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**60-YEARS OF
UN PEACEKEEPING**
Commemorative issue

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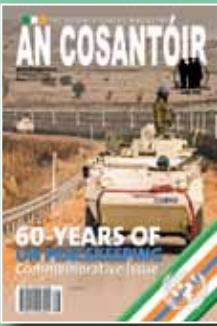
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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OF STAFF

This year marks the 60th anniversary of Irish Peacekeeping when Defence Forces personnel were first deployed on UN peacekeeping operations as part of the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UN- TSO) in 1958. The proud service of our soldiers, sailors and aircrew sees Ireland holding the longest unbroken record of UN peacekeeping service of any nation in the world. This is a remarkable achievement for a nation of our size and is a major contribution by the women and men of Óglaigh na hÉireann over the past sixty years.

Our commitment to the UN, playing a positive and constructive role in the maintenance of international peace and security, is widely acknowledged. It is appropriate that as we mark this anniversary and indeed the 40th anniversary of UNIFIL, that an Irish Officer, Maj Gen Michael Beary, holds the position of UNIFIL Force Commander and Head of Mission. Holding this prestigious appointment is a mark of Ireland's esteem as peacekeepers in the international community and in the Middle East. Our reputation as fair and impartial brokers, dedicated to the common purpose of supporting peace in South Lebanon is built upon the work, dedication and sacrifices of successive Irish contingents since 1978.

Whether it be Lebanon or areas such as Golan or Mali, Irish troops help facilitate a safe and secure environment, which is a key enabler for civil society. The entitlement to live in a civil society is a human right of every man, woman and child. It goes to the heart of democracy, built on values, where people are free, where the institutions of state function, and where the vulnerable are protected.

During 'Operation Pontus', the humanitarian mission on the Mediterranean, for many of the 18,000 plus people rescued by Óglaigh na hÉireann, the first semblance of a civil society experienced in months, if not years, was what the survivors experienced under the Irish Tricolour on the afterdeck of an Irish sovereign warship in the Mediterranean. Now as part of both the EU and UN mandate EUNAVFOR Med 'Operation Sophia', the Irish Navy continue to play an important role in the Mediterranean as part of the broader EU comprehensive response to the migration issue.

The 70,000 individual tours of duty completed by Irish Defence Forces personnel have not been without great sacrifice. It is appropriate to remember the eighty-seven (87) members of the Defence Forces who have died in the service of international peace including the two soldiers who remain missing in action, one in Congo and one in Lebanon.

Everything we do is built on our values of moral courage, physical courage, respect, integrity, loyalty and selflessness. We must continuously strive to accentuate these values.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the members of Óglaigh na hÉireann and our Veterans who have served overseas over the past sixty years. The role that your family and loved ones play in enabling your service abroad must also be commended. They too serve.

In conclusion, I would like to thank every member of Óglaigh na hÉireann for your devotion to duty, commitment and professionalism. To those currently deployed overseas in some of the world's most dangerous environments, I wish you well, as you uphold Ireland's great peacekeeping tradition. You do us proud.



Vice Admiral Mark Mellett, DSM

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Front Cover

Members of the Irish Force Reserve Company (FRC) on patrol in UNDOF.

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

Editorial

Hello and welcome to our 64-page June special, which commemorates the 60th anniversary of the Defence Forces' first involvement with United Nations peacekeeping, 26th June 1958. It includes a commemoration of UNIFIL, which marked its 40th year of operations on 19th March 2018. This issue also coincides with International Peacekeeping Day, 29th May 2018.

"Not one year, not one month has passed in 60 years without Irish troops wearing the blue helmet abroad - it is part of who we are at the UN." - Ambassador Brian Flynn, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations, at the Security Council open debate on peacekeeping – March 2018.

Since 26th June 1958, Defence Forces personnel have completed 64,000 individual tours of duty on peacekeeping operations all over the world. Today, the Defence Forces has 649 personnel serving in a variety of missions throughout the world. Overseas service has always provided Irish soldiers with the opportunity to practice their profession in an operational environment, to travel, to see new places and meet new people, to sample foreign cultures, and, most importantly, to make a difference where and when they could.

With this special issue we have tried to capture a reflection of our current overseas footprint by providing an insight into the forming of the League of Nations after WWI, the establishment of the United Nations, and our 60 years of service.

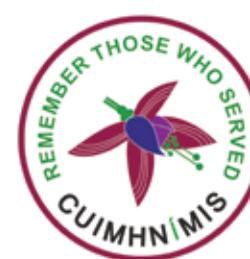
We start with interviews with first-timers and experienced soldiers heading to Lebanon with 112 Inf Bn. We then have interviews with senior leaders and an update on each current

mission where Irish personnel are serving.

We also have historical articles looking at our exemplary service in the Congo and Lebanon, written by former DF personnel and now authors: Declan Power writes about the now infamous Siege at Jadotville and Lt Col Dan Harvey retd writes about the Battle of At Tiri in South Lebanon in 1980.

We also have interviews with three distinguished overseas veterans from ONE, IUNVA and ARCO.

During our six decades of overseas service we have lost 87 of our comrades in the service of peace. These heroes made the ultimate sacrifice while trying to protect the vulnerable and bring peace to troubled regions of the world, regardless of the dangers and risk of personal harm. We also think of their families and their sacrifices, *Cuimhnímis!* – Let us remember!



(ONE's Fuchsia fundraising emblem is a symbol of remembrance for those who have passed and to those currently serving in the Defence Forces.)

We dedicate this magazine to the memory of all those who have died on active service with the Defence Forces, at home and abroad.

As editor of *An Cosantóir* I would like to thank all our contributors, advertisers, and staff for helping to produce this special issue. We hope it will help mark this important anniversary, and provide future generations with a unique insight into Defence Forces peacekeeping in 2018.

Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald

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BALLYMULLEN BKS, TRALEE

Pictured is GOC 1 Bde, Brig Gen Patrick Flynn who visited Ballymullen Bks, Tralee recently with OC 12th Inf Bn, Lt Col Sean Murphy and officers of the Reserve Defence Forces. Photo: Denis Walsh Photography



NEW ARMOURED LAND CRUISER

Pictured are members of 217 IRISHFINBATT conducting an area patrol with the new in-service Toyota Land Cruiser Armoured Utility Vehicle (AUV). Having reached initial operating capability, these vehicles are being phased into operational service with the 11th Inf Bn in South Lebanon. Representing a leap forward in force protection and capability, the AUV will become a fundamental part of the IRISHFINBATT fleet and a regular feature on patrol. Photo: Lt Cian Clancy, 11th Inf Bn

PASSING OUT PARADE 6 INF BN, ATHLONE

Pte Jordan Brennan, 7 Inf Bn pictured at his passing out parade with his proud father retired Cpl Jerry Brennan formally of the 5 Inf Bn in Custume Bks, Athlone on 6th April 2018. Photo: Jordan Brennan

Pte Daniel Byrne pictured with his proud grandfather retired Pte William Byrne. Daniel is also being posted to the 7th Inf Bn where his grandfather served. Photo: Brian O'Neill



VISIT TO CATHAL BRUGHA BKS

Pictured are members of the Fr James Gilmore Br of ONE and members of the 7th/65th Inf Bn Association who toured the Visitor's Centre and Military Archives in Cathal Brugha Bks on 23rd March 2018. Many thanks to those who made these tours possible. Photo: Dessie O'Hara



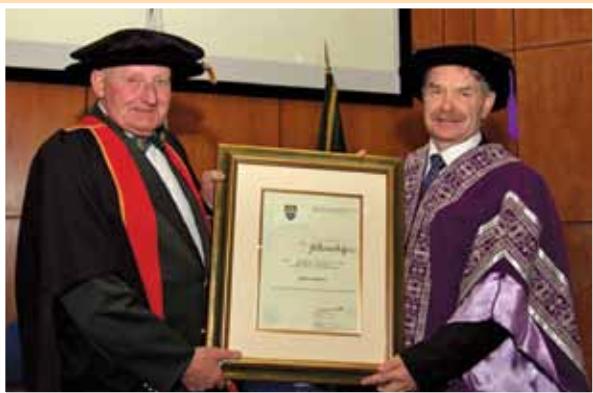
BTY SGT PATSY O'DRISCOLL RETIRES

On 20th April 2018 a retirement function was held in Collins Bks, Cork for Bty Sgt Patsy O'Driscoll. Bty Sgt O'Driscoll retired after completing nearly 40-years service primarily with 1 Bde Arty Regt. Comdt Parsons, 1 Bde Arty Regt is pictured presenting him with a piece of Cork Crystal. Photo: Sgt Daniel Sheehan, 1 Bde HQ



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID COURSE

The Organisation for Ex-Service Personnel (ONE) held a Mental Health First Aid Course (MHFA) for its members in McKee Bks over the weekend of 28th, 29th April 2018. Lt Col Ollie Barber Retd, former Director of PSS instructed on the course. *Photo: John Whelan*



JADOTVILLE VETERAN HONOURED BY AIT

Pictured is John O'Gorman, Jadotville campaigner accepting the award of Distinguished Fellowship in recognition of his continued campaign over many years for his comrades of A Coy, 35th Inf Bn, Congo 1961. He proudly accepted the award from Prof Ciaran O'Cathain who presented it on behalf of Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) at a ceremony on 27th April. *Photo: Martin Crawford*



ANZAC DAY

25th April ANZAC Day, is one of Australia's most important national occasions. It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War. Every year the United Irish Ex-Services Association of Australia (UIESAA) march with the Allied Troops. This year we dedicated the march to the 87 Irish troops that lost their lives serving with the United Nations peacekeeping forces. Members of UIESAA have family and friends that have passed serving under various flags in all kinds of uniforms throughout the world. The memories of those are prominent on this day. *Photo: Ves Campion*

LT COL RAY LANE RETIRES

Pictured at his retirement from the Defence Forces is Lt Col Ray Lane who served most of his career in the Ordnance Corps. Making a presentation to Lt Col Lane is Coy Sgt Liam Dowling on behalf of the staff of the Ordnance School, DFTC. *Photo: by former Ordnance Corps veteran Sgt Anthony O'Brien Retd*

RSM JOHN 'SPIKE' MCCORMICK RETIRES

After 40 years of service to the Defence Forces, at home and abroad, RSM John 'Spike' McCormick retired on 4th May 2018. RSM McCormick joined the DF in 1978 in the 4 Fd Arty Regt, he joined the Air Corps in 1991, where he has served in No 3 Ops Wing and ACC before becoming Station RSM in December 2005. We wish Spike all the best and thank him for his loyal and selfless contribution to the Air Corps. *Photo: Mark Pollack, Baldonnel*



FATHER AND SON

Bill Howard served in the Irish Defence Forces from 1962 to 65 and served in the Congo with the 38th Inf Bn in 1962 as a peacekeeper. His son Stephen also served in the DF for 13 years and served as a UN peacekeeper in Lebanon. Bill recently joined his son in Australia. Both are now members of UIESAA and marched proudly beside each other in the 2018 ANZAC Day in Sydney on the 25th April. *Photo: Michael Lyons*



IN FOCUS

112TH INF BN ARE BOUND FOR LEBANON

BY CPL LEE COYLE, PHOTOS BY SGT KARL BYRNE AND ARMN JAMIE BARRETT



Travelling overseas on a UN mission for the first time brings a bunch of mixed feelings to every soldier, it can be those of excitement and eagerness, but it can also bring feelings of fear and trepidation of the unknown and unexpected.

The 112 Inf Bn departed for Lebanon in early May, we caught up with some of them in Gormanston Camp for a quick word just before their Mission Readiness Exercise (MRE).

Ministerial Review of 112th Inf Bn, Aiken Bks, Dundalk, April 2018.

Pte Richie Coffey (25), 6 Inf Bn, 2 Bde

Tell us about yourself and your family?

"I'm 25 years old and have three and a half years service with the 6 Inf Bn, this will be my first trip overseas. I'm originally from Stillorgan in Dublin but moved to Athlone when I got posted. Waiting for me at home I have my mother and father."

How does your family feel about you going overseas?

"Grand really, my father is delighted that I'm in the army and traveling abroad, he always thought I would like the army, my mother is a bit nervous about me travelling away, but she is happy for me to go to Lebanon."

How have you found the training for the mission?

"The training has been good, meeting the other troops and getting to know them and who you will be serving with. We have been doing a lot of training for the MRE, which is all building up to the stands on it, which will be good."

What have you heard about Lebanon, and how do you feel about the mission?

"I've heard it's a good trip out there from other soldiers who have served over there. We will be very busy out there doing patrols of the area. The threat level isn't as bad out there compared to what it used to be. I've no worries about the mission, we are trained and prepared for doing our job out there, and we have trust in our NCOs who are travelling with us."

What are you looking forward to most about the mission?

"I think it will be interesting to see the difference between where we come from and over there and being able to give the people of Lebanon a helping hand."



Armn Sean Moriarty (23), No 1 Ops Wing, AC

Tell us about yourself and your family?

"This is my first trip overseas, I have served four and a half years in the DF with No 1 Ops Wing in the Air Corps in Baldonnel. At home in Navan, I have my mother and father and I also have two younger brothers and a younger sister."

How does your family feel about you going overseas?

"My family are happy with me going away, I have a cousin who has served in Lebanon so they know what it's like and have seen it with that side of the family with him traveling over, because of this they're not too nervous about it."

How have you found the training for the mission?

"I liked the training for the mission, it's good to get a chance to do this sort of military training as it is different from my normal day to day in the Air Corps. The training with the Mowags was the best part, being able to use these vehicles during training, getting in and out of them was really enjoyable. I'm looking forward to our MRE, it will be good to put everything we have done in the last number of weeks into practice and see how it's done at Platoon level."

What have you heard about Lebanon, and how do you feel about the mission?

"I'm not worried about the trip, I've heard a good bit about the mission from other soldiers and my cousin, so it makes us a bit more relaxed knowing what we will be doing out there, also we have lads that have been out there recently."

What are you looking forward to most about the mission?

"I've never been in the Middle East before and it's going to be interesting to see what way of life people have over there and how we get on over there."

We also spoke to two veterans, who are returning to Lebanon after over 20 years since they last served in the country.



**Sgt Joey Howe (45),
27 Inf Bn, 2 Bde**

Tell us about yourself, your family and your past missions?

"I'm from Dundalk town and have completed 24 Years service with the 27 Inf Bn. At home I have my wife Dianne, and my three sons Sean (11), Tadhg (9), and Aaron (5). My first overseas trip was with 77 Inf Bn UNIFIL, in 1995. I have also served in Liberia in 2004, and Kosovo in 2008."

Tell us about the training, and how it has changed from your first overseas trip to Lebanon?

"The first thing that comes to mind is the equipment; it really is to the forefront of the mission and has stepped up to the mark. Training and instruction is top class and our experience makes it second to none. The mission has really changed from the static checkpoint-based training from older missions to mobile patrol training. The soft-skin vehicles are gone and the armoured vehicles are now used, it really reflects the mission."

What are you looking forward to most about returning to Lebanon?

"Well 22 years is a long time ago from my last trip to Lebanon, I suppose the development of the country. I hear that there is tarmac on most roads now and the country has come a long way in the last number of years."

What is the hardest part about being away from your family?

"Leaving the family unit is the hardest part, but I have good backing from my wife and the kids are well prepared. Compared to years ago, social media and communications have improved, the kids will probably get tired of speaking to me."



**Sgt David Casey (42),
27 Inf Bn, 2 Bde**

Tell us about yourself and your family?

"I'm from Dundalk and I joined the army 21 years ago. My first trip overseas was with the 84 Inf Bn 1998 into 1999. I have my wife and four kids, Clara (13), Lee (10), Zoey (5), and Corey (3) at home and I'm travelling on a family friendly mission."

Tell us about the training, and how it has changed from your first overseas trip to Lebanon?

"The training has become more streamlined now; some of the training from years ago has been changed to suit the mission. The knowledge and experience from the area has been reflected in the lectures and training."

What are you looking forward to most about returning to Lebanon?

"I'm looking forward to seeing how the country has developed and moved on from where it was 20 years ago to a more positive way of life. It's nice to know that our small contribution back then has led to a better society for the people out there. I'm also looking forward to seeing where the old posts were and what it looks like now."

What is the hardest part about being away from your family?

"The family friendly trips are a great thing they really are family friendly. I will be out there for six weeks, and then I'll be home and then back out for five weeks. My wife and I were recently looking through a box of letters I wrote to her the last time I was in Lebanon; there were even some old call cards from out there. The communications back in the old missions could be frustrating, now with the Internet things are much easier to send messages back and forth, so will make things easier."



United Nations Peacekeeping

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING

The United Nations began Peacekeeping in 1948, when the Security Council authorised the deployment of UN military observers to the Middle East. The mission's role was to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours – an operation which became known as the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) – and still on-going today. Since then, 71 peacekeeping operations have been deployed by the UN, 57 of them since 1988. Over the years, hundreds of thousands of military personnel, police and civilians from more than 120 countries have participated in UN Peacekeeping Operations. More than 3,326 UN peacekeepers have died while serving under the UN flag.

On 29th May 2018, the UN, along with its member states and NGOs, held solemn events around the world to honour fallen peacekeepers.

"At its best, UN peacekeeping is a remarkable enterprise of multilateralism and international solidarity... And UN peacekeeping missions now operate in far more dangerous, complex and high-risk environments. They are under threat from armed groups, criminals and terrorists, who have access to powerful modern weapons.

Last year, we lost 59 peacekeepers through malicious acts – a sharp increase since 2016, when the figure was 34. I pay tribute to the fallen; we will never forget their sacrifice. These figures are unacceptable and weigh on us all."

UN Secretary General António Guterres said to Security Council High-Level Debate on Collective Action to Improve UN Peacekeeping Operations – 28th March 2018. ■



President Michael D. Higgins meets UN Secretary General António Guterres. Photo: UN Photo

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF IRISH DEFENCE FORCES PEACEKEEPING

On the 25th April 2018, President Michael D. Higgins met with UN Secretary General António Guterres, on the second day of his visit to the UN in New York during the High Level Meeting on Peace Building and Sustaining Peace.

"Ireland, the country I represent, knows from our own Peace Process which continues to this day that peace does not come without engaging with the experience of the Other, that it remains a process to be nurtured.

Humanitarian actions must not any longer be allowed to serve as sufficient responses to crises that are political in their origins. Humanitarian action is not a substitute for political dialogue and mediation. Nor is the remarkable work of UN peacekeepers, whose service, including that of many Irish men and women over the past 60 years, whom I salute here today. UN peace support operations save countless lives, but they can only ever be but one element of a comprehensive response."

President Higgins emphasised the contribution of the Irish peacekeeping forces over the past six decades, in which, in any given year, Ireland has had some 1,000 peacekeepers deployed. The President paid tribute to the Defence Forces for their role in the field, and for their invaluable work informing Irish society, upon their return, of the work of the United Nations. ■

CURRENT MISSIONS (W.E.F. 18TH MAY 2018)	PERSONNEL
UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON - UNIFIL	379
UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE (SYRIA) - UNDOF	138
UNITED NATIONS TRUCE SUPERVISION ORGANISATION (MIDDLE EAST) - UNTSO	12
UNITED NATIONS NEW YORK (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) - UNNY	2
UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR THE REFERENDUM IN WESTERN SAHARA - MINURSO	3
UNITED NATION OBSERVER MISSION IN CONGO - MONUSCO	4
EUROPEAN UNION TRAINING MISSION MALI - EUTM MALI	20
EUROPEAN UNION MILITARY STAFF (BRUSSELS) - EUMS	3
EUROPEAN UNION MILITARY COMMITTEE (BRUSSELS) - EUMC	4
EUROPEAN UNION FORCE BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA - EUFOR BIH	5
EUROPEAN UNION IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION ALTHEA - (SHAPE, NATO, MONS, BELGIUM)	1
EUROPEAN UNION IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION SOPHIA	61
LIAISON OFFICE & PNMR IRELAND - (SHAPE, NATO, MONS, BELGIUM)	1
KOSOVO FORCE HEADQUARTERS - KFOR HQ	12
PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE HEADQUARTERS (BRUSSELS) - PFP HQ	2
ORGANISATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE (AUSTRIA) - OSCE	2
TOTAL	649




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The Origins and Evolution of DEFENCE FORCES PEACEKEEPING

BY LT COL TIMOTHY O'BRIEN, SCH COMDT UNTSI

“Given the importance that Ireland places on collective security and multilateralism, the Government are fully committed to contributing to peace support and crisis management operations. This is a practical demonstration of Ireland’s support to the UN.” - White Paper on Defence, 2015

The genesis of 60 years of Defence Forces unbroken service with the UN on peace-support, or crisis-management, operations, was not the result of a coherent Cold War defence or foreign policy, but, instead, the outcome of an unexpected and urgent request received on 23rd June 1958 from the UN Secretary General to Ireland’s Permanent Mission to the UN seeking a group of military officers to deploy immediately as unarmed observers on a newly established mission to Lebanon. The emphasis was on ‘immediately’.

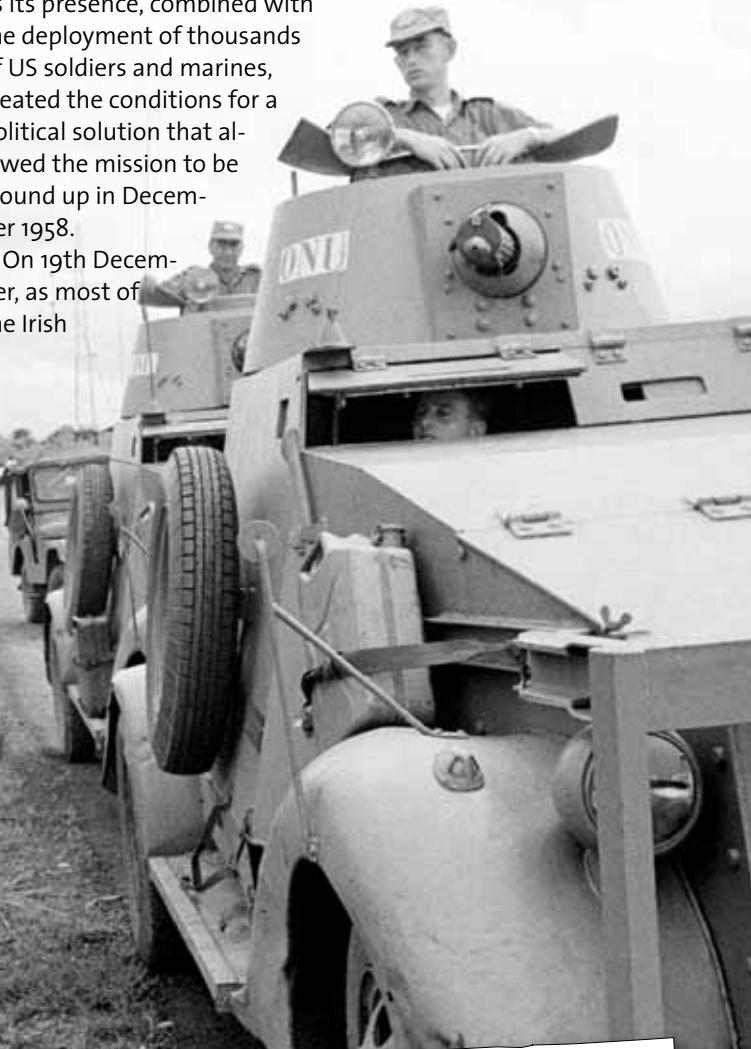
The United Nations Observer Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL) was the UN’s response to a deteriorating security situation resulting from the country’s dispute with the United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria from 1958 to 1961), which had led to inter-communal violence between Lebanon’s confessional groups. Within 24 hours Ireland, which had only joined the UN three years earlier, responded positively to the request, as the deployment of the Defence Forces on a UN mission

was seen by the Dept of Foreign Affairs as a practical demonstration of Ireland’s positive membership of the organisation.

