of 1814 Brown sailed out of Buenos Aires harbour with his small and somewhat improvised fleet to engage the Spaniards in battle at the heart of their power on the island of Martin Garcia. This was a key position that dominated the upper River Plate, and the Parana and Uruguay rivers that flowed into it.

The patriot fleet arrived at the island on 10th March and without delay engaged the opposing Spanish fleet, which comprised of nine ships armed with 18- and 24-pounders sheltering under the batteries of the island's fortress.

When Brown's ships were within range a furious barrage commenced. The tide was ebbing and although the flotilla consisted in the main of small, agile, shallow-draught vessels, Brown's ship received a terrible pounding and in excess of a quarter of her crew were killed.

After some consideration Brown decided to land on the island before dawn and storm the fort. A number of the combatants were gauchos, skilled with their *facónes* (long knives). They landed on the island at four o'clock in the morning unopposed. However, as the troops approached the fort they were spotted by sentries who sounded the alarm. Their advance was halted as men began to fall but Brown, determined to succeed in his audacious attack, called on his band to play *Saint Patrick's Day in the Morning*, which helped rally the patriots, together with shouts of encouragement from the officers, many of whom were Irish. The advance was renewed with spirit and the royalists were overwhelmed and finally surrendered. Thus, Brown secured his first victory against the Spanish, who retreated to the fortified city of Montevideo.

Following orders from Buenos Aires, Brown sailed for Montevideo, the bastion of royalist strength in South America. On arrival, Brown's flotilla of seven ships surrounded the bay and together with the patriot land forces they completed the encirclement of the city. This stranglehold proved effective and resulted in shortages of all supplies and the outbreak of epidemics.

In an effort to destroy the blockade the Spanish fleet, under the command of Commodore Augustin Sierra, sailed out to meet the patriots with 13 ships armed with 150 guns and 1,200 men.

Brown, wanting room to manoeuvre, succeeded in luring the Spanish into the deeper waters of the Plate in order to get between them and the port. Realising the need to be as agile as possible in combat transferred his flag to the *Hercules'* sister vessel the *Itati*.

As firing commenced, Brown, as usual, was exposed to the violent gunfire, and he was soon struck down with great pain. The crew transferred him back to his the *Hercules* where Doctor Campbell, who was trying to cope with a string of wounded men, attended to him.

Brown refused to be carried below decks and insisted on transmitting orders through the use of a large megaphone, so Campbell had no alternative but to set his leg on deck and treat his injury as best he could while Brown gyrated to take in the whole area of combat, and bring his guns to bear on the royalists' fleet. His constant presence was vital to success.

Following a furious series of dramatic clashes that lasted for three days, the patriots overcame the Spaniards and entered the harbour of Montevideo, much to the fury of the enemy commander Governor Vigodet.

The royalist ships *San Jose*, *Neptuno*, and *Paloma* were captured and 500 sailors were taken prisoner. The final destruction of the

HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY

Spanish fleet was completed by 17th May, a date since known as 'the Day of the Argentine Navy'.

When the Empire of Brazil invaded the future land of Uruguay and declared war on the United Provinces (Argentina), Brown was appointed to the rank of admiral of the fleet in the January of 1826 and set about recruiting, raising funds, and fitting out ships, in the face of this new threat. On the morning of 11th June of that same year the residents of Buenos Aires awoke to see the impressive, but worrying sight of 31 Brazilian warships coming over the horizon heading for the port. Brown had four battleships available to him, the *25 de Mayo*, the *Congreso*, the *República*, and the *Independencia*.

Brown's crews, comprised of 750 men, faced 266 cannons and 2,300 sailors and marines. Nevertheless, he went forward into the enemy line, dividing his force into two columns, and was then joined by Captain Leonardo Rosales. The patriots cut into the Brazilian fleet, dividing them into three sections, and once they were amongst them they opened up with broadsides from both sides while the Brazilians found themselves with their guns pointing the wrong way.

Major factors in Brown's favour were that his ships were more manoeuvrable and they were aware of the location of the dangerous shallows. Following a terrible pounding, and afraid of going aground, the Brazilians went about and withdrew.

