

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

# AN COSANTÓIR



Óglaigh  
na hÉireann  
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



SEP/OCT 2023



**C295 | LEADERSHIP | RUGBY WORLD CUP**

[STRENGTHEN THE NATION]



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**Front Cover**

By 105 Sqn

# Editorial

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

We hope you enjoy reading this edition and continue to enjoy reading all the other An Cosantóir magazines we have published. I am sure you have noticed that more and more pages have changed, especially our On Parade section. Due to the redesign we can now capture more events within the DF. This editions On Parade contains images from Army, Naval Service, Air Corps, overseas and the RDF.

We have recently brought back the **Sports and Clubs** section where we showcase the achievements of many talented athletes and also highlight upcoming events. DF Soccer, Golf, Athletics and Kickboxing are featured in this magazine. Comdt Rory McCann also gave an excellent two-page feature on the **4th Military Rugby World Cup**.

If you have any ideas for the magazine, or would like to be featured in the On Parade section of An Cosantóir, please send us any submissions to [magazine@military.ie](mailto:magazine@military.ie)

We are currently looking to expand our team internally and have permanent positions and also the chance for a detachment. If you have interest in web design, photography or journalism this is the team for you. For more information e-mail [webmaster@military.ie](mailto:webmaster@military.ie)

Our first feature **C295 Technical Services Training** is brought to us by Cpl Kieran Roche. Kieran talks about the purchasing of four new Airbus C295 Maritime Patrol Aircrafts that will replace the original CASA that was bought in 1994. The new aircraft cost €230 million.

Fran 'Farmer' Reilly brings our **Veterans piece** as he discusses a recent Hands across the Waters tour in Italy. Fran is a member of the Irish Defence Forces Veterans Association (IDFVA) who do outstanding work for our veterans.

**"Experiences of a medical student in the Reserve Defence Forces"** is brought to us by Pte (AR) Dr David Killilea. David talks about his time on work experience in St Bricins

Military hospital, which also shows us the benefit of joint training within the DF. David has extensive skills and knowledge he can now share with the organisation.

**Defence Forces Dive Group (DFDG)**

shows that this club caters for all levels of divers from entry level to more advanced diving techniques. The DFDG is not just an adventure club, but are often tasked by J7 for operational purposes and exercises.

The **Artillery Corps** and the **27 Inf Bn** share their celebrations of 100 and 50 years respectively with us, two historical events this year for the DF. Cpl Shane Curran takes us through what is involved in the **Medical Standard Course**. Comdt Tadhg O'Donoghue discusses the **French Language programme** that has been encouraged within the DF since 2017. Lt Stephen Doyle follows on from a previous article by Comdt Gavin Egerton in our Jan/Feb edition this year on Mission Command. Lt Doyle discusses **Optimising Cavalry Tactics through Intuitive Decision Making**.

Our centre spread is a photo feature of a very successful 44th **An Cosantóir 10K run and 5K walk**. Even the rain could not bring the morale down, a great day was had by all. All race results can be found at [military.ie/run](http://military.ie/run) and all photographs can be accessed at [flickr.com/photos/dfmagazine](http://flickr.com/photos/dfmagazine)

Two new civilian appointments have been added to the General Staff, becoming the **Defence Forces Board** and these are the Head of Strategic HR Mr Declan Carville and the Head of Transformation Mr Brian Molloy. We have interviewed both new members to gain an insight into who they are and what their new appointments mean for the DF.

Our From the Archives section features an article published in the Jul/Aug 2017 edition of An Cosantóir on Exercise Neart.

*"Learn as if you will live forever, live like you will die tomorrow."*  
— Mahatma Gandhi

**Sgt Louise McDonald – Editor (stand in)**

# ON PARADE



*The Flying Training School recently conducted a 6-ship formation exercise with new students as part of their introduction to military flying. The new students now start their wings course and we wish them the best of luck in their training.*

*CS Gerry O'Mahoney retired from the DF with over 40 years' service, pictured with GOC 1 Bde Brig Gen Brian Cleary, Lt Col Sean Dunne and his son Fionn who has just been posted to 1 Bde Tpt.*



*Capt Gavin Looney 1 Bde Tpt presents Cpl Mark Bulman with his "State Stripe" Meritorious promotion after 42 years loyal service.*



*Sgt Maj Michael Ronayne  
1 BAR - GOC's Parade*



*OC 1 Bde Brig Gen Brian Cleary receives the handover of his parade from newly appointed Collins Barracks OC Lt Col Peader O'Cathain under the watchful eye of Comdt Dave Sweeney 2 I/C 1 BAR and Bde Sgt Maj Gordon Fitzgerald.*



*OC FTS and instructors alongside current and new cadets during the 6-ship formation exercise*

# ON PARADE



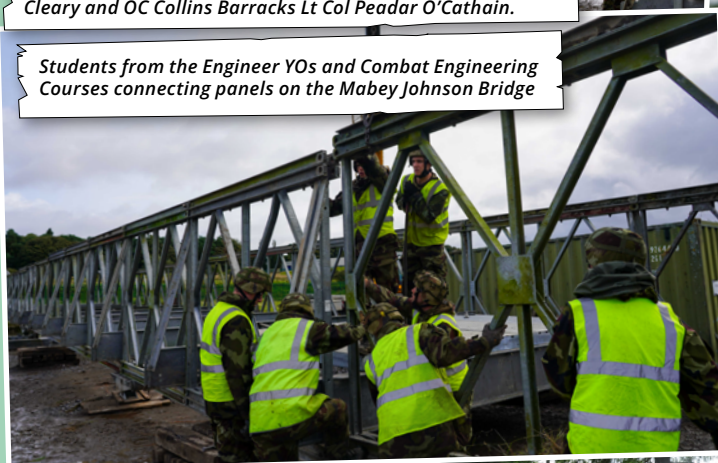
Lord Mayor of Cork Cllr Kieran Mc Carthy about to inspect the Honour Guard accompanied by GOC 1 Bde Brig Gen Brian Cleary and OC Collins Barracks Lt Col Peadar O'Cathain.



Lt Oisín Duff directs the crane on the Mabey Johnson Bridge



C/S Carroll, Cpl DeStanlaigh, Cpl Burke, CQMS Gunn 2 Bde MP at a recent mass for deceased members of the Military Police in Cathal Brugha Barracks



Students from the Engineer YO and Combat Engineering Courses connecting panels on the Mabey Johnson Bridge



Lt Rachel Madden, 1 Bde Eng Group



Serving and retired personnel at the equipment display in CIS Base Workshops following the CIS Corps Centenary Parade



Current and former Directors of the CIS Corps pictured at the recent CIS Corps Centenary which took place in the DFTC. L-R: Col Con Ryan (Retd), Col Des Bergin (Retd), Lt Col (T) Brian McQuaid (Retd), ACOS Brig Gen Rossa Mulcahy, D CIS Col Mark Staunton, Maj Gen Kevin Cotter (Retd) and Brig Gen Peter O'Halloran (Retd).



Cpl Gavin Murray, Reserve Gardai Eamonn O'Reilly and Kevin Sharkey and Cpl Ryan McGrath.



D CIS, Col Mark Staunton, and senior NCOs of the CIS Corps at the recent 100 year centenary of the Corps which took place in the DFTC

# ON PARADE



**Congratulations to our two most recently qualified Pilatus PC-12NG pilots Lt's Kevin Redmond and Joe Callan.**



**Congratulations to Pte Duffy and Pte Thornton, Sp Coy, 27 Inf Bn, on their outstanding performance in the DF International Sniper Competition which was conducted recently. The pair won: Best team overall. Best international team. Best individual sniper and longest shot at 1425m.**

**TT/AA Eoin McCarthy, PO/AA Greg Steele, TT/AA Peter Collins taking part in the recent FOCNS Challenge**



**Comdt Barry Hannon (122 Inf Bn DCO/COS) lays a wreath in remembrance for Irish soldiers in Tibnin**



**Ordinary Rate John Alcorn receiving the award for Best Ordinary Rate from OCNOC (Officer Commanding Naval Operations Command) Capt Kenneth Minehane.**



**A/Sea Cummins, CPO/Sea Lahive, A/Sea LeRoux taking part in the recent FOCNS Challenge**



**Winning Sniper Team from 27 Inf Bn, Capt Owens, Pte Thornton, Pte Duffy and Sgt Quinn**



**Exercise Steel Storm Mounted and Dismounted combined weapons shoot exercising soldiers in Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT) in Naqoura**