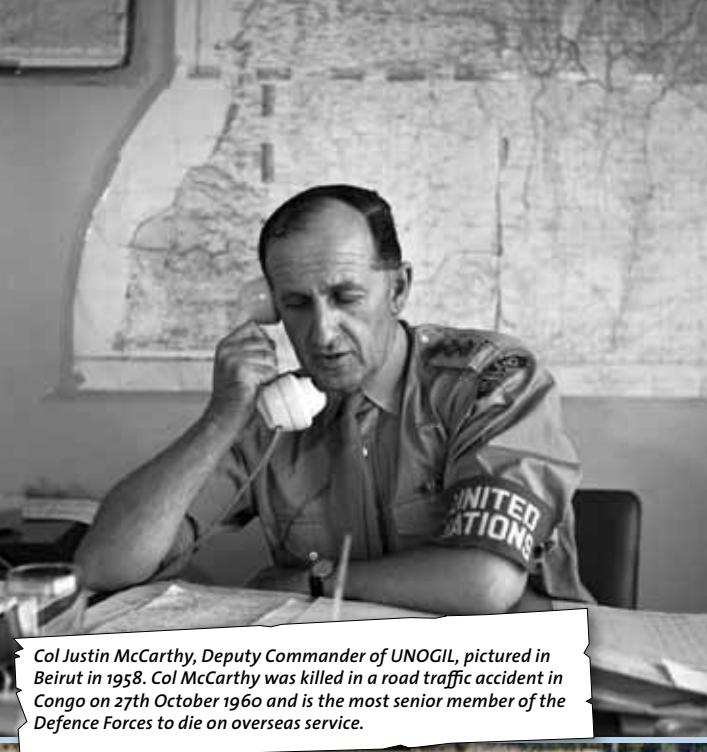
The decision made, it was a matter of finding the officers. A group of 12 were directed by the adjutant general, without explanation, to report to DFHQ on 25th June, where they were told of the UN’s request and asked to volunteer. All did and five were selected to deploy within 48 hours. This group, led by Lt Col Justin McCarthy, departed Dublin Airport on 28th June 1958, to be followed in the coming weeks by 45 more officers, all of whom were selected and volunteered in a similar manner. The Defence Forces contingent, UNOGIL’s fourth largest, was tasked with monitoring border crossings to Syria, as well as patrolling in Baalbek, Tyre and Sidon.

UNOGIL would prove a success, as its presence, combined with the deployment of thousands of US soldiers and marines, created the conditions for a political solution that allowed the mission to be wound up in December 1958.

On 19th December, as most of the Irish



38 Inf Bn Ford Mark VI Armoured Cars with infantry support outside Elizabethville during Operation Grandslam on 3rd January 1963. This was the final ONUC offensive operation against the Katangan Gendarmerie and it ended the secession of Katanga.



Col Justin McCarthy, Deputy Commander of UNOGIL, pictured in Beirut in 1958. Col McCarthy was killed in a road traffic accident in Congo on 27th October 1960 and is the most senior member of the Defence Forces to die on overseas service.



LÉ Eithne, the naval flagship, departing the Naval Base on 15th May 2015, en route to the Mediterranean. This was the first Naval deployment on a Crisis Support Operation.

contingent returned home, UNOGIL's deputy commander, the newly promoted Col Justin McCarthy, and Capt Pat Jordan, were transferred to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO), the UN's first and now longest running mission, set up to maintain the truce arrangements that followed the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948.

Remarkably, since then there has been a permanent DF presence in UNTSO. There have been four Irish commanders of the mission, including, most recently, Maj Gen Michael Finn.

Whatever difficulties the sudden need to supply 50 officers must have caused the Defence Forces in 1958, they surely faded into insignificance with the UN's next request. On 30th June 1960 Congo gained its independence from Belgium and immediately descended into anarchy when the mineral-rich province of Katanga declared its independence. The UN intervened and on 13th July Ireland was requested to provide troops to the proposed Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC) mission.

After the Dáil amended the Defence Act to allow an armed contingent to deploy overseas, almost 1,400 troops were deployed to ONUC by August 1960, serving with 32 and 33 Inf Bns and 9 Brigade HQ; with the latter being one of the forgotten chapters of our Congo deployment, as is the fact that under its commander, Col Harry Bryne, it would eventually command 4,800 Irish, Swedish, Moroccan, Malian and Ethiopian troops.

ONUC was a sharp learning experience for the novice Irish

peacekeepers, who conducted continuous operations, including the only battalion-in-attack ever conducted by the Irish army. Our soldiers would also discover that when dealing with well-armed Katangan gendarmerie, led by motivated European mercenaries, the lines separating peacekeeping, peace-enforcement and war-fighting were often blurred.

Inevitably, there were fatalities: 33 Inf Bn alone would lose 12 of its soldiers, including Coy Sgt Felix Grant, the first member of the Defence Forces to die on overseas service. The battalion would also suffer the greatest single loss of life incurred by a Defence Forces overseas unit when nine members of A Coy were killed at Niemba on 8th November 1960.

The Defence Forces' final Congo death toll of 26 officers, NCOs and men, would also include Col Justin McCarthy who had accompanied ONUC's first force commander, General Carl von Horn, from UNTSO as his chief of staff. Col McCarthy died in Leopoldville in a road traffic accident on 27th October 1960. He remains the most senior member of the Defence Forces to have died overseas. It also includes Tpr Patrick Mullins (35 Inf Bn), who was killed in action in Elizabethville on 15th September 1961 but whose remains have never been recovered. A further 57 were wounded or injured during the four-year deployment.

One Military Medal for Gallantry and 65 Distinguished Service Medals were awarded to Irish soldiers serving with ONUC.

When Irish involvement ended in May 1964, a total of 6,191 personnel; eight infantry battalions; two infantry groups; and two armoured car squadrons had served with the mission. In addition, DF Chief of Staff Lt Gen Seán MacEoin had served as commander of the 20,000-strong force between January 1961 and April 1962, becoming the first Irish officer to hold such an appointment.

Over the next 25 years the Defence Forces would take part in a myriad of what are now labelled 'traditional' peacekeeping operations: lightly armed battalions or infantry groups deployed to separate warring parties in Cyprus, Sinai, and Lebanon, while unarmed military observers deployed to Afghanistan, Central America, Namibia, India/Pakistan, Iran and Iraq, among others. In addition, Irish officers would be appointed as force commanders in the Middle East, Kashmir and Cyprus. Lt Gen William Callaghan DSM served not only as Force Commander UNIFIL but also as Chief of Staff UNTSO on two occasions.

The 'peace dividend' that many expected to follow the ending of the Cold War in the early 1990s failed to materialise and the international community had to face new and unanticipated challenges caused by rising nationalism in the Balkans, failing states in Africa, and worldwide intrastate conflict. Genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia would see the UN accused of being ineffectual in the face of mass killings of civilians, and traditional peacekeeping could not deal with the new threats developing; a different approach was required.

The Defence Forces' first deployment on a non-UN-led peacekeeping operation was to the former Yugoslavia as part of the 1991 European Community Monitoring Mission, which was established in conjunction with the OSCE.

By 2003 the EU had developed its common security and defence policy sufficiently to deploy its first autonomous military mission outside the EU. As part of Operation Artemis,



First Medical Detachment from CMU returning to Baldonnel from Sierra Leone on 22nd May 2015. They had been deployed on the British Army Operation Gritrock, which was battling the Ebola virus epidemic that had hit the country. The returning personnel are being greeted by GOC Air Corps Brig Gen Paul Fry, OC CMU Col Peter Marron and DJ3/J5 Col Phil Brennan.



Coy Sgt Mitch Bohan and Comdt TC O'Brien, QRF 43 Inf Gp, pictured in the Fijian UN Position 31, Golan Heights on 22nd February 2014, during a recce patrol to the position. 43 Inf Gp were the first Defence Forces unit to deploy to Syria in September 2013.

two DF personnel went to Congo as staff in the HQ of a French-led force deployed prior to the deployment of the UN-led MONUC mission.

When the EU deployed a 4,300-strong force to Chad in 2008 it was led by Lt Gen Patrick Nash from his Operational HQ in Paris and a total of 2,800 members of the Defence Forces would serve in Chad with either EUFOR or the UN's follow-on MINURCAT mission.

In 1993 the government amended

the Defence Act to allow members of the Defence Forces participate in peace enforcement as well as peacekeeping operations. This facilitated the deployment that year of a transport company to the war-torn cauldron of Somalia as part of UNOSOM II, where they operated in support of French and Indian brigades. Although only two companies would serve in the mission before it was withdrawn, they set an important precedent that would enable the DF to take part in more robust operations into the future. One example was the deployment of the ARW in October 1999 as part of the International Force East Timor (INTERFET), a multinational taskforce established and led by Australia in accordance with a UN mandate.

Although Ireland did not join Partnership for Peace until 1999, by May 1997 a 50-strong MP contingent was deployed to Bosnia as part of the NATO-led, UN-mandated Stabilisation Force (SFOR).

Participation in NATO-led operations would lead to new peace-support challenges for the DF, including deploying liaison teams and staff officers to ISAF in Kabul and transport companies and mechanised infantry groups to KFOR in Kosovo, where, within a decade of first taking part in a

NATO-led mission, Brig Gen Gerry Hegarty would command a multinational taskforce.

As the 20th century ended the DF had gained a hard-won and well-deserved reputation as proficient peacekeepers capable of deploying and working with international partners on UN, EU, OSCE, NATO and member state-led operations.

The current decade has continued to see an evolution in the type of crisis-management operations the Defence Forces participate in. For example, in 2010 a DF training team deployed to the EU Training Mission (EUTM) Somalia. The small group of officer and NCO instructors were deployed as part of a multinational team training the Somali armed forces.

EUTM-Somalia would be led in succession by two Irish officers, Col Michael Beary and Brig Gen Ger Aherne. (The now Maj Gen Beary is the current Head of Mission and FC UNIFIL, and with the late Lt Gen Callaghan, referred to above, is one of only two Irish officers to command more than one multinational peace-support operation.)

Two major developments occurred in 2015. In January, the first of two medical detachments from the Central Medical Unit deployed to Sierra Leone as part of the successful British Army-led operation that participated in the fight against an Ebola outbreak in West Africa. The significance of this deployment was that it was by government direction rather than at the request of an international organisation. Simultaneously, other personnel deployed to the Irish embassy in Freetown as part of an emergency assistance team to assist consular staff in coordinating their response to the crisis.

Having seen the army conducting and leading peace-support operations since 1958, the deployment of *LÉ Eithne*, under the command of Cdr Pearse O'Donnell, to participate in bilateral migrant rescue operations with the Italian navy in the Mediterranean in May 2015, was a momentous occasion; arguably of equivalent significance to 32 Inf Bn's deployment to Congo in 1960.

The deployment of NS vessels to the Mediterranean continues in 2018, although now with the EU Naval Force, Operation Sophia.

For 60 years the men and women of *Óglaigh na hÉireann* have represented Ireland with pride while conducting peace-support operations throughout the world. Their success is a function of their training, leadership, experience, professionalism and equipment. This anniversary presents an opportunity to learn about and commemorate the almost 64,000 individual tours of duty that have been completed. It will also be used to honour the memory of the 87 Irish peacekeepers who gave their lives in the cause of international peace and security.

The story of Ireland's participation in peace-support operations is ongoing, and the future will surely hold leadership challenges for the officers and NCOs who will follow in the footsteps of Col Justin McCarthy, Coy Sgt Felix Grant, Lt Gen Seán MacEoin, and the other officers and NCOs who acted as pathfinders for today's generation of soldiers, sailors and aircrew that provide Ireland with her peacekeepers.

About the author: Lt Col Timothy O'Brien is School Commandant, United Nations Training School Ireland. He has served on UN- and NATO-led peace-support operations in Lebanon, East Timor, Afghanistan, DR Congo and Syria. ■



➤ Declaration by United Nations issued in Washington, DC, on 1st January 1942, pledging 'to employ its full resources, military or economic' in 'the struggle for victory over Hitlerism'. Washington DC, United States. Photo #327496 UN Photo/VH

➤ The League of Nations at its opening session in Geneva, Switzerland, 15th November 1920. Photo #97289 UN Photo/Jullien

As the Great War of 1914 to 1918 came to an end, world leaders sought to establish an organisation that, through negotiation or the implementation of sanctions, could prevent mass slaughter like that which had just devastated countries throughout the world.

During the war, as men were being sent to the trenches, influential voices in the United States and Britain began campaigning for a permanent international organisation to maintain peace in the post-war world.

The United States president, Woodrow Wilson, became a vocal advocate of this concept and in a proposal he submitted on ending the World War, he mentioned such a body. As the war ended and world powers convened at Versailles in France to agree on formal peace terms, Wilson urged everyone involved to establish a just and lasting peace, but this was not to be.

The League of Nations was approved, and during the summer of 1919 Wilson presented the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant of the League of Nations to the US Senate for ratification. However, the Senate thought that the League and the Treaty reduced US authority. Before he could debate the issue and reach a compromise with his opponents in the Senate, Wilson suffered a severe stroke. As a result, the Senate did

not ratify the Treaty and the US did not join the League, leaving the organisation weak and somewhat vulnerable.

On 10th January 1920, the Covenant of the League of Nations came into force having been ratified by 42 nations. The League comprised the General Assembly (representing all member states), the Executive Council (with membership limited to major powers), and a permanent secretariat. Member powers were expected to 'respect and preserve as against external aggression' the territorial integrity of other members and to disarm 'to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety'.

All states were required to submit complaints for arbitration or judicial inquiry before going to war. The Executive Council would establish a Permanent Court of International Justice to make judgements on disputes.

During the 1920s, the League, with its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, incorporated new members and successfully mediated and resolved minor international disputes. A series of disputes between Germany and Poland over Upper Silesia, between Italy and Greece, and between Greece and Bulgaria, were resolved under its auspices. However it failed to deal with Britain and the question of Palestine.

In addition to the Permanent Court of International Justice,



On 28th June 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was signed during the Paris Peace Conference at the end of World War I.



Meetings and events leading to formation of the United Nations Organisation President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill (seated upper left in front of their standing staff members) at divine service aboard the British battleship HMS Prince of Wales, during the Atlantic Charter meeting. 1st August 1941. Photo #83983 UN Photo/(Historical Photo)

the League oversaw several other agencies and commissions to dealing with international problems, health and safety issues, labour related incidents, slavery, drug trafficking and the protection of refugees.

However, some major powers disregarded the organisation and undermined its work.

The situation deteriorated in the 1930s when a series of events exposed the League as ineffectual. Its condemnation of the Japanese invasion of China in 1931 prompted Japan to quit the organisation. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia was also condemned but Italy continued its campaign regardless. Germany's rearmament programme during this period was also cause for concern, but Hitler ignored the League's calls and continued preparing for war.

Ireland, and in particular Eamon de Valera, was to play an important role in the League of Nations. Having become An Taoiseach, de Valera retained for himself the external affairs portfolio and as such he represented Ireland at League

of Nations' meetings during the 1930s. In September 1932 he became president of the League's council, where his speeches won him worldwide acclaim. In a world dominated by major powers he was particularly vocal on the role of small nations, which he did not want to see dragged into international conflicts against their will.

In a prescient speech given in Geneva in 1936, de Valera highlighted the failings of the organisation and condemned those countries that sought to invade, occupy and bring war to others.

However it may be disguised, it can only be with a feeling of bitter humiliation that each successive speaker has during these days come to this Tribune.

Over fifty nations pledged themselves to one another in the most solemn manner each to respect the independence and to preserve the integrity of the territories of the others. One of these nations turned its back on its pledges freely given, and was adjudged almost unanimously by the remainder to have been an aggressor, and now, one by one, we have come here to confess that we can do nothing effective about it.

Over fifty nations, we banded ourselves together for collective security. Over fifty nations, we have now to confess publicly that we must abandon the victim to his fate.

It is a sad confession, as well as a bitter one. It is the fulfilment of the worst predictions of all who decried the League and said it could not succeed.

As has been said already, we are all of us in some measure responsible for this pitiable position, some much more responsible than others. Read the speech delivered here by the Emperor of Ethiopia. Does any delegate deny that, so far as it relates to what has happened here, there is to his knowledge truth in every line of it?

Perhaps as the representative of a small nation that has itself experience of aggression and dismemberment, the members of the Irish delegation may be more sensitive than others to the plight of Ethiopia. But is there any small nation represented here which does not feel the truth of the warning that what is Ethiopia's fate today may well be its own fate tomorrow, should the greed or the ambition of some powerful neighbour prompt its destruction.

Mr President, you had, indeed, very good reason to warn us at the opening of these proceedings against the pitfalls of bitterness, scepticism, and discouragement which the present situation has spread around us. Nothing, surely, would be more disastrous than to abandon ourselves to despair, but is it not equally the height of folly to think that we can go on just as if nothing had happened?

Many delegates have stated the circumstances of the present position and given us an analysis of its development. The representative of Russia has stated in precise terms the kind of League we would all like to see established as a guarantor of peace, but, except to say that the masses must be educated, he has not shown how such a League can be built up. He has not shown how in the present conditions the masses can be led to feel any confidence that obligations, no matter how explicitly they may be undertaken on paper, will in fact be carried out when the testing time comes. How can the plain man be convinced that obligations entered into will not in the future, at the prompting of selfish interest, be ignored, as the existing obligations have been ignored.

Unless the League can inspire confidence it clearly cannot stand. Subscribing to what has been proved to be a delusion is not the way to secure confidence. If confidence is to be restored to the masses it can only be by rigidly restricting commitments to those we know can be loyally carried out and which the average man can believe will be carried out. By all means let us keep before us the ultimate ideal, which we desire to reach, and work as far and as fast towards it as we can, but let us contract only for that which we can in the time of test certainly perform. Let us face the fact that economic and financial sanctions can be made effective only if we are prepared to back them up by military measures. Let us face the fact that every nation may, when the test comes, have many good reasons for shirking the terrible responsibility of entering upon a war. Let us face the fact that not one of the fifty nations represented here is prepared to face war to preserve the principles of the League in the present dispute. For the sake of a nation in Africa, apparently no one is ready to risk now a war that would be transferred to Europe.

That is the position today, and does anyone doubt that some similar position can occur tomorrow.

Europe is obviously the danger point. If we want to be realists we will concentrate upon Europe without delay, and once our common commitments under the League are explicitly defined (and clearly these commitments do not include and cannot at this time be amended to include an obligation to go to war to maintain the principles of the League) let us, if we are thinking only of the future, set about the urgent task of preserving peace in Europe and leave aside for the moment such questions as how the Covenant should be altered to make it as a world organisation, effective and universal.

The peace of Europe depends, as everybody knows, on the will of the great Powers. If the great Powers of Europe would only meet now in that Peace conference which will have to be held after Europe has once more been drenched in blood; if they would be prepared to make now in advance only a tithe of the sacrifice each of them will have to make should the war be begun, the terrible menace which threatens us all today could be warded off.

The problems that distract Europe should not be left to the soldiers to decide. They should be tackled now by the statesmen. If these problems cannot be settled by conciliation, let them be submitted to arbitration. I will be told that there are difficulties. Of course there are difficulties. There are difficulties in every direction that lies open to us, but in which direction are there the least difficulties. Are there more difficulties along the way of peaceful adjustment by conciliation or arbitration than along its alternative way of a modern war?

It has always been urged that if there had been a League of Nations in 1914 - if there had been a Council or an Assembly - where the problems and the dangers that then threatened could be discussed, the Great War could not have happened. It was argued that in the absence of a League the military machines were set in motion before the statesmen could get together. The statesmen can now get together, but what are

they doing? Millions are being squandered on armaments, but are the root causes of the trouble being sought out and effective steps taken to remove them?

If the major problems of Europe can be settled, all can be settled. If the problems of Europe are not settled, it is vain to talk in the wider terms of a world League.

The French prime minister has spoken of disarmament. If Europe can be persuaded to settle its present problems peacefully, the policy of a rapid reduction of armaments will for the first time get a chance, and the wealth that is being wasted in preparing instruments of destruction can be made available for improving the conditions of life of many millions of people.

Despite our judicial equality here, in matters such as European peace, the small states are powerless. As I have already said, peace is dependent upon the will of the great states. All the small states can do, if the statesmen of the greater states fail in their duty, is resolutely to determine that they will not become the tools of any great Power and that they will resist with whatever strength they may possess every attempt to force them into a war against their will.

In September 1938 de Valera had the distinction of being given the highest office within the organisation, that of president of the General Assembly. This period in the League's history was very trying, especially with the withdrawal of Germany, Japan and Italy from the organisation. Shortly after de Valera took up his new position, the Munich Agreement was signed and de Valera praised Adolf Hitler and Neville Chamberlain for their efforts to keep the peace in Europe.

Unfortunately, within a year of the signing of the agreement in Munich, World War II erupted and the world was once again plunged into warfare. This was the death knell for the League of Nations.

By 1946, the League of Nations was seen as no longer fit for purpose and was officially dissolved with the establishment of the United Nations. While the United Nations was modelled on the former organisation, it had increased international support and a structure that would ensure its power and recognition in an international arena. ■



INTERVIEW WITH DCOS OPS

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

MAJOR GENERAL KIERAN BRENNAN IS NOW THREE YEARS IN THE APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF OPERATIONS (DCOS OPS). AN COSANTÓIR RECENTLY SPOKE TO HIM TO GET HIS VIEWS ON DEFENCE FORCES PEACEKEEPING AND CURRENT AND FUTURE MISSIONS.

This year marks 60 years of continuous peacekeeping involvement by the DF. What have been the highlights of this remarkable commitment?

There have been a number of highlights, the first being the absolute commitment of the men and women of Óglaigh na hÉireann to serve their country and the international community in very challenging security environments, where the risks to their lives were real and ever present. We have done so continuously for over 60 years, enhancing the lives of the people where we served. Complementary to this has been the selection of DF personnel as force commanders, deputy force commanders and in key officer and NCO staff appointments, again greatly enhancing the ability of various UN missions to deliver on their mandates.

Secondly, our peacekeeping operations have continuously evolved over the years, moving seamlessly from Chapter VI peacekeeping to the more robust Chapter VII peace enforcement operations.

As part of this evolution, the Defence Forces developed significant expeditionary capacity, which was exemplified in our deployments to Eritrea, Liberia, and the most challenging of all, Chad in 2008, where, as OC 98 Inf Bn, I saw at first hand how successful we had become in delivering our personnel and equipment to remote parts of the world.

Finally, the development of our military capability, from our first troop deployment to the Congo to our present posture in the Golan and UNIFIL, has been significant. Much of our current military capability has been informed by our experiences overseas, which have also led to the Defence Forces being recognised internationally as a highly valued and professional military force and a partner of choice on UN-mandated peacekeeping operations.

What developments in overseas commitments have taken place in your time as DCOS Ops?

A major honour for the Defence Forces, and indeed Ireland, was the appointment of Maj Gen Michael Beary as Force Commander and Head of Mission UNIFIL, in July 2016.

Also the ARW deployment to UNIFIL HQ in a close-protection capacity, and the Defence Forces taking over the lead role from the Finns in November 2016, which allowed us to deploy additional personnel back into UNIFIL.

In Mali we increased our participation from 12 to 20 personnel as a practical demonstration of our support to the French in combating terrorism, not just in France but in the greater Sahel region of Africa.

UNDOF has seen the reconfiguration of the Force Reserve Company (FRC) with the withdrawal of a platoon from a static position in early 2017, allowing the FRC to expand its operational footprint on the Alpha side. And of particular significance has been the deployment of eight DF officers to Camp Faouar on the Bravo side in March this year.

The appointment of Col Michael Dawson as Chief of Staff UNDOF in January is also significant as it ensures that the general staff have full oversight of on-going security and mission-support developments on the Bravo side.

From a Naval Service perspective, we had the commencement of Operation Pontus, the humanitarian mission, where the Naval Service excelled in their response to the migration crisis in the Mediterranean, rescuing up to 18,000 personnel. This operation was conducted under a bilateral arrangement with the Italians. As a follow on in 2017 we saw the Naval Service entry into Operation Sophia, a UN-sponsored mission in the Mediterranean under the auspices of the EU. This has also seen the deployment of two NS personnel to the OHQ in Rome, and two to the flagship in the Mediterranean.

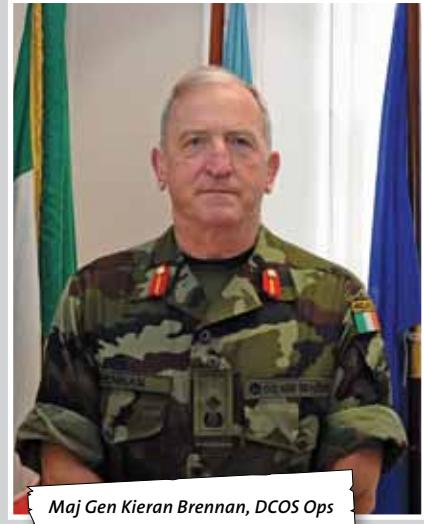
Since taking up my appointment the Defence Forces has also completed its deployments to Afghanistan and Côte d'Ivoire.

From a capability perspective I was delighted to see the deployment of new armoured utility vehicles to UNIFIL and UNDOF this year, greatly enhancing force protection for our personnel.

Finally, for the first time in a number of years we deployed an officer to the Dept of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in New York, who provides the general staff with situational awareness at the strategic level in respect of evolving security trends worldwide.

What developments are on the horizon for our overseas missions?