Eventually peace was restored and the state of Uruguay was established as an independent nation in 1828.

Brown was nominated as governor of the province of Buenos Aires. However, he did not seek a role in internal politics and subsequently resigned from his appointment as director of the Bank of the Nation and from the navy.

However, he returned to the navy in 1838 when a French fleet blockaded Buenos Aires, and once again organised the fleet during a confrontation involving Uruguay in 1842. During this encounter he defeated the enemy ships, which were led by Giuseppe Garibaldi, and during an engagement spared Garibaldi's life, stating: "Let him escape – that gringo is a brave man."

William Brown is regarded as Argentina's greatest naval hero and one of the founding fathers of the nation. On the centenary of his death, in 1957, the Argentine nation/navy donated a bronze bust of Admiral Brown to the people of Foxford, and commemorations to mark his death are held on 3rd March annually. In Argentina Admiral Brown is known as 'Liberator of the River Plate and the South Atlantic and Founder and 1st Admiral of the Argentine Navy'.

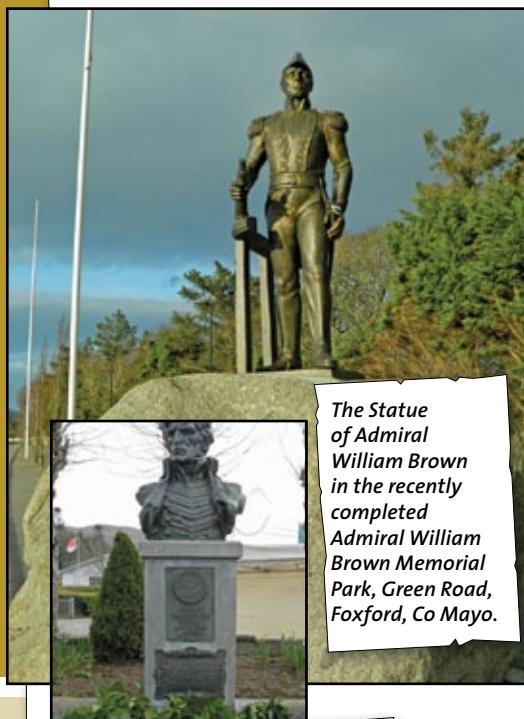
The Admiral Brown Society operates a small museum in his honour and in recent times the Admiral William Brown Memorial Park was completed on a linear site on the banks of the famous salmon-rich River Moy that runs through the town. Some years ago a statue of Admiral Brown was erected on Sir John Rogerson's Quay in Dublin's revamped docklands. ■



The 54th Naval Service Cadet Class pictured during the 158th anniversary commemoration of the death of Admiral William Brown.



Pictured are Cadet Class Training NCOs L/R: L/ Commrop Paddy Gallagher, TTHA Ronan Malone, recipient of the Admiral William Brown / JJ O'Hara Perpetual Trophy awarded to the Best Junior Military Leader annually by Admiral Brown Society and Petty Officer Timmy Lahive.



The Statue of Admiral William Brown in the recently completed Admiral William Brown Memorial Park, Green Road, Foxford, Co Mayo.



Admiral William 'Guillermo' Brown on Sir John Rogerson's Quay



Statue of Admirante Brown in Argentina

Statue of Admiral Brown in the recently completed memorial park, Green Road, Foxford, Co Mayo.

DRY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY

DF Hill Run TWO ROCK

BY CPL KAREN ROBINSON PHOTOS 105 SQN

Wednesday 25th March was another great success, a tidier bunch of 65 personnel participated in the second of the DF Hill Running Series races for 2015. We missed the PTI Course, the Air Corps Apprentices, the Cadet School and some Units further afield due to other engagements, but most are hoping they will venture out to Djouce on Thursday 21st May.

Even though the numbers were lower than last month, 27 walkers and 38 runners, the competitiveness for first place was just as exciting, with all the big names coming out to claim the title. To our amusement some of them even scanned the entry list to see who had turned up!

The route was the same as last year, a 9.6km course, mostly on forest trails with a short distance on rocky path and sleepers, taking in the wonderful views of the Dublin Mountains from the summit of Two Rock.