**OARs (Ordinary to Able Ratings) Class Alpha 23 during their Passing Out Parade**



**2/Lt Amy O'Neill and 2/Lt Anna Kellegher at the WorldSkills Ireland National Final Award Ceremony**

# ON PARADE

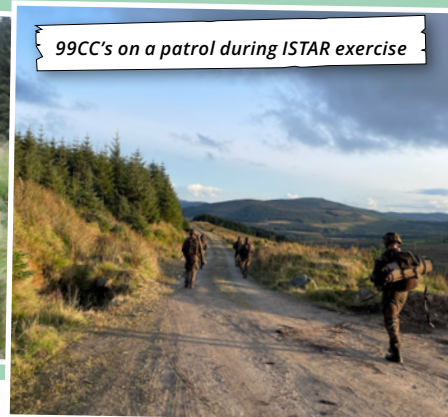
*International Sniper Competition*



*Recruit (AR) Hassan taking up a firing position during exercise Door Frame*



*99CC's on a patrol during ISTAR exercise*



*OC C Company 7 Inf Bn, Comdt Twamley (AR) talking with the troops on exercise*



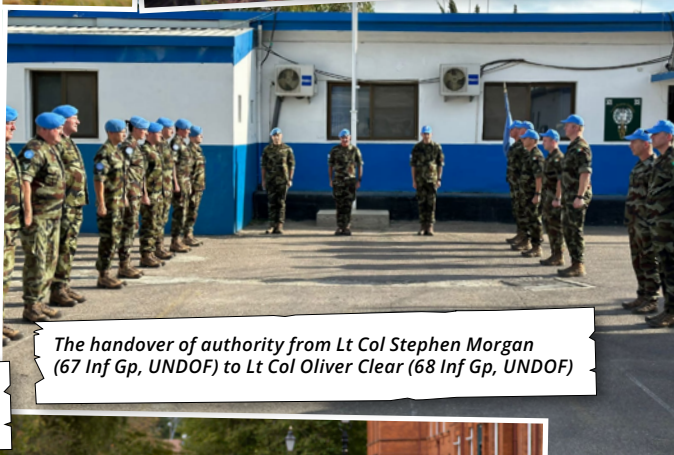
*Platoon O Group during exercise Door Frame (AR) conducted in the Glen of Imaal. Cpl Darcy, Cpl Fynes, Sgt Browne, Cpl Owens (AR)*



*Lt Col Clear hands over the United Nations flag to BSM Anthony Jinks, who will be the custodian of the flag for the 68 Inf Gp, UNDOF*



*The handover of authority from Lt Col Stephen Morgan (67 Inf Gp, UNDOF) to Lt Col Oliver Clear (68 Inf Gp, UNDOF)*



*Induction ITs for the 100CC, after commencing training on the 04 Oct 23*



*Major General Anthony McKenna DCOS (Ops), Major General Maureen O'Brien, Brigadier General Brian Cleary. Major General Maureen O'Brien on the way to receive her well earned DSM.*



# C295 Technical Services Training

## TECHNICAL TRAINING COMPLETED BY AIR CORPS PERSONNEL BY AIRBUS MILITARY TO SUPPORT THE ARRIVAL OF 2 NEW MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT

BY CPL KIERAN ROCHE. CREW LEADER C.T.S.O. NO 4 SUPPORT WING, AIR CORPS

TRAINING ATTENDEES: F/SGT DECLAN RYAN, SGT DARRAGH SKELLY, SGT DARREN ROGERS, CPL KIERAN ROCHE



*C295 Tail Number 284 outside its new home at Casement Aerodrome, Hanger #5*

2023 marks a pivotal year for the Irish Air Corps with the delivery of two new Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA). At the time of writing Airbus Military have delivered the first of two C295 MPA with the second to follow in the coming weeks.

The Original two CASA CN235 MPA were delivered in 1994 and since then have proven to be a reliable and efficient platform to patrol the Irish Economic Zone. 101 Squadron have operated these aircraft in multiple roles but their primary tasking has been maritime patrol. Over the near 30 years in operation C252 and C253 have now logged over 21,000 and 23,000 flying hours respectively.

However time and technology moves on and it becomes more and more difficult to source parts and support for ageing airframes and equipment. In 2009 the original constructor of the aircraft Construcciones Aeronáuticas SA or CASA as we know it was absorbed into Airbus Military who are now the manufacturer of the replacement MPA.

The Replacement MPA chosen was the Airbus Military C295, a direct descendant of the CASA CN235. These aircraft repre-

sent the cutting edge of technology in regards to airframe and powerplant. However, the biggest leap in technological terms is reserved for the avionics and sensor suite installed. These aircraft are without doubt the most complex aircraft ever operated by the Irish Air Corps or any aircraft operator in Ireland; civilian or military.

To prepare for the arrival and operation of the C295 a lot of preparation and training needed to be completed. Along with training for Pilots, Aircrew, Airframe & Engine Technicians, a course was needed for the personnel of Technical Services No 4 Support Wing.

"Technical Services" I hear you say....."What's That?"

C.T.S.O. (Central Technical Services Office) is a small office within the Air Corps which provides Continuing Airworthiness Management for the fleet of fixed wing aircraft. "Airworthiness" refers to the condition of an aircraft that allows it to safely operate in the sky. "Continuing Airworthiness" refers to the on-going efforts to maintain and ensure that an aircraft remains safe throughout its operational life.



*C295 Tail Number 284 Starting up on the Apron at Casement Aerodrome*

Continuing Airworthiness is provided by a series of checks, inspections and maintenance procedures that are completed on a pre-defined schedule, or once off interventions to ensure the aircraft remains in a safe and reliable condition. This requires continuous monitoring of the manufacturer's Maintenance planning recommendations, Service Bulletins, Airworthiness Directives etc. Our office forms the backbone of this strategy and helps to combine all of this information and present it for use by the hands-on engineers and technicians.

The Training was completed over a three week period in the Airbus Military international Training Centre (ITC) in Seville, Spain. The facility is a purpose built training centre which caters for all disciplines and includes multiple simulators and a modern classroom environment. Our course, titled Maintenance Management Programme, had the following elements:



*284 Taxiing at Casement Aerodrome*



284 Gear and Flaps down.  
Landing at Casement Aerodrome



F/Sgt D. Ryan, Sgt D. Skelly, Cpl K. Roche,  
Sgt D Rogers at the training facility in Seville



284 Directly overhead bristling  
with antennas and sensors

- C295 Aircraft Familiarisation Course (Airframe & Powerplant)
- C295 MPA Familiarisation (Mission Equipment)
- Material & Logistics Course
- C295 General Maintenance Program and Technical Publications

The initial training was familiarisation on the aircraft and powerplant and each aircraft system was examined in detail. Everything from fuel to electrical, landing gear and hydraulics were all examined in turn.

Next up was the Mission equipment. The army loves its Acronyms and we were not disappointed on that front. FITS, EOIR, LIDAR, are only small fraction of the acronyms we had to learn as a gateway to the aircraft mission equipment. This equipment is what forms the backbone of this aircraft truly becoming a Maritime Patrol Aircraft. The suite of sensors, cameras and lasers allow the aircraft to monitor our precious resources on land and at sea.

Our third section was Material & Logistics. This gave us an understanding of the parts supply channel within Airbus Military. For an aircraft this complex it is important to keep the correct parts to hand and we were taught how to calculate which parts are needed and when to order. Our aircraft were supplied with an IPL (Initial Provision List). This list of parts was discussed and we learned how to keep this up to date based on aircraft utilisation.

The final 4 days were spent on Maintenance Planning and Technical Publications which were the most important section for us personnel working in Technical Services. This training was invaluable in teaching us to provide Continuing Airworthiness for the C295s. We're back to this "Continuing

Airworthiness" again! Also key to this was learning how to integrate the myriad of manuals into the Air Corps technical library.

For me personally it was amazing to see the advancement in technology particularly in the mission equipment. The aircraft has a full glass cockpit up front and a fully integrated tactical console and sensor console in the rear. Practically any camera image, radar return, sensor return or radio signal can be displayed on any screen in the cockpit or on the tactical or mission screens as needed. It really is a marvel of modern technology.