In relation to UNIFIL, Gen Beary is expected to complete his assignment in 2018. To date he has had an outstanding tour of duty in a very challenging appointment. Another big UNIFIL development from an Irish perspective has been the decision of Finland to withdraw its personnel from Post



Maj Gen Kieran Brennan, DCOS Ops



Maj Gen Brennan in UNIFIL recently for the medal parade.



Maj Gen Brennan speaking to members of the 56 Inf Gp at Camp Ziouan in March 2018.

2 -45 and a decision will shortly be made in respect of the 'back fill'. Options include engaging again with a strategic partner or increasing our numbers in UNIFIL for a year.

The return of the Irish contingent to the Bravo side in UNDOF is currently being examined. UNDOF HQ has developed a three-phased plan for the full return of personnel to the Bravo side, with phases one and two complete and elements of phase three on target for completion by July 31, but no final decision has been taken in respect of the redeployment of the FRC (currently 57 Inf Gp).

Our capability development programme continues, with the refurbishment of our armoured Mowag fleet being the priority. Although this process will take a number of years to complete, having recently viewed some of the refurbished vehicles I am extremely confident that this programme will greatly increase force protection and situational awareness for our personnel into the future.

We are also in the process of purchasing armoured logistical vehicles for our overseas personnel, and they should be in the mission areas within the next 12 months. These vehicles will provide additional force protection for our logisticians operating in challenging environments abroad.

What can you tell us about the ARW being selected as a lead unit in the German-led EU Battlegroup in 2020?

As part of our commitment to Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) we have been involved in EU battle-groups for a number of years; the most recent in 2016, where we had an ISTAR taskforce embedded with the German-led battlegroup. Two years before that I was GOC 1 Bde when we provided an ISTAR company to a Nordic battlegroup.

The government has agreed that we be involved with the German-led battlegroup in 2020, to which we would deploy a unit comprising a C2 group, the ARW, EOD, engineer, and a force-protection element, along with a logs and admin group. We also expect to deploy staff to the HQ in Germany.

The ARW have not been overseas as a unit, operationally, since 2008, so it will enhance their inter-operability, challenge their leadership, and develop additional skillsets. It will also help to develop relationships with key international partners and give the ARW an opportunity to operate in an international environment where they will be at the cutting edge of Special Forces operations.

In December 2019 it is proposed that the full battlegroup will conduct a 10-day exercise in Germany, before completing its certification exercise in March 2020.

How will Ireland's involvements in PESCO impact on the Defence Forces?

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) was initiated by 24 EU states in December 2017 with the objective of increasing defence capability and coordination, and the end goal of better capacity to respond to the wide range of security threats, both conventional and non-conventional, challenging Europe.

Participating nations sign up for different projects and Ireland has agreed that the DF will participate in two projects. One is the EU Training Mission Competence Centre (EUTMCC), led by Germany, with 11 partner nations involved. Its aim is to streamline the training of personnel from EU nations wishing to deploy as part of an EU training mission through the establishment of a training centre that would deliver best practice in the area of training outputs to personnel prior to deployment. It is likely that when established the centre would have DF personnel involved in both training and instructing.

Secondly, we will also participate, alongside six other nations, in maritime surveillance, with Greece as the lead. This project is focused on improving information exchange in respect of maritime surveillance, and is particularly relevant in the context of our participation in Op Sophia.

In addition, the Defence Forces will have observer status at eight other projects, which means that at some point in the future we can opt in to active participation in such areas as cyber-security, C-IED, military mobility, etc.

In summary, PESCO should increase the capacity of the Defence Forces into the future as well as enhancing operational and technology linkages with EU member states. ■

A Witness to Momentous Transformations in SOUTH LEBANON

BY MAJ GEN MICHAEL BEARY, UNIFIL HEAD OF MISSION AND FORCE COMMANDER

In May 2016 I was appointed by the UN Secretary General as Head of Mission and Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Established in 1978, following the first Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the UNIFIL mission has conducted peacekeeping operations within its area of operations (AO) in South Lebanon for the past 40 years. It continues to strive to implement its mandate under UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

The primary role of the Head of Mission and Force Commander is to provide the leadership and strategic guidance to the civilian and military professionals that constitute UNIFIL, which in its current form is a complex multinational peacekeeping operation. The role is also one of representation and advocacy on behalf of the mission with local, regional, national and international leaders in the political, diplomatic and military spheres.

This was my fourth time to serve with UNIFIL, with my first deployment as a platoon commander in 1982. My previous service also included tours of duty as a company commander and as a staff officer in UNIFIL HQ. In marked contrast to my early experiences, the change I experienced in South Lebanon this time was palpable: men and women running new businesses that dot the streets of Tyre, with the hope of becoming financially stable; young children playing in the schoolyards of Tibnine dreaming of a bright future; men and women going to work every day in Bint Jbeil to support their families; and the elderly residents of Naqoura enjoying evening chai with their neighbours. The normalisation of activities that we see in the communities in South Lebanon would have been unthinkable four decades ago.

President John F Kennedy once said: *“Peace is a daily, a weekly, a monthly process, gradually changing opinions, slowly eroding old barriers, quietly building new structures.”* This is exactly what's happening in South Lebanon: old barriers are being replaced by new structures. I am fortunate to be a witness to the fruits of four decades of hard work – with UNIFIL playing a key role, working together with the government and the people of Lebanon, and with regional and international partners. The region has experienced an unprecedented level of calm and stability over the past 11 years; the last two years, in particular, have been amongst the quietest on record.

UNIFIL's high tempo peacekeeping operations are directed at maintaining the cessation of hostilities, while allow-

ing space for political and diplomatic efforts to reach a permanent solution. In doing so, a lot of efforts have been made – including through UNIFIL's robust liaison and coordination mechanisms – to make sure that small incidents do not spark an escalation into a wider conflict, the so called 'accidental war'. I am immensely proud of the contribution of the thousands of women and men from the 41 troop contributing countries who provide peacekeepers to UNIFIL.

Of course, as an Irish force commander I am particularly conscious of the contribution of our own Defence Forces, and of our nation's proud record of involvement in peacekeeping. Irish personnel have served with UNIFIL in South Lebanon since its establishment in 1978. Thanks to their service and sacrifice, we now have the beginnings of a strong foundation for peace for successive generations.

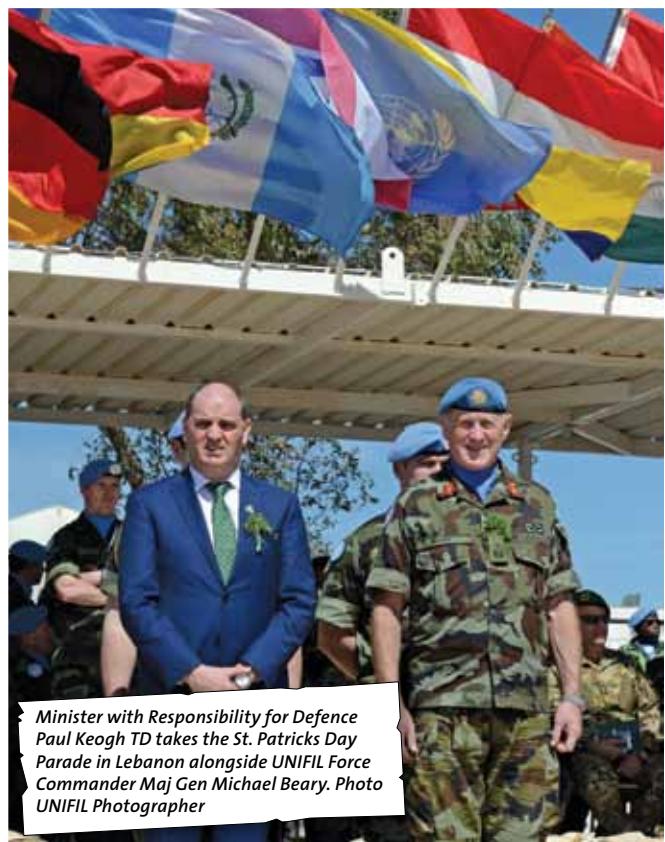
The increasing presence of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in the UNIFIL AO has also been a stabilizing factor. The LAF deployed into the AO in 2006, following the cessation of hostilities, and for the first time in more than three decades as UNIFIL's strategic partner, the LAF has been gradually taking on some of the tasks traditionally carried out by UNIFIL peacekeepers. This has reassured the residents of the south about their future, and, increasingly, the residents of the south view the LAF as the legitimate provider of security. For UNIFIL, capacity building of the LAF remains the most credible way forward.

Investing in the LAF means investing in the future security of Lebanon, as we endeavour to ensure that the sovereign army of the state retains a monopoly on the use of force





Maj Gen Michael Beary, UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander. Photo: Gerry Mooney, Independent News and Media (INM)



Minister with Responsibility for Defence Paul Keogh TD takes the St. Patricks Day Parade in Lebanon alongside UNIFIL Force Commander Maj Gen Michael Beary. Photo UNIFIL Photographer

within its borders.

But the cloud of another war still swirls over the skies of south Lebanon. After commanding UNIFIL's 11,000-plus, military and civilian peacekeepers for nearly two years I can say with full confidence that there is no appetite for renewed hostilities on either side of the UN-monitored 120-kilometre line of withdrawal (the Blue Line) that separates the two sovereign countries of Lebanon and Israel.

The fear of war is in part propelled by the frequent rhetoric originating from various quarters. Notwithstanding the recent heightened rhetoric, the situation on the ground remains stable and, despite some recent incidents, we have been able to prevent any escalation along the Blue Line through intense liaison with the parties. Such fears are the natural manifestation of the parties not reaching a final settlement – a permanent ceasefire – the ultimate aim envisaged in UNSCR 1701. The term 'permanent ceasefire' needs to enter the lexicon of the stakeholders on both sides of the Blue Line.

UNIFIL's continued presence and engagement on the ground has provided a strong deterrent to the resumption of hostilities. It is important for the leaders on both sides to take advantage of the window of opportunity provided by UNIFIL to work towards a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution to the conflict. A peacekeeping operation is a measure that can allow diplomatic efforts to reach a political solution; it cannot be the substitute for a political solution.

In an increasingly complex security environment like the one we are facing today in the wider Middle and Near East, Lebanon, once the source of instability in the region, now finds itself being impacted by events beyond its borders. While the UNIFIL area of responsibility is small, its area of interest is very large, and includes territories and issues that are outside the scope of UNSCR 1701. In this context I consider the stabilising presence of UNIFIL to be of the utmost importance in assisting the international community's efforts, along with other governmental actors, to improve the stability of the whole region. ■



The transfer of command of UNIFIL from Maj Gen Luciano Portolano (Italy) to Maj Gen Michael Beary in July 2016.



Maj Gen Michael Beary escorts An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar during a visit to Lebanon in December 2017.

40-YEARS OF UNIFIL

BY COMDT EOIN SCANLON



An Irish checkpoint in Lebanon during the early 90s. Photo: An Cosantóir Archives



An Irish peacekeeper observing the AO from Hill 880. Photo: Military Archives

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) came into being in March 1978 following the Israeli invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon as far as the Litani river.

Tensions along Lebanon's southern border had been escalating throughout the 1970s and events came to a head in March 1978 with the Israeli invasion on 14/15 March.

UNIFIL was established within days of the invasion and the mission's first peacekeepers arrived in Lebanon on 23rd March 1978, tasked with implementing UN Security Council resolutions 425 and 426. The mission had three broadly defined principles: confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restore international peace and security, and assist the government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area. Achieving these three principles would occupy UNIFIL for the next 22 years and would cost the lives of over 200 peacekeepers.

In 1982, the mission was further complicated following another Israeli invasion, which Israel called 'Operation Peace for Galilee'. With Israeli forces this time reaching as far as Beirut, UNIFIL troops found themselves operating behind Israeli lines. Despite being restricted in fulfilling its mandate, the mission focused on distributing humanitarian aid and providing protection to the local civilian population.

The conflict had also led to the creation of an auxiliary force, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), referred to by the UN as the De Facto Forces (DFF). Closely supported by Israel, the SLA would remain a major actor in the region until the 2000 Israeli withdrawal. The period between 1982 and 2000 saw frequent clashes between Israeli and SLA forces on one side and Hezbollah and other Lebanese and Palestinian resistance groups on the other.

On 17th April 2000, having maintained a presence in southern Lebanon for 20 years, Israel informed the UN secretary general that its forces would withdraw from Lebanon in accordance with UNSCRs 425 and 426.

By 25th May all Israeli forces had withdrawn and the SLA had disbanded. The UN now faced the challenge of defining the line of separation between Lebanon and Israel; what would eventually become known as the 'Blue Line', as well as securing the equipment abandoned by the Israeli forces and ensuring stability in the region. UNIFIL contributed to this work by monitoring the line of withdrawal, reporting violations, and continuing to distribute humanitarian aid in conjunction with Lebanese government agencies.

Throughout 2001 and 2002, the UN closely monitored the situation in the region and restructured UNIFIL, with the goal of

reducing troop strength to 2,000 personnel and shifting the focus to an observer-led mission. UNIFIL would now focus on contributing to regional stability by monitoring the Blue Line and undertaking other observer tasks.

While the Blue Line had experienced a much-increased degree of stability from 2000 onwards, periodic violence continued. Rocket launching by Lebanese resistance groups prompted Israeli



An abandoned Israeli tank at the 'Cuckoo's Nest' in South Lebanon. Photo: An Cosantóir Archives

air strikes and ground operations. This pattern of violence came to a head in 2006 when Israel once again invaded Lebanon. Consequently, UNIFIL returned to implementing the three principles of its original mandate, renewed and strengthened under UNSCR 1701 in August 2006. UNIFIL troop strength was expanded once again and the force now operates at a strength of over 10,000, all ranks, and is deployed to patrol bases and observation positions throughout southern Lebanon.

UNIFIL's focus today remains committed to the core principles of UNSCR 1701: monitoring the cessation of hostilities, supporting the local population by contributing towards the maintenance of a safe and secure environment, and assisting the government of Lebanon in extending its full authority throughout south Lebanon.

On 13th May 1978, the advance party of 43 Inf Bn arrived in Lebanon, beginning a commitment to UNIFIL that the Defence Forces has continued to this day. The deployment of a battalion to UNIFIL marked a significant milestone for the Defence Forces, being the largest deployment undertaken since the Congo over a decade previously.

It was the largest force that Ireland had ever deployed to a peacekeeping mission in the Middle East, and UNIFIL would remain Ireland's largest overseas mission for the next two decades. It also represented a renewed commitment to peacekeeping, which had been overshadowed by the outbreak of the Troubles in Northern Ireland in 1969. UNIFIL would also become the most costly overseas mission for the Defence Forces, as 47 Irishmen would make the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace in South Lebanon.

In the 40 years since the establishment of UNIFIL the Defence Forces have brought a uniquely Irish brand of peacekeeping, founded on compassion, fortitude and good humour, to a complex and volatile part of the world. The early years of UNIFIL were costly for the Defence Forces as battalions adapted to the political and military realities of South Lebanon. In April 1980 the small village of At Tiri was forever imprinted on the collective memory of Irish personnel. Clashes with the Israeli-backed SLA/DFF for control of the village resulted in the deaths of Pte Stephen Griffin, a Fijian peacekeeper and an SLA militiaman.

On 18th April a UN patrol was abducted by the SLA and Pte Derek Smallhorne and Pte Thomas Barrett were tortured and killed in revenge for the death of the militiaman. Pte John O'Mahony was

wounded in the incident and later recounted what had taken place.

The continued existence of the SLA and the second Israeli invasion, in 1982, meant that Irish personnel found themselves serving behind Israeli lines, where they operated checkpoints, conducted patrols, distributed humanitarian aid and assisted the local civilian population. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s Irish battalions provided support and assistance to communities across their area



Members of 217 IrishFinnbatt conducting RTA training in UNP 2-45. Photo: Military Officer Tiia Turunen, Finnish Defence Forces

of operations (AO), and a particularly strong connection developed with Tibnine Orphanage, which continues today. The kindness and warmth of Irish soldiers has lived long in the memories of people across South Lebanon.

With decreasing hostilities in the area and the confirmation of withdrawal of Israeli forces in 2000, the original mandate had largely been achieved, and in 2001 Ireland withdrew its infantry battalion from UNIFIL, although a small number of personnel remained with the mission headquarters in Naqoura.

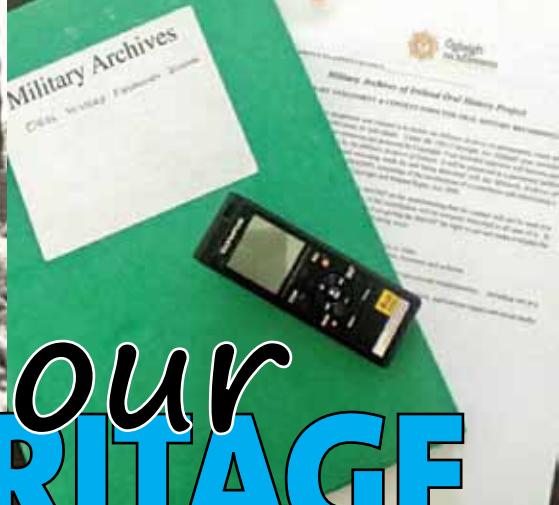
Following the 2006 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the Defence Forces was called upon to return in force to South Lebanon. A brief deployment of Irish troops in 2006/7 was followed by a sustained return to UNIFIL as part of a joint Finnish/Irish battalion in 2011.

While initially operating from Camp Shamrock in Tibnin, IrishFinnBatt moved to operate from a patrol base (UNP 2-45) near At Tiri, where it continues to be based today. The battalion also manned two posts overlooking the Blue Line, UNP 6-50 and UNP 6-52. Despite these changes to their AO, Irish personnel undertook their duties in the same manner that has characterised their peacekeeping operations since 1958.

Today the Defence Forces, in the form of 111 Inf Bn, remains committed to UNIFIL, with 336 Irish personnel serving with 217 IrishFinnbatt in UNPs 2-45 and 6-52. The DF also has personnel stationed in Sector West Headquarters in Shama and UNIFIL HQ in Naqoura.

The respect in which Irish peacekeepers are held within UNIFIL is exemplified by the appointment of Maj Gen Michael Beary as force commander in 2017.

In March 2018, Finland officially announced that it would end its involvement with IrishFinnbatt as of November 2018, and would instead focus on its commitment to the Force Commander's Reserve (FCR). This announcement signals the end of a seven-year partnership between the two nations. The decision regarding what form Ireland's involvement will take after the Finnish element withdraw has yet to be confirmed; whether UNIFIL will see the return of Irishbatt or whether a new strategic partner will be forthcoming. However, what is certain is that the high standards of peacekeeping set in the early days of Ireland's involvement with UNIFIL, and continued today through 111th Inf Bn, will be upheld into the future. ■



Preserving our LEBANON HERITAGE

BY CAPT DANIEL AYIOTIS, OIC MILITARY ARCHIVES

On 5th March 2018 a team travelled to UN Post 2-45 in At Tiri, South Lebanon - the home of the Irish contingent in UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) - to collect material for the Military Archives Oral History Project (MAOHP).

First, some background. On 9th November 2017 Military Archives officially launched the MAOHP, a project initiated in 2015 with the aim of digitally recording memory, oral history and tradition associated with the Defence Forces since its inception. By the time this article goes to print we will have gathered an estimated 170 interviews.

The latter half of the 20th century has seen a shift in archival thought, away from seeing the archive as a monolith of bureaucratic evidence forming the one 'official' narrative to viewing it as a contested space, characterised by competing narratives, with some dominant, and others subdued, suppressed or hidden. The job of the archivist is to ensure that all of these narratives find their way into the archive.

Oral history is the natural fit for such work by Military Archives, and the memories of people involved with the Defence Forces' presence in Lebanon over the last 40 years are voices that need to be captured.

The idea of conducting oral history interviews in Lebanon was something that had cropped up during project meetings and around the canteen table. We all viewed this as a natural and necessary avenue to pursue. The *raison d'être* of the MAOHP is to capture the first-hand accounts of the people who have been a part of Ireland's military history and our role in Lebanon is a significant element of this.

Recording and archiving the experiences of military personnel through oral testimony is not a new concept. While Military Archives has collected oral histories on an ad hoc basis since the 1980s, with precedents as far back to the 1940s, the MAOHP is the first organised, dedicated and systematic attempt to collect such material.

A lot of preparation was required in the weeks prior to deployment. Hardware, including laptops, dictaphones and external storage devices had to be tested, and a workflow designed to include file naming conventions and protocols for post-interview transfer and multiple backup of recordings. Consideration needed to be given to the legal aspects of the interviewee consent form and issues surrounding data protection and any potentially defamatory statements that could be recorded. We also had to consider the ethical issues



surrounding the potential for traumatic memories to be recalled by interviewees, and a protocol should this occur.

On the morning of 5 March 2018 the team, comprising myself, Sgt David 'Ned' Kelly (Admin and Records Management Sgt), Cpl Michael Whelan (Air Corps Museum curator, and the most experienced MAOHP interviewer), Noelle Grothier (MAOHP lead archivist), and Lisa Dolan (archivist), departed Dublin for Beirut. We arrived at UN Post 2-45 at about 2:30am and settled in for a few hours sleep.

The first day began with camp familiarisation, setting up our office space and interview rooms, and a welcome from the commanding officer. Capt Ciarán Carey (MP Det) was our point of contact for the week, and we were afforded every facility, assistance and courtesy possible.

Most of our interviews were with Lebanese civilian and we were extremely happy with these, as while there is no shortage of literature about the Defence Forces in Lebanon, these interviews captured rare insights into the opinions, feelings and experiences of the Lebanese themselves, covering events as intimate as sharing a childhood home in Tibnine with the first Irish soldiers in Lebanon; harrowing experiences of civil war and occupation; expressions of sympathies and opinions that may not sit easily with some listeners; and local perspectives on the wider geo-political situation in the Middle East.

We also captured the testimonies of two of Irishbatt's Finnish and Estonian colleagues, as well as the in-theatre impressions of some Irish UNIFIL first timers and seasoned veterans.

The trip also provided an opportunity for the two civilian archivists to familiarise themselves with the Irish area of operations with visits to Irish/Finnish outposts located along the Lebanon/Israel border and Tibnine, a location central to the story of the Irish in Lebanon. During these visits Sgt Owen McCarthy proved an exceptional tour guide, sharing his wealth of experience and knowledge with the team. This brief experience of life in the Irish AO, seeing things in action that they had previously only read about in archival documents, has greatly expanded and deepened our archivists' understanding of the Defence Forces' work overseas and enhances their capacity to interpret and appraise Military Archives' overseas records.

By the end of the week we were already discussing the merits and possibilities of having archivists deploy regularly to mission areas. In the immediate term, however, there was still the matter of post-interview processing back in Ireland: preserving the recordings on our server, preparing time-coded thematic abstracts (the most time consuming part) to make them usable for research, and identifying material deemed currently unsuitable for release

MAOHP Team visit the memorial to Irish Defence Forces personnel who died in Lebanon. (l/r) Sgt Owen McCarthy, Noelle Grothier, Sgt David 'Ned' Kelly Lisa Dolan and Cpl Michael Whelan



MAOHP Team (l/r) Cpl Michael Whelan, Noelle Grothier, Lisa Dolan, Capt Daniel Ayiotis and Sgt David 'Ned' Kelly



into the public domain. Most importantly, we left appreciating the significance of what had been achieved; that we had been involved with something that was not only a first for Military Archives but a first for Ireland and our military heritage. ■

INTERVIEW EXTRACTS



Imad Lalous, Mayor of Ain Ebel, reflecting on the SLA and the murder of Ptes Smallhorn and Barrett

"The South Lebanese Army, during a certain period, was very much needed. Especially for the Christian villages, and for defending the area against the Palestinians. We all know that there was problems with South Lebanese Army and UNIFIL, and we know that there was some sad accidents...especially with the Irish. Some soldiers were killed in [prolonged pause] a very bad way. I remember when the Irish soldiers were killed here. The Christian villages and the Christian soldiers in the SLA were very much angry. It reached a point where it could have led to a fight within the SLA because people were not approving of that incident. It was very bad days."



Bassima Fawaz, Language Assistant, remembers the first Irish troops arriving in the village of Tibnine

"I remember in 1978 there was a political decision [UN Resolution] 425 for UNIFIL to come to Lebanon for six months. In the six months some [Irish] officers came to my parents' house, who live in the suburb of the village, asking to rent a part of my family house. My father accepted and the Irish troops started coming in, they brought their baggage and suddenly the house is full with soldiers! I remember, I think I was about 10 years old... We were during the Israeli occupation, we had very restricted movement, we couldn't go out. We were happy seeing new faces! After, I found out my mother started to cook. She said, 'I have to feed those people! They're so young! They're so hungry!' They (the Irish) shared our happiness and our sadness at the same time."