Sgt Alan Hayles gave a very descriptive account of the route before setting both groups off - he knows this course well, covering it twice on race day.

Lt Damien Kelly (No 3 Ops Wing) won the race with a finishing time of 36m 45s, 4 minutes faster than last year's winner. He thought he was on his own until he took a sneaky look behind him and suddenly realised he was being hunted down by Sgt Owen Connolly (Air Corps HQ), an exciting finish to the line ensued and Owen took second place with a finishing time of 36m 48s - so, so close! In third

place was 2/Lt Tom Bell (3 Inf Bn) last month's winner, again with a very impressive time of 37m 44s.

The Male Over 40s race was very competitive this year with Tpr Patrick McCarthy (2 Cav Sqn Res) claiming the winning title once again with 39m 19s, with his arms punching the air as he came down the hill, he was fully sure this was CQMS Joe Devlin's race (McKee Bks Coy). His day will come but for this day as always, an all out effort was made by Joe who claimed second place finishing in 40m 34s.

Sgt Tom Bishop (DFSM) won the Male Over 50s category with a winning time 3 seconds off the Over 40s 2nd place in a time of 40m 37s. Tom amazes us every month in his running fitness, years of hard work secures this man to claim victory for a very long time to come. Is there anyone out there to give him a good run for his money?

Of the 65 participants, only two females dared to run the race. A fellow comrade from An Garda Síochána, Garda Patricia O'Connor took the title in a time of 52m 43s. Come on girls get those runners on!!!

Thank you to all who participated in this event, especially the walkers, although we go in depth into the running side of the house, we can't thank you all enough for your support and banter on the day!

For the next running series the following needs to be looked at as the distances start to expand, the weather may not always be so kind to us. All participants should be advised to wear clothing suitable for running and trail shoes where possible for extra grip. Runners should also bring a running jacket/windstopper, which may be worn during inclement weather and a whistle. As the weather conditions dictate, runners will be advised at registration whether



DF Handball News

DF Handball News

BY SÁIR ERIC O'BRIEN, 1 CN COIS

O/Sea Robbie McCarthy (Westmeath) won his 2nd in a row All-Ireland title on 21st March 2015, after defeating Charly Shanks (Armagh) in a thriller at Kingscourt, Co Cavan.

In what was one of the most sensational endings ever to an All-Ireland Final, Robbie McCarthy showed incredible nerve to survive two match points, and come from 20-16 down in the tiebreaker to defeat Armagh's Charlie Shanks 21-20 in an utterly absorbing encounter in Kingscourt. The packed gallery could not have asked for a better ending to a great day's action. Shanks came out of the blocks quickest to take the first game 21-13 with a series of explosive kill shots. Robbie, determined not to relinquish his crown without a fight, turned the screw in the second with a convincing 21-5 win, before sealing the tiebreaker by the minimum.

All-Ireland Senior Singles Champion 2015, O/Rec McCarthy returns to Haulbowline Naval Base to start branch training and has also been named as the Captain for Team Ireland competing in the World Handball Championships, Calgary in August 2015.

The Defence Forces played against An Garda Síochána on their annual representative handball match in Collooney, Co Sligo on 26th March 2015. The tournament was hosted by the Gardaí and Mr Willie Roche, Uachtarán GAA handball, was also in attendance.

There were five doubles games up to 21 aces with the total amount of aces determining the winner. The games ran as follows: Ptes Dowd & Dunne 21-20 Gardaí O'Toole & J Hannon; S/S Doherty & McConn 6-21 Garda Macken & G/Rec Ramsey; Ptes Hennessy & Greene 19-21 Gardaí Brennan & Roberts; Cpl Ryan & Pte Kinsella 10-21 Gardaí Darcy & D Hannon; Cpl Clifford and S/S Gallen 19-21 Sgts McConnell & T Hannon. Total aces were 104-77 to the Gardaí.

The DF will take on the Gardaí in One-Wall in Dún Uí Mhaolíosa this June.