Currently the CN235s are still performing maritime duties while the C295 comes fully on line. It will still take considerable work to get our pilots and aircrew, technicians and all ground support crews fully operational. If you see the new aircraft they will be distinguishable by its winglets and its new paint scheme. The older MPA were blue but the new aircraft are painted a more modern grey similar to the Pilatus PC12 Aircraft.

The team in Technical Services and I look forward to providing Continuing Airworthiness support for the new aircraft and look forward to seeing them in the skies working their way to 20,000 flight hours and 30 years' service with the Air Corps. Safe Flying!



The original CN235 aircraft now retired but still  
working as "Gate Guardian" outside the factory  
in Seville

# DEFENCE FORCES DIVE GROUP

BY CAPT ANTHONY DUFFY AND CS KENNETH MURPHY

## WHAT ARE WE...?

The Defence Forces Dive Group (DFDG) is a group within the DF that has the task of promoting and conducting sports diving, for DF personnel under the auspices of the Defence Forces Council for Adventure Training (DFCAT). It caters for all levels of divers; not only can it conduct entry level training to new trainees but can also teach divers more advanced diving techniques in terms of mixed gases, extended decompression and in the use of rebreathers.

The DFDG is now in existence for almost fifty years (2024 is the fiftieth anniversary), with its origins predating that as far back as 1958, when the Curragh Sub Aqua Club was founded. DF personnel had been involved in diving both inside and outside of the organisation since sports diving became popular, with the earliest recorded official Army dive in New Quay, Co Clare in June 1969. As times progressed, moves were made by a number of individuals to get Adventure Training recognised in the DF as an integral part of military training, formalising its position under the Director of Training, where it remains today under the DFCAT umbrella, which is currently led by Col Mark Browne.

This formalisation enabled the DFDG, under its original title Army Sub Aqua Group (ASAG), to become an official DF club and became affiliated to the Irish Underwater Council (now Diving Ireland), the national governing body relating to sports diving in 1974. It has had great influence and played an important role within it since joining, holding many of the top appointments within that organisation.

Since those early days with only sixteen members, the DFDG has grown to approx 75 members from all three arms of the DF and is managed by a central team. This team schedules and coordinates courses, exercise supports, training management and equipment procurement for the Group.

As the DFDG has developed, so also has its capability in associate skillsets such as powerboating, where it is also now an accredited powerboat school with Irish Sailing, with the DFDG running national powerboat courses not only for its members but also the wider DF including the Air Corps and Engineers.

The multi-year training and equipment plan devised by Col Browne has seen the DFDG becoming well equipped over the years through grateful assistance from the budgets allocated to Director of Training, Director of Engineers, Director of Transport, OC CMU, Service and Air Corps Jointly owned! A fleet group purchased to a modern fleet modern RHIBs and inflatable boats

Director of CIS, Naval making the Group truly of privately owned and inflatables has given way with seven well-equipped supported by a C2 truck.

We are affiliated to Irish Sailing and Diving Ireland, who are part of the global Confederation Mondiale Des Activités Subaquatiques (CMAS), World Underwater Federation, with all training conducted to the standards and certified by these agencies. The group members feature

regularly on civilian assessment panels helping progress the sport in Ireland.

## SO WHO ARE WE?

We are all serving members of the DF who enjoy the experience and challenges that come associated with sport diving. We are from ALL Services, Corps and Units and made up of ALL ranks, which is reflected in our team, which ranges in rank from Private to Colonel. In terms of the management of the team we focus on the competence of the individual and what skillsets they bring and NOT the rank. The DFDG has a strong focus on promoting transferable leadership qualities and skills through adventure sports. Regardless of rank an individual's diving skills define their role in the group which is evidenced in the fact that two of our stalwarts and principal instructors within the group in both diving and powerboating, are Gnr Pat Hurley 1 BAR and Tpr Tom O'Doherty 1 Bde Tpt att 12 Inf Bn. The development of the DFDG team relies not alone on the DF learned skills but also on their external expertise contributing to the group. Gnr Hurley was a previous member of the National Technical Commission and Regional Diving Officer within Diving Ireland and Tpr O'Doherty has many years of experience involved in commercial dive centres and the rescue services.

Fleet manoeuvres



Tpr O'Doherty receiving Coxn instruction from Capt Mark Browne and Sgt David Browne in 1993 near the Saltee Islands off the coast of Wexford



Members of the DF Dive Group at CS Seamus Purcell (RIP) annual memorial swim in Kilkee

## WHAT DO WE DO?

Many of the skillsets gained through the DFDG have a military application and can enable better exercises and more challenging scenarios during Unit training, career courses etc. all designed to develop a better prepared member of the DF going forward. We are actively involved in contributing to DF exercises, by providing means for amphibious insertions of troops on FTX, including the recent MOUT instructor cse in the 2 BTC, Cambrian patrol water crossing serials, SERE courses, Recce and Sniper concentrations. We also provide water safety and Surface Cover /Swimmers for water crossing serials, confidence training, and adventure races conducted within the DF. Recently the DFDG have been actively supporting the AC in a number of their activities



*Ribs on exercise at Dublin Port, earlier this year*

our instructors bring qualifications learned in the DF to the courses and ensure standards are as high as possible. Areas such as navigation training, medical support, equipment maintenance are all supported by team members and ensure DFDG contributions to all DF activities are always at the highest standards and based and derived from DF standards augmented with lessons learned from civilian courses.

The second course conducted in Sept was the Advanced Dive Camp in Donegal which is focused on developing member's skillsets and building the instructor pool for the future. Some members have progressed their skills with us and through external instruction to such an extent that a recent dive off Donegal saw one of our team reach 115m on a WW2 wreck using the latest rebreather technology.

To ensure skills and best practices are maintained to the highest standards, members are encouraged to remain abreast of current developments and practices within the sport.

The DFDG use every opportunity to upskill our existing members, with a number of our personnel qualifying as Leading Divers, Rescue Diver and Advanced Nitrox Divers, mixed gas blenders amongst



*Gully at Grannan Rock Bere Island*



*Swim through Grannan Rock Bere Island*



*Never know what you might meet, diver encounters a jelly fish*

such as Helicasting drills and crewman selection. Additionally the DFDG have assisted in providing safety whilst AC personnel undergo SWET and HUET training with our pool of qualified instructors.

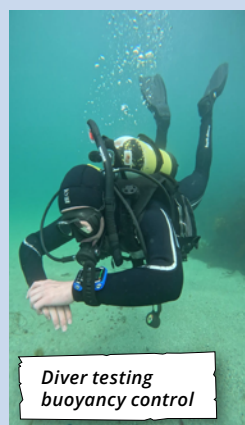
In terms of diving, members of the DFDG have always managed to challenge themselves diving in different locations both at home and abroad. At home, we get to dive some of the best dive locations in the world, focusing on remoter areas of the West and South coasts, such as Bere Island, North Donegal and Mayo. The DFDG also conducts overseas trips (self-funded) to some of the worlds most challenging and spectacular dive locations with members having visited locations ranging from the Red Sea, Scapa Flow, Arctic Azores and the Antarctic.

This year the DFDG conducted two training courses as part of the ATED, namely a Beginner / Continuation Dive Course and an Advanced Dive Camp, additionally we conduct two days CPD training a month (weather dependant) in areas such as Dive Skills, Rescue Skills, Boat Handling and Navigation.

The Basic Course this year was conducted from 15-26 May in the DFTC and Bere Island, with the first week in the pool in DFPES. The week was a mix of classroom theory and pool drills including snorkel tests and water confidence, with an emphasis on safety and drills, but most importantly on confidence training. On the Friday following a move to Bere Island, West Cork the open water element to the course began where the

trainees were challenged to step outside their comfort zone and practice their skills in the open water of Bantry Bay.

As with all our training courses, The Basic Dive Course is based on Diving Irelands syllabus for qualifying entry level divers or CMAS Diver 1\* (an internationally recognised civilian qualification). In addition to this the DFDG incorporate additional skills and lectures to develop trainees with skills that are transferable within the DF; such as assisting or planning dive briefs, boat handling and exercise support skills, medical, weather & sea state analysis and navigation amongst other highly useful skills. Many of



*Diver testing buoyancy control*

others. Additionally CS Kenneth Murphy recently qualified as a Leading Instructor (M3), the highest diving grade internationally within CMAS. This followed an lengthy process not alone in practical dive skills but extensive education on multiple diving topics. As with all adventure training medical training is essential and is maintained and supported by essential CMU personnel. Within the group Sgt Emmanuel O'Keefe CMU and CQMS Diarmuid Scannell 1 Bde Ord Gp, both highly skilled Paramedics, lead this. Instruction in all areas here conforms with the best CMU standards and practices and ensures should an accident occur, the members of DFDG are thoroughly prepared to render assistance.

