

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

AN COSANTÓIR

www.dfmagazine.ie

(ESTABLISHED 1940)

Price: €3.00 (Stg £2.70)



MAY 2017



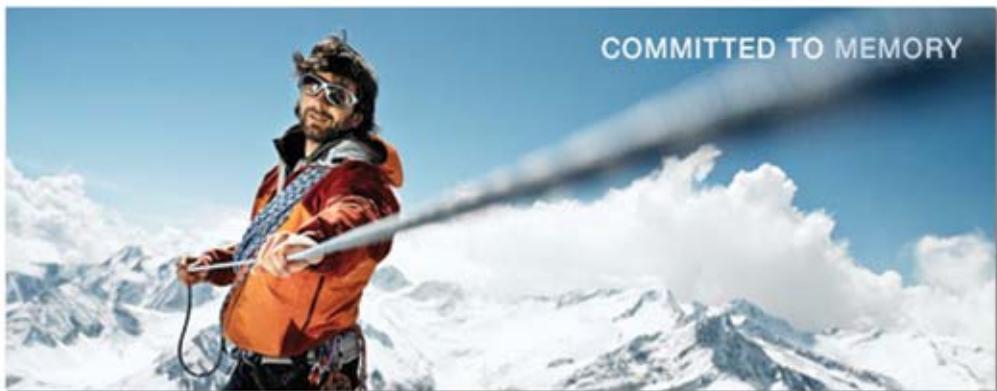
EXERCISE ‘Turas Fada’

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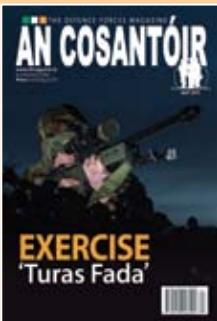
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Number 04
May 2017



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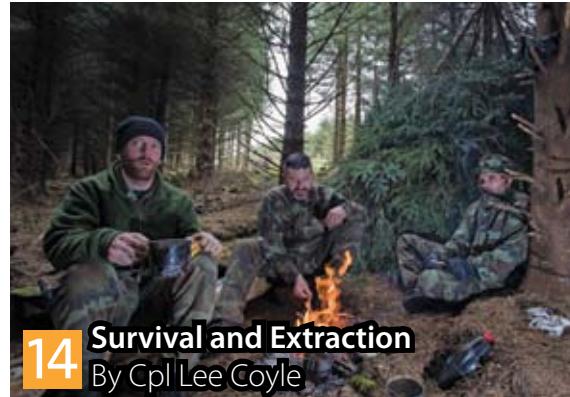


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The fact that an article appears in this magazine does not indicate official approval of the views expressed by the author.

© Published by OiC Public Relations Branch for the Defence Forces at DFHQ, Block 5, Ceannt Bks, DFTC, Curragh Camp, Co Kildare, Ireland.
Tel: +353 (0)45 445312

Front Cover

3 Inf Bn Sniper pictured during Exercise Turas Fada by Armn Adam Murphy

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

Editorial

Hello and welcome to our May issue. We travelled far and wide to bring you this month's stories from around the Defence Forces community; reporting on a wide variety of topics, from polished boots and sparkling medals to the rolling hills and dirt tracks of Ireland, as we endeavour to cover all aspects of military life. Thank you for your contributions.

Unfortunately, we are limited in the number of photos we can display in our popular *On Parade* feature but we do appreciate all your submissions. Please keep it up. *In Focus* travels as far back as 1845, as we take a bus tour through Dublin's Great Famine history, and as far away as Australia with a look at Jimmy Scott's book 'A Long Journey Travelled', which tells his experiences since being blinded in an accident. For *Veterans News* I witnessed former colleagues from 5 Inf Bn re-enacting the unit's departure from Collins Bks 20 years ago.

Our front-cover feature is on Kilkenny-based 3 Inf Bn's large-scale exercise 'Turas Fada', which took place around Knock Airport and included many 1 Bde units. Then we visit the Air Corps Military Training School to follow students on one of the DF's toughest courses; the SERE Level C Instructor Course. Next up is a short feature on 7 Inf Bn's RDF companies' annual range practices. Then, in *Rebuilding Somalia*, CPO/ERA Ruairí de Barra looks at international efforts to support the Somali government in combating piracy and lawlessness off their coast.

Paul O'Brien then looks at *Cyber Warfare: Attacking the Future*. That's followed up a report on the *Infantry Platoon Sergeants Course*, looking at how we train corporals who aspire to be infantry sergeants. Next we have two short pieces from Westmeath based around 1916. *Mullingar Remembers 1916* looks at a new memorial that was recently unveiled, and *Athlone Celebrates 1916 Centenary* reports on the town's commemorations of the 1916 Rising.

Our *History* features look at 1 Inf Gp's time at Kamina Air Base in Katanga, Congo, in May 1961; followed by a piece on Britain's Special Operations Executive, whose agents operated in occupied Europe during WWII. Our first of two *Sports* features looks at the benefits of the *DF Hill Running Series* and the second brings us to the Arctic Circle where Sgt Ann Marie Larkin takes on the Ice Ultra marathon.

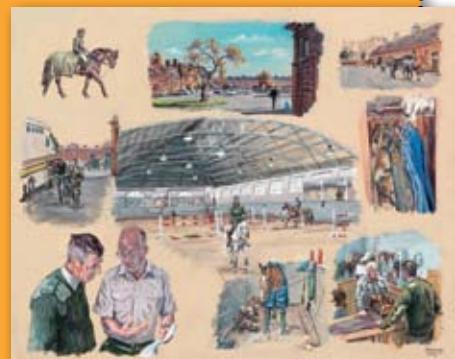
Plus, we have our regular *Gear Up*, *Noticeboard*, *Reviews*, and *What I Do* features. Finally, check out our competitions and results on pages 24, 35 and 36.

Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald - Editor

Sketches of the Army Equitation School

This artwork was worked up from sketches and photographs taken over several visits to the Army Equitation School by Liam Clancy. His family has a strong association with the Defence Forces over the years, and with the Equit Sch in particular, and it means a lot to him to be able to return to McKee Barracks with his sketchpad, camera and carry on that association - in some small way. Liam is a professional artist based in Abbeyleix whose work deals predominantly with equestrian and rural themes. He has strong family links to the Defence Forces going right back to the foundation of the Irish Free State. His cousin, Larry Kiely, show-jumped internationally during his service with the Equit Sch. Liam has a particular grá for the traditions and the spit and polish of soldiering, and hopes to produce more work on military themes in the future. His work can be seen on the Liam Clancy Fine Art page on Facebook.

LM_Clancy@hotmail.com or +353 86 8980326



6 | ON PARADE



1916 CENTENARY COMMEMORATION MEDAL ▲

Monday 20th March 2017 was a historic occasion for the 28 members of C Coy (Mullingar) 6 Inf Bn RDF, when Bn OC Lt Col Johnny Whittaker visited to present the 1916 Centenary Commemoration Medal to them. The Mullingar based unit is drawn from Counties: Offaly, Longford and Westmeath. *Photo: CQMS Ger O'Connor RDF Retd*



H DIP BUSINESS WITH CIT ▲

Coy Sgt Paul Mulhern is pictured with his wife Siobhan, when he was recently awarded his Higher Diploma in Business in Carlow IT. Congratulations on your achievement. *Photo: Coy Sgt Retd Harry Mulhern*



COS VISITS EUFOR BIH ▲

The Chief of Staff, Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM recently visited Irish personnel in EUFOR BiH. Pictured with the COS are Irish DF personnel in Camp Butmir. The EU Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is tasked with ensuring a safe and secure environment and providing capacity building and training to the Armed Forces of BiH. *Photo: Capt Deirdre Carbery, ADC COS*



LIVE FIRE TACTICAL TRAINING ▲

The 9th Live Fire Tactical Training Course (LFTT) concluded in the Infantry Weapons Wing (IWW) on 24th March 2017. With 18 students successfully completing the course and are now qualified to plan, conduct and/or supervise all dismounted LFTT up to platoon level. *Photo: Lt Richard Berney IWW, Mil Col*



PROMOTION OVERSEAS ▲

Congratulations to Wesley Cooney on his recent promotion to Corporal. Cpl Cooney is currently serving overseas with 109 Inf Bn UNIFIL and is pictured here with Lt Col James O'Shea and Cpl Cambell after receiving his stripes. *Photo Capt O'Callaghan, BSG 2I/C*



ONE COBH BRANCH AGM ▲

The Cobh Branch of ONE held their 2017 AGM in the Commodore Hotel, Cobh on the 12th January 2017. Branch President, Diarmuid Higgins has volunteered to stay on for another year, with Fred Crudge taking up position as the new Branch Chairman, and Michael Mc Carthy as the new Secretary and Edmond Mc Carthy staying on as Treasurer. *Photo: Domhnall Mac Cáirtheáigh PRO*



CPL PATRICK GALLAGHER (USMC) ▲

The 50th Anniversary Mass of Cpl Patrick (Bob) Gallagher US Marine Corps was held on 30th March 2017 in St. Patrick's Church Ballyhaunis, Co Mayo. Cpl Gallagher was born in Derrintogher, Ballyhaunis, Co Mayo on the 1st February 1944, and after emigrating to the USA in the 1960s and later voluntarily joining the US Army in 1966 and went to Vietnam was killed in action on the 30th March 1967 in Da Nang. Cpl Gallagher threw himself on a second grenade to save his comrades from death or serious injury and was awarded the prestigious Navy Cross to acknowledge his heroic actions. Photo: Armn Adam Murphy, PR Branch



NAVAL WATCHKEEPING AWARD ▲

Recently Todd Navigation's Managing Director, William Todd, presented the Todd Navigation Naval Watchkeeping Award to Sub Lt Aron Nutley. Aron was the top student during the practical phase of the Naval Service Watchkeeping Course. Todd Navigation provides the Irish Naval Service with admiralty charts and publications (paper and digital).



1916 CENTENARY COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL ▲

On the 8th April 2017, Brig Gen Peter O'Halloran ACOS presented the 1916 Centenary Commemorative Medal to members of 2 Bde CIS (RDF) in Cathal Brugha Bks. The Director of the CIS Corps, Col Maureen O'Brien was also in attendance. A new stained glass window was also unveiled in the Garrison Church in memory of deceased PDF/RDF CIS members and blessed Fr Dave Tyndall CF. Photo: Comdt Julian Ensor RDF



'THE BLOODS' FUNDRAISING ▲

Members of the 3 Inf Bn, Kilkenny raised €6,500 for the Jack & Jill foundation and Enable Ireland. The money was raised in support of family members of 3 Inf Bn troops who receive assistance from both organisations. The Jack & Jill foundation assessed that this money will provide at least 140 care hours for a child in their care. Pictured is Lt Col Mark Brownen, OC 3 Inf Bn, Pte James Dooley dog handler and project initiator with Cpl Fionn (wolfhound) and representatives from both organisations. Photo: Lt Kevin Lanigan, 3 Inf Bn

41YRS OF MERITORIOUS SERVICE ▲

Pte Christy Shiels, the Infantry School Military College, DFTC was promoted to the rank of Corporal on 23rd January 2017, following 41 years of meritorious service and distinguished conduct. Christy has given loyal and dedicated service throughout his career and is congratulated on this fantastic achievement. He is pictured with his family (L/R:) Maeve, Amanda (daughters), Christy, Kathleen (wife), Mairead (daughter), Ciaran (grandson) and Caomhe (granddaughter). Photo: Sgt John Butler, Mil Col, DFTC

FLEEING THE FAMINE

BY CPL LEE COYLE PHOTOS BY SGT MICK BURKE

While the history of the Great Famine (An Gorta Mór) of 1845 to 1852 is taught in every school in the country, the impact it had on the population is rarely truly understood. Now, a new bus tour telling the harrowing story has begun in College Green, Dublin. *An Cosantóir* was invited along for the maiden voyage of *The Perseverance – Fleeing the Famine* tour.

The tour is based on ships of the time, and one in particular, *The Perseverance*, which, like many others at the time, changed its cargo from goods to people in an effort to capitalise on the disaster. (The smell of the ship's last cargo of sugar, rum and molasses was most likely still in the air as the first passengers came aboard.) These vessels were soon nicknamed 'coffin ships'.

The bottom deck of the tour bus comprises a squalid room with a mother cradling her child, and the top deck is cladded to resemble the inner hull of a wooden ship.

The sound of water lapping against the imaginary hull played over the PA system, adding to the experience as we were greeted by actors dressed in period costume, who wished us well on our journey.

As we pulled away from our 'port', a list of names, ages and occupations was read over the PA system from the passenger manifesto of *The Perseverance's* maiden voyage in 1846, carrying 210 passengers from Dublin and landing in America on St Patrick's Day.

On the tour we heard about the many causes of the famine, ranging from the potato blight to crop failures, high land rents, and relief not reaching Ireland. We also heard newspaper articles from the time; heart breaking statements from those affected; and even from members of the British Parliament. A quick history lesson on the potato was a nice addition to the tour and gave some perspective.

One of the tour stops was at the North Dublin Union Workhouse. As people were forced to give up their land they flocked to the towns and cities to find work. Most ultimately ended up in a workhouse

with their families, but even this was a temporary measure.

Many were forced to emigrate, while unscrupulous landlords and agents tricked others into it. During the first six months it is estimated that 100,000 men, women and children fled the country. On board the ships, conditions worsened as the amount of human cargo was increased to maximise profits. The month-long journey to America was dangerous and with the cramped and filthy conditions disease was common, taking the lives of 20% of the emigrants.

The last stop on the tour was the Famine Memorial at Custom House Quay, an impressive sculpture depicting emigrants with skinny frames and looks of despair as they walk towards the coffin ships. The artist, Rowan Gillespie, presented a similar sculpture to Toronto, where many who fled sought refuge.