Team photo L/R: Back row Comdt Bernard Behan (Sec DFAA), S/S Joe Doherty (1 Cn Cois), Pte Tomás Dunne (3 Inf Bn), Pte Denis Dowd (3 Inf Bn), Cpl JP Ryan (1 Tpt Gp), Pte James Kinsella (12 Inf Bn), Cpl Eddie Clifford (3 Inf Bn), Pte JJ Hennessy (3 Inf Bn) and Sáir Eric O'Brien (1 Cn Cois, Bainisteoir DF Handball). Front row L/R: S/S Dave McConn (1 Cn Cois), Pte Darren Darcy (3 Inf Bn), S/S Paddy McKernon (1 Cn Cois), S/S Ciaran Gallen (1 Cn Cois) and Pte Kirk Greene (3 Inf Bn). ■

there is a requirement for the a/m on the day.

Also please encourage your units to include some of these events as part of their Unit Fitness Plan for 2015, as a means of promoting fitness for health in your unit. Runners should also be reminded to bring their own rations in the form of packed lunch etc and to coordinate transport through the Brigade

BPEOs where possible. There will be no rations supplied on the day but there will be tea / coffee facilities at the finish for all events. A big thank you to *Earl's Kitchen* in Navan for providing the gorgeous scones at this event! ■



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

*Training days will be coached by Triathlon Ireland qualified coaches in swimming
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For more information contact
Training Officer - Sgt Jackie Wykes - jackie.wykes@defenceforces.ie

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

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COMPETITION

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How much is a pair of 5.11 2.0 Trainers – Coyote on team-alpha.ie?

Send your answer along with your name, address & contact number to An Cosantóir's address or by email to subs@military.ie by the 21st May. Winner will be the first correct entry drawn.

Last month's winner was: Brian Curran Co Westmeath

NOTICEBOARD

GLASNEVIN CEMETERY AND MUSEUM

The Glasnevin Trust who manages Glasnevin Cemetery and Museum is a not-for-profit organisation and is both the guardians and storytellers for over 1.5 million people. From the ordinary to the truly extraordinary, these people helped shape the Ireland of today. We want to share their stories and times with you through tours of the cemetery, a visit to the museum or through a genealogy search for your family history. All proceeds are used to sustain and improve our cemeteries to ensure they are places of beauty, interest and intrigue. Glasnevin Museum has been the recipient of a number of prestigious awards since opening in April 2010.

Events:

August 2014 - June 2015, WW1 Centenary Exhibition, in the Museum's Prospect Gallery

14th March - 11th October 2015 - Daily at 2.30pm - Padraig Pearse Oration Re-enactment

18th June, @1200 (TBC) - Waterloo 200, remembering the bicentenary of the historic battle

Tickets: Combined Museum and Tour: €8.00 and Museum Only: €4.00

Museum Open: Monday – Friday, 10am-5pm.

Saturday, Sunday & Bank Holidays: 11am-5pm

Tours: Monday to Sunday, 11.30am & 2.30pm.

Contact: Glasnevin Cemetery & Museum, Finglas Road, Glasnevin, Dublin 11

Museum: 01 882 6550 Email: booking@glasnevintrust.ie

Web: www.glasnevintrust.ie

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Q&A MAY

WHAT DATE WAS GENERAL DICK MCKEE KILLED ON (THIS ISSUE)?

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

Last month's winner of the *An Cosantóir* T-shirt and 'Goody Bag' was Sean Hade, Bruxelles, Belgium. Closing date is 21st May 2015.



SUNDAY 17TH MAY INTERNATIONAL VETERANS PARADE

The Patrick Sarsfield Branch of ONE is delighted to announce that the Veterans International Parade (VIP 2015) will take place on Sunday 17th May commencing at 12:00 noon from Pery Square, Limerick. For more information visit their Facebook page at facebook.com/onepsb Or contact the Branch Secretary, Paul on 083 324 4822.