A key feature of the DFDG is its engagement with service Veterans. Each year a number of veterans attend our main courses. Their contributions allow us benefit from their vast experience but also address the gaps in our instructor pool. They attend following specific criteria laid down and approved, and integrate seamlessly into the very familiar training structures we employ. Cpl Pat King (4 Cav Sqn Retd), for example, was a member of the original group in the 1970's and continues to instruct and support new members of the DFDG. The contact also maintains and fosters the passing on of the DF culture, history, deployment and war stories too!

With military sports diving in the DF nearing its 50th year, it has continuously evolved from a small group of determined individuals with little resources, to a well-equipped, dedicated team of highly qualified personnel, delivering a variety of services to the DF, supporting and enhancing training whilst focusing on developing our people.

If you are interested in anything to do with recreational diving, powerboating or joining the DFDG please contact your local Rep on [MDLDFDG@defenceforces.ie](mailto:MDLDFDG@defenceforces.ie) or through the Connect app.



*Cpl Paddy O'Grady, Cpl Pat King, Sgt Joe Bourke, Sgt Martin Walsh and Comdt Pat Sweeney seen on a training exercise near the Cliffs of Moher in 1987*

# LEADERSHIP THROUGH EXAMPLE

BY THE LEADERSHIP DOCTRINE WORKING GROUP

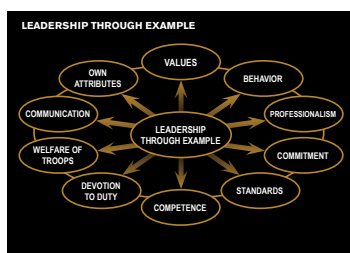
Every member of the Defence Forces, regardless of rank or appointment, is a leader.

— DEFENCE FORCES  
LEADERSHIP DOCTRINE P.17

## LEADERSHIP

The ethos of Óglaigh na hÉireann is rooted in our volunteer tradition, which has underpinned our service to the State for over 100 years. Throughout that time, the Defence Forces have been central to Ireland's response to a wide range of national and international events and crises.

In recent times, we have faced a broad range of Defence and Security challenges at global, regional and national levels. The Covid-19 pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine, the impact of climate change and cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure have brought a renewed focus on the importance of having a flexible, capable and appropriately-resourced Defence Forces. The report of the Commission on the Defence Forces, and the recent publication of the Detailed Implementation Plan, presents a unique opportunity to transform the organisation in terms of our structures, staffing and capabilities. This transformation won't happen overnight, and we will face challenges as we forge ahead with the development of our Joint Force to meet future threats. Effective and proactive leadership will be fundamental



to our growth and development as an organisation.

Central to our progress will be the positive stewardship of our culture and climate. All of our personnel have a fundamental right to dignity and respect in the workplace, and this doctrine sets out that it is the job of our leaders to ensure that our working environment is one where all personnel feel valued and respected, and where behaviour is grounded in our values as an organisation. This is critical to our capability as a military force, because our personnel are the most important element of our capability, and leadership is central to mission success across the spectrum of operations.

This second edition of our leadership doctrine describes what we hold to be important in the conduct of ethical and effective leadership. It discusses the type of leaders we should be in terms of our character; what we need to know in terms of our competence; and what we need to do in terms of our behaviour. It should be read by all members of the Defence Forces, but like all doctrine, it requires judgement in its application.

There are no simple answers to leading in the complex environment we find ourselves in, however the parameters and guidelines in this doctrine should be considered, together with the context of each situation, in order to exert a positive influence on our personnel; develop and evaluate individuals, teams and the organisation; and achieve the mission.

Ultimately, the most powerful leadership influence is, as it has always been, the men and women of Óglaigh na hÉireann giving the most positive example to our colleagues through our presence, our words and our actions.

## THE LEADERSHIP HUB

To complement and support the introduction of our new Leadership Doctrine, we have developed a Leadership Hub on CONNECT. Every member of our organisation is a leader, regardless of their rank or appointment. The Leadership Hub provides a Space where all within our organisation can access useful resources that can support our daily work, regardless of

rank or appointment. We have included all types of interesting and easily accessible resources including an Audiobook version of the Doctrine, podcasts on leadership, associated articles and books, presentations, lectures and lots, lots more. The Leadership Hub can be accessed on CONNECT from the 8th November with a QR code provided below.



LT (NS)  
Tahlia Britton

## LEADERSHIP DOCTRINE VIGNETTE 1: LEADERSHIP REFLECTION 3 – TEAM WORK

Leadership is about balance. It's knowing when to push yourself to the forefront, to lead by example. But somewhat counterintuitively, it is also about knowing when to take a step back and provide your team with the freedom and resources to achieve the mission. For a leader to be effective, those around them must trust their ability and judgement. This can be achieved by demonstrating the former, leading from the front. The Naval Service Diving Section combined diving course is a prime example. It is a course where students are pushed to their absolute limits physically and mentally.

Many people ask how or what set me apart. How was I able to pass a course that many men before me had not? The answer is simple, NOTHING. All candidates are held to the same exact standards, and are expected to be capable of conducting the same roles. Students are held to the highest standards of integrity, honesty and humility. For one to achieve in this environment, they must prove that they are able to thrive as part of a team under immense pressure. Leadership in this context must be displayed by everyone, be willing to push past all preconceived limits and bring their "buddy" along with them. The water is cold, dark and intimidating sometimes all that you have to hold onto is the reassuring pull of your buddy at the other end of your swim line.



Navy



Army



Air Corps

## VIGNETTES

Updated vignettes, or short accounts, from both a historical and modern perspective have been included in the Leadership Doctrine to highlight the real world practical examples of leadership. While some of the vignettes emanate from leaders not of our parish, we only have to look within our own

organisation for inspiring examples of leadership. Over the coming editions of An Cosantóir we will select and publish leadership vignettes from our Doctrine based on particular themes. In this edition we have selected two of our own leaders, past and present that provide us all with powerful examples of what leaders can achieve through Physical Courage and Teamwork.



**Col Anthony Bracken BMC**

For his actions at At-Tiri, Col Bracken was awarded the Military Medal for Gallantry (An Bonn Mileata Calmachta), with distinction.

## LEADERSHIP DOCTRINE HISTORICAL VIGNETTE 8: THE DAY THAT THE TANK CAME CALLING

*Lt Anthony Bracken, Recce Sec Comd, C Coy, 46 Irishbatt, UNIFIL, 1979/1980*

Following the helter-skelter dash to At-Tiri on Sunday afternoon and the tense beginnings of the incident a relative calm ensued over the first twenty-four hours. Cpl Cyril Henry, Trooper Paddy Moore and I settled into a routine to man the AML 90. Having slept in the car the first night we all agreed that unless this uncomfortable practice was absolutely necessary it had to cease...and then Sherman came calling.

The DFF (de-facto forces) were equipped with US Sherman Tanks, known as 'Super Shermans' being modified versions of the original M4 design. Weighing in at just over thirty tons and armed with a 76mm main gun accompanied by a 0.5in HMG and two 0.30in machine guns, the tank was a resilient warrior in the Middle-East, seeing service with the Israeli Defence Forces for over thirty years since the 1950's.

To put it mildly no member of Recce Section, C Coy, 46 IRISHBATT UNIFIL would have predicted such a close encounter with one of these behemoths but then the incident at At-Tiri was proving to be anything but ordinary. Waking up on Monday morning 07 April 1980 to a trundling hulk placing itself no more than ten metres or so from our 90mm Cannon was an interesting experience. I told Cyril to lay the battle-range mark on his gun sight on the turret race of the Sherman and I then brought a HEAT round from the carousel into the breach holding it on the chock release mechanism. Looking across at Cyril with both of us thinking the improbable, I often wondered what Paddy Moore was thinking at that juncture as he crouched in the driver's seat facing his counterpart in the tank.

Both barrels were trained on each other for a day. It was highly improbable that if either or both vehicles fired that the rounds would have had enough range to do more than cursory damage and cause large headaches for the crews...at least that is what my AML 90 crew, myself included, chose to believe.