Such was the devastation of the Great Famine over 150 years ago that the country's population is not expected

to reach pre-Famine levels for at least another 50 years.

We thoroughly enjoyed this tour and would recommend it to anybody who has an interest in Irish history. ■



To book a tour or find out more please visit:

www.fleeingthefamine.ie or
www.hiddendublinwalks.com

JIMMY SCOTT

'A Long Journey Travelled'

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

Jimmy Scott a visually impaired civilian employee in Custume Barracks, Athlone, published a book last December, titled 'A Long Journey Travelled', telling the story of his life so far.

Jimmy grew up in Elphin, Co Roscommon, and when he qualified as a civil engineer in the late '80s, he went to London to work.

In 1989, Jimmy, then aged 22, travelled to Australia in search of work and adventure. While working there as a labourer on a large, rural sheep farm, Jimmy was travelling with a friend, and fellow Irishman, when their vehicle careered off a dirt-track, mounted a verge, and tumbled over.

What happened next changed Jimmy's life forever. His friend was thrown from the vehicle and found not long after by some fishermen who were driving by and who took him to hospital where he spent a number of days suffering with back injuries and double vision. However, Jimmy lay in the crashed vehicle for approximately six hours before being discovered. He was airlifted to a hospital where he lay in a coma for six weeks – the family were told to expect the worst as he was not expected to survive. However, Jimmy defied all the odds by coming out of the coma, although he was left severely visually impaired and is registered as blind. He spent six months in hospital relearning how to walk with his new disability and undergoing numerous operations on his eyes.

Jimmy jokes: "Two of my friends married nurses from the hospital; I must have been matchmaking while I was asleep."

In 1995 Jimmy joined the Defence Forces as a civilian employee, working on the telephone switchboard in Custume Bks, Athlone. Now 50, Jimmy has been working on the switch for over 20 years, and everyone in the barracks knows him. His passion and pastime is hill-walking and he undertakes hiking expeditions around the world, raising much needed funds for the National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI) in the process.

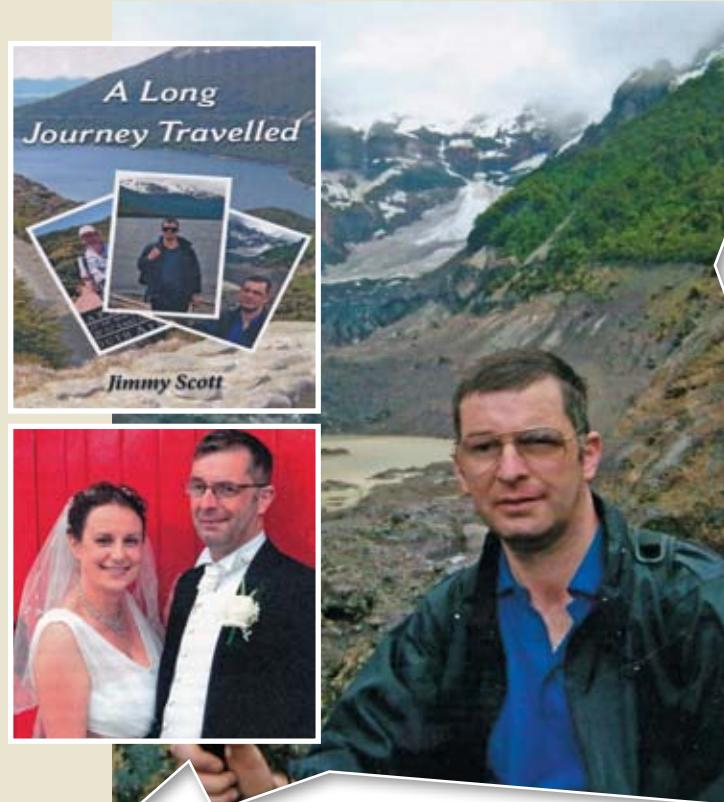
Jimmy went on his first foreign mountain trek in 2002 in Majorca with the Terracotta Ramblers, who organise and fundraise treks abroad. So far he has travelled the seven continents and hiked in places like Vietnam, Argentina, South Africa and Antarctica. He has also revisited the hospital in Australia where he was treated after the accident.

It is said 'there's a book in everyone', so Jimmy decided

to tell his life experiences in his. *A Long Journey Travelled* (launched by Comdt Ray Kenny in Custume Bks, Athlone, last December) covers Jimmy's accident in Australia and his travels around the world. He looks back on his highs and lows, including meeting and later marrying his Polish wife, Patrycja, who he met while waiting for the bus to Ballina in 2010. He jokes: "I've travelled around the world and I meet Patrycja in Busáras in Dublin!" The birth of their first-born, Seán, four years ago is another special moment in his book. (Patrycja has recently given birth to their second child, a little girl, and Jimmy says "I now have a gentleman's family - a boy and a girl.")

Jimmy hopes his book will benefit others who have to go through a life-changing event and show them there can be a silver lining.

Jimmy has sold 300 books so far, and will print more if there is enough interest. His email is jimmy.scott@defenceforces.ie. Copies of the book can still be purchased for €10 from the NCBI shop in Athlone, with all proceeds going to the NCBI. ■



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

20th Anniversary of Collins Bks Departure

REPORT & PHOTOS BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

On 18th April 1997 the 5 Inf Bn marched out of Collins Barracks, Dublin, for the last time, led out through the gates by the Army No 1 Band. Watched by a sizeable crowd, the troops marched along Benburb Street and through Phoenix Park to their new home in McKee Bks.

At the time, Collins Barracks (originally Royal Barracks) held the record as the oldest continually occupied military barracks in the world. Construction commenced in 1701 and Royal Bks was first occupied by Col Pierce's Foot in 1704. The last British unit was 2nd Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment, who handed over the barracks to Irish Free State troops on 17th December 1922, ending 218 years of occupation by the British Army. It was soon renamed Collins Bks.

While 5 Inf Bn was originally established in Custume Bks, Athlone, in February 1923, it is most associated with Collins Bks, having been stationed there from 1928 to 1940 and from 1959 to 1997. The battalion's departure in 1997 saw the barracks transformed into the location for the Decorative Arts and History section of the National Museum of Ireland.

On a fine Saturday morning, 8th April 2017, the 5 Inf Bn Association commemorated this historic event by marching out of the barracks' arched gateway once again. Former BSM Gerry Hanley called the markers on parade, with veterans 'Anto' Finn and Wally Doyle marching out with the unit pennants, still in pristine condition thanks to the Association. Over 50 former members of the battalion then marched onto the parade ground with the smartness and pride typical of former soldiers. President of the 5 Inf Bn Association, former Chief of Staff and OC 5 Inf Bn, Lt Gen Gerry McMahon DSM (retd), then took control as parade commander. Colours were marched onto parade by retired NCOs Joe Hanley, Marlow Brien, and Eamon Doyle.

Speaking to those gathered, Lt Gen McMahon said he was honoured to take the parade, particularly as 5 Inf Bn was the only unit he had commanded during his career. He commended former members of the battalion for their commitment, many of whom had spent their entire careers with 5 Inf Bn, as well as thanking the families who had supported their loved ones, particularly during long periods of service overseas. *"The 5 Inf Bn was a proud unit and I'm glad steps were taken to preserve the memory of the Battalion. We parade here to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the March Out of Collins Bks."*

Regrettably Lt Gen McMahon was unable to march at the head of the parade and was deputised by Comdt John Picard (retd), another former 5 Inf Bn officer.

The IUNVA pipe band provided fine musical accompaniment to the parade as it left the hallowed ground of Collins Bks, adding greatly to the excitement of unsuspecting tour-



5 Inf Bn Association march on to their marker Wally Doyle.



Lt Gen Gerry McMahon DSM (retd) saluting the Colours marching on to parade.



Retired Sgt 'Anto' Finn once again leads the 5 Inf Bn through the archway.

ists visiting the National Museum.

Arriving onto Clarke Square, where the music and marching feet echoed once again for this memorable occasion, they proceeded out through the archway of the Clock Block, where the iconic photo was taken 20 years previously. They marched out of the main gate and onto the streets of Dublin City, where everything stopped momentarily as these men and women once again marched out of Collins Barracks, keeping their former unit's history alive.

(In 2012, 5 Inf Bn was amalgamated with 2 Inf Bn to form 7 Inf Bn, based in Cathal Brugha Bks, Rathmines.) ■

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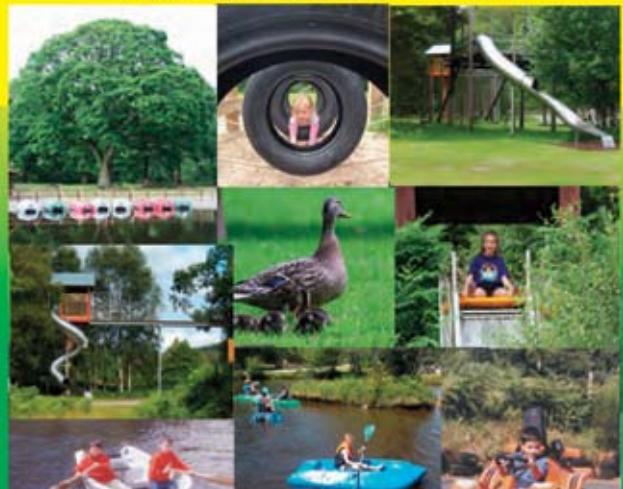
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Ready for Anything, *Prepared for Everything* **EXERCISE TURAS FADA (Long Journey)**

BY CPL LEE COYLE PHOTOS ARMN ADAM MURPHY

Training for the ever-changing operational environments faced by the Defence Forces requires exercises with multi-role scenarios to encompass a wide variety of situations that have been, or may be, encountered at home or on overseas deployment. With this in mind, 3 Inf Bn was tasked with conducting an exercise to incorporate many situations encountered on past overseas missions. Accordingly, troops assembled in Stephens Bks, Kilkenny, on 27th March for Exercise Turas Fada (Long Journey).



Staff from *An Cosantóir* joined the troops on the square, where an array of vehicles including Mowags, LTAVs, Ford Rangers, Mitsubishi Pajeros, and TCVs were parked, waiting. Preparations were well underway, with troops getting 'bombed up', kit being squared away and final checks being ticked off.

We spoke with Lt Col Mark Brownen (OC 3 Inf Bn), who gave us a quick run down on the exercise and its scenario. He told us that most corps were represented on the exercise, with elements from 1 BAR supplying fire support, 1 Cav Sqn filling the recce group role, 1 Bde CIS Detachment providing comms, and the Air Corps supplying heli support for different parts of the exercise.

Lt Col Brownen also emphasised the importance of linking the scenarios to real life situations. "We have pulled in incidents from previous UN missions to the exercise," he said, "such as the CRC element, which came from dealing with riots in Kosovo."

"Each serial of the exercise links on to the next," he continued, "to complete the wider picture of what is going on. The serials are

designed to escalate over the four-day exercise to a final cordon and snatch. This exercise will then provide GOC 1 Bde with a benchmark from which to move forward."

Before they departed, the exercise troops gathered in a hollow square around Lt Col Brownen as he explained what he expected of them and gave them enough details on the scenario to get them started. He also introduced the enemy, who were dressed in a mixture of civilian and military attire. They were armed with Kalashnikovs and had some anti-armour capability in the form of an RPG. They were also equipped with a Foxtrack ground radar. The leader of the enemy was pointed out as a person of significant interest.

Next we sat in with Coy Commander, Comdt Cahill, who was using a detailed model as he issued orders to his platoon i/c's and attachments regarding the 'actions on' during the move to, and occupation of, the exercise location at Knock Airport. He also gave a situation brief on the exercise scenario, telling his troops that



they were part of a UN-mandated peace-enforcement mission overseas. They had seen major fighting, which had subsided in recent months, but the newly-signed treaty had been breached by incidents of unrest in and around the area of the country's airport. This was mainly down to the fact that a chief prosecutor from the International Criminal Court (ICC) was flying in to meet with War Crimes Prosecution teams based in the area; something that had angered many militiamen and locals.

We then headed to the exercise area, where the TAC HQ was set up and the main body was strategically deployed to monitor the situation and protect the airfield and its installation from any intrusion. Not long after the deployment a small group of protesters was spotted gathering nearby.

The first serial started at 01:00hrs, with the TAC HQ being notified of the small demonstration gathering down the road from the airfield. The group was protesting at the visit of the ICC prosecutor, waving banners and chanting "*Get her out! Get her out!*"

The Quick Reaction Force (QRF) was quickly deployed to the scene to keep an eye on the situation while the company was 'stood-to' in crowd riot control (CRC) gear, with 15 minutes notice to move, given the escalating situation.

With the imminent arrival of the prosecutor, tensions started to increase. As the protesters grew in number so did their anger, with mob mentality taking over. An AW139 heli flew overhead, signalling the arrival of the prosecutor and, like reacting to the starting pistol at the beginning of a race, the demonstration suddenly became more aggressive, with objects being thrown. As the QRF was not dressed in CRC gear, they kept back from the mob and radioed in the escalating violence.

The Coy CRC was rapidly deployed to break up the demonstra-

tion, while the AW139 circled above providing a searchlight and sniper cover. As the CRC approached they were met with strong opposition. Projectiles flew through the air and shields were kicked and struck with sticks as soon as they were within reach. Scuffles soon ensued as protesters grabbed at riot shields. One member of the CRC platoon was dragged off balance and fell but the rest of the platoon reacted quickly to recover their downed colleague and resume their formation.

By this time the VIP had landed and the road needed to be cleared so that the prosecutor's vehicle could leave the airport. The CRC gave a last big push, driving the crowd back far enough for the vehicle to squeeze through. As the driver sped out and onto the clear road, the mob was reduced to hurling abusive language at the car as it disappeared into the distance.