The famous 'Rosie' from Baraachit, on President McAleese's visit to her shop

"She came twice to Lebanon after she met me. I hear now she's living in Longford in a big house...anyway, sure fair play to her, no harm! She was out here in 1998, I think, maybe '99, it was the first time she came to Lebanon, and she came to Baraachit to C Company. She was there and she came down to the shop. She was there for about fifteen minutes... and there's a guy from Longford – I don't have to mention his name [proceeds to mention name – both laugh] and he says 'She spends only five minutes with us and she spends twenty minutes with you!' [Laughter]

UNITED NATIONS TRUCE SUPERVISION ORGANISATION (UNTSO)

BY LT COL DAVID FOLEY, CHIEF LIAISON OFFICER TO CAIRO (LOC), UNTSO

"The pursuit of 'saving the world' (peace and progress) cannot end in a few years in victory or defeat. The pursuit of saving the world, with its trials and errors, its successes and setbacks, can never be relaxed and never abandoned." – Dag Hammarskjold

For the 12 Irish officers proudly serving with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) today there is great resonance in this quote from Dag Hammarskjold who was UN Secretary General when the first Irish peacekeepers deployed as a team of five officers to United Nations Observer Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL) 60 years ago on 28th June 1958. When the UNOGIL mission ended that December two of those officers, Col Justin McCarthy and Comdt Desmond Jordan (an Air Corps officer) were headhunted by UNTSO and they became the first Irish officers to serve with the mission. Ireland has since maintained an unbroken commitment to UNTSO, which remains the longest overseas mission for the Defence Forces and the United Nations.

The International Day of the Peacekeeper on 29th May coincides with the initiation of UNTSO, the first and longest running UN peacekeeping mission, which was founded on the observer group deployed to assist the mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict under UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 50 of 29th May 1948. This was a fortnight after Britain relinquished its mandate over Palestine, the state of Israel was proclaimed, and hostilities had commenced with Arab states. UNTSO was formally established to support the parties' implementation of the Armistice Agreements under UNSCR 73 (1949).

Following the wars of 1956, 1967 and 1973, and numerous inter-state and intra-state conflicts in the region since, the functions of the observers changed with the changed circumstances, but they remained in the area, acting as go-betweens for hostile parties and as the means by which isolated incidents could be contained and prevented from escalating into major conflicts. It must be remembered that 51 UNTSO personnel have lost their lives in the cause of peace, including Comdt Thomas Wickham (7th June 1967) and Comdt Michael Nestor (25th September 1982).

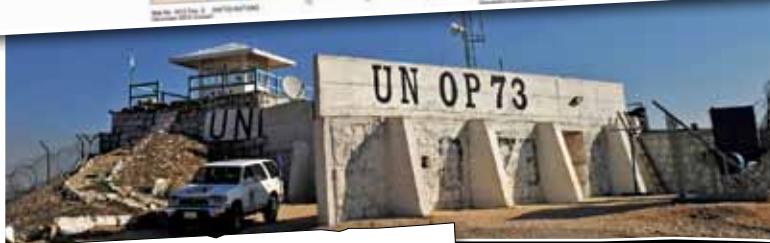
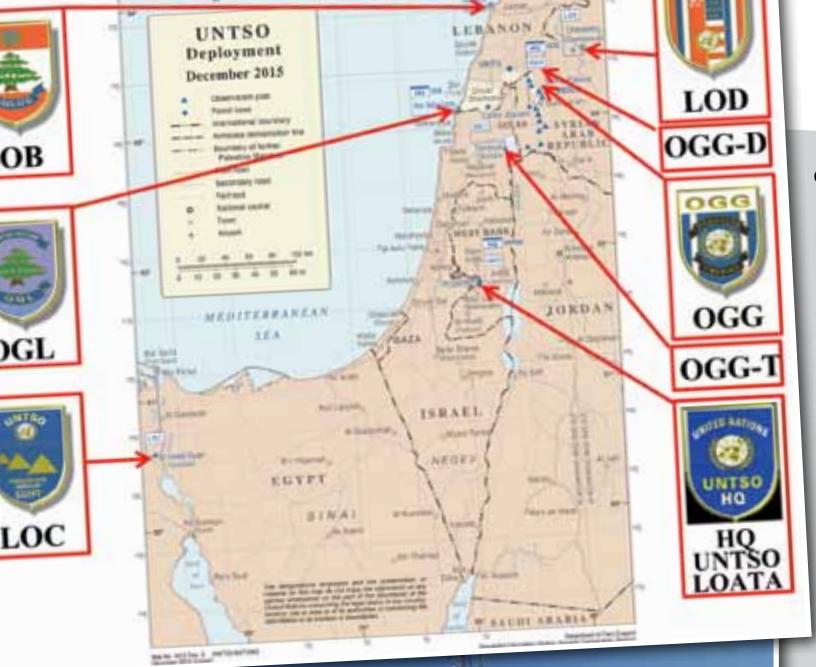
UNTSO military observers will remain in the Middle East until a regional settlement is achieved. The mission's regional mandate is unique, covering the five parties to the Armistice Agreements, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic, and UNTSO activities are spread over these five states.

Its two core functions today are maintaining the regional liaison architecture and also, with two groups of UNTSO military observers serving under UNDOF in Syria and the Israeli-Occupied Golan, and under UNIFIL in Lebanon, assisting those missions in mandate implementation. UNTSO also maintains liaison offices in Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem (also covering Tel Aviv and Jordan), and Ismailia (covering Cairo and also conducting liaison in the southern Sinai).

All 152 UNTSO military observers, drawn from 25 countries, are unarmed and, given the gravity of the job in hand, all are experienced officers.

Notwithstanding the fact that the breadth and depth of previous overseas experience is an influencing factor in the selection of the Irish officers there is a considerable amount of additional training necessary. The pre-deployment and in-mission training is designed to best prepare and qualify those officers for the diverse range of roles in an environment that demands self-sufficiency and the capability to operate independently, if required, while also being able to work as an integral member of a multi-tasking, multinational team.

The training cycle commences in Ireland with the mandatory requirement to complete the three-week Overseas Qualification Course. All officers must also deploy with a licence to drive an armoured jeep, which involves many additional weeks of training.



(l-r) Comdt Shane Courtney, Maj Gen Kieran Brennan, Minister Keogh, Col Kajanmaa, Irish Ambassador to Israel Alison Kelly, Capt Dónal Gallagher, Mr Ciaran Murphy, Comdt Aileen Keating and UNTSO Chief Security Officer Mr Ronan Corcoran. Photo: Comdt Shane Courtney



then deploy to their respective group (OGL, OGG or OOG-T) and commence the induction training specific to their Group mission area.

One week later the officer begins the process of on-the-job training while operational on an observation post or patrol base. Usually after one week, the officer completes Senior Observer Test (SOT) 1 and within another six weeks of developing their practical knowledge and understanding of the mission area, as well as the functions of the military observer, they have successfully completed SOT 2; all before finally completing SOT 3 to qualify as HQ duty officer. Later, in preparation for possible selection as a staff officer, there is a requirement to complete a specific Staff Officer Test. The time invested in training is important to ensure the highest levels of standardisation and it is also invaluable in the development of a positive team dynamic, especially when the most recently qualified officer has responsibility for assisting and supporting the on-the-job training of the next batch of newcomers.

While all Irish officers deploy to UNTSO initially on a one-year

Current Disposition of Irish officers in UNTSO:
UNTSO HQ, Jerusalem: one commandant, one captain.
Observer Group Golan (OGG), UNDOF HQ, Camp Zouina, Syria: two commandants.
Observer Group Golan - Damascus (OGG-D), Camp Yarfour, Syria: one commandant.
Observer Group Golan - Tiberias (OGG-T), Israeli-Occupied Golan Heights: one commandant, one captain.
Observer Group Lebanon (OGL), UNIFIL HQ, Naqura, Lebanon: four commandants.
Liaison Officer Cairo (LOC), Ismailia, Egypt: one lieutenant colonel.

After the initial four days of mission induction training, conducted during the first week of each month in UNTSO HQ in Jerusalem, officers

deployment the great majority are successful in extending for an additional year, dependent upon operational requirements. On average there is a deployment of one Irish officer to UNTSO every two months. Within their two-year deployment the officers normally serve in a range of appointments, starting with the fundamental job of a military observer on an observation post or on mobile patrols, and then ranging to the responsibilities of staff appointments within Group HQ, and for many the opportunity to serve in key staff appointments in UNTSO HQ.

The two-year tour of duty is arguably very long but as it involves experiencing different appointments within the Group mission area, and, for many, within the wider region, it proves to be a truly unique and professionally enhancing experience, unparalleled in any other current Irish overseas deployment.

Working in such a diverse multinational environment is always interesting and the Irish officers are universally respected, particularly because of the prevalence of Irish officers in key leadership roles and staff appointments. In recent years Maj Gen Michael Finn (retd) led the mission as Chief of Staff/Head of Mission between July 2013 and July 2015; a position previously held by senior Irish officers on four separate occasions. More recently Col Eamonn Caulfield (retd) served as Deputy Chief of Staff from September 2015 until September 2017.

The current UNTSO Chief of Security is Comdt Ronan Corcoran, who, owing to his extensive mission experience (two previous two-year tours of duty with UNTSO), was invited to fill this key leadership appointment.

Most recently Comdt Peter Ott filled the appointment of Chief of Observer Group Lebanon for six months and some 35 years after an Irish officer last served as Chief of Observer Group Egypt there is an Irish officer back in Ismailia as Chief Liaison Officer Cairo from

October 2017 until October 2018.

Next month Lt Col Denis Hanly will take over the key appointment of Chief Joint Operations Centre (CJOC) in UNTSO HQ in Jerusalem. Currently, Irish officers are also serving in the appointments of Deputy Chief OGL, Deputy Chief OGG-D, operations and logistics appointments in HQ OGG, Training Officer in OGG-T, and Mission Logistics Officer and Mission Information Officer in UNTSO HQ.

The tasks and responsibilities of the officers serving with UNTSO can be challenging but are hugely rewarding. The hope is that all who are serving in UNTSO and the other UN missions in the Middle East will continue to demonstrate the same commitment, efficiency and professionalism that has been the hallmark of UN personnel, and that they all, and in particular our Irish officers, will return home safe and well with invaluable overseas experience when their tours of duty are over.

UNTSO has 70 years of hard work at the fault lines of Middle Eastern conflicts, and with a philosophy of 'good work done, more to do' will continue its mandate efforts until a peaceful regional settlement has been found. The Irish officers who take great pride in their service in UNTSO will continue that same committed and professional 'cool, calm and collected' legacy of the hundreds of Irish officers who for the past 60 years have served in UNTSO, working to resolve disputes, reduce tensions, and liaise with the parties to avoid the recurrence of conflict. ■

UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE (UNDOF)

BY COMDT PADRAIG BRENNAN, SSO MEDIA & PR, UNDOF HQ

On 16th July 2013 the Defence Forces received authorisation from the government to deploy a light mechanised infantry group to serve in the Golan Heights with UNDOF, and 43 Inf Gp deployed to the mission two months later, in September, to take up the role of Force Reserve Company (FRC). Since then, over a thousand Defence Forces personnel have served on the Golan.

The infantry groups deployed by the Defence Forces have a wide range of capabilities and support elements, including armoured force protection, patrolling and mobility, surveillance, communications, medical, engineering and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD).

A Force Commander's asset, the FRC's primary responsibility is to maintain a quick-reaction force (QRF), a small, highly mobile, mechanised force that can respond at short notice to a changing operational environment. The effectiveness of this force was seen in 2014 when the QRF came to the aid of Filipino peacekeepers surrounded by insurgents in a UN position and evacuated them to safety while taking fire.

The FRC is a key component in the mission successfully achieving its Security Council assigned mandate and is an essential element in ensuring the safety and security of UN personnel deployed to the area.

On 6th October 1973, war erupted in the Middle East between Egypt and Israel in the Suez Canal area and the Sinai, and between Israel and Syria in the Golan Heights. On 24th October, as fighting between Egypt and Israel reached a critical stage, the Security Council established the United Nations Emergency Force II (UNEF II), which was immediately deployed between the Israeli and Egyptian armies in the Suez Canal area. While its arrival effectively stabilised the situation, no new peacekeeping operation was established on the Syrian front.

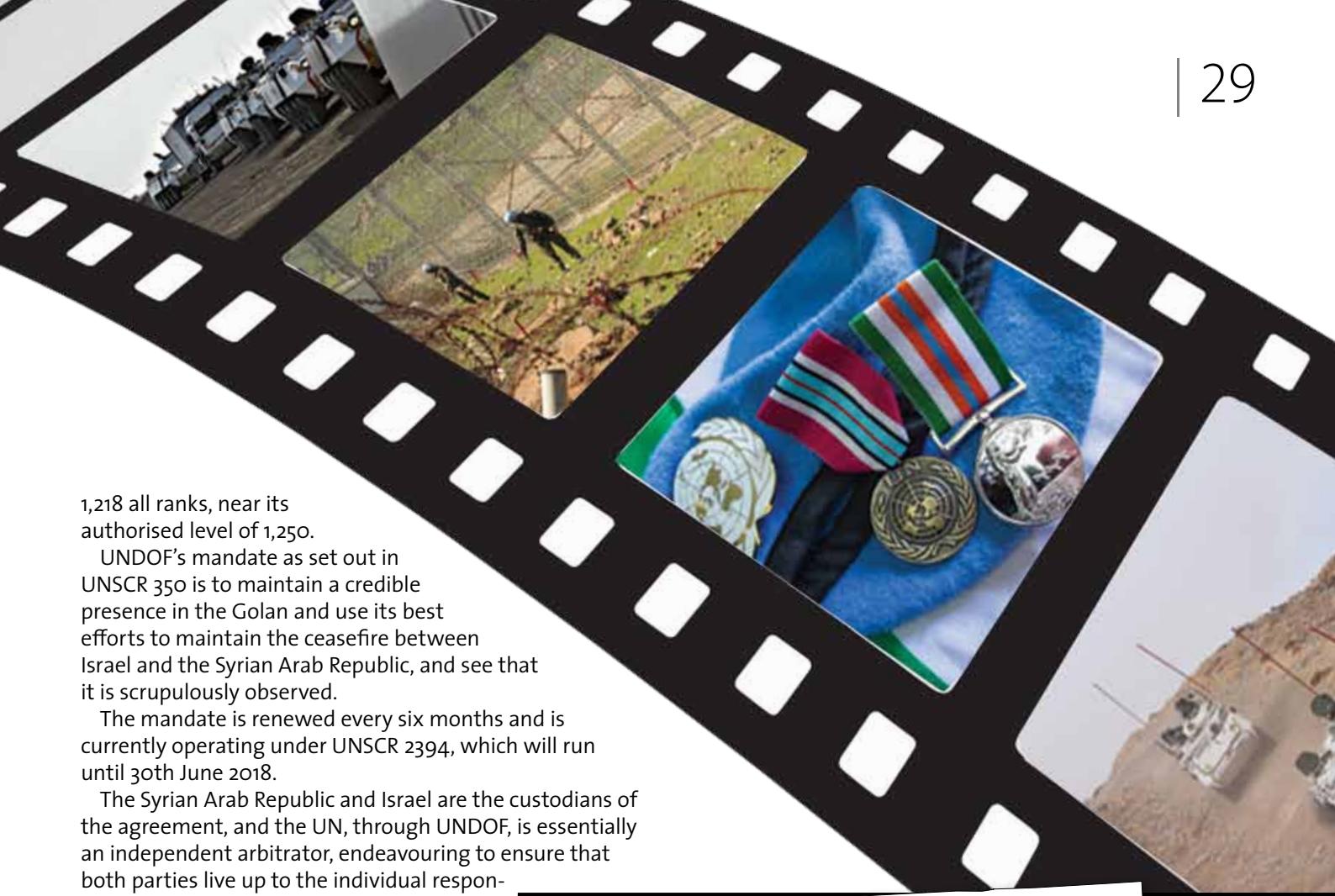
Therefore, in the Israel-Syria sector tensions remained high, and in March 1974 the situation became increasingly unstable.

Against this background, the United States undertook a diplomatic initiative that resulted in the conclusion of an agreement on disengagement between Israeli and Syrian forces. The agreement provided for an area of separation and for two equal zones of limited forces and armaments on both sides, and called for the establishment of a UN observer force to supervise its implementation.

The agreement was signed on 31st May 1974 and, on the same day, the Security Council adopted UNSCR 350 (1974), which set up the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force. By 16th June 1974, the strength of UNDOF stood at



FRC conduct a medical emergency contingency operation



1,218 all ranks, near its authorised level of 1,250.

UNDOF's mandate as set out in UNSCR 350 is to maintain a credible presence in the Golan and use its best efforts to maintain the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, and see that it is scrupulously observed.

The mandate is renewed every six months and is currently operating under UNSCR 2394, which will run until 30th June 2018.

The Syrian Arab Republic and Israel are the custodians of the agreement, and the UN, through UNDOF, is essentially an independent arbitrator, endeavouring to ensure that both parties live up to the individual responsibilities they committed to in their agreement. UNDOF endeavours to maintain the status quo between Syria and Israel pending a final political solution.

The commencement of the current conflict in Syria in 2011 has presented a considerable challenge to UNDOF and its personnel. This challenge culminated in 2014 when the decision was made to withdraw UNDOF from Bravo-side operations. However, since 14th November 2016, operations have recommenced in Syria with the incremental return to Camp Faouar and Bravo-side operations.

The UNDOF area of operations is located on the Golan Heights and consists of an area of separation (AOS) and an area of limitation (AOL). Intended to be an UNDOF-only zone, the AOS is enclosed by two boundaries, east and west, referred to as the Alpha and Bravo lines in which no military deployment by Israel and Syria is allowed. The AOL is three lines of 10km, 20km and 25km on either side of the AOS in which only certain levels of troops and armaments are allowed.

In October 2017, 56 Inf Gp rotated into the mission area, under the command of Lt Col Dermot Hanifin. The unit contains 130 personnel of all ranks (14 officers, 115 enlisted personnel and a chaplain) drawn from 27 units of the Defence Forces. Over a third of the unit (44 personnel) were on their first overseas mission. They were replaced in April 2018 by 57 Inf Gp, under the leadership of Lt Col Mark Brownen.

UNDOF Force Commander and Head of Mission Maj Gen Francis Vib-Sanziri viewing the Irish Force Reserve Company's (FRC) medal parade ceremony on 15th March 2018. The FRC is made of members from the 56th Inf Gp under the command of Lt Col Dermot Hanifin. Photo: UNDOF



The deployment of Irish troops in 2013 was not Ireland's first involvement with UNDOF. In June 1997, former Defence Forces Chief of Staff Lt Gen Dave Stapleton was appointed as UNDOF Force Commander and Head of Mission. Stationed in UNDOF HQ Camp Faouar, Syria, Lt Gen Stapleton served in this appointment until August 1998.

Col Tony Hanlon also served with UNDOF, as an acting brigadier general, holding the appointment of Deputy Force Commander from September 2014 until March 2016.

Recently, Col Michael Dawson was appointed UNDOF Chief of Staff. He is the Senior National Representative and is one of eight DF officers currently serving in UNDOF HQ. ■

MINURSO WESTERN SAHARA

BY COMDT THOMAS BOUCHIER, SIO MINURSO

Mission des Nations Unies pour l'Organisation d'un Référendum au Sahara Occidental

(MINURSO), known in English as the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, was established in 1991 by UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 690 in accordance with settlement proposals accepted on 30th August 1988 by Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente Polisario).

The settlement plan, as approved by the Security Council, provides for a transitional period for the preparation of a referendum in which the people of Western Sahara will choose between independence and integration with Morocco.

MINURSO was originally mandated to monitor the ceasefire; verify the reduction of Moroccan troops in the territory; monitor the confinement of Moroccan and Frente Polisario troops to designated locations; take steps with the parties to ensure the release of political prisoners or detainees; oversee the exchange of prisoners of war; repatriate refugees; identify and register qualified voters; organise and ensure a free and fair referendum; and reduce the threat of unexploded ordnance and mines.

While the organisation of the referendum has not been possible to date, other requirements of the mandate have been pursued successfully, such as monitoring the ceasefire and reducing the threat of mines and unexploded ordnance.



Western Sahara, on the north-west coast of Africa, is bordered by Morocco, Mauritania and Algeria. The people are a mixture of indigenous Berbers and Arab tribes whose direct ancestors can be traced back to the 15th century when tribes from Yemen crossed into North Africa and established themselves in the region.

The difficult environmental conditions and rough terrain encouraged the different tribes to coexist and live together. Later, the acceptance of Islam by the Berbers and the increasing strength of Arab culture gave the tribal people predominantly Arabic characteristics.

Traditionally, Saharans are essentially nomadic, pasturing livestock (camels and goats) in the sandy low-lying plains

and moving in accordance with the seasons, following routes dictated by wells and watering holes.

With little rainfall, Western Sahara's population depends on pastoral-nomadism, fishing, and phosphate mining as their principal sources of income, and most of the food for its urban populations must be imported. All trade and other economic activities are controlled by the Moroccan government.

Western Sahara was a Spanish colony until 1976, and following Spain's withdrawal both Morocco and Mauritania asserted historic claims to the territory. These claims were opposed by the Frente Polisario, which is supported by Algeria.

War between Morocco and Mauritania led to Mauritania withdrawing all claims to the territory in 1979 and the conflict from then centred on Morocco's 'reintegration' of the territory and Frente Polisario's resistance. The UN has been seeking a settlement since Spain withdrew, and in 1979 the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) also became active in seeking a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Secretary General's report S/22464, which further detailed the implementation plan.

Since MINURSO's deployment in September 1991 the ceasefire has generally held and the political situation in Western Sahara has seen some positive developments in recent years, such as the passing of UNSCR 2285, calling on the parties to the conflict to continue to show political will in order to enter into a more intensive and substantive



In 1990, the UN Security Council approved the Secretary General's report S/21360 containing the full text of the settlement proposals and the outline of the Secretary General's implementation plan. On 29th April 1991, UNSCR 690 established MINURSO in accordance with the

phase of negotiations.

MINURSO tirelessly monitors the ceasefire and continues to adapt its structure to emerging needs, as well as improving the logistic and passive protection of its team sites.

The mission HQ is in Laayoune, with regional headquarters in the northern and southern sectors of the territory. A liaison office was also established in Tindouf, Algeria, to maintain contact with the Algerian authorities and Frente Polisario.

MINURSO, which faces unique challenges from the terrain and climate, has military observers (UNMOs) from 37 countries, and is the only mission where UNMOs are extensively trained on the ground and have their performance evaluated by a Patrol Leader Qualification Test before performing as MINURSO observers.

The UNMOs' basic duties and responsibilities include observing, reporting, patrolling, observation point procedures, verification and monitoring, investigation and inspection, briefing procedures, and team leading.

The Defence Forces has been involved in MINURSO since the 1990s and currently has three officers serving with the mission: Comdt Thomas Bouchier, Capt Shane Brennan and Capt James Mulderrig. ■



CURRENT MISSIONS



1	UNHQ	New York
2	CSDP*	Brussels
	CSDP Support	
3	UNOCI	Côte d'Ivoire
4	MINURSO	Western Sahara
5	MONUC	Congo
6	EU-BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
7	KFOR	Kosovo
8	UNTSO	Jerusalem (HQ)
9	UNIFIL	Lebanon
10	UNDOF	Golan Heights
11	EUTM	Mali
12	EUNAVFOR	Operation Sophia

*Each CSDP Operation is identified with a different clasp

MISSIONS



DEFENCE FORCES OVERSEAS MISSIONS

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC of the Congo

BY COMDT MICHAEL HOSBACK



Capt Eoin Murphy pictured in MONUSCO DRC in November 2017.

The UN Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) was launched on 1st July 2010 as a successor to the MONUC mission. It is authorised to use all necessary means to carry out its mandate to protect civilians, humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders under imminent threat of physical violence, and to support the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in its stabilisation and peace consolidation efforts.

Uniquely, MONUSCO is the only current UN operation in which the 'force intervention brigade' concept is utilised. The Force Intervention Brigade is a force commander's asset that is designed to enable the conduct of offensive operations against armed elements threatening safety and security.

External interference in the DRC's affairs has been a consistent feature of the country's history, mainly driven by the goal of accessing the country's huge wealth of natural resources. (A Congolese mine produced the uranium for the Manhattan Project, which developed the first atomic bomb, and today Congo is one of the world's leading producers of coltan, a metallic ore used in the production of smartphone technology, laptops, tablets and electric cars.) After the Rwandan genocide, which had security implications spilling over the border into the DRC, various government, rebel and armed group elements continued to battle for control of these resources in a conflict that eventually became known as the Great War in Africa. It eventually involved nine sub-Saharan countries and resulted in the deaths of an estimated six million people. MONUC's and subsequent MONUSCO mandates were enacted to enforce the peace terms that ended that conflict.