Day two of Sherman's visit saw the welcome sight of the main armament elevated above its head-on aim and so we reciprocated. I am sure that the tank crew were as relieved as we were, and I know that the check-point infantry who had borne witness to this strange stand-off were likely happier as well.

The following early morning Sherman trundled off down the road to Kunin Crossroads much as he had trundled in, never to be seen again. Perhaps that crew returned to their battle position at the Brown Mound and could well have been involved in direct strikes onto the Platoon HQ the following Saturday, thereby bringing Comdt Taylor's, Company Commander C Coy 46 Inf Bn, wrath down upon them in the form of two Dutch TOW missiles. The tanks of the DFF were to remain silent for the remainder of our tour of duty.

Whatever the final story it was an intriguing visitation, initially frightening, then worrying and finally curious. Thank God neither of us had to open fire...as Irish soldiers we would have rapidly found out if the 15mm of French hardened steel at the front of the AML 90 was up to the task.



**DO YOU HAVE  
ACCESS TO OUR  
INTERNAL COMMS  
APP CONNECT?**

1

Scan the QR code on this page or download Workvivo app to your phone (entering Irish Defence Forces as organisation).

2

Register using form (quicker using civilian email address).

3

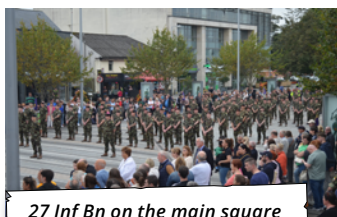
Once account verified you can set password.



# 27 INF BN CELEBRATE 50 YEARS

BY LT CONOR KENNEDY

PHOTOS BY LT CONOR KENNEDY



27 Inf Bn on the main square in Dundalk town

## THE COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAM

This year the 27th Infantry Battalion held its final anniversary commemoration of its centenary commemorative program, marking the unit's 50th Anniversary with a parade

in Market Square Dundalk. The Aiken Barracks commemorative program was planned and organised by the 27th Inf Bn Anniversary Committee, which consisted of military personnel and several local historians and authors. Numerous members of the committee had long-standing family ties with the unit's history, including a number of members with family who served under Comdt General Frank Aiken in the 4th Northern Division. The Committee planned to mark all of the unit's most historically important dates and promote community engagement with the history of Aiken Barracks and the 27th Inf Bn.

These events commenced last year on 13 Apr 2022 with the commemoration of 100 years since the British forces withdrew from Aiken Barracks, Dundalk on 13 Apr 1922. This event saw the 27th Inf Bn march proudly through Dundalk, with the support of family and friends, and onto Aiken Barracks square where the handover ceremony took place. Following this, the Anniversary Committee ran a commemorative event, on the 14 Aug 2022, where the 27th Inf Bn respectfully marked the anniversary date of the civil war executions and those killed during the 5th Northern Divisions raid on Dundalk military barracks.

As part of the commemoration program, the Committee conducted various guided tours of Aiken Barracks. These tours were hosted by Sgt Lucchesi, a key contributor in the establishment of the committee and one of its leading members, alongside Capt Padraic Agnew. These guided tours were open to the public in order to share the long and rich history of the 27th Inf Bn and its relations with Dundalk town and its communities.

## THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

The commemoration of the 50th anniversary was marked with a parade, held on Saturday 02 Sep 2023, where currently serving members of the unit marched through Dundalk town and onto the historical Market Square where the parade was held. At 1040hrs that morning, the 27th Inf Bn marched onto the square and stood at the position of 'aire' where they awaited the arrival of their commanding officer Lt Col Frank Colclough and the Cathaoirleach of Louth County Council, Paula Butterly. Upon their arrival, the parade under the command of Adjutant 27th Inf Bn, Capt Hugh Simpson, rendered a general salute and the brigade

colours flag was marched on parade.

After reviewing the troops on parade, the Cathaoirleach addressed those at the event, welcoming the families and friends of serving members and veterans, thanking them for the sacrifices they have made and for the commitment they have demonstrated throughout the unit's history. The Cathaoirleach acknowledged the vast amount of diverse and difficult functions and duties the 27th Inf Bn has carried out from Aiken Barracks over the years. From the various on island duties and taskings, such as assisting An Garda Síochána in the protection of the internal security of the state, policing the fisheries, aiding in preparation for the defence of the state from attack, to the numerous overseas commitments including peacekeeping, crisis management, and humanitarian relief operations. She then thanked the unit, and its past and present members, for its years of loyal service, as in times of trouble and turmoil the 27th Inf Bn have assisted communities of Dundalk by taking part in search and rescue operations, providing relief in times of natural disaster, and ensuring the maintenance of essential services.



27 Inf Bn on the square

Following this, OC 27th Inf Bn Lt Col Frank Colclough spoke to the crowds, acknowledging the long history of cooperation and good relations between the unit and the communities of Dundalk. Lt Col Colclough also took the time to remember all those members of 27th Inf Bn who have lost their lives overseas,

including Pte Seán Rooney who tragically died on the 14 Dec 2022, while deployed overseas with UNIFIL.

## HISTORY OF AIKEN BARRACKS

Dundalk has always been known as a garrison town with its military history dating all the way back to the 9th century. The barracks, originally a linen mill, was rebuilt by the British in 1825, where it accommodated a cavalry regiment. The barracks saw varied use over the following 70 years as it was occupied by various units of dragoons, lancers and hussars. However, in 1902 it was once again rebuilt to accommodate a newly established British artillery regiment. A little over a decade later, the barracks saw a massive increase in numbers and activity as with the beginning of World War 1 hundreds of troops would join the war effort and were stationed in Dundalk. The barracks remained under British control until 13 Apr 1922, when Comdt General Frank



Flag officer LT Harry Swan

**27 Inf Bn RDF marching as part of the parade**



Aiken and his 4th Northern Division took command of the barracks from the British however his political views put him at odds with the pro-treaty Irish forces. As a result, on 16 Jul 1922 pro-treaty forces moved

against Comdt General Aiken, capturing Dundalk barracks and imprisoning most of the 4th Northern Division.

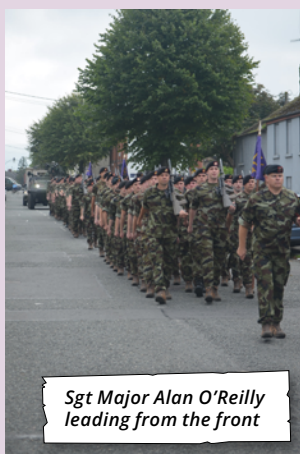
In response to the capture of Dundalk military barracks an anti-treaty force was constituted from the Dundalk South Armagh Brigades and using IED's they breached the walls of the local prison allowing over 200 anti-treaty POW's, along with Comdt General Aiken, to escape and re-organise for a counter-attack. Comdt General Aiken led a successful attack on the pro-treaty held barracks, recapturing it and cementing his legacy as a first-class tactician and field commander. However, on 17 Aug 1922, after the recapturing of Dundalk barracks, pro-treaty forces commanded by General Dan Hogan enveloped Dundalk town and launched raids on the military barracks and three police barracks under anti-treaty control. This led to Comdt General Aiken standing down the 4th Northern Division and calling a total ceasefire.

In the following years, the Dundalk barracks was occupied on and off by troops from various units however, in 1973, with violence escalating following The Troubles, the Irish Government recognised the need to establish two infantry battalions in order to secure the northern Irish border. On September 1st 1973 the 27th and 28th Inf Bns were established, with 27th Inf Bn headquarters being based in Dundalk military barracks where it still remains today. In 1986, a special ceremony was held in the barracks where An Taoiseach, Dr Garrett Fitzgerald TD, officiated the dedication of the barracks new name to Comdt General Frank Aiken in memory of the distinguished military leader and statesman's achievements. As a result, for the first time in its long history, the Dundalk military barracks would have its own distinct identity, Aiken Barracks, which remains today.

## THE 27TH INFANTRY BATTALION UNIT FLASH

The 27th Inf Bn's distinctive saffron and purple flash was designed by the units first OIC, Lt Col Louis Hogan, and his 2IC. They took inspiration from the Irish mythological warrior Cú Chulainn, who shares a close relationship with the town of Dundalk, their motto being "Mé do rug Cú Chulainn cróga" meaning "I gave birth to brave Cú Chulainn". Cú Chulainn was not only seen as relevant due to the unit's location and area of operation, but due to his representation of loyalty and a strong sense of duty, shared by members of the unit.