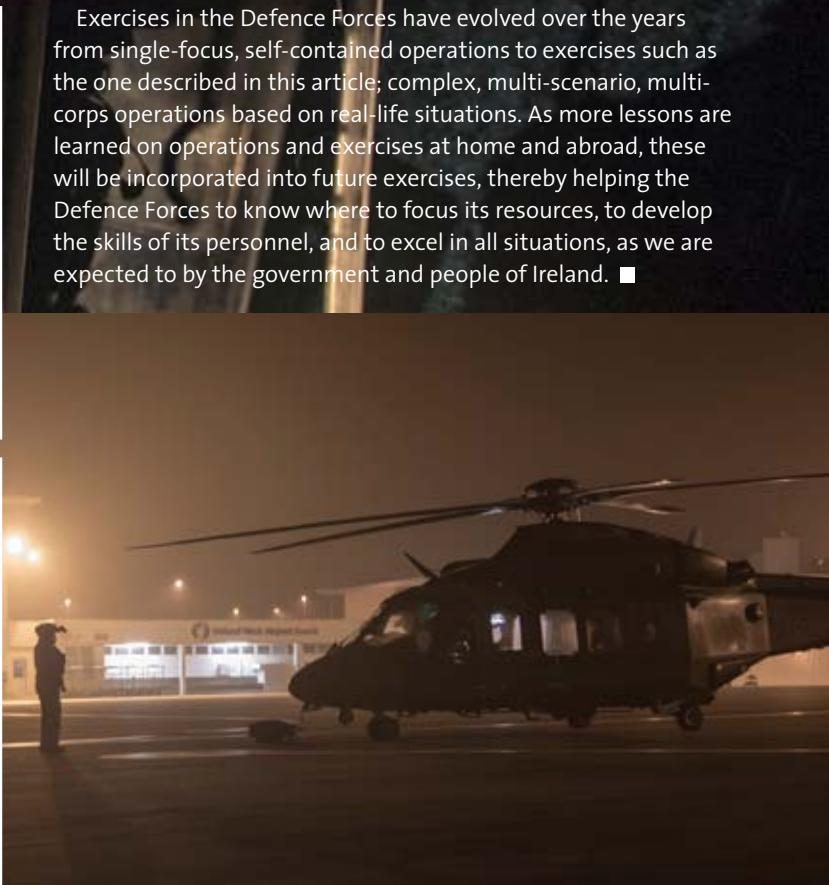
Soon after, the crowd dispersed, angry that they had failed, and disappeared into the darkness of the night.

At 05:00hrs a quick debrief took place in TAC HQ where Comdt Cahill went over the incident and gave an update on the current situation.

By 07:00hrs, intelligence gathered during the CRC operation and information provided by locals on enemy operations in the area had been collated. Now the exercise transitioned to more conventional operations, with a possible enemy position being located and declared as an area of interest. A FRAGO was issued and the Coy began their Troop Leadership and Preparation Process (TLPP) for direct action.

Over the next 16 hours the exercise troops carried out a recce on the suspected enemy position, followed by a company attack on the enemy. The troops then moved to a rolling replenishment site by 10:00hrs the following day before proceeding to Kilworth Camp at 16:00hrs for the final serial of the exercise, a cordon and snatch.

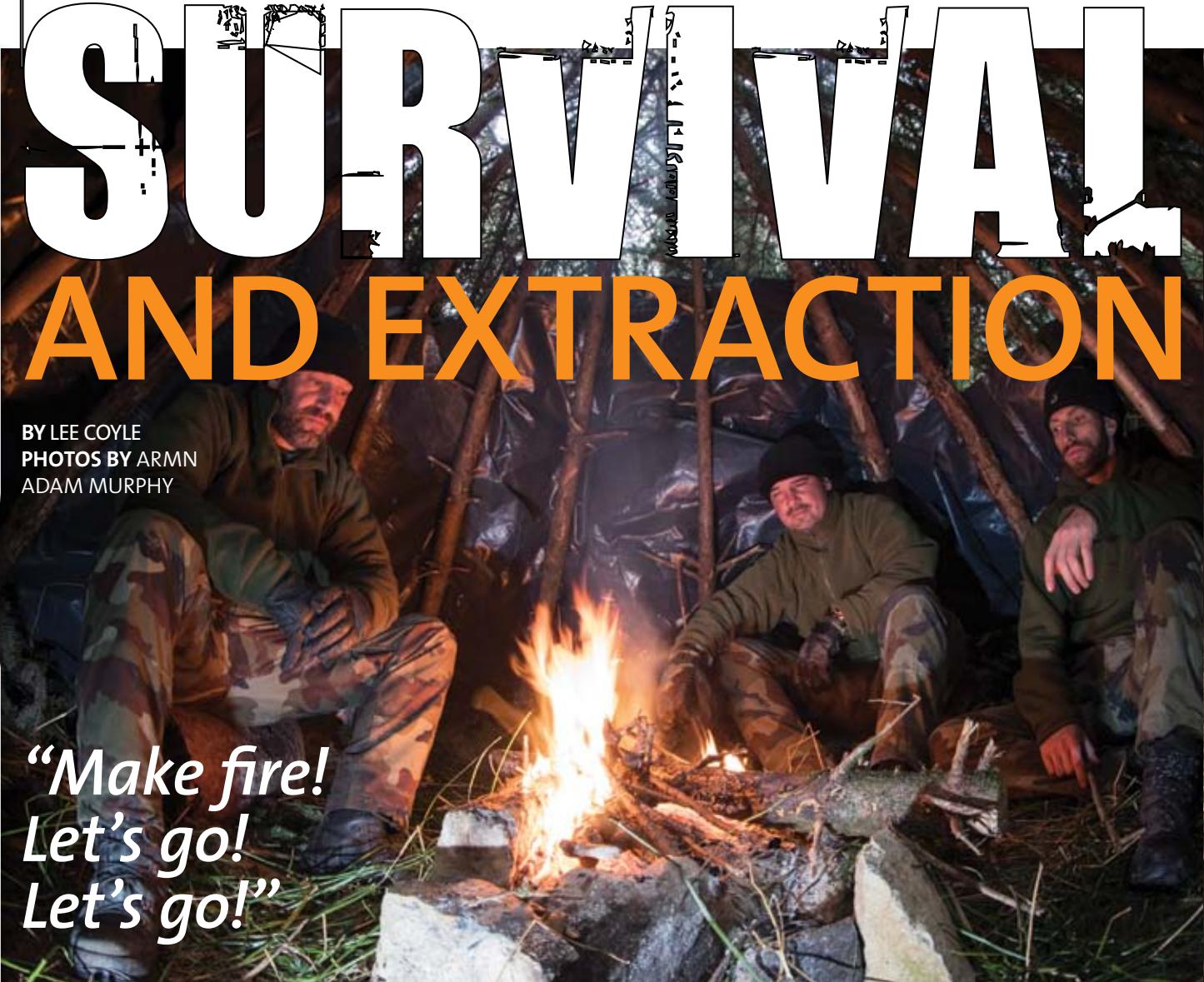
Exercises in the Defence Forces have evolved over the years from single-focus, self-contained operations to exercises such as the one described in this article; complex, multi-scenario, multi-corps operations based on real-life situations. As more lessons are learned on operations and exercises at home and abroad, these will be incorporated into future exercises, thereby helping the Defence Forces to know where to focus its resources, to develop the skills of its personnel, and to excel in all situations, as we are expected to by the government and people of Ireland. ■



SURVIVAL AND EXTRACTION

BY LEE COYLE
PHOTOS BY ARMN
ADAM MURPHY

*“Make fire!
Let’s go!
Let’s go!”*



The room bursts into life and everyone dashes for the exit, pushing and shoving to get outside. They quickly find a space up against the building to use as shelter as they began to remove small bags of tinder from small pouches attached to their hips.

“Forty seconds, people!”

Tinder is quickly placed on the ground and the first few sparks fly as knife edges scrap across fire-steel.

“Thirty seconds. Come on, get it done!”

The sparks are now flying furiously as every student tries to get ignition on their tinder.

“Fire!” gets called out from one student, quickly followed by others, until everyone has done it with five seconds remaining on the clock. A happy instructor gives them a quick *“Well done”*, then it’s back to the classroom.

An Cosantóir had been invited to the Military Training School (MTS) in Baldonnel to follow the students of its latest SERE Level C Instructor Course and this was a very memorable introduction to a SERE course.

Some form of SERE (Survival, Escape and evasion, Resistance to interrogation, and Extraction) training is taught to all DF personnel during their recruit or three-star training. This may consist of simple survival techniques, like shelter

building, fire starting and finding food and water, while also giving some information about conduct after capture.

The SERE Level C Instructor Course provides students with the knowledge and skills required to effectively instruct and conduct basic survival training and exercises at unit level.

The course is conducted over a four-week period during which the students are taught a range of fundamental SERE skills and cover a wide range of subjects that even include the psychological effects of survival and interrogation.

Capt Barry Jones, the lead instructor, gave us a quick breakdown on the course syllabus and its main points. *“Not only do we teach the students survival training, but we also give them the skills to enable them to be extracted, which is the most important part,”* he told us.

The next time we met the instructors and students was on the third day of their five-day final exercise in the Wicklow Mountains. For three days the students had been working in three- or four-person teams, making their own shelters and only eating what they could find. They had quickly settled into a daytime routine of finding food and water, collecting firewood, improving their shelter, and preparing a signalling fire and other signals so they could be found and get extracted. Their night routines meant one would stay



Vox Pops

We spoke to the students at two different stages on the course, firstly during their classroom training and secondly on the third day of their final exercise.

Sgt Clive Dunne, Cadet Sch, DFTC

(In class.) "I have 18 years service in the DF and my interest in SERE came from recruit training and also the Cambrian Patrol. It's an important skill to have in my role in the Cadet School as there is a shortage of instructors and knowledge at the moment."

(During the exercise.) "I'm really enjoying the course but the hunger is the worst part at the minute, even though there are a lot of edible plants around, like wild garlic and sorrel."

Cpl Derek Moore, 2 Cav Sqn

(In class.) "I have applied for this course for the last five years as it's something that interests me. With the new Cavalry recce syllabus including survival train-

ing, it's important to have instructors within my unit."

(During the exercise.) "I found the second day the hardest, with the 20km march from our first location; it was very tiring and I really felt it. Another challenge is purifying water when on the move - especially with your energy levels being low. I'm enjoying today, though, and getting the chance to put some of our skills to good use."

L/Sea Darren Buckley, Naval Service

(In class.) "I'm among the first from the Naval Service to go on this course and I'm excited to be on it as it will be a new challenge for me. I'm also looking forward to bringing back all this experience to the navy and passing it on."

(During the exercise.) "It's a great achievement for us all so far. The exercise has had some hard moments, like the shock of the cold water. You just have to get your mind back into it and continue on. The hunger is really on our minds at the minute, but we're staying focused."

up and manage the fire while the others slept. This was important to keep warm but also to prevent an uncontrolled fire.

While the instructors kept a close eye, they also remained out of the way so the students could put their skills to work. One of the main points of this exercise was learning to deal with the effort-versus-reward problem. This emerges as energy levels get lower and decisions have to be made, weighing up the reward of doing something against the effort required. Burning unnecessary calories will only make things harder.

The build up to the end of the exercise focuses on the participants being prepared for the most important part, the extraction. Capt Jones summed up the importance of the extraction at the end of all the other effort by saying: "If you don't make the extraction it's like going to the effort of walking to the bus stop but forgetting to put your hand out to get the bus to stop." ■

On the FIRING LINE

REPORT & PHOTOS BY
CQMS MICHAEL BARRETT
RDF, 7 INF BN



The first weekend in April saw RDF members of 7 Inf Bn conduct their annual range practices (ARPs) on the rifle ranges in TIS Kilbride Camp, Co Wicklow. This was the second weekend in 2017 that saw 7 Inf Bn RDF members on the rifle range, in an effort to get all Reserve troops qualified on the Steyr rifle.

The day of the shoot was dry, warm and sunny; perfect for shooting. Along with 7 Inf Bn, RDF elements from 2 CIS and 2 Cav Sqn were also firing their ARPs on the ranges that day. The three units had departed Cathal Brugha Bks in convoy, and on their arrival in Kilbride Camp the waiting armourer checked and examined all rifles to ensure they were safe to use. Table 8 is now the standard table fired by all RDF troops, and after the first shots were fired the armourer would, if needed, adjust rifles for precise aiming and zeroing purposes.

All DF personnel, regardless of service or corps, must be able to efficiently and safely operate their own personal weapon. This is achieved by spending time and training on the weapon, undergoing tests of elementary training (TOETs), and, finally, firing it on the range with a satisfactorily high score for qualification, or possibly a marksman qualification.

An ARP qualification is required by all RDF personnel for reasons including: it is a nominal requirement for almost all courses in the DF; to qualify troops to perform armed security duties; and to

facilitate selection for shooting teams.

Lunch was delivered from the cookhouse in Cathal Brugha Bks and all three RDF elements had a shared meal before resuming firing.

Once practices were complete, all weapons and equipment were cleaned, checked and loaded onto the transport, before all troops departed Kilbride Camp to journey back to Dublin.

This range qualification was another step in 7 Inf Bn RDF's ongoing training and development of infantry skills prior to taking part in exercises with our unit's PDF companies later in 2017. ■

Rebuilding Somalia

BY CPO/ERA RUAIRÍ DE BARRA



Mr Chris Reynolds, the Director of the Irish Coast Guard is on secondment to EUCAP Somalia as Head of Operations.

For decades the Horn of Africa has been a much-troubled region. Recently, in this publication, Paul O'Brien MA delivered an overview of the conflict. In this article, I will focus on the efforts underway to rebuild the country.