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SEÁN LEMASS HISTORICAL ASSOC OF IRELAND LIFE AND TIMES NEW SERIES

Author: Robert J. Savage

Publisher: UCD Press (New edition March 2015) www.ucdpress.ie

ISBN: 978-1906359874

Price: €15.30

Pages: 139

Seán Lemass (1899-1971), statesman, politician and moderniser is the latest in a line of influential and leading Irish figures to be name checked in the Historical Association

of Ireland's Life and Times New Series. The diminutive word count of this title and others within this series is purposeful as it is the intention of the publishers to present short, concise scholarly studies of persons that made a definitive contribution at crucial times in Ireland's past. The intended reader is someone who wants a succinct and well-researched aid to understanding not just the life of the person under investigation, but also their times. In this title, Savage glosses over Lemass's earlier life as an activist and soldier during the revolutionary years, to give way to the legacy affirming part of his story.

The main text focuses on Lemass once he became leader of Fianna Fáil in 1959, then Taoiseach and later Minister for Industry and Commerce during successive Fianna Fáil governments. The book charts his political career progression which lead Ireland "out of the economic and social doldrums of the 1950's" and into a modern and swinging 1960s. Savage takes us through Lemass's economic policy, his involvement, or as some would argue, lack of active involvement in dealing with relations between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, his ability to thaw once frosty Anglo-Irish relations during his tenure as Taoiseach and his pragmatic approach to Church/State relations borne out of his understanding that "the church could easily jeopardise government initiatives" if provoked. Savage exceeds the limitations imposed by a tight word count and no frills presentation by fulfilling the brief to offer a well-rounded and in depth look into Lemass's most influential period of his life. This book would be perfect for anyone wishing to know just a little bit more about Lemass without committing to reading a weighty tome presented in a traditional biographical style. **LD**



IRISH COASTAL LANDINGS 1922

Author: Ralph A. Riccio

Publisher: Stratus Publications, January 2015 <http://mmpbooks.biz>

ISBN: 978-8363678609

Price: €30.00

Pages: 160

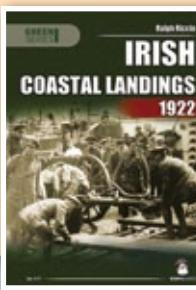
Every now and then a book hits the shelf that is unique in the fact that it tells the story of an often overlooked aspect of a military campaign. Irish Coastal Landings 1922 by Ralph A. Riccio is one such publication.

This book is a history of Irish National Army coastal landings during the Civil War that enabled the newly established Free State army gain a foothold in parts of the country occupied by Republican forces in the aftermath of the signing of the Treaty with Britain.

This book provides details on each of the landings that took place from July to December 1922. The author has researched the landings meticulously and provides the reader with detailed information on the ships used to transport the troops, armoured vehicles and weapons, troop dispositions, major personalities involved and the objectives achieved. The book is well illustrated with many black and white photographs but there are superb coloured scale drawings of all the ships involved in the seaborne operations.

In addition to the many period photographs of the landings, troops and transports, the text is also supported by comparative 'then and now' photos of most of the landing sites. These photographs enable the reader to discover an often hidden aspect of Ireland's Civil War that is still there, hidden away amongst almost a century of development.

While the landings have often been overlooked or omitted from previous histories on the Irish Civil War, this book has rectified that, and is an important addition to this period in Irish history. A great read. **PO'B**



WHEN THE CLOCK STRUCK IN 1916 CLOSE QUARTER COMBAT IN THE EASTER RISING

Authors: Derek Molyneux & Darren Kelly

Publisher: The Collins Press, March 2015. www.collinspress.ie

ISBN: 978-1848892132

Price: €17.99

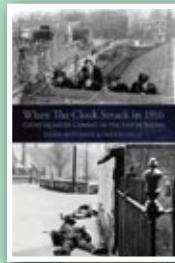
Pages: 264

As the centenary of the 1916 Rising approaches, books on the subject are being released expeditiously.

When the Clock Struck in 1916 – Close Quarter Combat in the Easter Rising by Derek Molyneux and Darren Kelly is a new work that presents the reader with a dramatic account of the events of Easter week. The authors have delved into the witness statements held by Military Archives and have recreated the battles fought in Dublin's streets. The book's opening chapter details the attack on the Magazine Fort in the Phoenix Park. The detonation of the High Explosives store was to signal the beginning of the insurrection, but due to the fact that the Volunteers were unable to locate the keys for the room, the plan had to be shelved. A smaller explosion did manage to damage the magazine, but if they had succeeded, with the amount of explosives contained within; they might have not only blown up the store, but also themselves with it.