The saffron sword in the middle of the flash, crossed by two saffron spears, represents the weapons presented to Cú Chulainn by the Ulster King Conchobar for singlehandedly defending Ulster against the armies of Connacht in the famous



**Sgt Major Alan O'Reilly leading from the front**

Táin Bó Cúailnge (Cattle Raid of Cooley). The flashes shape is the design of the angular sloped armour of the Panhard M3 armoured personnel carrier used by the battalion in the 70's with the rise of paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland and overseas as part of UNIFIL.

The saffron colour was chosen to represent the colour of the cloak worn by the Irish mythical warriors, the Fianna, who stood as protectors of the Gaelic Order and upheld the values and ethics of the warrior-code. The purple colour was chosen due to it being the traditional colour of the infantry corps, with the colour having a long-standing association in Europe with royalty and reverence. Every part of the flashes carefully chosen design has meaning and is representative of Irish history and culture, and the unit's strong relationship with Dundalk and its communities.



**The DF band leading the parade**

## 27TH INFANTRY BATTALION OPERATIONS

Throughout the unit's history, the 27th Inf Bn has led numerous ATPC and ATCA operations. During the troubles, the unit executed numerous operations in aid of An Garda Síochána, ranging from the deployment of checkpoints on border crossings to aiding in search and disposal missions. In more recent years, other ATPC taskings included cash escorts, explosive and ammunition escorts, the guarding of high-security prisoners in Portlaoise Prison, and providing internal security for major events in Ireland such as the visits of Pope John Paul II (1979), Queen Elizabeth II (2011) and President Barack Obama (2011). In 2015, the Bn aided the Gardaí in searching for the Dundalk local Ciara Breen who had gone missing.

Over the years, the unit has also led various ATCA operations, such as acting as an emergency firefighting service during the strikes of 1978 and 1987; in 2001, during the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak when the unit was deployed with Gardaí to checkpoints along the border in order to stop the illegal importing of animals and animal products from Northern Ireland and in late 2010, following the heaviest snowfall in the country's history.

In 2018, during snowstorm Emma, the 27th Inf Bn aided emergency services by facilitating transport for patients and medical staff to hospitals, and clearing snow blocked roads to facilitate emergency service vehicles. In 2020, following the outbreak of Covid-19, 27th Inf Bn members administered the Covid-19 Vaccine, bolstered numerous emergency services, provided security in Dublin airport, and aided the HSE. The

units constant willingness to provide aid to the people of Ireland under any circumstances has been demonstrated on numerous occasions.



**A Coy 27 Inf Bn**

# 4TH MILITARY RUGBY WORLD CUP

BY COMDT RORY MCCANN

The Defence Forces Men's rugby team have recently returned from competing in the 4th Military Rugby World Cup. The previous competitions were held in 2011 (with the British defeating Fiji in the final), 2015 (where Fiji claimed the trophy) and in 2019 (where Fiji again won the trophy). For 2023, France were hosting the competition and preparations commenced in late 2021 and the application was made through J7 to the DOD for approval to travel. The Defence Forces rugby committee began making preparations for the tournament and rebuilding the squad after the impact COVID had on training and matches. During 2022, the DF men's side travelled to the UK to play the RAF Development team and played An Garda Síochána in the annual Gordon Wood Trophy.

Preparations stepped up significantly in 2023 with the nomination of the coaching and back-room staff of the competition. Capt Philip Dowling along with Capt Derek Farrell and Capt Billy Henshaw took on the coaches' roles, with Comdt John Quinn as the team manager. The backroom team was complete with BQMS John (Maxi) McDonald, Cpl Dave Brannigan and Pte Brian (Hopper) McGrath as the kitmen and Pte Jonathan Angland as the physio. The team was facilitated in the background by the DF Rugby President, Brig Gen Rossa Mulcahy and chairpersons Lt Col Damian Carroll and Lt Col Jayne Lawlor. The final part of the leadership team was the announcement of the team captain to which the honour fell to Cpl Donal Liddy who has been a stalwart of the team for the last number of years.

The draw for the groups was held on St Patrick's Day in France. Twelve countries had agreed to participate in the competition – France, Ireland, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Spain, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Uzbekistan, Fiji, South Africa and Georgia. Ireland were drawn in a group with New Zealand, Fiji and Uzbekistan! This was certainly the group of death! This group did not deter the coaching staff and a plan was hatched to ensure that the squad was as prepared as they could be. Unfortunately, South Africa were unable to travel and were replaced by Tonga. The tournament would consist of 3 groups of 4 teams with the top 4 ranked teams after the



Facing down the NZ Haka



Idris Rqibi putting in a hit against Uzbekistan



Ire v Australia

group stage competing in the Championship Competition, the next 4 teams would play in the Trophy Competition and the final 4 teams would compete in the Challenge Competition.

During the preparations, the Defence Forces took advantage of the numerous contacts within the Provincial Set up to learn from the best in order to prepare for the competition. The coaching staff visited Leinster Rugby to shadow them in their preparation for a URC match and to observe how this preparation is done at the highest level. This was arranged courtesy of Jim Bastic, who left the DF and is now the Kit Man for Leinster Rugby. The squad conducted a training session on the new 4G

pitch in Connacht and received a very informative talk from Andy Friend, the Director of Rugby for Connacht. The squad also had the opportunity to train over 2 days in the Munster High Performance Centre in University of Limerick.

From a playing perspective the Defence Forces had warm up games against the Leinster Juniors, An Garda Síochána (on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Gordon Wood Trophy, played in Ballina Killaloe RFC) and in April they travelled to France to play a French Military XV. This match proved to be an excellent learning experience for the relatively young DF team. Here they were exposed to the differences between club and military rugby!!

The last item to get sorted prior to departure was the kit and DF Rugby would like to thank J7 for their efforts in securing the training and travel kit for the squad. The team were provided with enough kit to ensure that they were properly kitted out for the 3½ week tournament. The logistics for a competition like this were no small feat and could not have been done without the assistance of a lot of personnel including, the DOD, D COS Ops and Sp, ACOS, D Transport, D J7 and D J4 (especially the Travel and Sub section) and the Defence Forces Rugby back-room staff.

The competition commenced on the 16th of August 2023 with the opening ceremony in Pontivy. All twelve nations were addressed by the Mayor of Pontivy and the President of the Brittany Regional Rugby League. Once the formalities of the



Ire v Fiji

competition were concluded it was down to business for the Irish team. Based out of Plomeur Rugby Club, the Irish team commenced training for their opening match against Uzbekistan.

Playing five matches in twenty (20) days required a balance between training and recovery. Our physio, Jonathan Angland had his fingers worked to the bone in keeping the players patched up and ready for the next game. While the ice bath provided by the French was worth its weight in gold, it unfortunately struggled with the size of some of the players and a more suitable option was found in the Atlantic Ocean. This tournament was always going to be a squad effort and the success of the competition came down to the efforts from the squad members to be able to balance their work commitments as well as their family and social lives for the duration of the competition. This involved a number of personnel arranging their own flights to get home for family occasions, courses or other commitments during the competition. However, all of this would not have been possible without the assistance of their home units and the General Staff in facilitating them to be released for the competition. While we may not have had the 'rub of the green' with some of the refereeing decisions we certainly landed on our feet with our Liaison Officer. Adjutant Florian Bourdin (AKA 'Mick') couldn't have done more for the squad in ensuring that we had everything that we needed and in arranging our transport, sightseeing, and feeding requirements. He integrated so well into the Irish team that he was even mistaken as Irish on a number of occasions with some locals surprised to find out he was actually French.