A lasting peace will be built not only by the absence of conflict but by resetting the foundations of the state. Many interconnected parts must be brought together to provide a place where a functioning government can use its natural resources for the benefit of all its citizens.

One of the greatest resources open to Somalia is the sea. They have the longest coastline on mainland Africa at 3,025km. Somali waters may have become synonymous with piracy and lawlessness but this will be one of the key areas where economic activity is brought back to the impoverished country, which is balanced on a knife-edge regarding its security and stability.

We in Ireland know that the ocean harbours great rewards, if it can be fished or farmed and traded across with certainty, safety and creativity. However, to be able to protect the ocean's wealth, the state must be able to project its authority out to the sea; no

easy thing to achieve in the complex political climate of Somalia.

Federal Somalia, in theory, consists of the states of Puntland, Galmudug, Jubaland, South West State, Hir-Shabelle and Somaliland. A prime example of the difficulty in creating a federal government is that Somaliland declared independence in 1991 and has no relations with the Federal Government of Somalia, despite no country recognising Somaliland's independence.

Three EU missions were created to assist the Federal Government: EUTM Somalia; EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta; and EUCAP Somalia (formerly EUCAP Nestor). In 2016 all these missions' mandates were prolonged until 31st December 2018.

There are 17 participating nations in EUCAP, whose budget was nearly €18m in 2015, and the mission has a planned capacity for nearly 180 staff. EUCAP's objective is to assist Somalia in strengthening its maritime security capacity, so that maritime law is enforced more effectively.

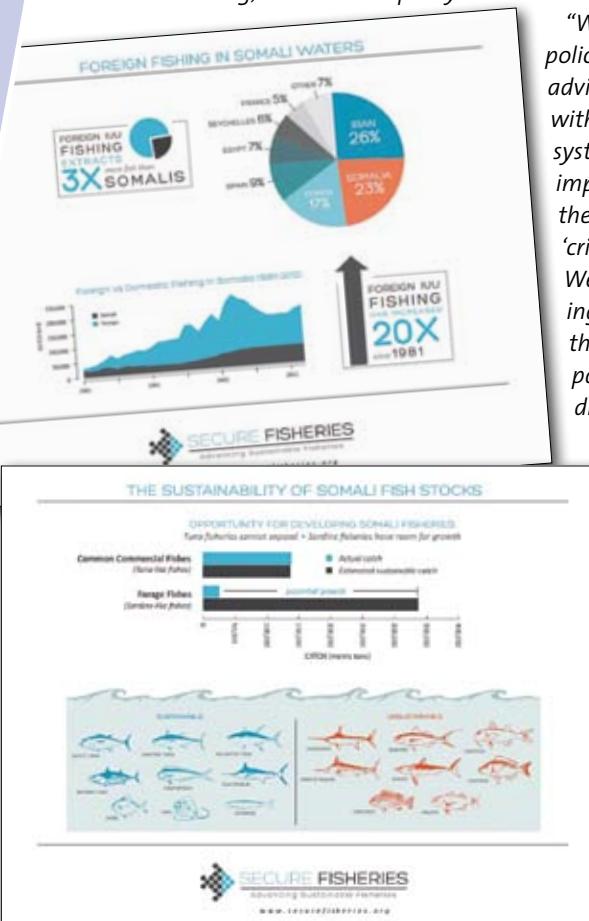
EUTM contributes to the capacity building of the Somali National Army (SNA), while Operation Atalanta is countering piracy off the coast.

The EU's comprehensive approach in Somalia is based on active diplomacy and support to the political process, security support, development assistance, and humanitarian aid. It aims to tackle both the symptoms and root causes of piracy.

An Irishman and former member of the Naval Service, Mr Chris Reynolds, is playing a key part in this important work as Head of Operations with EUCAP Somalia. Director of the Irish Coast Guard since 2006, Mr Reynolds is on secondment from his position to assist in the EU's efforts to build a force from the ground up that will be able to protect the vulnerable fisheries and the ever-increasing trade plying the waters of Somalia's exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

I began by asking him about his main duties.

"My role is head of operations," Mr Reynolds told me, *"which is divided into three sections: maritime capacity building, policing and institution building, and national policy."*



"The other role I have is head of field offices, of which we have three: Mogadishu; Garoowe, in Puntland; and Hargeisa, in Somaliland."

He is very positive about the progress that has been made in a relatively short time.

"It is hard to overstate how far they have come," he said, *"even though they are really still at the beginning of creating a state and facing the problems that come with that. There is also the clan issue here; a lot of power politics is based around the clan."*

Somali politics is nearly inseparable from its clans and some of the main problems lie in the complicated nature of its clan-based politics.

Claude Gonot, a senior international security advisor for Scandinavian Risk Solutions, has a great knowledge of the security situation in Somalia and his view is: *"Rebuilding Somalia will be huge and hard work. Clans and sub-clans are ancestral, omnipresent and*

"We have policing and legal advisors who work with the Somali system to try and improve it using the concept of 'crime to court'. We are also trying to develop the Somali capacity to interdict maritime crime and ensure that the correct piracy, transnational crime, and fisheries laws; everything you need to have in place to exercise good governance.

"The



at all levels. Somalia remains in a condition of internal conflict, fragmentation and is complex politically. The partial exceptions are Somaliland and Puntland in the north."

It is very hard to create a climate for investment and growth given this fractured nature of politics and the lasting effects of 25 years of civil war.

"To actually create business here is very difficult," Mr Reynolds says. *"Especially for people from the outside who want to have transparency in the banking, legal or policing system."*

"There is an agricultural capacity in Somalia, but it is mainly to the south in Jubaland, an area heavily influenced by Al Shabaab." (Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen is a Salafist, jihadist, Islamic fundamentalist group based in East Africa. In 2012, it pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda and is a further complication in an already volatile and muddled security picture.)

"The army and the police tend to try and control the towns and cities," Mr Reynolds continued, *"while Al Shabaab have a lot of sway in the countryside. Farming is very difficult and there are reports of farmers paying 'tax' to Al Shabaab."*

"The people want to move on but it is a challenge because it has been 25 years of people fending for themselves."

Mr Reynolds also told us about efforts underway to create the infrastructure needed to create growth in the maritime industry. *"They have three major ports,"* he said, *"Berbera in Somaliland, Bosaso in Puntland, and Mogadishu."*

The UAE are interested in developing the northern ports in the north of course because of their proximity, and Turkey is developing Mogadishu Port as its area of influence.

Regarding fishing, Mr Reynolds said: *"One problem with the fisheries is that there is widespread abuse of the licensing system. This leads to a lot of crime and vigilante-type activity at sea, which is not in anybody's interest."*

This abuse of the fisheries industry was highlighted in a report, 'Securing Somali Fisheries', released in September 2015 by Secure Fisheries (www.securefisheries.org), a programme of the One Earth Future Foundation and developed as part of Oceans Beyond Piracy (www.obp.ngo). It is the first comprehensive report carried out since the 1980s, and shows that foreign, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing in Somali waters by foreign fleets is reducing fish stocks and has caused widespread resentment among Somali coastal communities, threatening renewed maritime insecurity.



The report shows that IUU vessels catch over 132,000 metric tons of fish each year, while the Somali artisanal fleet catches only 40,000 metric tons, and that they have been a problem for decades.

During the 1990s, IUU fishing was cited as a justification for pirate attacks in Somali waters, and though Somali pirates quickly shifted their focus toward more lucrative vessels, such as cargo ships and oil tankers, piracy appears to have caused many foreign fishing vessels to leave the area during the mid-2000s. Recently, however, this trend has reversed. According to John Steed, Secure Fisheries Regional Manager for the Horn of Africa: *"Illegal fishing was the pretext used by criminal gangs to shift from protectionism to armed robbery and piracy. Now the situation is back where it was, with large numbers of foreign vessels fishing in Somali waters again – and there is a real danger of the whole piracy cycle starting all over again."*

The report has proven correct. Abdiqani Hassan of Reuters news agency recently reported that *"a volatile build-up of weapons and resentment along the northern Somali coast culminated in the hijack of an oil freighter in March 2017, the first such seizure since 2012."*

Locals say the attacks will continue and blame their government in the semi-autonomous Puntland region for granting foreigners permits to fish in Somali waters. *"Since the fish are drained by foreigners, my colleagues plan to go into the ocean to hijack other ships. We have no government to speak on our*

behalf," said fisherman Mohamed Ismail.

The maritime policing situation also varies greatly from place to place within the country. Somaliland has a coast guard and some basic boats for day patrolling but they lack overnighting or stay-at-sea capabilities.

In Bosaso maritime or port police only patrol the immediate area of the port in small skiffs, but the Puntland Maritime Police Force, who are probably the most developed maritime security agency, are supported directly by the Puntland president and funded directly by the UAE. They have decent boats and facilities and have been known to carry out search-and-rescue, fisheries enforcement, and migration interdiction. They are also directly involved in the fight against Al Shabaab and, increasingly frequently, Daesh (ISIS), who have developed a stronghold in the mountains above Bosaso.

Glamudug has a coast guard that basically consists of a militia with a couple of boats. Their big focus is illegal fishing, mainly against Yemini and Iranian vessels. They arrest a lot of fishing boats and demand fines from them.

In Mogadishu the maritime police are in operation but their jurisdiction only extends 12 miles from shore. While the country had a navy in the days of the USSR, and they still have an admiral and two vice-admirals, they have no structure currently in place apart from a couple of boats given to them by Turkey.

The international community are telling Somalia that it doesn't need a navy but instead should develop a coast guard because that's what you need.

EUCAP are talking to states who might be willing to potential donor states and the EU and Mr Reynolds says they are telling them: *"We can only do the training and mentoring, we need someone else to buy the boats, to build the bases and the piers."*

"However, buying the ships and building infrastructure is only one part of the job. The hardest part is the ability to maintain a ship at sea, to maintain its engines, to train crews. Then you need an officer corps who can manage the organisation and a maintenance corps to keep it running."

I finished by asking Mr Reynolds if he felt the project can succeed and how the Somalis he works with view it. His answer was swift and positive: *"Yes, it can, and absolutely they want this to work. They have an ambition for their country. I have talked to their Deputy Prime Minister and many others and they all say exactly the same thing, that the sea is their future."* ■



CYBER WARFARE

Attacking the Future

BY PAUL O'BRIEN MA

Instead of using bullets and bombs, hackers use bits and bytes to attack central infrastructures. This new type of warfare is developing on a daily basis as embedded computers are running everything from cars to pacemakers; devices which are all hackable.

While hackers remain anonymous, their reach is global. In recent months there have been two high-profile cyber attacks in Europe. There was a total shut down of TV5 Monde resulting in the cessation of transmission of a number of its channels and in Ukraine, an attack on two electricity grids resulted in a major power outage. While such attacks in the past have been attributed to computer nerds, there has recently been a worrying trend that insurgents and rogue nations are launching a new campaign of terror.

The world is becoming more dependent on computers and a concentrated attack has the capability to take down power networks, water infrastructure, financial systems or air traffic control systems, causing

chaos. While perimeter security at such complexes is high, network security can be lax. These threats are viable and reveal that there is a need to develop a full counter-cyber-attack capability.

The internet has become a conduit for attack as cyber sabotage has become prevalent. We are all familiar with data breaches, identity theft and credit card fraud, to name but a few, but breaching protective computer programmes can have devastating effects. Hacking a programme protecting a pipeline could cause it to explode just as if it was attacked by a kinetic weapon. Hackers can also infiltrate industrial or military systems to steal data for cyber espionage utilising malware.

Until recently, controls at power plants were mechanical switches, immune to cyber attack, but now with the drive to put everything on line, a hole has been created in our defences that no one seems able to plug. Entering malicious codes into a computer network or PLC





been downloaded directly from the net as the system within the nuclear plant was air-gapped and could not be breached by remote hackers. Instead, the attackers had designed their weapon to spread via infected USB flash drives. To achieve this, the attackers identified five companies carrying out contract work for their target and infected their computers, making each company a 'patient zero', an unwitting carrier of the lethal devices. As they brought their infected flash drives in and inserted them in the computers of the nuclear facility, the worm was unleashed, spreading rapidly and fulfilling its destructive purpose.

Having identified that the computers as the problem, the Iranians replaced a number of machines used for enriching the uranium, allowing them to press ahead with their nuclear programme. During this period of relative calm, production increased.

However, utilising the same attack method that was used before, hackers infiltrated four contract companies that were either manufacturing products or installing component parts or control systems at the nuclear facility. These surrogates, again unknowingly infected, provided the attackers with a gateway for the Stuxnet virus to access Natanz.

While previous versions of the worm only infected step 7 project files, a deadlier version was used in the second attack that could spread using Windows' Auto-run feature. Infiltrating the programmers' local network via the print-spooler zero-day, the infections of each company were spaced out over a few weeks. It was difficult for IT personnel to identify the problems, as when they scanned for viruses no malware was found on their machines. When they used conventional methods such as DVDs or CDs to transfer data from an infected machine to a clean one there were no problems but when using a USB flash drive, the new PCs started having the same problems as their predecessors.

Production at the facility decreased as the computer problems continued to destroy the machinery associated with the manufacturing process, leaving the future of Iran's nuclear programme uncertain.

The future of warfare is changing rapidly as cyber attacks are now permeating everyday life. Cyber sabotage affects us all, as individual terrorists or rogue nations develop weapons that can shut down air traffic control systems, oiling plants, electric grid or traffic lights, and many, many more systems.

Without deploying military personnel or using force, attackers can get into fortified facilities, shut them down and wreak havoc on a scale never before seen.