Ireland first contributed to UN peacekeeping operations in the Congo in 1960 when 32 Inf Bn was deployed in response to a UN request for participation in a peacekeeping mission after violence erupted following Congolese independence from Belgium and the secession of Katanga, a mineral-rich province in southern Congo, from the new state. This was the first large-scale overseas mission for the Defence Forces and the significance of the deployment to both the DF and the country has been widely referenced in recent years with the well-deserved recogni-

tion of Congo veterans. DF personnel have served in all subsequent Congo missions.

As a result the Congo has taken its place in the psyche of the Defence Forces. One of the most rewarding elements of the latest deployment to the area is being able to put a place to names like Lubumbashi (formerly Elisabethville, and the location of the Battle of the Tunnel) and Likasi (formerly Jadotville). Irish troops serving with MONUSCO have also visited the site of the Niemba massacre.

There are currently four Irish personnel deployed to the mission area, but downsizing as a result of budget reductions and other considerations means this will shortly be reduced to three. All Irish personnel are deployed in Goma in eastern DRC, which borders Rwanda and has been the scene of numerous instances of intense fighting over the past 15 years.

A commandant is employed as Deputy Chief of the Joint Operations Centre (JOC), which is responsible for the co-ordination of military and civilian (UN civilians and other agencies) operations, reporting directly to the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General. The JOC also has a specific and critical role in crisis management response. This is normally related to an event involving an attack by armed elements on UN personnel or members of the civilian population when the mission response will need to be co-ordinated directly with New York.

Another JOC task involves responding to eruptions of the Nyiragongo Volcano, on whose slopes Goma sits. This response has been required twice in the past number of years.

Two captains are employed in the G2 cell. One works as an armed group analyst, providing critical real-time information to the mission leadership on the most significant armed group currently operating in eastern Congo. In recent months, particularly as the security situation has deteriorated, this appointment and the presence of a subject matter expert has been critical to the formulation of MONUSCO's response to a number of critical incidents.

The other G2 captain is an artillery-specific appointment whose role is that of Targeting Officer in the Intelligence, Surveillance, Targeting and Reconnaissance Cell. This is a highly technical appointment that requires detailed knowl-

edge of the capabilities of UAVs and how their output can be incorporated into the targeting cycle, as for a number of years now MONUSCO has successfully utilised UAVs to record the presence and movement of armed groups to feed into the planning process for the Force Intervention Brigade.

The other DF appointment, captain in the Information Operations cell, is the one that will shortly be handed over to another contingent. The main role of this appointment is

and governance apparatus on the part of the host nation. In December 2017 an attack by an armed group on the Semuliki COB outside Beni in North Kivu province resulted in the deaths of 15 UN peacekeepers and the wounding of an additional 56. Irish personnel were closely involved in the response to this event and will continue to fill an important role in the mission in the run up to scheduled elections in December of 2018. ■

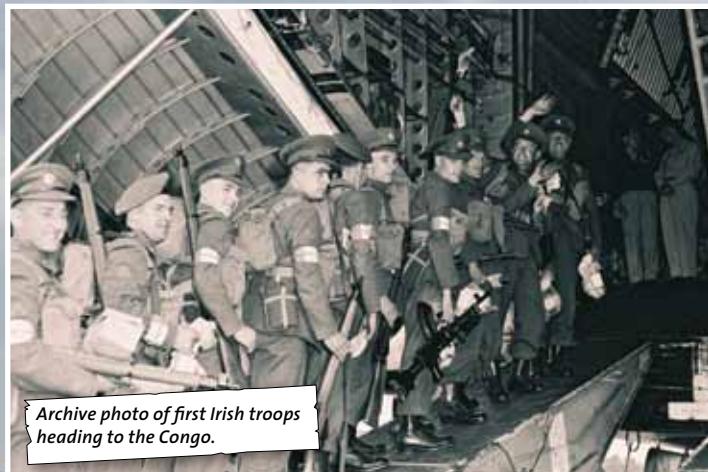


The Nyiragongo Volcano, taken from a UN airbase on 12th March 2018.

targeting the local population and members of the various armed groups with MONUSCO messaging. Within the past year, for example, a batch text-messaging system has been brought online so that, in co-ordination with the service provider, MONUSCO can send brief messages directly to target audiences to support the conduct of operations. This tool was employed within the past number of months to aid in the search for a Tanzanian soldier who was (and remains) MIA post-contact with an armed group.

The current security outlook for the Congo is, unfortunately, not positive. The president, Laurent Kabil, has served his constitutionally-permissible two terms in office but has not so far vacated his position, citing security concerns and the difficulties of holding elections in the current environment. His refusal to step down has resulted in significantly increased activity from state-sponsored armed groups in the country's volatile eastern border region. The UN has declared a level-three humanitarian emergency, its highest level of classification, in the region.

MONUSCO continues to attempt to bring security to a country the size of Western Europe against a reducing fiscal envelope and partnered with ineffective national security



Archive photo of first Irish troops heading to the Congo.



Archive photo where 'A' Coy, 36th Inf Bn fought the Battle of the Tunnel.



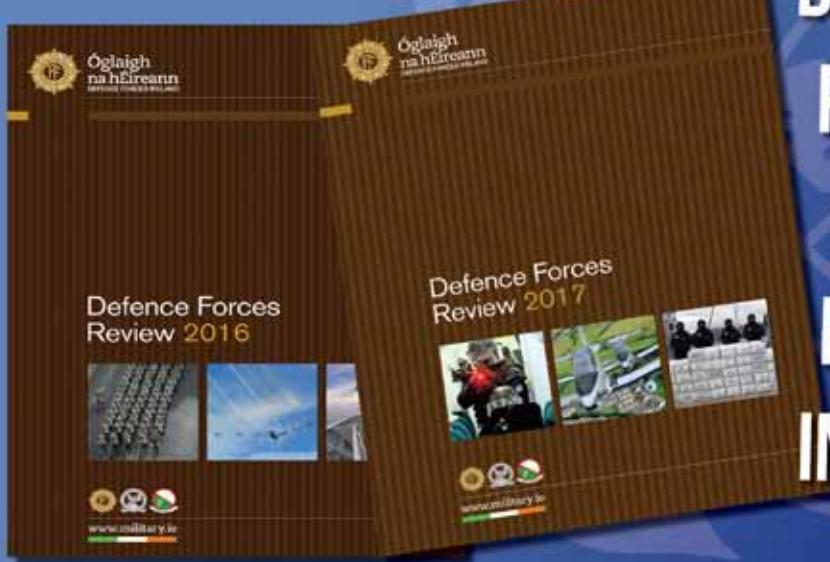
Members of the 32nd Inf Bn being airlifted to the Congo.



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OÉ Gaillimh
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WILD ATLANTIC WAY
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EU TRAINING MISSION

BY LT THOMAS MCRAE ROE

Unrest in Mali stems from a 2012 Tuareg separatist uprising that broke out during the instability that followed a military coup. The rebellion was partly an unintended consequence of Muammar Gaddafi's downfall in Libya. The Libyan 'blowback' took the form of an influx of Libyan weapons and the return of Tuaregs who formerly fought for the Libyan dictator. Those weapons and the presence of seasoned fighters tipped the balance. Mali's three largest northern cities, Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu were overrun by the rebels within three days.

The rebels drove back the government troops in the north and started imposing Sharia law. The situation was exploited by jihadists, and more than a dozen of Timbuktu's holy shrines, built in the 15th and 16th centuries, when the city was revered as a centre of Islamic learning, were destroyed in a campaign against idolatry by groups linked to al-Qaeda.

The Malian government asked for foreign military help to retake the north, and on 11th January 2013, the French military began Operation Serval against the Islamists. This led to the establishment of a UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, known by its French acronym MINUSMA, to support the Malian peace agreement by helping to restore state authority, advance diplomacy, strengthen security and promote human rights.

The restoration of a lasting peace in Mali is essential for long term stability in the Sahel region and, in a comprehensive sense, for Africa and Europe. At the request of the Malian government, and on the basis of UN resolutions (in particular UNSCR 2085), the member states of the EU agreed on 18th February 2013 to establish a mission to train the Malian Armed Forces (MaAF), within the framework of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy.

The mission objectives were to help the Malian authorities to restore constitutional and democratic order through the faithful implementation of the EU's 'road map' for the transition, adopted on 29th January 2013 by the National Assembly. This road map

includes free and transparent elections and a national inclusive dialogue, in addition to restoring state authority, law and order throughout the country, and neutralizing organised crime and terrorist threats.

The military training mission, EUTM Mali, was set up specifically to assist the MaAF through the provision of training and advice in command and control, logistics and human resources, as well as in international humanitarian law, and the protection of civilians and human rights.

EUTM Mali, with 581 personnel at present, has its multinational headquarters in Bamako, the capital of Mali, where the mission's force commander is located with his staff and advisors. The training camp, where the Education and Training Task Force is based, is 60km northeast of Bamako in Koulikoro, where the MaAF has a training centre that includes their Cadet School, NCO Training School and Soldier Training School. The camp has lecture halls, outdoor classrooms, living facilities, training areas, and a shooting range located on the north banks of the River Niger.

Comprising personnel from 21 member states, EUTM Mali is one of the elements of a global approach organised by the EU in Mali and defined within the strategy for security and development in the Sahel. The mission has a non-executive mandate; that is to say, the deployed servicemen and women do not participate in combat activities and do not accompany MaAF units on operations.

Since the mission was established in February 2013, EUTM Mali's mandate has evolved and responded to the operational needs of the MaAF as it encounters new threats. This includes training and advice on command and control for their company commander's courses. Courses conducted in the Koulikoro Training Centre include basic infantry, C-IED, communications, air base defence, medical, armoured vehicle operation, weapons, sniper training, leadership, and many more.



Lt Killian Owen, teaching a MaAF class on offensive tactics

MaAF after completing an urban exercise



Sgt Lee Bolger, Lt Killian Owens and Sgt Kieran Crawford with a MaAF Platoon after their airbase defence exercise

EUTM-Mali's current mandate, the third, has progressed to conducting decentralised training with combined mobile advisory and training teams (CMATTs) across the country. There is also the delivery of training on international humanitarian law, protection of civilians and human rights.

The mission established a support cell in Brussels to liaise with the different branches of the European External Affairs Service and officials from the EU's Common Defence and Security Policy.

Upon Malian request and in co-ordination with MINUSMA, EUTM also contributes to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process framed by the peace agreement by providing training sessions to facilitate the reconstruction of an inclusive MaAF.

In support of the MaAF, EUTM-Mali also supports the G5 Sahel Joint Force by contributing to the enhancement of co-ordination and interoperability within the G5 Sahel national armed forces.

EUTM-Mali's Education and Training Task Force has currently trained over 11,500 MaAF soldiers, and has provided ten CMATTs throughout Mali. An 11th CMATT is currently being concluded in the military town of Kati, 20km north of Bamako, which had a company of MaAF ranging from ground troops to tank crews. The four week CMATT focused on basic skills all the way up to 'training the trainers,' and learning is confirmed and reinforced by a combined MaAF exercise in the concluding week.

In addition, EUTM-Mali has trained eight ETIAs (battle groups) and retrained five more. The ETIA courses are mainly conducted in Koulikoro training facilities over an intense six-week programme.

The Defence Forces contributes a contingent of 20 personnel to six-month tours of duty. The DF has been involved in the mission since it began and is currently on its 11th contingent (IRCON 11) and its personnel hold some of the key appointments within EUTM-Mali, including SIO, EO ETTF and KTC Camp Commandant, Deputy Chief Instructor, training leaders and instructors, and roles in MovCon, J1, J4, and J6.

Troops selected for this mission come from all areas of the Defence Forces and IRCON 11 has troops from 2 Brigade, the Air Corps, and the DFTC. They include infantry, transport, CIS, logistics, engineering, and training unit personnel. Before serving with EUTM-Mali all troops must undertake a three-week Overseas Qualification course in the United Nations Training School Ireland, in the DFTC. This includes a Military First Responders course, and lectures on human rights and military law. Furthermore, they must complete a two-week specific training course for Mali, which focuses on C-IED, mine awareness, patrol drills, helicopter drills, foreign weapons, medical and SERE training.

When arriving in-theatre the troops quickly find themselves in temperatures ranging up into the 40°C. In the first week they receive a full handover while they acclimatise to their new environment.

The training team members from IRCON 11 are presently involved with CMATTs, a fusiliers course, and signals, topography, and engineer search courses. They are involved in training on weapons, basic tactics, signals, patrol drills, base defence, C-IED and urban fighting. Trainers have to quickly adapt to training requests from the MaAF and have to immerse themselves in the MaAF doctrine.

EUTM-Mali's fourth mandate is scheduled to begin on 18th May 2018.

Despite the interventions and the assistance committed to Mali unrest has grown, with jihadists groups targeting UN peacekeepers. MINUSMA, with more than 13,000 peacekeepers deployed, has become one of the most dangerous peace operations in UN history, and since 2013 over 160 peacekeepers have lost their lives in this north-west African conflict. Over the course of 2017 and 2018 the security situation in Mali has worsened and attacks against MINUSMA and Malian defence and security forces have increased and intensified.

Given the increasingly challenging nature of today's conflicts and the high number of recent peacekeeper casualties, the United Nations is actively engaged in seeking solutions that will reduce fatalities, improve the safety and security of our personnel, and improve the overall performance of UN peacekeeping operations in protecting the vulnerable and establishing peace. The crisis is very complex, with both humanitarian and security concerns, and a comprehensive solution will be required, not just one focused solely on counterterrorism to try to end the violence. ■



Sgt Lee Bolger teaching a MaAF class on Cam&Con

KFOR

KOSOVO FORCE

BY COMDT MICHAEL CULLEN, CHIEF INTERNAL INFORMATION, PA OFFICE, KFOR HQ

The Balkans: When two worlds collide, it can lead to a rich mixture of art and culture. Equally, there is great potential for fragmentation and conflict. As the Ottoman Empire expanded west in the 14th century, it was the Balkans where the Christian and Muslim worlds collided and then lived side by side for centuries; not always in conflict but often co-existing peacefully with a necessary fluidity.

The one constant in Balkan history has been change; the transience of peoples and transitions of power. Major regional powers, the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires, Italy, France, Germany, Russia and Britain, have shaped the Balkans that exists today, and Kosovo, located in the middle of the region, has played a part not necessarily in proportion to its small size.

During the fragmentation of the former Yugoslavia international attention was focused on the conflict between Croatia and Serbia, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, throughout this period another conflict was taking place in the then little known autonomous province of Kosovo.

Kosovo was established by the Ottomans in 1878 as a first line of defence on the western border of their fading empire. Later it was reshaped to deny Montenegro and Serbia a common land border, and extended beyond its current geographical boundaries. After the Balkans War in 1913, Kosovo was split between Montenegro and Serbia before becoming part of Yugoslavia after the First World War. In 1946 Kosovo became an autonomous province within Serbia, one of the six socialist republics in Tito's Yugoslavia.

Kosovo was always important to the Serbian community, as many of its primary religious sites, such as Decani and Gra-canica, are within Kosovo's borders. It also includes the site of a

pivotal battle in Serbian history, Kosovo Polje, where the Serbs were defeated by the invading Ottomans in 1389. This battle took on even greater significance for the Serbian community with the rise of Serbian nationalism in the nineteenth century. The monument to the battle, at Gazimestan on the outskirts of modern-day Pristina (Kosovo's capital), remains a hugely important historical site.

Kosovo shares a border with Albania and has long had a large majority population of ethnic Albanians. While Tito was alive ethnic nationalism within any part of Yugoslavia was suppressed in favour of the concept of *Brotherhood* between the communities. However, after Tito died in 1980 the *Brotherhood* nationalism began to rise, particularly in Serbia. In 1989, on the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo Polje, the president of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, made an historic speech in Gazimestan claiming that Kosovo belonged to the Serbs.

According to the renowned BBC series, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, this incident in Kosovo signalled the beginning of the breakup of Yugoslavia, in which the collection of republics and ethnic groups sundered into bloody conflict.

In 1990 Kosovo's autonomy was revoked and its provincial assembly dissolved by the Serb government. This resulted in the closure of all Kosovo Albanian establishments, such as schools and unions.





Initial accommodation structures in Camp Clarke. Photo: Pte Olan McCarthy, 1 Tpt Coy



Col Ray O'Lehan who will take over as OC Irish Contingent from Col Timmy Daly. The then Capt Ray O'Lehan was the first Irish member of EUMM sent to Kosovo from Bosnia in Nov 1999 as an observer.



1 Tpt Coy, KFOR convoy in Kosovo. Photo: An Cosantóir Archives

authorised by UN Resolution 1244, entered Kosovo.

Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008 has been recognised by a large majority of UN member states, including Ireland. Notable exceptions include Serbia, Russia, China, Greece and Romania.

KFOR Mandate: The 1999 agreement between KFOR and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and the Republic of Serbia allowed the NATO-led KFOR mission to deploy in Kosovo and for FRY and Serbian forces to cease hostilities and withdraw from Kosovo. The scope and nature of KFOR's role is determined by UNSCR 1244, which authorises member states to

Initially a peaceful resistance was adopted, but as resistance to Serb rule increased the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) emerged and began attacking Serbian security forces, who responded heavy-handedly against the population as a whole.

By 1997, with the situation in the remainder of the Balkans stabilising, the international community finally began to focus on Kosovo. Throughout 1998 international diplomacy sought to reign in Serb aggression, while NATO planners drew up plans for military intervention. In September UN Resolution 1199 highlighted an impending human catastrophe in Kosovo and demanded a ceasefire.

However, by March 1999 the violence was continuing and NATO began an aerial bombardment of Serb targets in Kosovo and Serbia. In June 1999 Serbia agreed to the G8 Peace Principles and began to withdraw its forces. NATO ended its air strikes and KFOR,

establish an international security presence in Kosovo to deter hostilities, and to provide a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement.

KFOR's mission also included, verifying and enforcing compliance with the various agreements, and to providing support to the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

The mission began on 12th June 1999 with 50,000 troops from 36 NATO and non-NATO nations, including Ireland. Its current strength is 4,000 personnel.

Defence Forces Involvement: In 1999, the DF's initial contribution to KFOR, comprising a transport/logistics company, with a fleet of articulated vehicles, DROPS vehicles, 4x4s and ancillary vehicles, under the command of Comdt Martin Gibson, entered Kosovo as part of the 23-mile long international military convoy.

The Irish unit, based in Camp Clarke, Lipljan, 15km south of Pristina, was situated in Multinational Brigade (MNB) Centre, and was under control of HQ KFOR. Its mission was to provide, on order, equipment and material lift to KFOR and to humanitarian organisations working with the UN. It also included assisting with the recovery of the bodies of many of the approximately 13,000 people killed in the conflict in Kosovo between 1998 and 2000.

In October 2003 DF involvement with KFOR changed when 8 Ir Tpt Coy was replaced by 27 Inf Gp, an APC-mounted infantry company, under the command of Lt Col Michael Finn.

(On 17th March 2004 the Irish unit was involved in the prevention of a serious attack on a Serb enclave on the outskirts of Pristina. Their performance led to 18 of the Irish troops receiving letters of commendation from the commander of MNB Centre.)

The change of the Irish contributions saw the contingent split between Camp Clarke, Camp Ville, and Camp Karhu (a former Finnish position). A number of Irish personnel also served with KFOR HQ, Task Force (Centre) HQ, and the multinational MP company.

The Irish company's area of responsibility (AOR) covered 190 sq km and it carried out its mission through vigorous and regular Mowag patrols. The eastern part of the AOR was mountainous and dotted with Albanian villages while the western part contained a Serb enclave. The AOR also included two mixed-population villages, Janjevo and Robovce.

Current DF Role: In 2010 Camp Clarke closed and Irish appointments in Camp Ville were phased out. However, the DF still holds 12 appointments in KFOR HQ (Camp Film City), including commander of the Headquarter Support Group (HSG), which is responsible for protecting Camp Film City; providing material support to KFOR HQ, including food, accommodation, transport, fire service, engineering and maintenance services and Role 1 and Role 2 hospital facilities; and protecting the military point of departure at Pristina airport.

Current Situation: Currently, the situation in Kosovo is stable but fragile. Ongoing issues include visa liberalisation, border disputes and organised crime.

With one of the youngest populations in Europe and high levels of unemployment, the requirement to apply for a visa to enter the EU is creating much stress. However, visa liberalisation is connected to Kosovo tackling organised crime and resolving its last remaining border dispute (with Serbia).

KFOR's current posture is 'deterrent presence' with no set timeline to move to the final stage of 'minimum presence'. ■

EUFOR BIH

OPERATION ALTHEA

BY CAPT DAIRE ROACHE, EUFOR BIH

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), one of the six republics that made up the former Yugoslavia, entered a period of bitter war in 1992; a war that cost the lives of over 100,000 people. Finally, in 1995, with the assistance of the international community and NATO, the war was brought to an end with the signing of the Dayton Accords in Paris. The long road to restoring peace and prosperity in this war-ravaged nation had begun.

The 2003 Thessaloniki Declaration confirmed that the future of the Western Balkans, of which BiH is a central and significant part, lies within the EU. On 2nd December 2004, nine years after the war ended, the EU launched a military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), named Operation Althea, to replace NATO's SFOR peacekeeping mission that had maintained security in the region since the war ended.

Operation Althea is one facet of a comprehensive and coherent EU commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina. It adds an extra dimension to the existing political engagement, assistance programmes, and police and monitoring missions that are already underway.

Althea is the third, and largest, military operation that the EU has embarked upon to date. The European Military Force, known as EUFOR, is a manifestation of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), from which has evolved the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP). The CFSP, in addition to the objective of strengthening the security of the Union in all

ways, also has a prime objective of preserving peace and strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter.

EUFOR BiH deployed at the same manpower levels as SFOR (just under 7,000 troops) to ensure continued compliance with the Dayton Accords and to contribute to a safe and secure environment in BiH. Irish troops have served with Operation Althea since the outset.

The mandate for EUFOR's Operation Althea comprises executive and non-executive elements. The mission's mandate derived from the UN Security Council, is based on EU Council Joint Action/2004/570, which includes an executive part (supporting the BiH authorities in maintaining a safe and secure environment), and a non-executive part (capacity building and training for the AFBiH). This supports BiH in its progress to becoming a 'security provider' rather than a 'security consumer'.

Basic decisions on the operation are taken by the Council of the European Union. The EU's Political and Security Committee exercises the political control and strategic direction of the operation, under the responsibility of the Council.

Powers of decision with respect to the objectives and termination of the



Comdt Bernard Behan (25 IRCON) featuring on a popular 2018 EUFOR advertisement shown throughout Bosnia to highlight the work of the local observer teams (LOTS).

operation remains vested in the Council, assisted by the EU Special Representative Lars-Gunnar Wiggemark and High Representative Federica Mogherini. The EU Military Committee (EUMC) monitors the proper execution of the military operation.

The EUFOR Commander, currently Major General Martin Dorfer, is based at Camp Butmir, Sarajevo. However, as it operates under the 'Berlin Plus' arrangements, Operational Commander EUFOR Althea is General Sir James Rupert Everard, who is Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and the OHQ is located at SHAPE, in Belgium.

The majority of Irish Defence Forces involvement in Bosnia has been in the area of military policing. Irish MPs served with IFOR and SFOR from the late 1990s to 2003 as part of the International Military Police (IMP) Company and were first located in Ilidza before moving to Camp Butmir when it became the mission HQ. The IMP Coy was commanded by an Irish commandant and consisted of three



Irish Verification Team inspecting ammunition as part of EUFOR BiH.

platoons: Irish, Italian (Carabinieri), and Spanish (Guardia Civil). The company was responsible for policing all SFOR personnel in the Sarajevo Valley area. The last Irish-led IMP company, with SFOR 11, commanded by Comdt Bernard Markey, left the mission area in January 2003.

There are currently five Defence Forces personnel serving on the

mission, with 26 Irish Contingent; all are located at EUFOR HQ in Camp Butmir. Lt Col Albert Cusack, the current senior Irish representative, is MA to Commander EUFOR BiH; Lt Col Damien Coakley is Chief of J2; Comdt Conor Gorey is JOC Director with J3; Capt Daire Roache is Irish NSE officer and S1; and Coy Sgt Joseph Skelly is currently S3 NCO. ■



Mine clearance training in Bosnia, 2007.



Irish Military Policeman on duty in Sarajevo, 2007.