Marty Cummins rises highest v Uzbekistan

## MATCH ROUND UP

Ireland's first game in a Military Rugby World Cup would be played in Paimpont against Uzbekistan on the 19th of August. Uzbekistan proved to be extremely physical and determined throughout. Ireland's nerves in the opening quarter resulted in some unforced errors that allowed the Uzbek's some vital territory. In the Ireland conceded to a resilient Uzbekistan team, who ran out as winners 43-0. On the 23rd of August, Ireland faced the double world champions, Fiji. This would be the first time the Irish DF would face the Fijian Cibi (Fijian war dance). Played in Pontivy, the Fijian flair was coupled with sheer athleticism and power proving too strong for the Irish team, Fiji winning 56-3. The score-line however did not reflect the Irish team's performance. The Irish scrum was dominant throughout and were extremely unlucky not to turn possession into points. The final group game saw Ireland face New Zealand on the 27th of August. The New Zealand Defence Forces performed their Haka in Vannes, the second tribal challenge in four days. The Defence Blacks took the lead in the first half, with Ireland keeping the pressure on and staying within touching distance of the lead. In a heroic performance by the Irish team in both attack and defence, the NZ team ran out winners 39-24, scoring a late try to take it out of reach from the Irish. With the group stage

complete, Ireland had qualified in the top 8 and a match against Australia awaited.

The DF faced off against a strong Australian side in the Trophy semi-final which took place in front of a very large attendance in Plabennec on Saturday 02 Sep 23. Australia immediately laid a marker down with an early try and brutally punished any individual defensive errors by the DF and ran in three more tries during the first half. The DF started the second half very strong. Controlled and aggressive attacking led to a very well worked team try by S. O'Connell making the score 28-13 going into the last 30 mins. Fatigue and a number of injuries took their toll and Australia ran in a late salvo of tries to give a full-time score of 52-13 – not reflecting the overall performance of the DF.

The Defence Forces played Tonga in their final game of the International Defence Rugby Competition. The game was the 3rd place play off for the Trophy Competition, with the winner finishing 7th seed overall in the tournament standings. Ireland would again face a southern hemisphere war dance called the

Sipi Tau, which is a tradition carried out by Tongan Rugby teams since 1994. Both teams exchanged scores in the 1st half but as the 40mins ended it was the DF who held the lead 17-15 after scores from S. Smyth and R. Conway with the



Opening Ceremony

extras and a penalty added by D Liddy. C. McNally scored an excellent try off an attacking lineout to give the DF the lead going into the last quarter. Tonga sustained a large period of pressure right up until the last play of the game. However the DF team held out to secure a 24-22 victory on the final whistle. An impressive performance in 30-degree French heat against a fast paced and strong Tongan team outfit.

Preparation has already commenced for the upcoming season and building for the 5th Military Rugby World Cup. The team placed 7th overall, playing against 4 teams from the Southern Hemisphere. After this great learning experience, we feel we have the potential to be able to compete with the Top 4 given the opportunity again.

A special mention has to go to the travelling support for the Irish Defence Forces. Numerous friends and families made the trip over to France and their efforts were greatly appreciated by the entire squad. The travelling support made their voices heard before, during and after every game and helped to build a great team spirit wherever the team went. Some were even roped into the odd job and a big thanks to Thomas O'Neill for all his work in providing the video analysis to the team.

**Want to get involved..... for information regarding DF Rugby, please contact:**

Capt Phil Dowling – 1 BAR (Men's Rugby)

Capt Meabh O'Brien – 2 BDE HQ (G7) (Women's Rugby)

# 44TH DF AN COSANTÓIR 10K RUN & 5K WALK

## MALE RACE

**1st Place:** Sgmn Josh O'Sullivan-Hourihan (30.27)

**2nd Place:** Pte Kenneth Rodgers (31.44)

**3rd Place:** Nathan O'Leary (32.02)

### O/35

**1st Place:** Comdt James Ledingham (32.05)

**2nd Place:** Cpl Conor Tiernan (32.14)

**3rd Place:** Pte Terence Garland (36.38)

### O/40

**1st Place:** Comdt Garry Mulligan (34.07)

**2nd Place:** Sgt Michael Colohan (35.51)

**3rd Place:** Sgt Andrew D'Arcy (36.5)

### O/45

**1st Place:** Pte Paul Buckley (34.07)

**2nd Place:** Lt Mark Ecock (36.35)

### O/50

**1st Place:** CQ Pat Byrne (38.23)

**2nd Place:** Sgt Maj David O'Reilly (41.24)

### O/55

**1st Place:** SCPO Brendan Madden (45.5)

## VETERAN

**1st Place:** George Sharpe (43.11)

**2nd Place:** Jordan Nesbitt (48.08)

### VET O/40

**1st Place:** Mark Mitchell (45.11)

### VET O/50

**1st Place:** Noel Marum (38.09)

## FEMALE

**1st Place:** Capt Elizabeth Carr (36.14)

**2nd Place:** CQMS Jackie Wykes (41.43)

**3rd Place:** Pte Louise Nolan (41.48)

### O/35

**1st Place:** Laoighse Styles (45.38)

**2nd Place:** Lisa O'Halloran (56.05)

### O/40

**1st Place:** Lt Cdr Caroline Scanlon (56.47)

## VETERAN

**1st Place:** Dolores Collins (51:11)

**2nd Place:** Isabella Hamilton (1.09.13)

## TEAM RESULT

**1st Place:** 2 Bde 27 Inf Bn

**2nd Place:** DFTC 1 Mech Inf Coy

## BLOCK WINNERS

**1st Place:** 99 CC, Cadet School





# INTERVIEW WITH HEAD OF TRANSFORMATION MR BRIAN MOLLOY

## What is your job title in the Defence Forces?

Head of Transformation

## What was your first job and outline your career path to date?

My first job that I received a "pay packet" for would have been way back when I was 12/13 years of age and I worked over the summer picking tomatoes I worked with a number of banks and insurance companies in Dublin from leaving school until 2006 when I moved to Galway, and then in 2019 I joined the Public Sector. I worked as Principal Officer in the Department of Social Protection (DSP), got promoted to Chief Appeals Officer and then was promoted to my current role in the Defence Forces.

## What job did you leave to join us and what is the one major change?

I moved from the DSP – I think the biggest change is operating in an environment where there is such a reliance on a separate management team for some high level decisions. I know our symbiotic relationship with the department has a grounding in the constitution and provides us with access to an additional excellent source of knowledge and expertise... but it takes a bit of getting used to!!

## What was your knowledge of the Defence Forces before you joined?

Very little to be very honest. I don't come from a military family. I do have some military connections in my ancestors – my grandfather was a captain in the Army Reserve in the 1940's and two of his brother's fought in WWI. One of them was killed in action in Cuichy in Feb 1915 and the other served as chaplain in the 5th Battalion of Royal Irish Regiment and was decorated with the Military Cross for bravery in July 1917 while on the Salonika front.

## What do you think is our greatest opportunity?

It is something of a cliché but ultimately I think it is our personnel and the willingness of those women and men to embrace meaningful change. Of course, in order to maximise the potential of this opportunity we need to resolve the current retention issues. We need to convey to current personnel that the issues that are currently leading them to consider an early exit are going to be addressed in the coming period and that they should strongly consider giving the

transformation programme a bit more time before deciding to exit from the Defence Forces.

## What is the biggest challenge facing us, in your opinion?

We have many challenges, let's be honest. There is a lot of negative coverage in the media which doesn't help us build our morale and our feeling of self-worth. We have to face up to that and implement comprehensive changes to how we operate and how we behave individually and collectively to ensure that the Defence Forces is a safe, respectful and equal opportunity environment for everyone. Achieving this in a rapidly changing geo-political environment and coming from the position of being so significantly under resourced makes this an even greater challenge. However – to remain positive – I



firmly believe we can and will overcome these challenges and will transform the Defence Forces over the next few years.

## What leader, historical or current, inspires you and why?

I was very impressed by our two female presidents (McAleese and Robinson) – who demonstrated with very different approaches that gender has no impact on ability to deliver. I like the concept of quiet unassuming leadership – people who achieve a huge amount quietly in the background and I think in T K Whitaker we have one such example. A civil servant who received numerous accolades including being named as the "Greatest living Irish Person" in 2002. Ultimately we all have the capacity to show leadership – in work and outside work – whether it is by doing something, deciding not to do something, saying something or deciding not to say something – we can all demonstrate leadership no matter our age, rank or background.

# INTERVIEW WITH HEAD OF STRATEGIC HR MR DECLAN CARVILLE

## What is your job title in the Defence Forces?

Head of Strategic Human Resources. This is a newly created role as identified under the Commission for the Defence Forces, I joined on the 4th of September.