Cyber warfare needs to be taken much more seriously. No mission has yet been given to secure the internet, and rogue elements are infiltrating, corrupting and destroying infrastructure through the net. There is a need for policy and highly skilled computer personnel that are given the resources to combat such attacks, as future warfare will see 'keyboard warriors' doing battle on a virtual battlefield that will have geopolitical implications and deadly consequences for the world's population. ■

(programmable logic controller) can completely destroy or take over that system. It may speed up or slow down the system, causing it to operate above safety limits until it malfunctions. While many of us will have experienced viruses on our PCs, the results of cyber attack on a country's infrastructure could be catastrophic.

Many computer networks have a PLC. This small and compact device is a mini computer that controls a variety of devices from pipelines and chemical plants to elevators. A hacker can breach these devices using sophisticated computer worms, such as Stuxnet.

Considered by many to be the world's first digital weapon, the Stuxnet worm targets industrial control networks that are used to control and monitor large-scale industrial facilities: power plants, dams, waste processing systems, and similar operations.

It is unknown who, or which country, developed Stuxnet but it has been attributed to certain western powers by the media as it was developed in 2005 and used to attack Iran's top-secret uranium enrichment facility at Natanz in November 2007.

Having encountered a number of problems such as computers crashing and rebooting continuously and the centrifuges that were used to enrich the uranium gas failing at alarming rates, the Iranians decided to call in a computer security firm to troubleshoot the problem.

Unlike other computer worms or virus-related software, Stuxnet escaped the digital realm and wrought physical destruction on the equipment the computers controlled. To the untrained eye, it looked as if their own computer system was destroying the machines it was controlling. The worm had been unleashed a year before and slowly infiltrated the system leaving little or no trace before it accelerated, destroying its targets.

Another attack targeted Natanz's German-made Siemens computer systems. In this case the worm could not have

THE INFANTRY PLATOON

BY CAPT SHANE BRENNAN, NCOTW, MIL COL, DFTC

PHOTOS BY ARMN ADAM MURPHY

The Infantry Platoon Sergeants Course (IPSC), conducted by the NCO Training Wing of the Infantry School, The Military College, DFTC, is a course that must be completed by infantry corporals who aspire to become sergeants in Óglaigh na hÉireann. With the changing landscape of the Defence Forces over the last number of years and the operational and training requirements needed in the organisation, the Infantry Platoon Sergeants Course was created to replace Module Three of the Standard NCO Course.

Since its inception in 2012, 146 students have successfully completed the four IPSCs that have been conducted, enabling them to become eligible for promotion to sergeant.

The course is designed to train corporals to the level of professional competence required to fill sergeants' appointments in the Infantry Corps. Its main objectives are to provide students with a comprehensive knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of an infantry platoon sergeant in all phases of combat operations; to provide students with the required knowledge of Combat Service Support (CSS) to sustain a platoon during combat operations; and also to practice and develop students' command and leadership skills at platoon level.

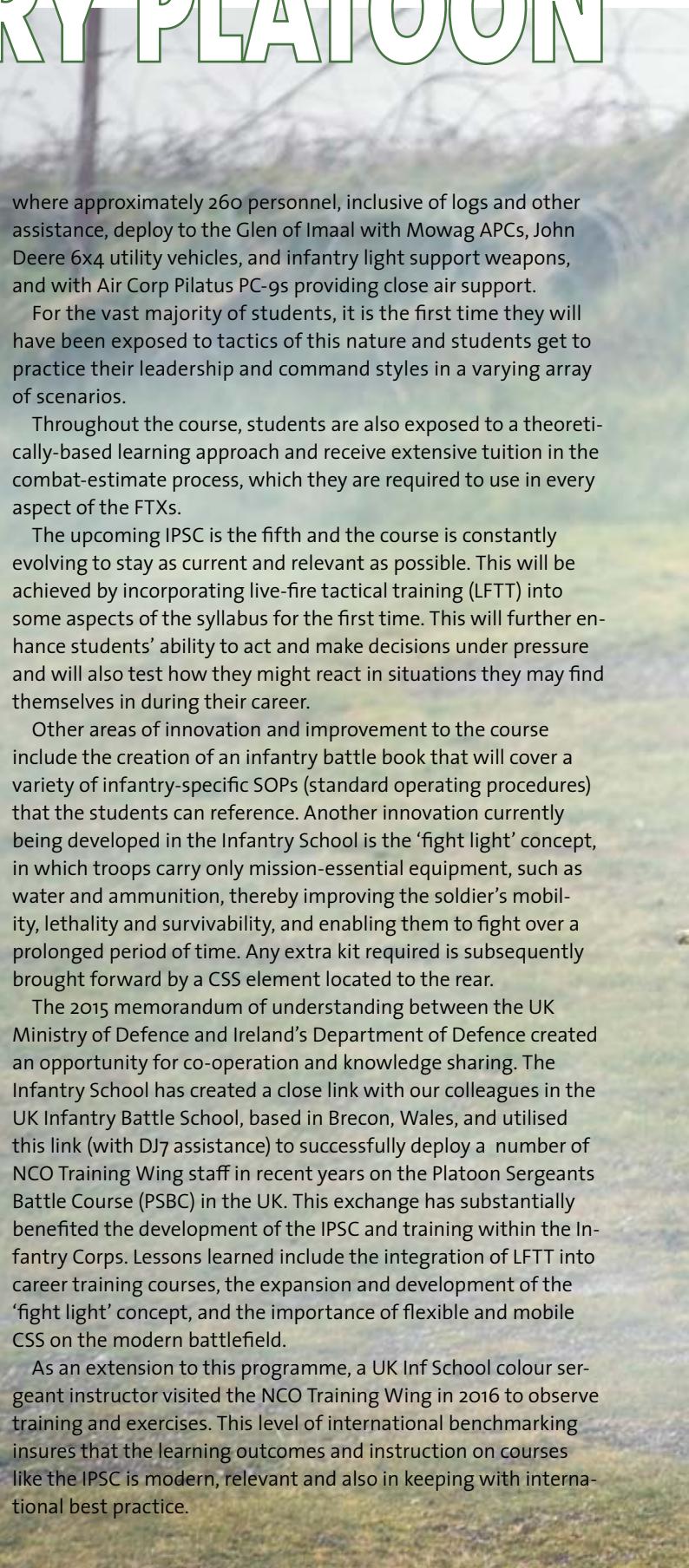
As part of the qualifying criteria for the course, students are required to have completed a ten-week All-Arms Standard Course (AASC), which gives them the required basic knowledge of the platoon sergeant's role. On the IPSC, the main focus changes from an instructional environment, as is the case on the AASC, to a practice and assessment perspective. Students are given the freedom and mission command to excel in infantry-specific TPPs (tactics, techniques and procedures) in all environments at platoon level; they are also given an appreciation of company-level tactics and operations.

The course objectives are achieved by means of a seven-week, intensive course where students are tested mentally and physically, encompassing all phases of war including FIBUA (fighting in built-up areas), patrolling, and retrograde and offensive operations. During the course, students complete four main FTXs (field training exercises), totalling approximately 23 days on the ground.

Along with the requirement for students to show a high level of robustness and survivability in a tactical setting during the FTXs, they are also expected to demonstrate a sufficient level of combat fitness by completing timed two-mile and ten-mile combat PT fitness assessments.

To complete the course, students are also required to pass both minor and major command test appointments, which range from platoon sergeant in a quick-attack FIBUA environment to platoon commander in a deliberate night ambush, to name but a few.

One of the biggest exercises students undergo is Exercise 'Black Light', which is based on a company-level retrograde scenario



where approximately 260 personnel, inclusive of logs and other assistance, deploy to the Glen of Imaal with Mowag APCs, John Deere 6x4 utility vehicles, and infantry light support weapons, and with Air Corp Pilatus PC-9s providing close air support.

For the vast majority of students, it is the first time they will have been exposed to tactics of this nature and students get to practice their leadership and command styles in a varying array of scenarios.

Throughout the course, students are also exposed to a theoretically-based learning approach and receive extensive tuition in the combat-estimate process, which they are required to use in every aspect of the FTXs.

The upcoming IPSC is the fifth and the course is constantly evolving to stay as current and relevant as possible. This will be achieved by incorporating live-fire tactical training (LFTT) into some aspects of the syllabus for the first time. This will further enhance students' ability to act and make decisions under pressure and will also test how they might react in situations they may find themselves in during their career.

Other areas of innovation and improvement to the course include the creation of an infantry battle book that will cover a variety of infantry-specific SOPs (standard operating procedures) that the students can reference. Another innovation currently being developed in the Infantry School is the 'fight light' concept, in which troops carry only mission-essential equipment, such as water and ammunition, thereby improving the soldier's mobility, lethality and survivability, and enabling them to fight over a prolonged period of time. Any extra kit required is subsequently brought forward by a CSS element located to the rear.

The 2015 memorandum of understanding between the UK Ministry of Defence and Ireland's Department of Defence created an opportunity for co-operation and knowledge sharing. The Infantry School has created a close link with our colleagues in the UK Infantry Battle School, based in Brecon, Wales, and utilised this link (with DJ7 assistance) to successfully deploy a number of NCO Training Wing staff in recent years on the Platoon Sergeants Battle Course (PSBC) in the UK. This exchange has substantially benefited the development of the IPSC and training within the Infantry Corps. Lessons learned include the integration of LFTT into career training courses, the expansion and development of the 'fight light' concept, and the importance of flexible and mobile CSS on the modern battlefield.

As an extension to this programme, a UK Inf School colour sergeant instructor visited the NCO Training Wing in 2016 to observe training and exercises. This level of international benchmarking insures that the learning outcomes and instruction on courses like the IPSC is modern, relevant and also in keeping with international best practice.

SERGEANTS COURSE



As the largest corps within the Defence Forces and the backbone of all training and operational commitments carried out at home and overseas, it is important that infantry corporals who undergo this course are given the best instruction possible in order to give them the fundamental knowledge and confidence they need as they progress in their careers as sergeants in the Defence Forces.

Students who have completed the course admit that it is an extremely demanding course, both physically and mentally. Students are pushed to their limits for the seven weeks and on completion of the course feel a great sense of pride in the Infantry Corps and sense of achievement after completing what is an extremely rewarding and enjoyable course.

The course creates a great bond between students and it gives them a valuable insight into what it takes to become an infantry platoon sergeant. The 5th IPSC will commence in the NCO Training Wing on 12th June 2017. ■



Havoc: The Auxiliaries in Ireland's War of Independence

The latest work from military historian, author and regular contributor to *An Cosantóir*, Paul O'Brien, is a detailed look at one of the most feared and reviled units to fight in Ireland during the War of Independence; the Auxiliary Division of the Royal Irish Constabulary. With the escalation of violence in early 1920, the British government were forced to bolster its police force with the recruitment of new personnel who became known as the Black and Tans. However, this was not enough to curb the insurgency which was spreading throughout the country. In July 1920 a new force, comprised of former soldiers, were formed and given the title, Auxiliaries. Trained for swift, surgical assaults and sent into a war zone with little or no understanding of the conflict or the locals, the Auxiliary Division of the Royal Irish Constabulary found themselves fighting for their lives in a counter-insurgency campaign that left a lasting legacy in Ireland which is still evident today.

Similar books on this period look at the well known personalities or list names of participants, but O'Brien's work takes the reader out on patrol. Ambushes, counter ambushes, intelligence gathering, Black Ops, and interrogations are just some of the daily scenarios experienced by the Auxiliaries. Violence and killing are an every day occurrence, and staying alive and completing your tour of duty is uppermost on everyone's mind.

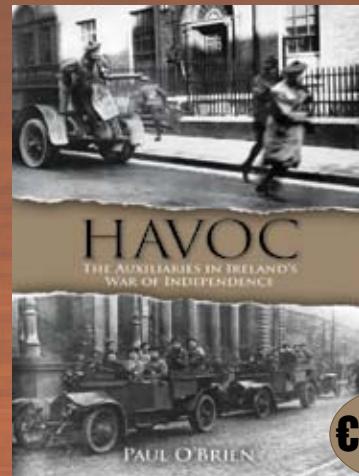
The author examines the unit and looks at them as an early form of Special Forces. Formed at the suggestion of Winston Churchill, known for his support for such specialists, some consider the Auxiliaries the world's first anti-terrorist unit while others see them as forerunners of the SAS or the Commandos.

O'Brien provides a balanced account of their origins and operations without glossing over the brutal details of fighting a counter-insurgency campaign. Controversial from the outset, this is an excellent read and one that will take you back in time to the havoc, which was the Irish War of Independence. *WF*

Published by Collins Press (April 2017) www.collinspress.ie - ISBN: 978-1848893061

Pages: 224 - Price: €19.99

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ESSENTIAL KIT FOR A DAY HIKE IN THE MOUNTAINS

With Russ Mills, [Mountaintrails.ie](http://mountaintrails.ie)

Here is a list of essential kit that you should pack for a day out in the mountains (outside of winter):

Rucksack: A pack of 30/35 litres capacity is best, and is sufficient for carrying what you would need for a day hike.

Rucksack liner or cover: My preference is always for a liner, a waterproof bag that sits inside the main compartment of your pack and helps to keep the contents dry in wet weather. Rucksack covers have a tendency to come off in high winds and can be awkward to manage.

Waterproof Drybags: Put those items that you want to ensure stay dry into drybags for extra protection from the weather.

Waterproof Jacket & Pants: Invest in a good waterproof jacket and waterproof pants. These are essential items to ward off both rain and cold winds. Inadequate protection from either can make you uncomfortable at best, and at worst can lead to hypothermia, as the chilling effects of wet clothes and high winds are greatly increased.

Choose one with a breathable membrane to reduce moisture building up



inside, and ensure it has either waterproof zips or storm flaps to cover the zip, this will prevent water ingress through the front. Make sure it has a good hood too, with plenty of volume, and that this is adjustable.