Capt Daire Roache (26 IRCON) addressing an audience for International Women's Day 2018 in Army Hall, Sarajevo.



EU NAVAL OPERATIONS

BY CPO/ERA RUAIRÍ DE BARRA

Currently, *LÉ Samuel Beckett* is on patrol in the Mediterranean with its 56-strong crew. The vessel is the physical embodiment of Ireland's commitment to an EU mission that is determined to break apart the callous criminal enterprises that have extracted huge profits from the misery and death of thousands of innocents.

With an EU and UN mandate, the roles begin played by the Naval Service in EUNAVFOR Med 'Operation Sophia', are very different from those which were undertaken by other NS vessels that have deployed since 2015, when *LÉ Eithne* first headed south as part of the EU response to what has been interchangeably referred to as, the 'Mediterranean', 'migration' or 'refugee' crisis.

During the early months of 2015 there had been substantial criticism of the EU for its 'cost-cutting, continental infighting and bureaucratic indifference', which had 'turned the Mediterranean into a graveyard' (Haddad 2015). In response, a special meeting of EU heads of state in the European Council in April 2015 concluded that the EU would 'mobilise all efforts at its disposal to prevent further loss of life at sea and to tackle the root causes of the human emergency'.

Arising from that meeting was a commitment by the Irish government to provide a naval asset in a primarily humanitarian role. 'Operation Pontus' saw Irish warships co-operating with other EU naval and search-and-rescue assets off the Libyan Coast. This also saw them operating at the edges of the security afforded by EU naval task forces in the area of operations, as they worked at the coalface of search-and-rescue operations, with nearly 18,000 migrants recovered from ramshackle craft.

As the EU member states agreed to strengthen the EU's 'presence at sea, to fight the traffickers, to prevent illegal migration flows and to reinforce internal solidarity and responsibility', they also decided to initiate a Common Foreign and Security Policy crisis management operation within the framework of the EU's Maritime Security Strategy. Originally referred to as EUNAVFOR MED, the EU High Representative Federica Mogherini later had a proposal accepted to rename it 'Operation Sophia', after a baby born on board one of the participating ships.

In late 2017 *LÉ Niamh* ceased its Operation Pontus mission and joined Operation Sophia, the Naval Service's first armed overseas peace-support operation. While NS personnel have participated in nearly every overseas mission since the earliest days of Ireland's UN service, they had done so in army uniform and in traditional army roles, so joining Operation Sophia was a historic and a long awaited day.

NS staff officers and NCOs are also serving onboard the Fleet HQ vessel, the aircraft carrier and Italian flagship *ITS San Giusto*, and they are also serving ashore in Italy, where Cdr Kenneth Minehane is currently Force Protection Officer with the Operational HQ in Rome.

He describes the mission as "part of the wider EU 'comprehensive response' to irregular migration", adding that a core

mandate is the "*disruption of the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean*". The EU force's naval assets will achieve this, he says, "*through the identification, capturing, and disposal of vessels and associated assets suspected of being employed for smuggling or trafficking activities*".

The European Council's decision on Operation Sophia's launch states that an EU mission was necessary 'to prevent further loss of life and to tackle the root causes of the ongoing emergency situation in line with the relevant international law provisions', and that its immediate priority is 'to prevent more people from dying at sea'.

To achieve these aims, Operation Sophia has been conducted in four sequential phases.

First, there was a deployment and assessment phase, including information gathering and patrolling to monitor migrant smuggling activities and to build a comprehensive understanding of smuggling activity and methods. This phase is now complete.

The second phase involved the boarding, search, seizure and diversion of vessels suspected of participating in human smuggling or trafficking on the high seas under the conditions provided for by applicable international law.

The third phase expands this activity, up to and including taking operational measures against vessels and related assets suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking inside the coastal state's territory. Once again, this is subject to the necessary legal framework established by UN Security Council resolution and following coastal state consent;

The fourth, and last, phase will consist of the withdrawal of forces and completion of the operation.

The European Council is responsible for assessing whether the conditions for transition between the operation phases



have been met. On the legal side, all activities undertaken in each phase adhere to and respect international law, including human rights-, humanitarian- and refugee law and the *non refoulement* principle, meaning that no rescued persons can be disembarked in a third country.

Lt Cdr Eoin Smyth, OC LÉ *Samuel Beckett*, who has the responsibility of bringing his ship into the new mission during phase two, says, *"This mission tackles the causes of the problems, not just the results, as part of the comprehensive EU strategy."* He feels very strongly about the capabilities of his vessel and most of all about the ability of his crew, saying: *"We have a fine ship with an excellent and experienced crew. We are more than capable of meeting any of the challenges and denying smugglers the opportunity of operating in our area of operations."*

One of the larger questions posed by Operation Sophia and other EU military- or capacity-building missions, such as EU CAP Somalia, is the progress of the EU towards deeper integration. Despite the many different backgrounds, cultures and histories of the 27 members of the EU, it has achieved much in the integration of national interests since the 1950s.

Specifically, in areas like the environment, economics, free movement for EU citizens, and monetary union, the integration process has been hugely successful. Notwithstanding that success, the EU faces serious challenges to full integration in the area of defence and security, as many EU member states are adamantly opposed to such integration, arguing that it could sacrifice some state sovereignty, such as a state's inherent right to decide when to use force.

Further, some of these member states suggest that the role of defence and security in Europe should be fulfilled by NATO, and that any attempt by the EU to integrate in this arena will challenge NATO and its role in the sustainment of peace in

Europe. On the other hand, these same nations claim, quite vocally, that the EU should play a more dominant role in the international community. Moreover, that it should be able to influence how the international community deals with threats, challenges, and crises by offering a European instrument for crisis management.

The challenge for the European Union then becomes how to integrate in the areas of defence and security without undermining the role of NATO and the sovereignty of member states. These questions will be answered through sustained dialogue at both national and European levels.

The questions answered by Irish naval crews serving with Operation Sophia will, while still complex from an operational context, be slightly simpler. They will serve under the EU flag as it streams from their mast, while proudly bearing *Óglaigh na hÉireann* on the their chest, with the tricolour on their shoulders and stern. They will answer these questions with their professionalism, their hard work and their commitment to their ship and their shipmates; holding their own beside the largest navies in Europe, on the front line, working to stop those who profit from the desperate, to disrupt the trade of illicit arms that fuels conflict, and to stem the flow of pilfered oil that deprives the Libyan nation of much-needed revenue.

They will help to establish, and then keep, the peace, as Irish military men and women have been doing for 60 years. ■



in the Mediterranean

The Soldier You Were

(Rifleman Shay Singleton, UN Checkpoint 6-38 Alpha, Haddathah Village, Irish Area of Operations - Winter 1988)

I will always remember
that Peacekeepers, like Icarus, sometimes soar
too close to the flames of a violent sun,
that warriors are drawn by the gods
to the night-time's phosphorous tracer
bouncing like molten solder
under a welder's torch,

that glory and honour take many forms,
and a Greek falling at Thermopylae
was as real and important to antiquity
as you buying shoes for a near barefoot child
and your reading these words now.

So these lines are for the soldier you were,
for that Peacekeeper all those years ago
because you've often wondered
if the months you spent in that burning land
were worth the time away from home
and your family's fret,
what the things you did and witnessed meant,
for though all warriors seek the glories of the Spartan

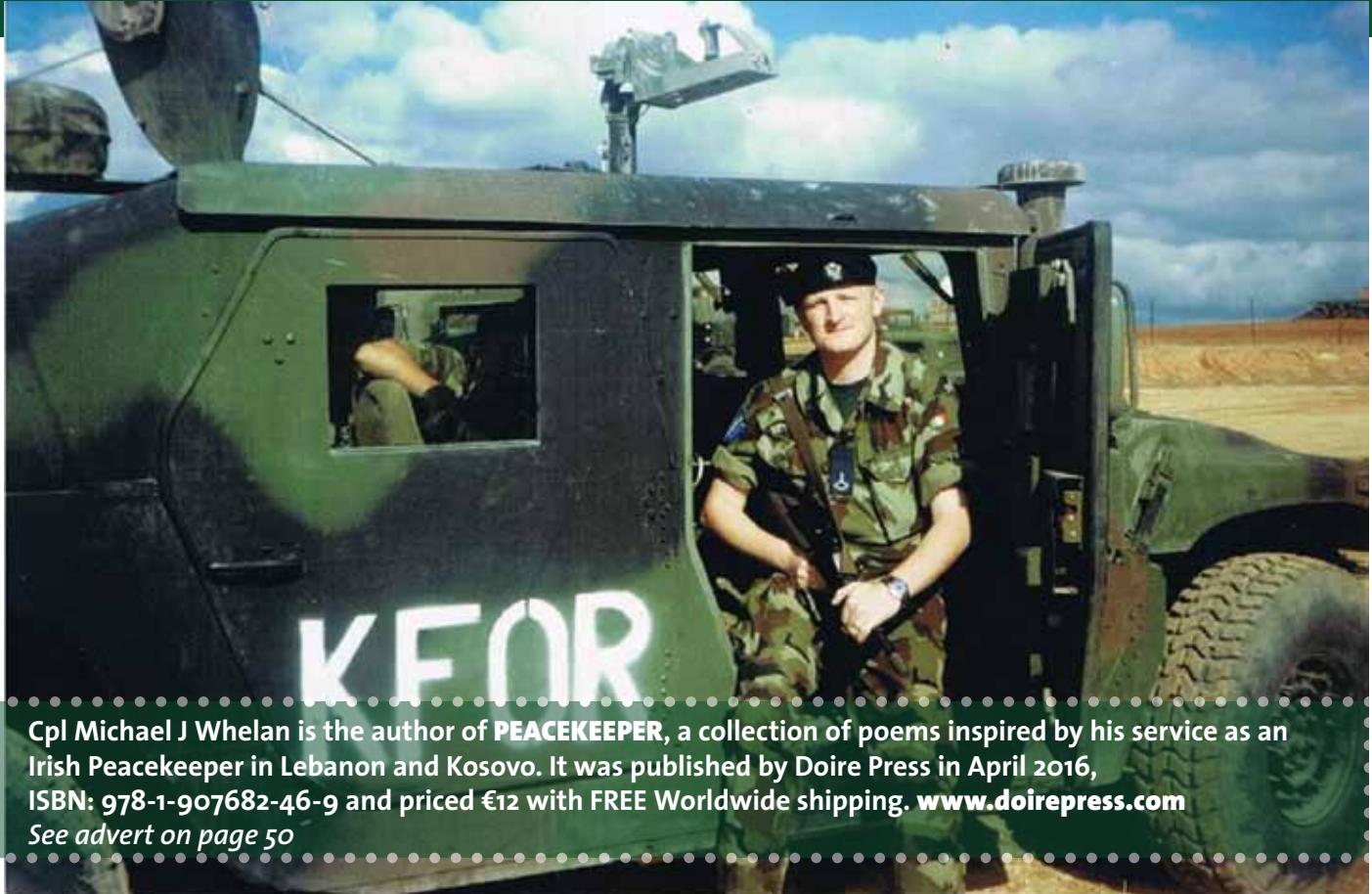
and armies, for millennia, have
ploughed the soil of Lebanon,
history shows that enemies aren't
always victims of a war,
the poor and innocent too are taken
by the sword.

But, even warriors are known to
save lives,
like the day you refused to let a
schoolboy die
or the greatest pain explode
among that winter's classroom,
or his home.

Though he thought better
than gift a secret hand-grenade to you - an Irish soldier,
you gave him every dollar you could muster from your
pockets
for the deadly contents of his bag.



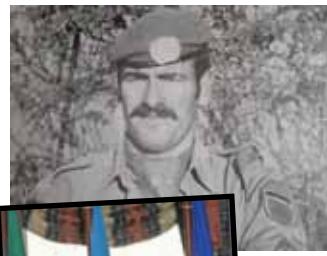
Cpl Michael J. Whelan



Cpl Michael J Whelan is the author of **PEACEKEEPER**, a collection of poems inspired by his service as an Irish Peacekeeper in Lebanon and Kosovo. It was published by Doire Press in April 2016, ISBN: 978-1-907682-46-9 and priced €12 with FREE Worldwide shipping. www.doirypress.com
See advert on page 50

VETERANS PADDY FLAVIN ONE VETERAN

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD



Paddy Flavin was born in Waterford City and moved to Tramore where he grew up in the 50/60s. Around 1965 at the age of 15, Paddy left Ireland in search of work and travelled to London. After working in the hospitality trade Paddy returned to Ireland and joined his local FCÁ unit 9th Inf Bn based in Waterford and Kilkenny. Still aged 17, he enlisted in the Defence Forces in 1967 and completed his recruit training in McDonagh Bks, Curragh Camp. He was then posted to the Military College, where he was employed for administration and general duties in the Cadet and Command and Staff Schools. In 1973 Paddy completed a Military Police course and served between the MP Depot and the Detention Centre, which was a military prison at the time. After 15 years in the MPs Paddy transferred to Area Records, Curragh Comd where he served until his retirement in 1997 after 30-years service.

Paddy still has family serving in the Defence Forces; his daughter Martina Flavin is a Medic Sgt in the CMU, and he has other relations and connections still serving.

Paddy had served overseas as a peacekeeper on a number of occasions. His first mission was as a rifleman with 19 Inf Gp, UNFICYP from October 1970 to April 1971. Paddy spent 3-months in Camp Wolf Tone in brick buildings and the remaining 3-months under canvas in Kofinou. Paddy has some fond memories of a jumper he bought in Cyprus that was originally made in Ireland and had been quality checked by his future wife Patsy and was handed back to her as a present!

Paddy served overseas with the 51st Inf Bn, UNIFIL, April-Oct 1982, as a Coy Clerk with HQ Coy. *"This was a hairy trip, we had plenty incidents and towards the end of the trip where we lost Comdt Mick Nester in UNTSO in September and I had only gone home on Chalk 1 in October when the incident happened on Tibnin Bridge where three Irish soldiers were murdered by one of our own. They were Ptes Burke, Murphy and Morrow, may they rest in peace."*

Paddy's second visit to Lebanon was with the 65 Inf Bn, UNIFIL in 1989, again as a Coy Clerk this time with B Coy based in Tulun. His duties included checkpoint 6-40 outside the Coy HQ. Paddy remembers that Sgt Charlie Forester

died of natural causes on the trip. Paddy served in Lebanon with UNIFIL for a third time with B Coy, 69 Inf Bn, in Hadatha. *"This was a great trip, best mission overseas."* As well as Coy Clerk, Paddy did checkpoints and OPs and he was a regular DJ on Radio Scorpion, which was run by the Norwegian Contingent. Paddy remembers lots of 'ground hogs' on the 69th where they constantly bombarded by DFF compounds. In one incident Paddy and some colleagues were stuck inside a SISU APC for several hours, while shelling was taking place around them. In another incident his friend was injured with shrapnel from a roadside IED that he now wears around his neck as a souvenir.

Paddy was completing his medical for the 71 Inf Bn UNIFIL, which he didn't pass due to a hearing loss of 80% in his right ear and 37% in his left. This trip will be always known as the one that got away.

Paddy has been a member of St Conleth's Branch (Newbridge) of the Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel (ONE) since 2013, where he is currently a board member. *"ONE's primary objective is to ensure the welfare of ex-service personnel by way of providing accommodation to homeless, elderly or disabled members in need of such domestic accommodation and shelter and other assistance that may be required."*

On the 27th June 2018 the ONE will launch their Fuchsia Appeal at the Defence Forces Monument at Merrion Square West. The ONE needs to raise approx €600,000 annually to continue running its current facilities for former military personnel, with residential centres provided in Dublin, Letterkenny and Athlone and Veteran Support Centres in Dundalk and Limerick.

For more info: ONE National HQ, Smithfield Market, North King St, Dublin 7. Phone 01 485 0666 - info@one-connect.ie - www.oneconnect.ie



Veterans Paddy Flavin, Felix Grant and George Kerton.

VETERANS

FELIX TONY GRANT IUNVA VETERAN

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

Felix Tony Grant and his twin brother Billy were born in Clonmel in 1947. On the 27th July 1960, Ireland's first peacekeeping battalion 32 Inf Bn, went to the Congo after it gained independence and violence erupted, they were reinforced within a month by 33 Inf Bn. Their father Coy Sgt Felix Grant (12 Inf Bn) was serving with the 33 Inf Bn when he became ill with a burst appendix, spilling infectious materials into his abdomen. He was airlifted from Katanga to Elisabethville but died on 3rd October 1960 of a suspected heart attack immediately following the operation. He was posthumously awarded the An Bonn Seirbhise Dearscna: The Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) and became the first Irish soldier to die overseas on a peacekeeping mission. Felix Jnr and Billy were only 13-years-old and their sister Mary only 11 when their father died.

2-years later in 1962 both lads joined the Army Apprentice School in Devoy Bks, Naas to start their military careers. Billy left after 3-years, and travelled to work in the UK. In 1965 Felix went on to serve in the Engr Corps as an electrician in the Curragh Camp.

In March 1965 an IRA splinter group blew up Nelson's pillar in O'Connell Street, Felix was part of the Engr team tasked with blowing up the rest of the pillar to make the area safe.

In March 1967, Felix went overseas himself as a peacekeeper with the 8 Inf Gp, UNFICYP. He was stationed in Xeros (now Denizli), and was responsible for the electrics and generators in the UN camps. Felix said he loved the experience of overseas as a peacekeeper. *"As a soldier and engineer we worked well internationally. I remember being taught how to fix the generators by some British soldiers while on a course in Nicosia. It was great to work along side the British soldiers."*

In 1970 Felix volunteered to go back to Cyprus, again as an electrical engineer with the 18 Inf Gp, UNFICYP. Here Felix was working on the building of new Ops. *"There was plenty of hard work, and security duties. But we had a trouble free 6-months. I loved the camaraderie of overseas."*

In 1972 Felix was sent to Gormanston Camp, when the Troubles had created a wave of refugees from the north, where some families were housed in the billets. *"We had to partition the huts so families could co habit there for several months."*

In October 1973 Felix was again Cyprus bound with the 25 Inf Gp. After a short few weeks they were given notice to move to the Sinai as the Middle East was heating up. *"I went on a patrol to an abandoned town called Ismailia,*

which had an eerie and scary feel to it. We slept on a balcony of a block of flats, in sleeping bags and used prima stoves. This was a great experience, real soldiering."

This mission became UNEF II, which lasted less than a year, October 1973 to September 1974.

"We were the first UN troops to ever cross the Suez Canal. We built our camp in a blown up railway station... It was difficult to walk on the sand so we used the railway sleepers as a car park and walkway. The Israeli soldiers couldn't believe we were doing all this work, but we expected to be here for months. We even made bunk beds to make life easier. Our next task was to clear minefields, difficult as it is but we hadn't seen these mines before either. We had to clear it in sections as the Egyptians just scattered them. This was another amazing experience, we just got on with the work – they were a unique group of lads. It was great to have no casualties."

While on his UN leave, Felix decided to finish his military career on a high and went travelling. He settled in the UK where he worked for many years with Euro Star and as a Facilities Manager with a number of universities and colleges before coming home to retire in Ireland.

Tony is a member of Post 24 South Tipperary of the Irish United Nations Veterans Association (IUNVA). For more info contact: IUNVA HQ, Arbour House, Mount Temple Road, Dublin 7. Tel: 016791262 iunvahq@eircom.net - www.iunva.ie



The UN cross the Suez Canal in 1973.

VETERANS

COL GEORGE KERTON RETD ARCO VETERAN

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD



Lt Gen William Callaghan DSM at Brashit in May 1986 on his last visit as FC UNIFIL to 58 Inf Bn. L/R: Capt George Kerton PSO to COMIRCON, Capt Brian O'Keeffe 2/IC C Coy, Comdt PJ Delaney C Coy Comdt, Col Walter McNicholas COMIRCON (partly hidden), Lt Col Michael O'Hagan-Wright Bn Comdt 58 Inf Bn and Lt Gen Callaghan.

George Kerton was born in Clonmel in 1950 and he remembers the funeral of Ireland's first fatality on UN service when, as an 9-year-old, he saw the cortège of Coy Sgt Felix Grant at Kickham Bks. "I remember the coffin arriving in a Matador truck as I stood at the railings."

He joined 3 Mot Sqn FCÁ in 1966, and in April 1972 he joined as a cadet in the 47th Cadet Class. He was commissioned as a 2/Lt into the Cavalry Corps in September 1973, serving in Depot Cav, 1 Armd Car Sqn and in 1976 he was posted to Curragh Comdt HQ.

He was selected as QM with No 1 Irish Component, UNIFIL in October 1979. Capt Kerton has vivid memories of the 7th April 1980 when Pte Stephen Griffin 46 Inf Bn was critically wounded during the Battle of At-Tiri. "I was tasked with finding the Padre, Fr Sean Conlon CF who was on leave in Jerusalem. I found him in the Notre Dame Hotel and we drove at speed to Rambam Hospital in Haifa. I remember the atmosphere in the large open plan intensive care unit with 80 cots with critical patients. The neurosurgeon told us that Pte Griffin was fatally injured with no hope of recovery. Fr Sean and I drove back to Naqoura and my report was transmitted by radio to OC 46 Inf Bn. After a few days Pte Griffin's sister and brother arrived to Haifa and they gave permission for the ventilator to be switched off. The family donated his organs and a few days later the 'Jerusalem Post' reported that organs had been given to an Israeli man and an Israeli Arab boy. Stephen Griffin was the first Irish UNIFIL casualty to die from hostile action"

On the 18th April 1980, Ptes Derek Smallhorne and Thomas Barrett were abducted and killed by the De Facto Forces (DFF). Pte John O'Mahony was wounded three times and managed to get away. Mahmoud Bazzi, a local DFF commander at the time, is on trial in Lebanon for the killings. During the evening of the killings, an OGL and Nor Med Coy convoy brought the remains of the two murdered soldiers to Naqoura. The Irishbatt section guarding OP Ras was evacuated after enduring days of bombardment and they

travelled in this convoy. Capt Kerton was tasked with debriefing the OP Ras guard. "I remember the commander Sgt John Power, who was cool and calm as he went through the unloading drills and in his reporting, he was later awarded a DSM for his outstanding courage and leadership at OP Ras."

On his return from overseas George was posted as 2 I/C 1 Armd Car Sqn and later as an instructor in the Inf Sch followed by 2 I/C 1 Tank Sqn. In April 1985 he went back to Lebanon as Personal Staff Officer to the Irish Contingent Commander. On his return home in May 1986 he was posted to Trg Sec for four years where he was promoted to Comdt in January 1989.

In May 1993 he was appointed as OC 2 Cav Sqn and in January 1995 he was posted to UNIFIL 76 Inf Bn as replacement for the Military Information Officer (MIO), he remained on as MIO 77 Inf Bn. He returned to Plunkett Bks as OC 1 Tk Sqn. In January 1997 he was selected for a yearlong tour of duty as Military Assistant to the Force Commander UNFICYP. "This was a busy period, we had seven fatalities on the 'Green Line' in 1996. Cyprus was very tense because of an arms race building in the background and Turkish Naval exercises off the coast"

In 2000 it was overseas again, this time to the Western Sahara for six-months as a UN observer. He was promoted to Lt Col in January 2002 and in January 2005, he went to Sarajevo to EUFOR BiH to CJ 3/5/7 Cell (Ops/CIMIC/Trg). He was involved in the security operation for the commemorations of the 10th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre.

In 2007 he was promoted to Col as Dir HR Sec and in 2009 he was acting Assistant COS for six-months before he ended his service in Kickham Bks as Dir of Reserve Forces.