Other events such as the shooting of Lieutenant Guy Pinfield at the gates of Dublin Castle, and the carnage encountered by British soldiers at Mount Street Bridge, are vividly portrayed as are the many other battles that took place throughout the city.

However, while the book is based on fact, the authors have made use of subjective interpretation and licence that has resulted in a work of creative non-fiction. While not an academic history book, it is a fast paced, graphic retelling of events that will in no doubt appeal to a new generation that will find it an informative yet enjoyable read. **PC**



NAME
STEPHEN HARDIMAN

RANK
CORPORAL

UNIT
RECORDS & DATA
MANAGEMENT, HQ 2 BDE

My grandfather served with 2 Inf Bn so I was following in his footsteps by enlisting in the Defence Forces in 1998. I was 18 and living in Ballyfermot when I joined 56 Recruit Platoon in CTD E (now 2 BTC) in Cathal Brugha Bks. After training I opted for 2 Cav Sqn, where I went on to complete many driving courses, including Dispatch Rider (DR), and was a member of the presidential escort of honour.

I've always had a keen interest in sport and before joining up I studied Sport and Leisure in Coláiste Íde, Finglas. I've also played soccer with Crumlin Utd under-18s, Cherry Orchard and St Patrick's Athletic over-18s. I was offered a football scholarship to America, but at the time I was young and unsure about going abroad and turned it down. My soccer highlight was winning the Oscar Trainer Cup in 2007 as captain of the amateur football league selection. Since then I've played with Malahide and Grange Woodbine in Coolock. I also played for the Defence Forces soccer team.

I travelled overseas to Lebanon with 89 Inf Bn UNIFIL in 2001, which was an interesting trip as we were closing down the mission and handing over to the Nepalese. I was employed as the water truck driver, which meant I got to see a lot of the mission area.

I also travelled to Liberia with 91 Inf Bn UNMIL in 2004. I found this to be a very different mission; the heat and humidity was incredible and it was tough going with long-range patrols lasting from three to ten days.

In 2005 to further my career, and to be closer to home as I had now moved to Malahide to start a family, I applied and received a transfer to the Director of Human Resources Management (DHRM) section in Coláiste Caoimhín, Glasnevin. I was employed in the Commissioned Officers Management Office (COMO) where I was responsible for processing military passports and visas, overseas rotation manifests, AF95s (officer movements) and producing the officers gazette.

In 2010 I travelled overseas again as a logistician with the NSE for 102 Inf Bn MINURCAT in Chad. Again I was with a unit involved in closing down a mission, which was another challenge.

I completed many courses, including ECDL, PMS, web design, Orderly Room Cpl, and a MIF Course, and a Pot NCOs course in 2012. In July 2013 I was promoted to Cpl Clerk in COMO.



"I am making good use of the IKON system, which is a great tool in running the reserve section"

In November 2013 DHRM was relocated to DFHQ/DoD HQ in Newbridge as part of the government's decentralisation plans, which meant taking a bus, the Luas and a train to get to work. It was also a busy time, setting up new offices in Newbridge, as only four of the original staff from Glasnevin moved with the section. I found myself helping to train new staff as they were posted in to the vacancies. Thankfully, the transition went as planned with very little down time.

In late 2014, I applied for a position in Records and Data Management Section, HQ 2 Bde, based in Cathal Brugha Bks, in order to get closer to home and reduce my travelling costs. In September that year I got the move to Records, where I'm now employed in the RDF section, responsible for enlistments and discharges, extension, re-engagement and continuance in service, postings and transfers, and medal returns. It's a busy job, especially during the last RDF re-org, which included up to 1,600 discharges. At present I am making good use of the IKON system, which is a great tool in running the reserve section.

Over the next few years I would like to travel overseas again and complete a standard NCOs course, see out my 21-year contract and possibly extend it.

Looking back I would say the highlight of my military career has to be meeting my wife Jenny O'Connor (now Hardiman) in recruit training. We started seeing each other shortly after passing out as three-star privates; we are now happily married with two beautiful children. ■



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