Warm Hat & Gloves: Brightly coloured beanies are the order

of the day here! Take several pairs of gloves. I often find lost gloves and hats in the hills, so take spares to use in case you lose one. It's also great to change into dry gloves half way through a wet day. Fleece type gloves are ideal for most conditions, but be prepared to upgrade to insulated and waterproof gloves in the colder months.

Map and Compass – Essential items for all hillwalkers that you should know how to use: Do not rely on smartphone apps as phones can get wet and then fail. Carrying a map and compass is not enough on its own, you need to be confident and competent in their use. If you are not sure how to navigate yourself around the mountains with a map and compass then go on a course to learn how to master these essential skills.

Warm Spare Layer: You may have an enforced stop in the mountains, maybe a colleague has an injury, or perhaps you are stopping for lunch in an exposed spot. In this scenario a spare warm layer is ideal. A synthetic insulated jacket is best, it can be put over your existing clothing, including wet waterproofs, and will warm you up straight away. A fleece jacket could be an alternative, but they are not windproof, so you would need to put it on under your windproof layer.

Food and Drink: Always ensure you have plenty of high calorie food available, and bring extra in case you are delayed and have to spend more time outdoors, a 75kg person with a day pack can burn around 450-500 calories an hour when hiking.

There is no rule concerning how much liquid you should take, though 1.5 litres is a good guide. Take more in hot weather, and take a hot drink in a flask when it is going to be cold. My favourite is a hot fruit tea with honey.

First Aid Kit: A bare minimum is an 'ouch-pouch', consisting of plasters, antiseptic wipes and blister plasters, such as Compeed. You may feel you want a more comprehensive kit, but do get training in this case, and do not carry what you are not competent to use. Rescue and Emergency Care (REC) courses are very suitable and widely available. If you are part of a group then a larger, 'group first aid kit' should be carried between you.

Survival Bag: Like a plastic sleeping bag it is bright orange, lightweight and cheap, and everyone should carry one in their pack. In emergency situations you can climb into this bag and it will protect you from the worst of the weather. They have often been attributed with saving lives in the mountains.

A Group Shelter: AKA an emergency or survival shelter, this is a plastic tent-like cover that a group of people can get into to give protection from the elements. They come in various sizes from 2 to 10 person, and would be used to protect a casualty or as a shelter on an exposed lunch stop. If you are hiking as part of a group then a larger one could be carried between you.

Head Torch: Essential in winter, and a good idea all year round, a head torch will provide you with light to get off the mountain should you be caught out in the dark, it can also be used for signalling for help. It's a good idea to carry extra batteries, or a spare torch in addition.

Emergency Whistle: Many rucksacks now come with an integral whistle in the chest strap. Six one second blasts on the whistle, repeated after a short break, is the internationally recognised emergency signal. The reply from the rescuers is three blasts. It makes sense to carry one.

Duct Tape: This amazing versatile tape has a myriad of uses, from repairing torn waterproofs to temporary boot repairs, it can also be used in a first aid context with proper training. Wrap some round your water bottle or walking pole).

Russ Mills owns and runs Mountaintrails.ie, a guided hiking and navigation training business based in Dublin, Ireland. +353 (0)86 4466997 - info@mountaintrails.ie - www.mountaintrails.ie



Mullingar Remembers 1916

BY JASON MCKEVITT B.A., H-DIP.F.ED
PHOTOS SARAH FOSTER OF SJF PRODUCTIONS

Easter Monday was a day to remember in Mullingar when the sound of the marching feet of soldiers was once again heard in this proud garrison town. The occasion was the unveiling of the new 1916 Memorial at the Green Bridge, an area which is closely linked with the revolutionary period in the town. The idea for the memorial was first muted in late 2016 when Mullingar Tidy Towns began the process of looking at ways in which the Green Bridge area of Mullingar could be further enhanced. While at the same time, marking the heroic sacrifices made by local Mullingar people who served in the Irish Volunteers/Óglaigh na hÉireann during both 1916, and also the subsequent revolutionary period in the town. A 1916 sub committee was formed by Mullingar Tidy Towns which consisted of Cllr Bill Collentine (Chairman, Mullingar Tidy Towns), Tomas Nally, Eamonn McGowan, Willie Collentine Jnr, Anita Kennedy, Ger O'Connor and Jason McEvitt (Local Historian) who also had the honour of reading aloud the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic. Both Jason McEvitt and Ger O'Connor served for many years with the Reserve Defence Forces (RDF) in Mullingar, with Ger, only retiring in February of this year from the Reserves, having served almost 42 years. Ger is well known within military circles as the author of the Defence Forces publication, *Medals of the Irish Defence Forces*.

As the construction of the memorial neared completion, decisions then turned to the day of its unveiling, which was planned for Easter Monday, 17th April 2017. The first decision was to request the Defence Forces as the contemporary formation of the Irish Volunteers, to partake in the unveiling ceremony. An Honour Guard consisting of the 'Gunners' of 2 Bde Arty Regt arrived from Custume Bks, Athlone to render honours on the day, under the ever watchful eye of RSM Noel O'Callaghan who was ably assisted by Bty Sgt Dinnegan, with the Flag Officer being another Mullingar resident, Lt Robert Duncan of the RDF component of 2 Bde Arty Regt. We were also honoured to have Col Ger Buckley of DFHQ present on the day. The Honour Guard was strategically placed around the seven trees which signify the seven executed signatories of the 1916 Proclamation. Indeed, it was viewed as a very symbolic gesture in which the members of the Óglaigh na hÉireann of today, displayed their dignified respect for those heroic members of the Óglaigh na hÉireann of yesterday.

As the bagpipes were sounded by an Army Piper and the Irish orders of command were exhaled towards the Honour Guard, those present, including old soldiers, civilians and the descendants of those noble volunteers, grew that bit taller and prouder as they looked on in awe. MC for the ceremony was Eamonn McGowan, with speeches by Cllr Bill Collentine, Cllr John Shaw (Mayor of Mullingar), Tomas Nally, concluding with a history presentation by local historian, Jason McEvitt.



Mullingar Tidy Towns 1916 Sub-Committee L/R: Willie Collentine Jnr, Jason McEvitt (Local Historian), Anita Kennedy (Administrator Mullingar Tidy Towns), Cllr Bill Collentine (Chairman Mullingar Tidy Towns), Tomas Nally, Eamonn McGowan and Ger O'Connor.

The wreath laying aspect of the ceremony was also a moment of deep reflection as, Willie Collentine Jnr, 1916 Sub-Committee, Mullingar Tidy Towns, David Robinson, Chairman, Post 20, IUNVA and Tom Gunn, himself, a Jadotville Veteran and current Chairman, Mullingar Branch, ONE, placed their respective wreaths in a deeply respectful manner. Many a tear was shed during this poignant ceremony, as the Easter sun cast shadows, which interwove the Honour Guard and the Seven Trees as one.

The ceremony concluded with the National Anthem, sung by the young students of Gaelscoil An Mhuilinn from Mullingar, as the Defence Forces provided the final salute on what was a most memorable day in the town of Mullingar.

Local historian Jason McEvitt is a qualified teacher by profession and is both a Graduate and Post-Grad of Maynooth University. He also served 26 years as a member of the Reserve Defence Forces in Mullingar, four of which, serving as a member of the National Executive of RDFRA. ■



2 Bde Arty Regt Honour Guard with members of C Coy, 6 Inf Bn, also present was Col Ger Buckley, DFHQ and RSM Noel O'Callaghan.



Pictured L/R: Mr Tony Colgan, Principal, Capt James Dunlea, Capt Tom Kelly, Band 2 Brigade, Grainne Kearney and Marie Leahy (both Parents Association).



The Band of the 2 Bde, conducted by Captain Tom Kelly.



ATHLONE CELEBRATES 1916 CENTENARY

BY WESTMEATH INDEPENDENT
PHOTOS OLIVER HORGAN

The Marist community in Athlone marked both their own bicentenary and the 100 anniversary of the 1916 rising with the unveiling of a special commemorative garden in the school recently. The 1916 Garden was the main event planned by the Marist College in Athlone to mark the worldwide celebrations of 200 years of Marist education.

The official opening was held over until 2017 in order to coincide with the Bicentenary Celebrations of the Marist Order. The garden is located on a parkland site within the College grounds on Retreat Road and features seven tall trees which represent the seven signatories of the Proclamation.

A copy of the Proclamation was placed in the garden, and the Tricolor was jointly raised by Marie Leahy a representative of the Parents Association, Annemarie Sheehan, from the Board of Management, and Fr Seamus Donohoe from the Franciscan Friary, whose late mother, Helena, was a sister of General Sean McEoin, who played a key role in the events surrounding the Easter 1916 Rising.

"Marist College had decided last year to undertake some project to honour 1916 so we approached Westmeath County Council for funding and they gave us a grant, and

the remainder of the funding for the Garden came from our very generous local businesses and from our past pupils," explained Grainne Dunican from the Parents Association.

The Band of the 2 Brigade from Custume Barracks, conducted by Captain Tom Kelly, provided the musical entertainment.

The Marist Brothers worldwide are celebrating 200 years this year. On January 2, 1817, Fr Marcellin Charnpagnat welcomed two young men into a house he rented for them in La Valla, France. Now known as Founder's Day, it was the beginning of the first Marist school.

This article appeared in the *Westmeath Independent* recently and is published here with their kind permission.



Pictured L/R: Gearoid O'Brien, Historian and Librarian Athlone, Grainne Dunican, Marie Leahy (both Parents Association), Fr Seamus Donoghue OFM, Athlone, Annmarie Sheehan, Board of Management, Marist College and Fr Liam Kelly OFM, Chaplin Marist College, Athlone.

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Kamina Air Base, Congo

*Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago*

The Solitary Reaper, by William Wordsworth.

September 1961

Moise Tshombe's foreign mercenaries in Katanga 1961.

1st (Irish) Infantry Group (1 Inf Gp) began service with ONUC at Kamina Air Base, Katanga, Congo on 28th May 1961. Less than two weeks later, it was posted to South Kasai province, remaining there until it was redeployed to Kamina Air Base in August 1961. When UN Operation Morthor began in Katanga on 13th September, 1 Inf Gp became embroiled in one of the more sustained, prolonged actions fought by Irish troops in the Congo.

This action, of defending and holding Kamina Air Base, has been overshadowed in Irish military historiography by the Niemba Ambush, the Battle of the Tunnel, and the Siege of Jadotville. And yet, the defence of this air base was strategically critical to UN operations in Katanga.

Prior to its handover to UN control, Kamina was used by Belgian military forces as an air logistics base and a base for training paratroops. They also had helicopters, a fighter-wing and an advanced flying school located there. The airfield (Base 1) - with its 5,000-foot-long main runway - was protected by a conjoined military barracks (Base 2). Both bases were linked by a spur-line to Katanga's main railway network at Kaminaville rail junction.

Kamina was the superior posting in Katanga, enjoying permanent barrack accommodation, messes, athletics facilities, swimming pools and a cinema.

When 1 Inf Gp returned to Kamina Air Base in mid-August 1961, OC

1 Inf Gp was appointed Base Commander. The Irish unit, of about 310 all ranks, carried Gustaf 9mm SMGs or FN SL 7.62mm rifles as their personal weapons and were also equipped with 25 Bren .303 LMGs, four Vickers .303 MMGs, six Carl Gustaf 84mm shoulder-fired anti-tank recoilless rifles, and six 60mm mortars. They had no armoured vehicles but were supported by a half-troop of two Malaysian-manned Ferret scout cars, each armed with a single .300 Browning MMG.

Other UN forces under command of the Base Commander included a Swedish infantry company and two Indian infantry companies. Overall strength was about that of a full infantry battalion, and although tasked with the defence of an air base the force had no anti-aircraft weapons.

UN intelligence assessed the strength of Katangese forces in the Kamina area at some 5,000, and the first signs of the approaching hostilities appeared when, as part of a Katanga-wide UN operation, officers of 1 Inf Gp made unsuccessful attempts to arrest mercenaries of the Katangese Gendarmerie at nearby Kaminaville on 28th August. The following day, on the route from Kamina Air Base to Kaminaville, Katangese forces placed a roadblock, manned

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at platoon strength and supported by two Greyhound armoured cars, which, equipped with a 37mm cannon and two .300 Browning MMGs, had superior firepower to the UN's Ferret scout cars. Despite freedom of movement being one of their mission's key principles and tasks, the UN forces did not respond to this provocation.

From 29th August Kamina Air Base was utilised by the UN as a holding-point for mercenaries who had been arrested elsewhere in Katanga, and by 14th September all those arrested and their families had been repatriated or deported to Belgium.

Early on 14th September, Katangese forces placed a further roadblock/strongpoint on the Kaminaville road. The new position was closer to the air base than the earlier one and was manned by two platoons of Gendarmerie supported by six Greyhound armoured cars.

As a counter measure, the Base Commander immediately deployed platoon-strength elements to dig-in on all approach roads to Kamina Air Base and also on the rail link, as it was believed that the Katangese had an armoured train at Kaminaville. A mobile reserve of two platoons with a section of two 84mm Carl Gustaf recoilless rifles was established, supported by the two Ferret scout cars.

This prescient response by the Irish commander enabled his forces to stoutly repel the first Katangan attack, mounted at 16.30hrs on 14th September along the Kaminaville to Kamina road. The attacking force comprised two platoons, supported by two Greyhounds and mortars. Return fire from Irish, Swedish and Indian troops swiftly repelled the attack, with the Katangese suffering an estimated 20 dead and 30 wounded. The two Greyhound armoured cars and an ammunition truck were also destroyed by the Irish-manned 84mm recoilless rifles. The UN forces did not suffer any casualties.

As darkness fell on the evening of 14th September, a damage assessment revealed that the main radio transmitter at Base 2 had been destroyed by Katangese mortar fire. However, the radio installation at the airfield control tower was undamaged. The Base Commander then ordered the evacuation of all non-military UN personnel to Base 1 and the cutting of the rail link to Kamina.