Col George Kerton retd is the Vice President of the Association of Retired Commissioned Officers (ARCO). You can find out more here: <http://iarco.info> or write to: ARCO Honorary Secretary at PO Box 10414, Freepost F4129, Dublin 6W



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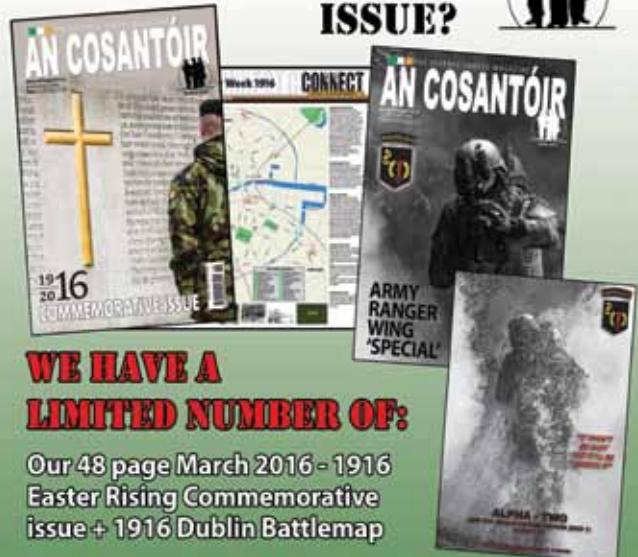


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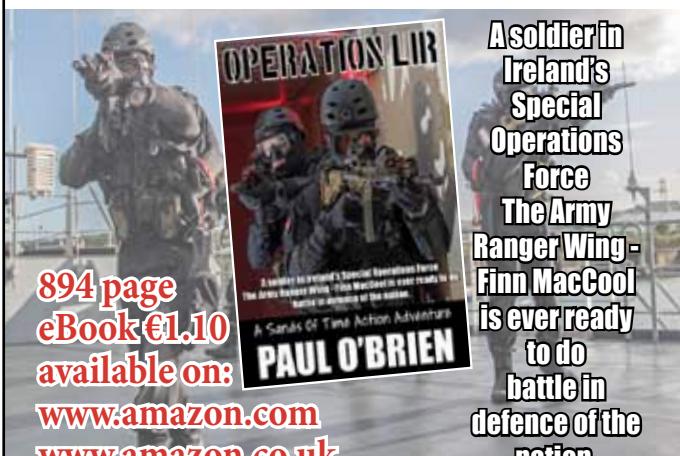
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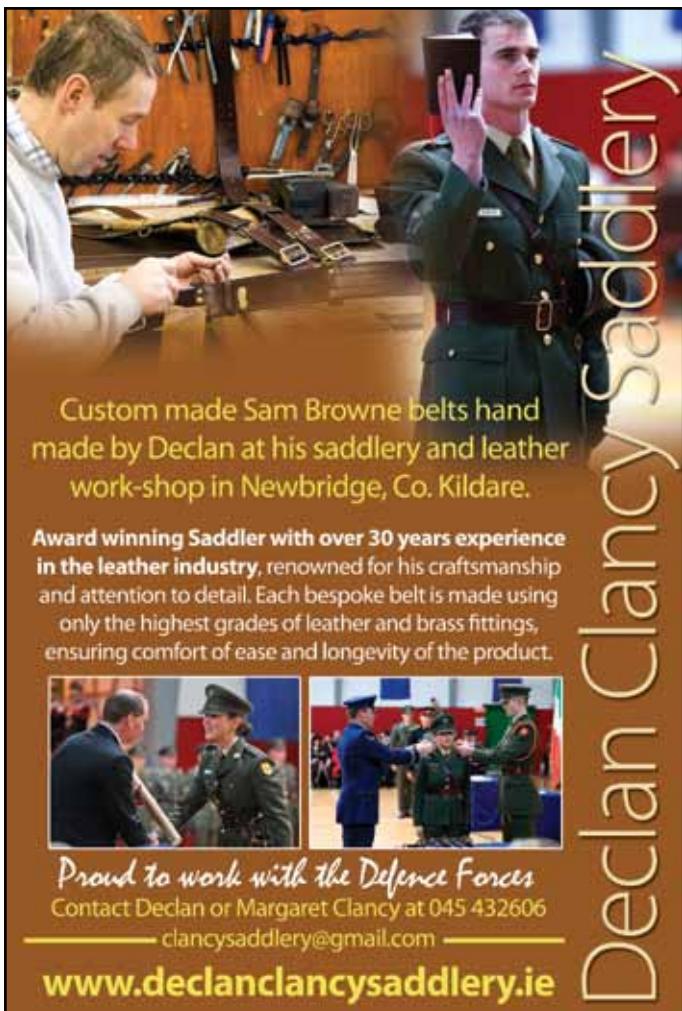
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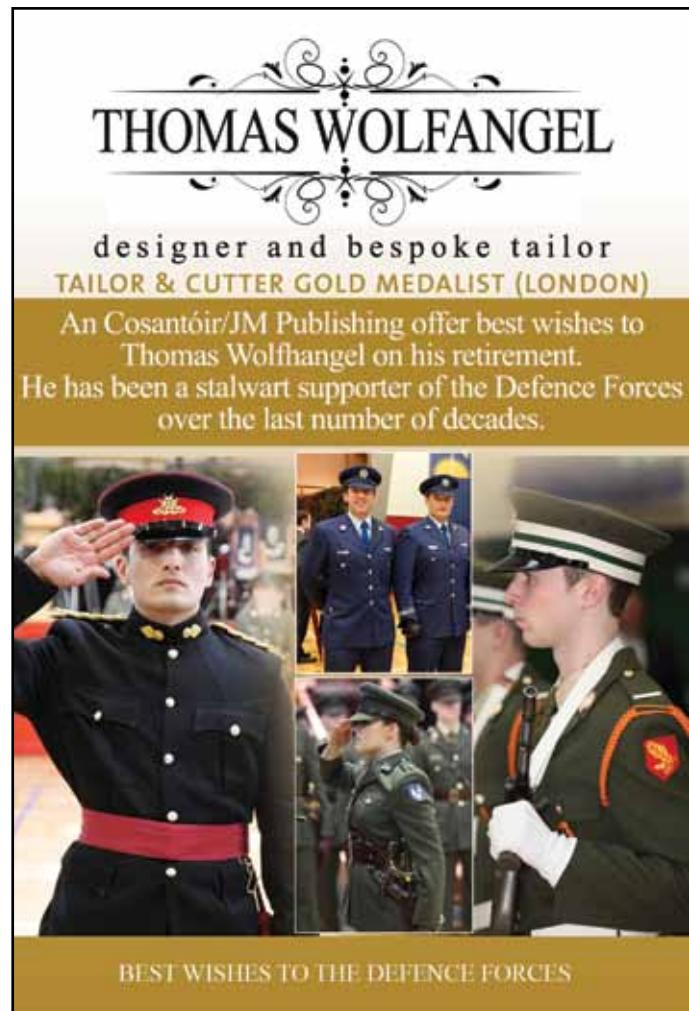


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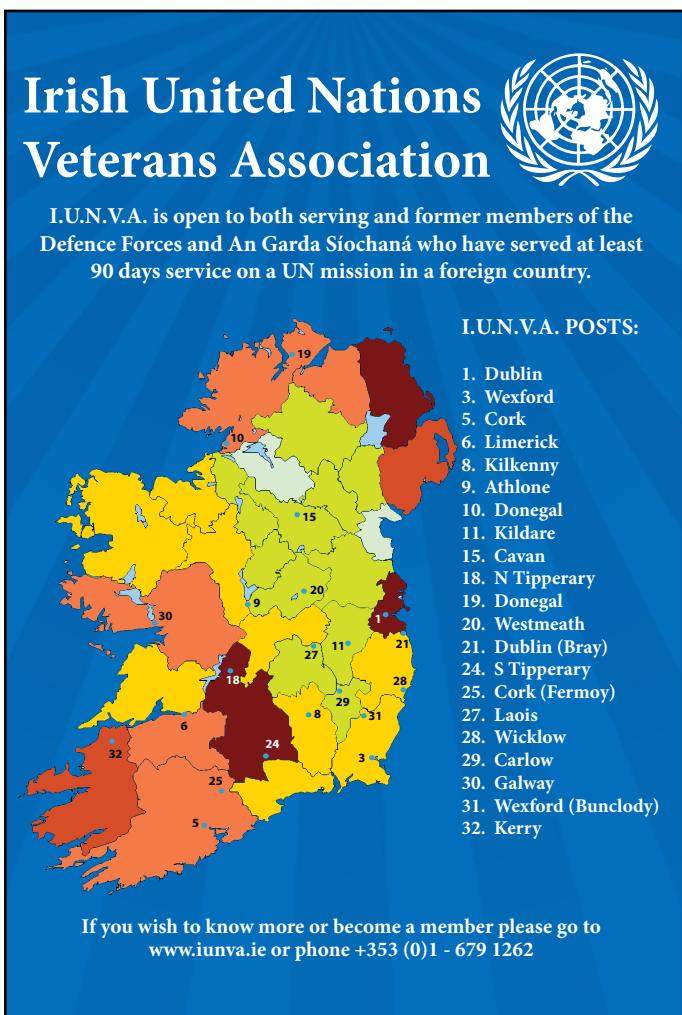
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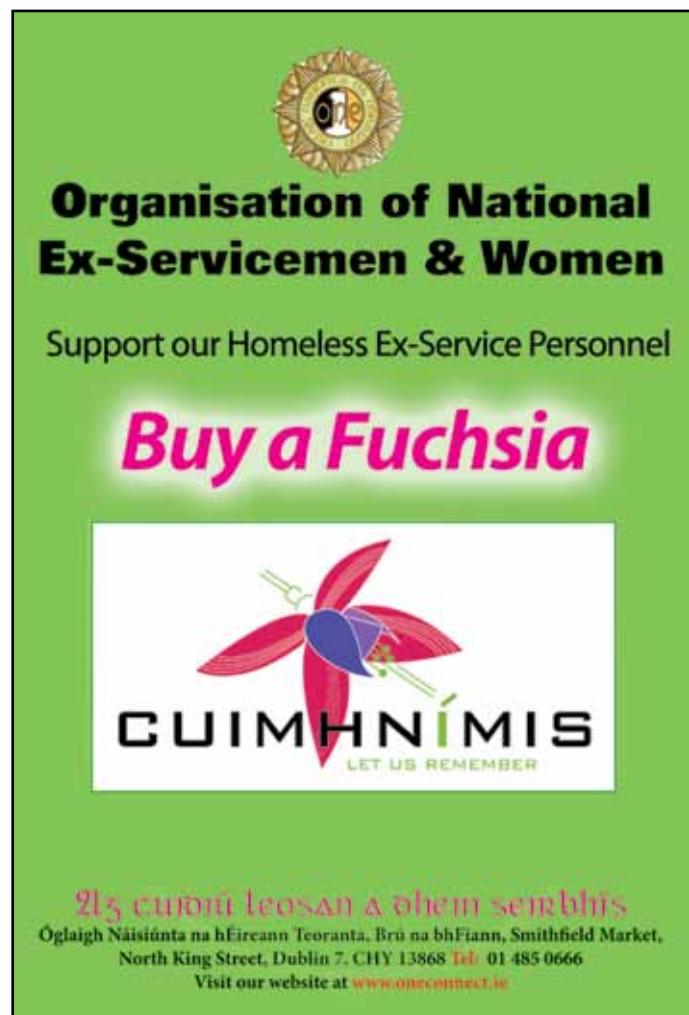
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SIEGE AT JADOTVILLE

BY DECLAN POWER

In September 1961 the rebel-held province of Katanga was located in the very bowels of the Congo. It was here that 157 men from A Coy, 35 Inf Bn were deployed to a mining town called Jadotville to protect the largely white Belgian inhabitants from massacre by marauding tribal groups.

But very soon the troops were to find the settlers had turned and were attacking the Irish positions with an overwhelming mercenary-led rebel force. The Irish positions were attacked while the main body of troops were attending mass parade with their Chaplain, Fr Tommy Fagan. As the native troops and their mercenary officers swiftly advanced. They had been passed information by a Belgian businessman about the morning's mass parade. The Irish wouldn't know what hit them.

However, they didn't bank on Sgt John Monahan in his singlet, having just finished shaving and with his towel still draped around his shoulders, Monahan vaulted a couple of trenches to get to a Vickers machine gun. With this belt-fed weapon he started to lay down accurate bursts of machine gun fire which broke up the Katangan attack and caused the jeeps to career wildly. This was to be the start of a week-long siege of the Irish positions by an enemy force that at its peak numbered 3,000.

Most of the men were lucky, their commanding officer Comdt Pat Quinlan, had ordered them to dig trenches on their arrival and this effort was now saving lives. However, Platoon Sgt Walter Hegarty wasn't in his trench the morning the mortars fell. Ever mindful to his men's welfare, he was returning to the trenches with fresh water.

"I heard the plop of the rounds as I was coming across open ground. I knew I was out of range of their machine guns, but not the mortars. As the rounds flew through the air I had a couple of seconds to drop the water and jump into a small depression in the ground. I remember how clear and sharp the colour of the grass was as the rounds came in." Crump! Seconds later Hegarty could feel the burning shrapnel lacerate his flesh.

"I could feel the blood running down my back and legs, but I wasn't in pain, just a daze and a voice in the back of my mind reminding me that the next round was just seconds away."

Hegarty was on his feet and sprinted like an Olympian to the nearest trench, tumbling headlong in on his fellow troops. He was brought back to the rear for treatment later and insisted like other wounded Irishmen to return to the action until the battle was over.

This was Ireland's first significant involvement in the UN's first large-scale peacekeeping operation in the Congo in the early 60s. Similar to the Dutch peacekeepers at Srebrenica in 1995, the small Irish contingent was denied any air or artillery support to aid them against overwhelming odds. But unlike the Dutch, and even though under aerial bombardment from a Fouga jet, A Coy had been ordered to dig in by their commanding officer and so were able to fight to hold their ground.

This they did for nearly a week against a force that outnumbered them 20 to one, with A Coy inflicting 300 casualties on their opponents. Yet for over 40 years both Ireland and the world turned their backs on the Jadotville veterans.

While a combined force of Irish, Indian and Swedish troops called Force Kane tried to break through to rescue the men of A Coy, twice they were beaten back at Lufira bridge, suffering over eight dead and numerous wounded on the second attempt.

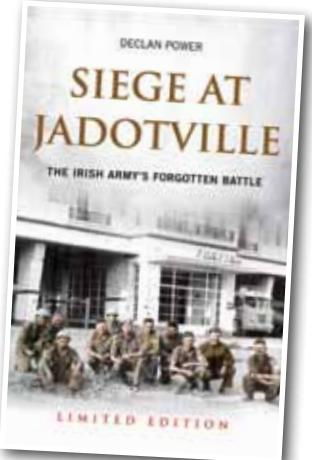
All the while the UN authorities in New York kept changing mandates on paper but not giving the troops on the ground the equipment and support needed to contain the violence.

There were tragic-comic moments too, like when a madcap Norwegian pilot, Bjorne Hovden, was the only one who volunteered to fly a helicopter with water supplies to the besieged Irish. Having landed under fire with his aircraft destroyed, the water supplies were found unusable having been put in jerrycans that previously stored petrol. This was the only attempt made by the UN to resupply the troops.

Men such as Pte John Gorman and Lt Noel Carey have told of their terror of having to hand up their weapons and go into captivity under a force the Irish had inflicted casualties on. Fear of reprisals was huge.

The battle created enormous personal strain for the Coy commander, Comdt Quinlan. Not alone was he under the normal pressure of commanding troops in combat, but in the aftermath, he had to enter ceasefire negotiations without recourse or direction from higher authority.

The UN kept telling him jets would be sent to support him but none came. Such was the strength of the mercenary-led force



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Preparing Defensive Positions in Jadotville, September 1961. Photo John Gorman

(l-r) Private Matt Quinlan and Sgt Walter Hegarty, September 1961. Photo John Gorman

Jadotville, Comdt Pat Quinlan is on the left. Photo John Gorman

the mission the men of A Coy were sent to carry out never existed. The local settlers were not in need of UN protection and were loyal to the rebel Katangan government.

After a tense period in captivity, A Coy was released in a prisoner exchange on 26th October, 1961. The men slotted back into the Irish battalion and even participated in further action, including the Battle of the Tunnel. Lt Tom Quinlan and Sgt Walter Hegarty went on to win Distinguished Service Medals (DSMs) in these further actions.

A Coy eventually arrived home to a torchlight procession through the streets of Athlone. Particular affection was shown to Comdt Quinlan for having brought home safely the sons, husbands, sweethearts and friends of so many. But then the story was quickly forgotten, some believed the surrender was an embarrassment, some believed personal rivalry was the cause.

In any event, though it lay dormant for years, the Jadotville story eventually resurfaced. Veterans of the battle like John Gorman and Liam Donnelly continued to pressure politicians for an enquiry and a public setting straight of the record. Irish people

that they beat back two attempts to rescue them.

After breaking the terms of the ceasefire by moving more troops into the area, the Katangans demanded the surrender of A Coy. Comdt Quinlan, knowing his situation was untenable, he no longer had the ammunition to defend his position, he decided against the needless slaughter of his men and reluctantly accepted the terms.

After all,

were shocked to learn how the soldiers were deployed to an isolated area by UN authorities against the advice of senior military advisors only to be attacked by the very people they were sent to protect.

In 2005, following the publication of *Siege at Jadotville*, Minister for Defence, Mr Willie O'Dea, publicly lauded the men of A Coy and their commanding officer for the stand they made and their devotion to duty. A plaque to this effect now stands in mute testimony outside the dining hall in Custume Bks.

Some 11 years later this record was added to when the book was adapted for film and released internationally via Netflix as *The Siege of Jadotville*. But the quest for setting the record straight did not end there. There was continued agitation. Comdt Quinlan's son, retired Comdt Leo Quinlan, embarked on a lobbying campaign for medals to be issued. This was a thorny issue, as there was a gap in the paper trail that would allow the Defence Forces and Dept of Defence to follow through on recommendations that Comdt Pat Quinlan had made.

Eventually an accommodation was reached and the surviving veterans of Jadotville, as well as the next-of-kin of those since deceased, were decorated with An Bonn Jadotville, or The Jadotville Medal.

This originally was to have been the insignia to go with the unit citation the Dept of Defence issued to the Jadotville veterans in September 2016, just before the film came out. However, due to public pressure it was eventually issued as a specially commissioned Defence Force decoration by the Minister with Responsibility for Defence, Mr Paul Kehoe TD at a special ceremony for the veterans and their next-of-kin at Custume Bks in December 2017. The wheel of life had now turned full-circle.

For new generations of Irish soldiers, Jadotville has now become a place synonymous with courage and honour...as it was and as it should be.

Declan Power wrote 'Siege at Jadotville' published by Maverick House in 2005. He is a former soldier and now works as an independent security and defence analyst. ■



Jadotville Veteran John Gorman and his wife Joan with author Declan Power.

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6th - 12th APRIL 1980

BY LT COL DAN HARVEY (RETD)

It was an abrupt assault, an abrasive action, and an able and assertive attack. The simplicity of Comdt (later Brig Gen) Dave Taylor's (RIP) contingency plan to take full control of the village of At Tiri had an enabling integrity about it. He knew that in order to have the final say the Irish needed to make a significant play. The sudden, sharp sortie against the De Facto Forces (DFF) half-track, followed by a fast and determined drive into the centre of the village, all stemmed from a weeklong refusal to lose the village to the Israeli-backed Christian militiamen of the self-styled South Lebanese Army (SLA).

Comdt Taylor caused events to happen faster than the DFF could react to them, and while in the end there was a composure in the collective effort of the Irish and their UN allies, it was every bit as much about individual acts of bravery, courage, leadership and resourcefulness. The Irish had retaken the village but knew this was not the end of the matter. They quickly readied themselves for the likely DFF reaction and it was not long in coming.

A week previously, something very wrong had suddenly developed at the east end of At Tiri on Sunday 6th April 1980 when, using surprise, speed, numerical strength, and the assistance of a half-track, a DFF party succeeded in forcing their way through the Irish checkpoint 6-15A. Once through, they moved into the outskirts of the village. Jumping from their vehicles, they took up positions inside local houses on both sides of the road, and commandeered a building close to the checkpoint, known as 'The Outhouse'.

Lt Tom Aherne quickly realised that the DFF now controlled all vehicle access inside the village. His platoon HQ at Post 6-15B (nicknamed 'Wuthering Heights') was cut off and could only be reached by foot. The Outhouse and the checkpoint were occupied by the DFF and the less prominent listening post 6-15B, at the western edge of the village, was cut off, but still in radio contact.

Major Haddad, the DFF leader, wanted At Tiri not for itself but as a springboard from which to take the strategically important Hill 880, with its commanding views providing dominant fields of fire into the Irish AO. His plans to seize At Tiri outright were however frustrated by the Irish platoon's

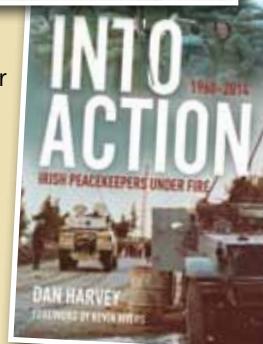
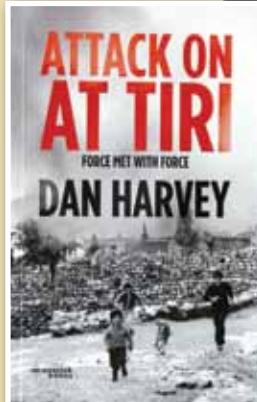
reaction; in particular Cpl Gaffney's suggestion to block the back road to Hill 880 and Lt Aherne's subsequent deployment of two 84mm anti-tank gun crews for that purpose.

The DFF had made a mistake, a serious one. Instead of securing the junction granting access to Hill 880 when they had the opportunity, they had gone straight for the village. Lt Aherne's response was to 'close the gate behind them' as it were, reseal the checkpoint, reinforce it and add barbed wire for good measure. Meanwhile, troops in platoon HQ deployed to secure their post's perimeter.

The DFF had gained ground and the initiative, but the Irish had contained their incursion; the result was an uneasy standoff. Within a half hour Irish reserves arrived from C Coy HQ in Haddatha, followed by elements from Recce Coy. The entire battalion was going into full alert.

Negotiation failed to bring a withdrawal of the DFF, and the Irish determination not to be intimidated frustrated the DFF, whose loss of patience manifested itself in further aggression, during which 21-year-old Pte Stephen Griffin from Galway was critically wounded. Capt Adrian Ainsworth and medic Pte John Daly valiantly recovered Pte Griffin under fire but sadly he would die from his wounds a week later.

During the tense standoff over the next number of days there were further instances of aggression and shooting from the DFF. Sherman tanks were moved forward as an act of intimidation before being withdrawn, and villagers were rounded up and forced to confront the Irish, throwing stones and rolling burning tyres into the Irish positions, while being urged on from behind by the DFF, and physical confrontations and fistfights took place between Irish troops and militiamen. However, the Irish didn't budge. Throughout the standoff DFF



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An Irish AML 90 on patrol in South Lebanon, circa early 1980s. Photo: Military Archives



An Israeli tank and APC passing through At Tiri. Photo: © <http://kenslebphotos.net>

aggression was matched by Irish determination.

Logistic resupply runs from Coy HQ ('the gravy train' as it became known) was critical and this too became a target. A soft-skinned ve-

culated that gaining the initiative lay in neutralising the DFF's centre of gravity in the village, the half-track. Using the flat roof of the platoon HQ house as a firebase, suppressive fires allowed an Irish AML 90 armoured fighting vehicle to come into play and neutralise the half-track. The firebase then 'lifted and shifted' its fire, allowing several mutually-supporting Irish elements to surge forward. The fight was on, and in a short time the DFF were driven out of At Tiri after suffering one fatality and a number of wounded. Having been defeated and pushed out, the DFF immediately began shelling the village in reprisal.

At the same time, 40km away, Naqoura, where UNIFIL HQ was located, was also subject to a mortar and small arms attack that lasted for four-and-a-half hours. A large number of buildings suffered damage, ten vehicles were destroyed, and three of It-alair's four helicopters were damaged by small arms fire and rendered unserviceable. No significant injuries to personnel were suffered.

Six days later, two Irish

soldiers, Ptes Tom Barrett and Derek Smallhorne, were killed in cold blood, and a third, Pte John O'Mahoney, was injured, when they were singled out as being Irish after the relief convoy they were driving to OP Ras with was stopped by DFF militiamen. This savage act of revenge shocked and outraged Irish and international opinion.

The Battle of At Tiri erupted when the 'strange soldiering' of peacekeeping had to transform into no-holds-barred 'solid soldiering'. At stake, tactically, was the village of At Tiri; operationally, the credibility of UNIFIL; and strategically, the will of the UN.

Peacekeeping is soldiering with a difference and the Irish are good at it. We have established a hard-earned reputation as peacekeepers, one of the cornerstones of which was the Irish actions at At Tiri. It is by such actions, and others in the Congo, Kosovo, Chad and the Golan Heights, and elsewhere over the last 60 years, that this reputation was earned and maintained.

Lt Col Dan Harvey (retd) served in the Defence Forces and on operations overseas for 40-years. He is the author of a number of books on the Irish Defence Forces, including *Attack on At Tiri: Force Met with Force* and his latest is *Into Action: Irish Peacekeepers Under Fire, 1960-2014*. Other books include *Soldiers of the Short Grass: A History of the Curragh Camp, A Bloody Night: The Irish at Rorke's Drift* and *A Bloody Day: The Irish at Waterloo*. ■

hicle taking an injured soldier to hospital was also fired on, and when the vehicle was put out of commission Lt Tony Bracken and Cpl Michael Jones helped the driver and patient to safety.

Apart from At Tiri, there were four other very vulnerable Irish OPs in the Israeli Controlled Area (ICA). The occupants of three of these were successfully led out of the enclave by Capt Declan Lawlor in a covert night-time self-extraction, while the fourth compliment, at OP Ras, under Sgt John Power, was too remote and remained in situ, steadfastly refusing to surrender despite being isolated, having meagre supplies, and being subjected to constant harassment and frequent fire.

Finally, permission arrived to respond in like manner to fires received, and when the occasion demanded this was done, much to the shock of the DFF.

With negotiations failing, and instances of dangerous firing increasing, the time had come to retake the village. As Comdt Dave Taylor's orders to 'prepare to move in' spread, a certain calmness descended over the Irish; a quiet determination and an undeclared resolve.

As a member of a supporting Fijian platoon, Pte Sornai-valva, was being briefed by Capt Ainsworth, he was hit by DFF fire. Although immediately medevac'd under fire, he died from his wounds.

Comdt Taylor knew that attack is about momentum and cal-



An Irish UNIFIL patrol near At-Tiri, circa 1990s. Photo: Mark Kelleher/News-Pics (Lebanon)

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Roll of Honour

A LIST OF DEFENCE FORCES PERSONNEL WHO DIED WHILE SERVING ON A MISSION OUTSIDE OF IRELAND

CONGO (ONUC)				O/Seas Unit	Home Unit	Date Deceased
Ser	No.	Rank	Name			
1	80322	Coy Sgt	Felix Grant DSM	33 Inf Bn	12 Inf Bn	3 October 1960
2	0.4350	Col	Justin MacCarthy	HQ ONUC	HQ 4 W Bde	27 October 1960
3	0.7500	Lt	Kevin Gleeson	33 Inf Bn	2 Fd Engr Coy	8 November 1960
4	804359	Sgt	Hugh F Gaynor	33 Inf Bn	2 Mot Sqn	8 November 1960
5	804234	Cpl	Liam Dougan	33 Inf Bn	5 Inf Bn	8 November 1960
6	809839	Cpl	Peter Kelly	33 Inf Bn	5 Inf Bn	8 November 1960
7	804536	Pte	Matthew Farrell	33 Inf Bn	2 Hosp Coy	8 November 1960
8	808548	Tpr	Thomas Fennell	33 Inf Bn	2 Mot Sqn	8 November 1960
9	806115	Tpr	Anthony Browne MMG	33 Inf Bn	2 Mot Sqn	8 November 1960
10	802900	Pte	Michael McGuinn	33 Inf Bn	2 Fd Engr Coy	8 November 1960
11	810242	Pte	Gerard Killeen	33 Inf Bn	CTD (E)	8 November 1960
12	806785	Pte	Patrick H Davis	33 Inf Bn	2 Fd Engr Coy	10 November 1960
13	806855	Cpl	Liam Kelly	33 Inf Bn	3 Inf Bn	24 December 1960
14	422602	Cpl	Luke Kelly	HQ ONUC	Dep MPC	30 August 1961
15	808594	Tpr	Edward Gaffney	35 Inf Bn	1 Armd Car Sqn	13 September 1961
16	810552	Tpr	Patrick Mullins	35 Inf Bn	1 Mot Sqn	15 September 1961
17	806566	Cpl	Michael Nolan	35 Inf Bn	1 Tk Sqn	15 September 1961
18	810568	Cpl	Michael Fallon	36 Inf Bn	5 Inf Bn	8 December 1961
19	87410	Sgt	Patrick Mulcahy DSM	36 Inf Bn	6 Fd Arty Regt	16 December 1961
20	0.7776	Lt	Patrick A Riordan DSM	36 Inf Bn	6 Fd Arty Regt	16 December 1961
21	812054	Pte	Andrew Wickham	36 Inf Bn	2 Inf Bn	16 December 1961
22	87602	Cpl	John Geoghegan	36 Inf Bn	15 Inf Bn	28 December 1961
23	811849	Cpl	John Power	36 Inf Bn	CTD (E)	7 March 1962
24	0.6769	Capt	Ronald L McCann	HQ ONUC	CTD (W)	9 May 1962
25	80453	Cpl	John McGrath	38 Inf Bn	4 Hosp Coy	21 March 1963
26	0.6536	Comdt	Thomas McMahon	HQ ONUC	HQ W Comd	28 September 1963
CYPRUS (UNFICYP)						
27	87770	Coy Sgt	Wallace J MacAuley	41 Inf Bn	Dep MPC	22 February 1965
28	99093	Sgt	John Hamill	4 Inf Gp	Dep Cav	7 April 1965
29	815345	Cpl	William Hetherington	4 Inf Gp	CTD (E)	19 July 1965
30	405923	Coy Sgt	James Ryan	6 Inf Gp	5 Inf Bn	4 October 1966
31	0.7778	Capt	Christopher McNamara	9 Inf Gp	2 Grn S&T Coy	16 January 1968
32	808052	Cpl	James Fagan	10 Inf Gp	2 Mot Sqn	10 June 1968
33	0.8006	Lt	Ronald B Byrne	11 Inf Gp	4 Inf Bn	28 October 1968
34	817553	Tpr	Michael Kennedy	12 Inf Gp	1 Armd Car Sqn	1 July 1969
35	818694	Pte	Brendan Cummins	20 Inf Gp	2 Inf Bn	11 June 1971
MIDDLE EAST (UNTSO)						
36	0.6374	Comdt	Thomas P Wickham	UNTSO	HQ C Comd	7 June 1967
37	0.8181	Comdt	Michael Nestor	UNTSO	Mil Col	25 September 1982
LEBANON (UNIFIL)						
38	836707	Pte	Gerard Moon	43 Inf Bn	4 Inf Bn	25 August 1978
39	829745	Cpl	Thomas Reynolds	44 Inf Bn	2 Grn S&T Coy	24 December 1978
40	839148	Pte	Philip Grogan	UNIFIL HQ	28 Inf Bn	10 July 1979
41	830497	Pte	Stephen Griffin	46 Inf Bn	1 Fd Engr Coy	16 April 1980
42	830818	Pte	Thomas Barrett	46 Inf Bn	4 Inf Bn	18 April 1980
43	828468	Pte	Derek Smallhorne	46 Inf Bn	4 Inf Bn	18 April 1980



Ser	No.	Rank	Name	O/Seas Unit	Home Unit	Date Deceased
44	813376	Sgt	Edward Yates	47 Inf Bn	2 Cav Sqn	31 May 1980
45	841137	Cpl	Vincent Duffy	47 Inf Bn	6 Fd Sig Coy	18 October 1980
46	838459	Pte	John Marshall	49 Inf Bn	6 Fd S&T Coy	17 December 1980
47	81518	Coy Sgt	James Martin	UNIFIL HQ	4 Grn MP Coy	10 February 1981
48	841576	Pte	Caoimhín Seoighe	48 Inf Bn	1 Cn Cois	27 April 1981
49	840638	Pte	Hugh Doherty	49 Inf Bn	28 Inf Bn	27 April 1981
50	837731	Pte	Niall Byrne	49 Inf Bn	6 Inf Bn	22 June 1981
51	826828	Pte	Gerard Hodges	50 Inf Bn	CTD (S)	20 March 1982
52	843152	Pte	Peter Burke	52 Inf Bn	5 Inf Bn	27 October 1982
53	841689	Cpl	Gregory Morrow	52 Inf Bn	2 Inf Bn	27 October 1982
54	843886	Pte	Thomas Murphy	52 Inf Bn	2 Inf Bn	27 October 1982
55	843587	Cpl	George Murray	55 Inf Bn	2 Grn MP Coy	9 October 1984
56	844963	Tpr	Paul Fogarty	59 Inf Bn	1 Tk Sqn	20 July 1986
57	0.9222	Lt	Aengus Murphy	59 Inf Bn	AAS	21 August 1986
58	850413	Pte	William O'Brien	60 Inf Bn	6 Inf Bn	6 December 1986
59	848100	Cpl	Dermot McLoughlin	60 Inf Bn	28 Inf Bn	10 January 1987
60	830670	Sgt Maj	John Fitzgerald	UNIFIL HQ	1 Fd Arty Regt	24 February 1987
61	828854	Cpl	George Bolger	61 Inf Bn	12 Inf Bn	29 August 1987
62	851307	Gnr	Paul Cullen	62 Inf Bn	2 Fd Arty Regt	17 March 1988
63	848545	Pte	Patrick Wright	63 Inf Bn	27 Inf Bn	21 August 1988
64	851270	Pte	Michael McNeela	64 Inf Bn	27 Inf Bn	24 February 1989
65	844701	Cpl	Fintan Heneghan	64 Inf Bn	1 Cn Cois	21 March 1989
66	844789	Pte	Thomas Walsh	64 Inf Bn	28 Inf Bn	21 March 1989
67	843237	Pte	Mannix Armstrong	64 Inf Bn	28 Inf Bn	21 March 1989
68	837612	Sgt	Charles Forrester	65 Inf Bn	2 Fd Arty Regt	21 May 1989
69	0.8527	Comdt	Michael O'Hanlon	66 Inf Bn	HQ C Comd	21 November 1989
70	848020	Cpl	Michael McCarthy	70 Inf Bn	4 Inf Bn	15 November 1991
71	843715	Cpl	Peter Ward	71 Inf Bn	6 Inf Bn	29 September 1992
72	842626	Cpl	Martin Tynan	72 Inf Bn	Dep MPC	13 December 1992
73	830851	CQMS	Declan Stokes	28 Ir Comp	Mil Col	14 June 1993
74	848554	Armn	Stephen O'Connor	73 Inf Bn	Air Corps	3 October 1993
75	846385	Sgt	John Lynch	36 Ir Comp	HQ C Comd	6 August 1997
76	851719	Pte	Michael Dowling	83 Inf Bn	30 Inf Bn	16 September 1998
77	856952	Pte	Kevin Barrett	84 Inf Bn	28 Inf Bn	18 February 1999
78	856301	Pte	William Kedian	85 Inf Bn	1 Cois Cn	31 May 1999
79	854526	Tpr	Jonathan Campbell	85 Inf Bn	4 Cav Sqn	5 September 1999
80	857259	Pte	Declan Deere	86 Inf Bn	3 Inf Bn	14 February 1999
81	857331	Pte	Brendan Fitzpatrick	86 Inf Bn	3 Inf Bn	14 February 1999
82	857266	Pte	Matthew Lawlor	86 Inf Bn	3 Inf Bn	14 February 1999
83	857271	Pte	John Murphy	86 Inf Bn	3 Inf Bn	14 February 1999
EAST TIMOR (UNTAET)						
84	858175	Pte	Peadar Ó Flaithearta	8 IRCON	1 Cn Cois	15 April 2002
LIBERIA (UNMIL)						
85	852480	Sgt	Derek Mooney	90 Inf Bn	ARW	27 November 2003
EU/NORDIC BATTLE GROUP						
86	0.8862	Lt Col	Paul Delaney	EU/NBG HQ	2 In Bn (Gen List)	23 July 2007
EU MILITARY STAFF, BRUSSELS						
87	0.9611	Lt Col	John 'Jack' Griffin	EUMS	J2 DFHQ	31 October 2015

IRELAND'S UN HEROES

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

The award of An Bonn Míleata Calmactha: The Military Medal for Gallantry with Distinction to Tpr Anthony Browne is perhaps the most known of all these awards. It was awarded in recognition of his exceptional bravery, which resulted in his death at Niemba, Republic of the Congo on the 8th November 1960.

His citation reads: "He endeavoured to create an opportunity to allow an injured comrade to escape by firing his Gustaf thereby drawing attention to his own position, which he must have been aware, would endanger his life. He had a reasonable opportunity to escape because he was not wounded but chose to remain with an injured comrade."

An Bonn Míleata Calmactha or, in English The Military Medal for Gallantry (MMG) was introduced in 1944. The medal may be awarded in the following classes:

a. With Honour

b. With Distinction

c. With Merit

AN BONN MÍLEATA CALMACHTA: THE MILITARY MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY (MMG)

Tpr	Anthony Browne
Capt	Adrian Ainsworth
Lt	Anthony Bracken
Cpl	Michael Jones
Pte	Michael John Daly
Comdt	Michael Lynch
Pte	Paul Coventry

Congo / ONUC
Lebanon / UNIFIL

with Distinction
with Merit



AN BONN SEIRBHÍSE DEARSCNA: THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL (DSM)

Lt Gen	John McKeown
Comdt	Kevin Nunan
Capt	Arthur Magennis
Cpl	Charles Connolly
Cpl	James Doohan
Maj Gen	James Quinn
Lt Gen	William Callaghan
Sgt	Gerry Lanigan
Lt Gen	Pat Nash
Col	Justin McCarthy
Lt Col	Patrick Barry
Lt Col	Michael Hogan
Comdt	Columba Browne
Comdt	Joseph Fitzpatrick
Comdt	James Flynn
Capt	Thomas Boyle
Capt	James Laverty

Congo / ONUC
Lebanon / UNIFIL
Cyprus / UNFICYP
Lebanon / UNIFIL
Lebanon / UNIFIL
EUFOR TCHAD/RCA
Congo / ONUC

with Honour
with Distinction

An Bonn Seirbhise Dearscna or, in English, The Distinguished Service Medal (DSM), was introduced in 1964. The medal may be awarded in the following classes:

- a. With Honour
- b. With Distinction
- c. With Merit

DSM with Honour



Capt	Roger McCorley	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Capt	John Norton	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Capt	Michael Purfield	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Capt	Thomas Quinlan	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Lt	Peter Feeley	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Lt	Anthony Murphy	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Lt	Patrick Riordan	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Sgt Maj	Patrick Norris	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Coy Sgt	Daniel Carroll	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Coy Sgt	Walter Hegarty	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Coy Sgt	William McLoughlin	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
CQMS	James Cotter	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Sgt	Alfred Johnston	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Sgt	John Quirke	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Sgt	Michael Rowland	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Sgt	George Shaughnessy	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Cpl	William Allen	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Cpl	Gerard Francis	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Cpl	John Kavanagh	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Cpl	Patrick Gregan	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Cpl	Michael O'Sullivan	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Pte	Anthony Connolly	Congo / ONUC	with Distinction
Comdt	Joseph Fallon	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Distinction
Lt Col	Gerald O'Sullivan	Cyprus / UNIFICYP	with Distinction
Comdt	James Flynn	Cyprus / UNIFICYP	with Distinction
Sgt	Maurice Lordon	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Distinction
Pte	Michael Dillon	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Distinction
Pte	Colin Douglas	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Distinction
Pte	Michael Burke	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Distinction
Sgt	John Power	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Distinction
Pte	Edward Doyle	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Distinction
Sgt	Michael Fleming	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Distinction
Sgt	John O'Reilly	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Sgt	Thomas Maguire	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Sgt	Patrick McCormack	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Coy Sgt	Felix Grant	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Pte	Patrick Wall	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Pte	John Murray	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Pte	James Murray	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Pte	Peter Madigan	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
A/Cpl	Aiden Doyle	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Cpl	John Keenan	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Pte	Christopher Doolan	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Pte	John Clarke	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Cpl	Anthony Woodcock	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Cpl	Francis O'Neill	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Cpl	Edward Nolan	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Cpl	John Kealy	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Cpl	James Feery	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Cpl	James Fallon	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Sgt	William Whelan	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Sgt	John Ryan	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Sgt	William O'Sullivan	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Sgt	James McCafferty	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Sgt	Patrick Mulcahy	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Sgt	Daniel Mannix	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Sgt	Patrick Hayes	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Sgt	William Hartley	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Sgt	John Daly	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Sgt	Richard Connolly	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Sgt	Joseph Cashman	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Sgt	Daniel Ahern	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Coy Sgt	Christopher Walsh	Congo / ONUC	with Merit
Fr	Edward Dunne CF	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Merit
Sgt	Michael Smith	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Merit
Cpl	Noel Mullins	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Merit
Sgt	Richard O'Shea	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Merit
Cpl	Timothy McCarthy	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Merit
Pte	Kenneth Benson	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Merit
Pte	Patrick Kennedy	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Merit
Pte	Michael Geoghegan	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Merit
Cpl	Timothy McCarthy	Lebanon / UNIFIL	with Merit
Comdt	Ian Byrne	Liberia / UNMIL	with Merit
Coy Sgt	David Murphy	Liberia / UNMIL	with Merit

In 1997, Pte Paul Coventry, 29 Inf Bn was awarded the An Bonn Míleata Calmactha: Military Medal for Gallantry with Merit while serving with 'A' Coy 71st Inf Bn in Lebanon. Following an attack on a DFF compound, approximately 30-armed elements attempted to get through an IRISHBATT checkpoint 6-10. Having failed, they opened fire with small arms and RPGs. Most of the fire was directed at the checkpoint's machine gun post manned by Pte Niall Coleman, and as a result he received a gunshot wound to the stomach. A number of attempts were made to get to Pte Coleman by his comrades but they were forced back by the severity of fire (approx. 2,000 rounds were fired at Irish positions, 74 hitting the MG position and 21 inside).

In a final attempt, Pte Coventry, ignoring the intense fire and without regard for his own safety, broke cover and ran 15 yards under heavy fire and scaled an 8ft high wall on the perimeter of the MG post. He rendered first aid to Pte Coleman, radioed a medevac and comforted his comrade while firing continued unabated. Unfortunately Cpl Peter Ward died when his SISU came under fire while attempting to reinforce the position.

His citation reads: *"For displaying exceptional bravery and compassion of a higher order, while serving with the United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon, when during a serious confrontation with armed elements at Checkpoint 6-10 Al Jurn, on the 29th of September 1992, he, with little regard for his own safety, voluntarily and without hesitation, left his position of relative safety and moved, exposing himself to hostile fire, to a position that was under effective fire, to render assistance to a wounded comrade."*



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27th June 2018, ONE launches the Fuchsia Fundraising Campaign, Merrion Sq West, Dublin.

8th July 2018, National Day of Commemoration, NMI Collins Bks, Dublin.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

10th June 2018, Defence Forces Open Day, to be held in Fitzgerald Park, Cork.

15th June 2018, UNIFIL 40th Anniversary Commemoration, UNTSI, DFTC.

24th June 2018, 60th Anniversary of Irish Defence Forces involvement in UN Peacekeeping, Mansion House, Dublin.

LOCAL HISTORY LECTURES FOR JUNE 2018

► **Western Front Association (Antrim and Down Branch):** Dr Tom Thorpe will present his lecture *Campbell College Belfast and the Great War* at 6.30pm on Thursday 14th June in the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), Belfast. All welcome.

► **Western Front Association (Dublin Branch):** Philip Lecane will present his lecture *Torpedoed! The Sinking of the RMS Leinster* at 2.30pm on Saturday 16th June in the Museum of Decorative Arts & History Lecture Theatre, Collins Bks, Benburb St, Dublin 7. All welcome - €3 donation appreciated.

► **Leixlip Library History Group:** Philip Lecane will present his lecture *The Sinking of the RMS Leinster in 1918* at 7.15pm on Thursday 21st June in Leixlip Library, Leixlip, Co Kildare. All welcome – admission free.

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NAME

RONNIE BURKE

RANK

COY SGT

UNIT

J3&5 OPERATIONS BRANCH, DFHQ

BY CPL LEE COYLE



In 1982 my brother and two uncles were serving in the DF, I was working and had no plans on signing up, as I didn't really understand what army life entailed. In October 1982 my brother Peter was tragically killed in Lebanon along with two of his comrades Gary Morrow and Thomas Murphy on Tibnin Bridge with the 5 Inf Bn.

At this time I got to see the real army family, the support received from Peter's comrades was immense. I knew then that I wanted to be part of this and in August 1983, I signed up with the 5 Inf Bn in Collins Bks, Dublin. Little did I realise that a year later, I would be in Lebanon myself as part of the 56 Inf Bn in October 1984.

During almost 13 years in the 5 Inf Bn I completed a number of courses, including MT Driver, Instructor Skill at Arms, Signal NCO and an APC Driver/Crewman my Potential NCOs course in 1986. As a young NCO I got to instruct new recruits and Potential NCOs courses. I also completed a number of courses including's course in the infamous Panhard APC.

In 1995 I transferred to Depot S&T, to the office of the Director of S&T. Here I learned office management skills, and completed a number of computer courses, like Amipro 123, Excel and IMS, this was the early days of computers in the DF.

I completed my Standard NCOs course in 1996 and in 2000 I was promoted to Sgt in the Office of DCOS (Ops), this was my first taste of working in operations.

In 2004 I served in ISAF as part Kabul MNB. I was a member of a Liaison Negotiation Team, assisting the Afghan Government in maintaining security throughout the region. It was a difficult but very rewarding mission.

In 2006 I completed the Senior NCOs course and the following year I got the unique opportunity to serve as a Coy Sgt at EUFOR

TChad/RCA Operational HQ, which was based in Mont-Valerien, just outside Paris. The OHQ consisted of personnel from 27 different nations under the command of Lt Gen Pat Nash. It was a great opportunity for me and for my family to accompany me; it gave my wife and daughters the chance to experience military life abroad and to support me in my military career.

In 2009 I completed the Military Static Line Parachute Course, this was something I had always wanted to do. In 2010 I moved to 2 Bde HQ, working in G3&5. This was a busy Tactical Operations Cell (TOC), with a number of large-scale operations occurring in 2 Bde, such as the VIP visits of President Obama and HM Queen Elizabeth II. I was promoted to Coy Sgt in November 2012 and straight away we had to deal with a DF re-org, which saw 2 Bde increase in units and the size of our area of responsibility. I was also on standby to travel overseas with the EU Battlegroup, I also completed the Range Manager and IKON Manager Courses during this time.

In 2016 I transferred to the Joint Operations Centre (JOC) of DJ3&5, DFHQ, were my experience in the TOC 2 Bde was of great benefit in preparing me. J3&5 consists of a Director, an Executive Officer and four sections: Planning & Capabilities, Overseas, EU and Current Operations. I work in Current Ops, which consists of an OIC, a JOC Director, and three Staff Officers (SO) Naval, Air and Land along with a Sgt and Pte, both clerks. We are responsible for keeping DJ3&5 fully briefed on all DF operations at home. I have responsibility for Land Ops, including Aid to the Civil Power (ATCP) such as escorts and VIP visits and Aid to the Civil Authority (ATCA) such as the recent severe weather events like Storm Emma. I also work closely with the Naval and Air Corp SOs in order to provide DJ3&5 with the most up to date Common Operational Picture.

I have recently signed on to complete 37-years-service and I'm currently studying for my French Language exams after completing a course in the Alliance Francaise College organised by D Training (J7) DFHQ. ■

EUFOR TChad/RCA 2007, pictured with his uncle BQMS Noel Hand



ISAF 2004, pictured with Col Dave Dignam (then Comdt)





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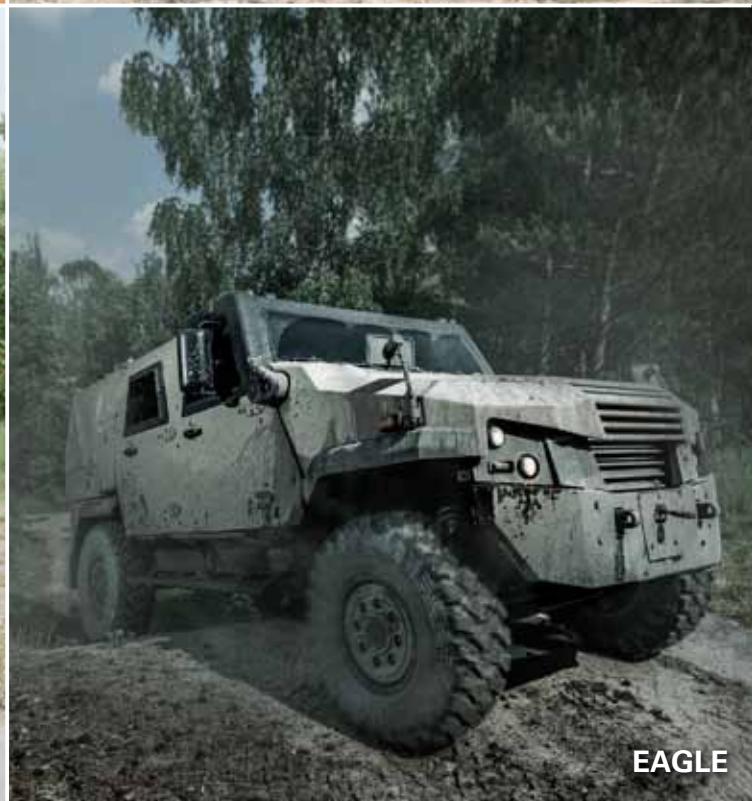
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