The next day, robust probing attacks by Ka-

tangese forces at several points around both bases commenced and a Katangese Fouga jet began strafing and bombing runs over the air base. The air attacks continued twice a day until 18th September and in lieu of anti-aircraft weapons Irish artillery officers from 1 Inf Gp modified the Vickers machine gun tripods to allow fire at a greater-than-normal elevation. These modifications, although rendering the Vickers more liable to jamming, and the use of interspersed tracer rounds in the ammunition belts forced the Fouga pilots to fly at an increased height, making their attacks less accurate. Nevertheless, the Fouga attacks destroyed one UN DC 3 aircraft on the ground and injured two ground crew.

The probing attacks on the ground persisted for a week but none were successful and Kamina Air Base remained securely in UN hands.

The electricity supply to Kamina came from a hydroelectric station at Kilubi, some 30km away, which was protected by an infantry platoon from 1 Inf Gp. These troops also succeeded in repelling a series of attacks over several days by Katangese forces. However, the power lines to Kamina were cut on 16th September when the Katangese blew up a pylon. No longer needed at the power station, the Irish platoon was withdrawn by helicopter to Kamina on the night of 19th/20th September where they took part in the continuing defence of the air base, which was then operating on stand-by power generators.

At 23:59 hours on 21st September a Katanga-wide ceasefire was agreed between UN and Katangese forces, coupled with a return to the *status quo ante-bellum*.

While the losses to the Katangese engaged in attacking the air base and power station are unknown, the combined UN force of Irish, Swedish, Indian and Malaysian soldiers lost no one.

Available records are not specific as to the roles played by Irish troops per se in this week-long engagement. However, as the defence was under the command and control of an Irish officer and staff-officers, and Irish soldiers formed about half of the combined UN force, their part was undoubtedly significant in, and contributory to, securing this strategically critical UN asset.

Following the cessation of hostilities, the Irish Minister for External (Foreign) Affairs, Mr Frank Aiken, visited the Irish at Kamina on 22nd September during his tour of inspection of Irish troops in the Congo. As the DC 3 aircraft carrying the minister came in to land it overshot the runway and the left undercarriage leg collapsed. Despite this unfortunate landing, Mr Aiken inspected the guard-of-honour, toured Irish positions at Kamina, and took tea with the Base Commander and his officers before departing that evening for Elisabethville.

On 9th October 1 Inf Gp was redeployed from Kamina to new positions in North Katanga, at Nyunzu and Niemba, where they remained until the unit was repatriated at the end of November 1961.

About the author:

Dr McCafferty served in the Congo with 34, 36 & 39 Inf Bns. His PhD thesis 'Political and military aspects of the Irish Army's service with UN forces in the Congo 1960-64' is based on research using sources in Ireland, Belgium, Britain, France, Portugal, USA and USSR. A copy of his thesis is lodged in Military Archives. ■

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SPECIAL OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE

BY PAUL O'BRIEN MA

During World War Two, the men and women of Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE) were tasked with 'setting occupied Europe ablaze'. Operating in occupied territories, they attacked German installations, blew up bridges and arms factories, organised local resistance movements, and carried out reconnaissance, gathering vital intelligence for the Allies. Having been parachuted behind enemy lines, however, the average life expectancy of an SOE operative was just three months. If caught, and many were, agents suffered torture and execution as no quarter was given by their enemies, especially the Gestapo.

As German forces consolidated their positions in Occupied Europe, Britain needed a specialised force designed to wage a campaign of sabotage and subversion, wreak havoc behind enemy lines, and interrupt the German war machine's vital supply of raw materials coming through Europe on their way to German factories. On 22nd July 1940, the SOE was given its charter under the directorship of Hugh Dalton, the Minister for Economic Warfare.

A certain amount of secrecy still surrounds the SOE and how it was organised. It was considered a fluid organisation, able to adapt to the changing demands of the war. At the beginning it was divided into three branches: SO1, SO2 and SO3. SO1 was the propaganda section, an amalgamation of a number of government departments. SO3 was a planning branch, but according to historians never achieved its goals. SO2 was to become the mainstay of the SOE was the amalgamation of two government agencies, MI6's D Section and the War Office's Military Intelligence Research Section. The organisation was further divided into units and sub-sections that included intelligence, signals, accounts, and research and production units.

Initially, recruitment for the SOE was difficult because, being a secret group, it could not advertise openly for volunteers. However, personal and indirect recommendations enabled the organisation to recruit a large number of men and women from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities with specialist qualifications, including engineers, journalists, and even some criminals.

Once identified, potential agents were interviewed to determine their suitability for the task that lay ahead. The interviewer had the difficult task of determining if the candidate was suitable to become an agent, whose work would be very different from that of a soldier. Linguistic skills were of great importance for survival in the field, as discrepancies in language, dialect or accent would immediately mark them as outsiders and draw suspicion.

Having been accepted and convinced to volunteer for the specialist group, candidates were put through a rigorous training



Philip Worrall, an SOE agent, pictured on assignment in the Greek mountains during WWII.

regime at the estate of Lord Montagu, at Beaulieu in the New Forest, Hampshire. Training consisted of a three- to five-week syllabus that included physical exercise, field-craft and combat training. When the formal training and individual assessment was completed, they were sent to more specialist training schools to be taught industrial sabotage, wireless operation and encryption.

Training also became more psychologically demanding, with courses in spy-craft, assassination, using disguises, and safe-breaking. They were also instructed on how to organise resistance cells. These would initially be used to gather intelligence on the enemy, before progressing to sabotage and assassination of high-value targets. Weapons issued to operatives included the Sten gun, which was the perfect weapon to conduct guerrilla warfare as it was cheap to produce, easy to fire, and could be broken down and easily concealed. A number of automatic pistols fitted with silencers were also distributed, as was the infamous Fairbairn-Sykes fighting knife.

Potential candidates also underwent parachute training, as this was the most utilised insertion method used. The RAF and Royal Navy did not like conducting insertion operations with the SOE, as they believed that the insertion of one agent risked the lives of aircrew or the possible loss of a ship. However, they were overruled and ordered to assist as required.

Having completed their training agents were covertly inserted throughout Europe, where they located local resistance groups,

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Christine Granville (born Maria Krystyna Janina Skarbek in Poland), recruited by SOE in 1941, acted as a courier during WWII and survived the war.



Capt George Alfred Wilkinson, code name 'Etienne', who parachuted into France on 5th April 1944. He was arrested on 26th June 1944 and died on 5th October 1944, aged 31.

armed them and then began organising cells, which in turn recruited others.

Attacks against Axis forces were not only carried out by resistance groups but also by SOE agents supported by British Commandos. One such mission was an attack against the Norsk-Hydro heavy water plant at Vermark on the night of 27/28 February 1943. The Germans needed heavy water for the production of an atomic bomb. Ten saboteurs infiltrated the plant by climbing down a ravine that the Germans had deemed impassable and had left unguarded. Setting their charges they withdrew, destroying the plant and delaying the Axis project considerably.

While sabotage and reconnaissance played a major role for SOE agents, there were other operations that are less well documented. These included the assassination of high profile figures. One such mission was conducted by Josef Gabčík and Jan Kubiš who were hand-picked to carry out Operation Anthropoid; the assassination of the deputy SS chief Reinhard Heydrich, in Prague.

The SOE planned the mass killing of a number of German officials in

October 1943 but although agents and weapons were dropped into occupied countries, the mission was shelved due to the fear of reprisals against civilians. However a number of 'hits' did take place, some sanctioned others not. In Operation Ratweek in February 1944, attacks took place in France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark and Norway, where high-ranking officials were gunned down. One operative in Lyon accounted for the killing of 11 Gestapo officers.

Three women operatives became well known for their missions. Lise de Baissac was one of the first women to parachute into France. Her mission was to scout convenient drop zones and landing strips. When her cover was compromised she was forced to return to England but later returned and operated in Normandy, sabotaging the rail network and establishing new resistance groups in the area.

Cecile Pearl Witherington was dropped into France in 1943 where she delivered coded messages to radio operators. When the leader of the SOE in her area of operations was captured Pearl took over the group. She commanded an estimated 1,500 resistance fighters and in the months leading up to D Day was responsible for organising the destruction of miles of railway lines and attacking German supply routes. She survived the war and lived to 91, receiving her parachute wings in 2006.

Another operative, Andree Borrel, was not so fortunate. She set up an underground railway between France and Spain that

enabled downed aircrues to escape and was appointed second-in-command of the Paris resistance. After being captured in an attack on a power station she was tortured but refused divulge information on her cell. She was sent to a concentration camp and, as with many operatives, sentenced to death. She was administered a lethal injection but survived the dosage and came to as she was being piled into a furnace for cremation. She tried to escape but due to her weak condition could not overcome the guard and was cremated alive. After the war, her killers were executed by the Allies for war crimes.

While it may be understandable that the SOE was considered a criminal organisation by its German enemies, it may be more surprising to know that they were not liked by some of their colleagues in England who believed that their tactics were ungentlemanly and that their methods were underhanded and despicable.

Many historians believe that the idea for such an organisation has its roots in the Irish War of Independence with Michael Collins and his Squad, who fought a clandestine war against the British, causing havoc throughout the country, and using an extensive intelligence network to identify and assassinate high-profile targets and sabotage British rule in Ireland.

There have been numerous books and films based on the daring exploits of the Special Operations Executive, and some believe that the group inspired Ian Fleming to come up with his James Bond character. ■



B2 radio set in Besançon Museum of the Resistance and Deportation, France.



A memorial to SOE agents was unveiled on the Albert Embankment, by Lambeth Palace, in London in October 2009.

The DF Hill Running Series

BY CAPT CAITRIONA NIC CABA, AIR CORPS
FITNESS CENTRE, BALDONNEL



‘It's not the mountains we conquer but ourselves’

Sir Edmund Hillary



Training our soldiers to meet the mental and physical demands of military life remains a primary focus for Defence Force Training. The Defence Forces Hill Running Series was established in 2012 under the auspices of DF Athletics, and a race calendar set up to present opportunities that complement the training of our soldiers. Our aim was to facilitate development and test the physical and mental strength of DF soldiers in the mountains and hills.

When designing the DF Hill Running series, we made a crucial decision not to focus solely on competitive hill runners, but rather make these events all-inclusive by inviting hill-walkers along to avail of the marked route and support staff. We understood that in addition to our young fit population of soldiers, the Defence Forces also includes a population of other types of soldier, from the older athletes, post/pre-natal mothers, rehab post-injury, and HRFA candidates.

Our philosophy from the outset is to promote the development of health and fitness for all Defence Force personnel and we achieve this by creating a tough racing

competition for our soldier's alongside an earlier start of hill-walking troops who wish to take time to enjoy the route at their own prescribed level of intensity.

Why not include the Defence Forces Hill Running Series in your calendar this year and take the opportunity to get some fresh air and exercise. Runners, walkers, competitive and recreational are all welcome.

If you are preparing for ARW SOFQ ‘ALPHA TWO’ Selection Course in September 2017, why not load up your CEMO with your prescribed training weight, and relentlessly hit those hills we have selected for the DF Hill Running Series, setting out with the early hill-walkers start. We will be happy to support you in your test and time your distance travelled over time. ■

For further information on events please contact Sgt Alan Hayles on alan.hayles@defenceforces.ie or Capt Nic Caba on caitrona.niccaba@defenceforces.ie, Air Corps Fitness Centre, Baldonnel 01 403 7537.



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
DEFENCE FORCES IRELAND

DF HILL RUNNING SERIES 2017

22 MARCH 17

TWOROCK 9.6km

Registration from
0930hrs at
Kilmashogue
Carpark (O 1510 2450)
Race start: 1100hrs
Walkers: 1030hrs

26 APRIL 17

DJOUCE 10.4km

Registration from
0930hrs at
Ballinastoe Woods
Carpark (O 194 078)
Race start: 1100hrs
Walkers: 1030hrs

31 MAY 17

SPINKS 14km

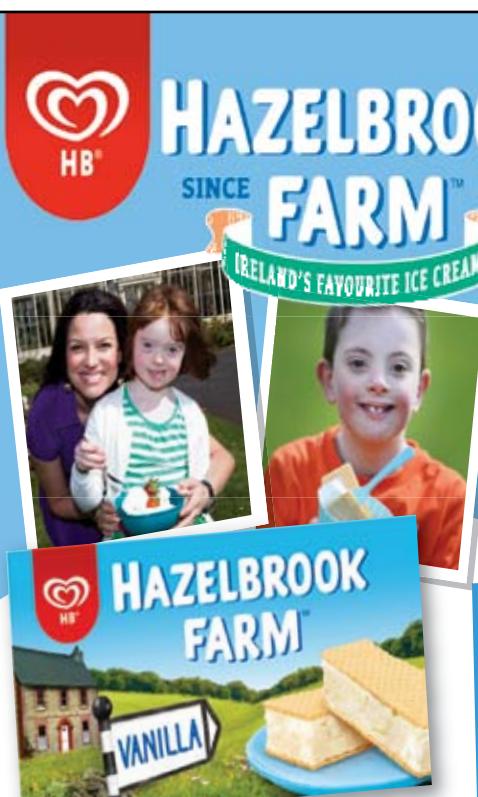
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Walkers: 1030hrs

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL EVENTS

- Trail shoes recommended particularly in wet weather conditions.
- Rations not provided, bring packed lunch; Tea/Coffee/ Scones provided at start/finish.
- Walkers are welcome to all events with earlier start.
- €2 Race Fee (to fund prizes & raffle).
- Registration on the morning of the event.

CONTACT:

Sgt Alan Hayles for further
information.
Air Corps Fitness Centre,
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Ph: 01 403 7537
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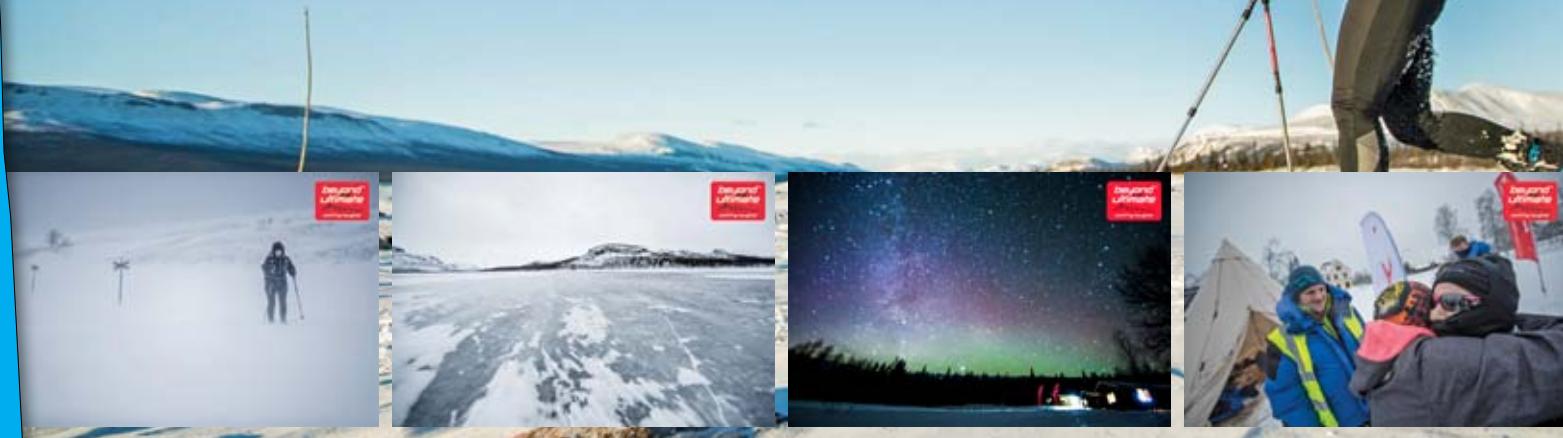
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BEYOND ENDURANCE

BY SGT RENA KENNEDY, PR BRANCH, DFHQ
PHOTOS BY MIKKEL BEISNER



Modern endurance events can be like expeditions, with all frontiers now open to exploration through running. Endurance athletes bear hardships over long distances and have the staying power to do so, not necessarily with ease, but enough to finish. One such athlete is Sgt Ann Marie Larkin, a veteran of over 100 marathons who has also undertaken the arduous Marathon Des Sables in the Sahara Desert, the Transylvanian Ultra, the Connemara 100-miler, and the 10-marathons-in-10-days challenge.

Ann Marie, from Co Offaly, has been with the Defence Forces since 1996, serving in 2 Bde and DFHQ. She has completed four tours of duty overseas and will deploy again in the near future.

Her latest adventure saw her in Swedish Lapland, inside the Arctic Circle, for the Ice Ultra, a 230km, five-stage race held against a backdrop of frozen lakes and snow-capped mountains. The area of the race, the Jokkmokk Municipality, is the size of Wales but with a population of only around 3,000, and has daytime temperatures as low as -20°C at this time of year. It is Europe's last remaining wilderness, a UNESCO world heritage area, and the heartland of the indigenous Sámi people.

Ann Marie was responsible for carrying her entire kit on the race, including food, safety equipment and a minimum of 1.5 litres of water. This kit was examined thoroughly and race numbers issued the night before Stage One. Accommodation each night was provided by way of remote huts and tepee tents with open fires. The Sámi race team, whose local knowledge and survival skills are essential to the race, check and mark the routes, and are responsible for the transportation of all equipment, including trailers, snow bikes, tepees, arctic suits, burners, firewood and reindeer skins.

The race organisers, Beyond the Ultimate, say it's a test of endurance for everybody involved, not just the athletes.

Due to the difficulty of the race, running in temperatures of -20°C, with zomph winds and white-out conditions, a number of the participants spent in excess of 12 hours completing Stage One.

Poor visibility prevented the athletes from viewing their course over the first two stages, which was a blessing, as the arrival of a dry, sunny day for the start of Stage Three meant the competitors could clearly see their destination across a frozen lake, knowing they wouldn't reach it for hours.

Stage Four, at 64kms, is the longest and is mentally and physically draining. According to the race organisers: *"Everybody crossing the line looks totally spent. Cruelly, the hardest part of the trail comes after 50kms, when the runners find themselves in deeper, softer snow just at a time when the accumulated calorie deficit is at its worst and the temperature is plummeting. The cruellest twist, though, lies in the last 500m. The runners emerge from woodland to see the finish line on the other side of a lake that looks little more than a paddling pool compared to the expanses of water they've become used to. However, this lake is dotted with patches of slush hiding under a few inches of snow. If your foot goes into that, the stuff freezes onto your snowshoes and hangs as heavy as concrete."*

Stage 5, 'the Sprint', is a mere 15kms long and ends in Jokkmokk where tired but ecstatic finishers are greeted with a hearty hug from their race director. Out of the 26 competitors in Ann Marie's race, only 14 completed the full course.

We wish her well in her next adventure.

Beyond the Ultimate are the architects of the Ultimate Ultra Footrace series, which take place in four of the most extreme locations on the planet: the Jungle Ultra in the Peruvian Amazon; the Mountain Ultra over the Himalayas in Nepal; the Desert Ultra across the Namib Desert; and the Ice Ultra. www.beyondtheultimate.co.uk ■

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Send your answer along with your name, address & contact number to An Cosantóir's address or by email to subs@military.ie by the 19th May 2017. Winner will be the first correct entry drawn. **Last month's winner was:** Stephen Ennis, Co Kildare.

COMPETITION



NOTICEBOARD

HISTORY & THE CULTURE CLUB AT COLLINS BARRACKS

On 26th May 2017 (11.30am-1pm) The National Museum of Decorative Arts & History, Collins Barracks will be running a new initiative, in collaboration with Dublin City Council. Inviting members to explore and enjoy the collection at Collins Barracks through a series of specially arranged guided tours and activities in the company of museum staff followed by 'Tea & Chat' and an opportunity to mingle.

Audience: Adults

While there visit the **Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition** - The Irish at War at Home and Abroad from 1550 to the present day. Explore Irish military history. Visit Collins Barracks to meet grenadiers, mercenaries, and musketeers and trace the Wild Geese across Europe. **Audience: Family**

For further information email: bookings@museum.ie or Tel: +353 (0)1 6777444.

Venue: Collins Barracks (Decorative Arts & History), Dublin.

Opening Times: Tuesday - Saturday: 10am - 5pm & Sunday: 2pm - 5pm Closed Mondays, Christmas Day & Good Friday

Web: www.museum.ie/Decorative-Arts-History

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COMPETITION €50 VOUCHER

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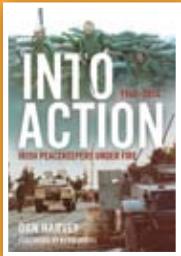
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Last month's winner of the PROTAC €50 Voucher was Seán Dempsey, Dublin 16. Closing date is 19th May 2017.

INTO ACTION: IRISH PEACEKEEPERS UNDER FIRE, 1960–2014

Author: Lt Col Dan Harvey
Publisher: Irish Academic Press (April 2017)
<http://irishacademicpress.ie>
ISBN: 978-1-785371110
Pages: 334
Price: €18.99 PB, €34.99 H/B



The remarkable story of *The Siege of Jadotville* and the success of the Netflix film has focussed the Irish public's attention on the Irish Defence Forces' participation on UN peacekeeping missions. In this action packed read, Lt Col Dan Harvey chronicles the story of other dangerous operations undertaken by Irish soldiers while deployed on peacekeeping missions to some of the world's most complex operating environments.

Lt Col Harvey has over 35-years of military experience and has served in a range of appointments both at home and overseas. He has written several books focussed on Defence Force deployments overseas including *Peace Enforcers: The EU Intervention in Chad*, and *Peacekeepers: Irish Soldiers in the Lebanon*. In 2016, he published *Soldiers of the Short Grass: A History of the Curragh Camp*, the first complete history of the Curragh Camp, from its foundation in 1855 to the present day.

Ireland has almost six decades of unbroken peacekeeping service and this book reveals little known details of how Irish troops have had to fight to impose the peace that they have been charged to keep. In Part I, the author skilfully presents fascinating details of major military incidents during the Irish deployments to the Congo (1960–64), including the Niemba Ambush, the Company in Defence at Jadotville and the Battle for the Tunnel at Elisabethville. Part II focuses on events in IRISHBATT's Area of Operations in south Lebanon in 1980 that culminated with the Battle of At-Tiri. The 17th March 2004, saw Irish troops deployed as part of Kosovo Force (KFOR) in a crowd riot control operation to quell violent demonstrations close to Kosovo's capital city, Pristina. In Part IV, Lt Col Harvey provides an insight into the environmental and security challenges faced by Irish troops on the ground in Chad, as well as the leadership challenges faced by the Operation Commander of the EU Force in Chad, Lt Gen Pat Nash. The concluding section provides an account of the 43rd Inf Gp's deployment to UNDOF mission on the Golan Heights in 2014.

Throughout this book, characteristics of professionalism, courage and decisiveness when required are evident traits of the Irish soldier. As the author concludes, peacekeeping is something that the Irish are "... very good at, prepared as they are to sometimes go 'into action' and fight for peace". This is a highly recommended read for both serving members of the DF and for military history enthusiasts. CL

NOAH WOLF SERIES BY DAVID ARCHER

The Way of the Wolf (Prequel #0)

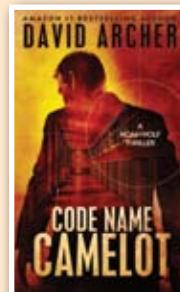


Publisher: Watchtower (February 2016)
ISBN: 978-1987987041
Pages: 144
Price: €6.50 PB / €2.30 eBook or FREE

This is the prequel to the USA Today and Amazon No 1 best selling author David Archer's Noah Wolf action thriller series based on the latest US secret agent and the unknown agency he works for. As a 7-year-old child Noah Wolf witnessed his parent's murder suicide, which left him traumatised, and he spent the rest of his youth in foster care. Living with post-traumatic stress that left him without emotion, but growing up he learns how to mimic others emotions which gives him a 'Spock' like persona.

This prequel can be read out of sequence as its mainly Noah's back story, and can be obtained for free by signing up to the author's mailing list on www.davidarcherbooks.com.

Code Name: Camelot (Book #1)



Publisher: Musterion Publishing (February 2016)
ISBN: 978-1987987034
Pages: 264
Price: €9.30 PB / €1.15 eBook

Noah Wolf has programmed himself to appear that he has emotions by mimicking natural reactions since his traumatic youth where he witnessed his parent's murder-suicide.

After being court-martialled and sentenced to death for shooting members of his platoon while serving in Afghanistan with the US Army. Sgt Wolf is offered a lifeline by a secret government agency that recognise his unique emotionless personality and military skill set that makes him an ideal and deadly assassin.

Noah becomes the latest super spy in David Archer's new best selling series.

This is a highly recommended new thriller series with plenty of action and use of the latest High-Tec tools in the spy business. Other books in the series are: #2 Lone Wolf, #3 In Sheep's Clothing and #4 Hit For Hire. WF



NAME
SHANE BYRNE

RANK
TROOPER

UNIT
1 ARMD CAV SQN

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD
PHOTOS BY ARMN ADAM MURPHY

Shane grew up in Stratford-on-Slaney, near the Glen of Imaal in Co Wicklow. After doing his leaving cert in Baltinglass in 2009 he worked as a green keeper on Rathsallagh golf course and also, through FAS, gained his C (truck) and EC (articulated truck) licenses.

Shane played rugby with Carlow RFC and football with Stratford Grangecon GAA, where he won titles at under-16 and senior.

Shane enlisted with the Defence Forces two days after his 21st birthday, and joined 104 Recruit Troop in 1 Armd Cav Sqn with 39 other hopeful recruits. (This was the recruit class whose experience was made into RTÉ's documentary, *Recruits*, which was broadcast in August and September 2015 to much acclaim.)

"I have no other family members who served with the Defence Forces," he says, "but joining up was just something I wanted to do. For me, saying goodbye to my family was hard and daunting – I was going into the unknown."

"At the start of recruit training it was kind of weird getting to know everyone but now we are really close. We all went through the same training and it was easy to make friends. I have made some really great friends; including Troopers Dunne and Kinsella, who I work with now."

After training, Shane was one of 24 of his recruit troop posted to 1 Cn Cois, in Galway. For Shane this meant a three-hour drive back and forth when not on duty and at weekends. However, after three months serving in the West of Ireland he was successful in getting a transfer back to 1 ACS in the Curragh.

In his first year after completing his three-star training Shane has completed a five-week recce course and also completed the prelims for the ARW.

"The recce course was hard," he says, "with long hours spent on the ground but it is a requirement for 1 ACS and overseas service. I really enjoyed the survival phase; it was great."

"I'd also like to go 'over the wall' and complete the ARW SOFQ course, but I felt I wasn't ready this year."

Shane also completed basic-, transit-, and truck-driving courses. "I hope to learn to drive the armour and complete a gunnery course," he says. "Then, hopefully I will qualify later this year for overseas service."

At 23, Shane has now completed two-and-a-half years in the Defence Forces, carrying out many operational duties and completing several training courses in that short time.

We'll leave the last word to the man himself: "I find the Defence Forces a great career and I'm enjoying life back in the Curragh, where I think there are many opportunities to develop my career." ■





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