## What was your first job and outline your career path to date?

I studied organisational Psychology in UCD both at undergraduate and Masters level and as a result I have always had an interest in creating a working environment that encourages people to bring their best selves to work every day. My very first role was in Lucent Technologies (Bell Labs Innovation) as Recruitment & Employee Relations Manager and all my subsequent roles have been in the sphere of Human Resources. I have worked in Golden Pages, Aviva, Dairygold Cooperative Society, FBD plc and most recently in PTSB plc for the last 5 years. All of these latter roles have been at Executive Director & Senior Leadership levels.

## What job did you leave to join us and what is the one major change?

My most recent role was in PTSB plc where I was the Head of HR Business Partnering & Performance. My first impression is the passion people have for the organisation, our raison d'être and for the people that serve. It is genuinely palpable. The second change is the investment in peoples development. This far exceeds anything I have experienced in

the private sector. The biggest personal change is the sheer amount of acronyms!

## What was your knowledge of the Defence Forces before you joined?

I did a significant amount of research and reading in preparation for joining. My first month has been spent meeting & listening to as many people as possible. This something I intend to continue doing. There is no substitute for listening and everyone has been hugely welcoming and engaging which is making the transition much easier than I had envisaged. I think it was Calvin Coolidge, the 30th President of the USA who said "No man has ever listened himself out of a job".

## What do you think is our greatest opportunity?

In my view, our single biggest opportunity is harnessing the passion and ideas of our people into a clear, consumable People & Culture Strategy, building on the huge amount of work already completed.

## Do you know what a day in the life our personnel looks like?

I'm not sure there is a typical day to be honest. The people I have met so far are performing a diverse range of activities across the Army, Air Corps and Naval Service. At the moment, I am working on making the connection better.

## What is the biggest challenge facing us, in your opinion?

Recognising our people as our key strategic resources, we have a unique opportunity in the coming years to co-create a People & Culture strategy where everyone feels valued, appreciated and invested in. That strategy will attract top talent, bolster retention and create an environment that optimises operational performance thus ensuring the Defence Forces is fit for the future.

## What's your favourite acronym that you've learned so far?

There have been so many, it is difficult to choose. It's like a different language.

## What leader, historical or current, inspires you and why?

I have been following Sheryl Sandberg, former COO of Facebook in recent times. Her thoughts on Leadership are inspiring and a rock of common sense. I particularly like her quote, "If you are offered a seat on a rocket ship, don't ask what seat, just get on". Sometimes we need to push ourselves out of our comfort zones and then that comfort zone becomes wider.



# ARTILLERY CORPS CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF SERVICE

BY CAPT BRIAN CLARKE, ARTILLERY SCHOOL



*18 Pdr Gun Being fired by Free State Army, 1922*

On 01 June 2023 gunners both serving and retired gathered in Collins Barracks Cork, home of 1 Brigade Artillery Regiment (1 BAR), to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Artillery Corps. The Artillery Corps was formally established after the Civil War in order to add a full time professional fire support element to the Defence Forces. Artillery guns were used throughout the Civil War by the National Army against the Anti-Treaty IRA, but these guns were used by line infantry soldiers without proper training and a wider understanding of indirect fire support and its application in conventional warfare. The first Artillery unit formed under the command of then Colonel P.A. Mulcahy in Islandbridge Barracks on 23 March 1923. Prior to the Civil War Colonel Mulcahy served in the British Army during the First World War on the Western Front, and subsequently in the IRA during the War of Independence. Despite having no experience in the proper use of Artillery, Mulcahy and his Battery of 11 officers and 62 other ranks paraded and began the process of creating and developing Ireland's Artillery Corps. 100 years later, the parade held to mark the centenary of the foundation of the corps was made up of exactly 11 officers and 62 other ranks.



*Artillery Corps 3.7 Inch AA Gun, WW2 Era*

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTILLERY CORPS

Some officers of the new Artillery Corps first underwent gunnery training with the United States Army, and subsequently officers began training frequently with the British Royal Artillery. Frequent training in gunnery with the Royal Artillery imparted a style of training and operating that was easily identifiable as being of a somewhat British tradition. This includes the Irish Artillery Corps' distinctive gun drill and words of command given in English instead of Irish that is still used today during gunnery practice. The tradition of close cooperation with the British Royal School of



*RUAG 120mm Heavy Mortar Shoot*

Artillery continues today with NCOs and officers often participating in courses and training in the UK.

During the inter-war period, the Artillery Corps saw further expansion of its roles and associated

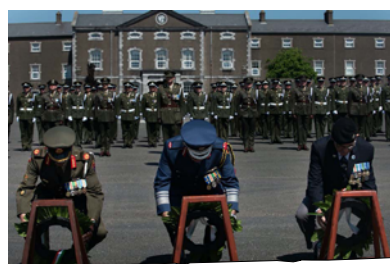


*L119 105mm Gun High Angle Shoot*

equipment and tactical modernisation. The Corps moved away from horse drawn guns to towed howitzer systems, the addition of an air defence role as well as the formalisation of its coastal artillery responsibilities during the Second World War. Prior to the war, the Corps had a total of 28 Field Artillery Batteries and 1 Anti-Aircraft Battery between regular and reserve forces. By 1943 the Corps had reorganised to include 6 Field Artillery Regiments, an Anti-Aircraft Battalion, and a larger Coastal Artillery branch. The Anti-Aircraft Battery was the first element of the Artillery Corps to see any action since the Civil War, having fired at German aircraft on a number of occasions in at least Clontarf, Ringsend, Ballyfermot, Stillorgan, Collinstown, and Dalkey during German bombings on neutral Ireland.

## PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

The Artillery Corps would later prove itself to be a vital part of Ireland's involvement in international Peace Support Operations. The Corps first deployed overseas in a fire



*GOC 1 Bde Brig Gen Brian Cleary, Chief of Staff Lt Gen Sean Clancy, and RSM (Retd) Podge O'Driscoll lay wreaths in Remembrance of Deceased Gunners.*

support role in 1960 as part of Ireland's contribution to the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Congo, (ONUC). In 1962 and 1963 the Irish Heavy Mortar Troop of the 38th Infantry Battalion, drawn primarily from the now disbanded 4th Field Artillery Regiment, provided significant

amounts of fire in support of friendly forces engaging in battalion and brigade level attacks. Since these early days of Irish peacekeeping, the Artillery Corps has been in an



*11 Officers and 62 Other Ranks on Parade*



*RSM Michael Ronayne on Parade with Troops from 1 BAR and 2 BAR*

almost constant state of providing a fire support capability to Irish units in places such as Lebanon, Chad, and Liberia. Despite it not being required to provide such a lethal level of support since Ireland's involvement in ONUC, such a capability remains essential. The Artillery Corps has also provided surveillance and observation skills on deployments to include operating UAVs for target acquisition, surveillance, and information gathering. Artillery UAVs were used in the surveillance of armed groups during the Defence Forces deployment to EUFOR Chad in a robust protection of civilian's role which also included the provision of a mortar battery for force protection.

## CONTEMPORARY ARTILLERY

Since the US led invasion of Iraq and the War in Afghanistan the attention that artillery received in the minds of the planners and military theorists of the western world seemed to dwindle. A focus on counter insurgency operations led to a relative side-lining of artillery as an essential element in a lot of western militaries occurred. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has changed that perception utterly. With the presence of air defence artillery within both sides on the battlefield, fire supported provided by air assets

has been significantly limited. Artillery fire also plays a central role in Russian military doctrine. As a result, the war has developed into a war of duelling Artillery units. The vast majority of casualties in the war are the result of indirect fire, and the war has even resulted in the development of new Artillery tactics.

## CENTENARY PARADE

Serving and retired gunners arrived to Collins Barracks on the morning of 01 June, where equipment and weapons displays were setup by 1 BAR. At 1140hrs on 01 June 2023 the parade formed up on Collins Barracks Square in the same numbers as on the first parade of the first Artillery Battery on 23 March 1923. After the arrival of dignitaries, speeches were made by Brig Gen Ger Buckley, the Army's most senior Gunner, and by the Chief of Staff, Lt Gen Sean Clancy. During his speech the Chief of Staff highlighted the contributions made by the Artillery Corps throughout the 100 years of its existence, and he complimented the Corps on its unique traditions and esprit de corps. He also highlighted the resurgence in the relevance of Artillery



*Lt Col John Prendergast, OC 2 BAR, Takes Over as Parade Commander*



*5 Pdr Ceremonial Gun Ready to Mark the End of the Minutes Silence*

on the modern battlefield, where Ukraine has shown how essential it is for an armed force to have credible fire support and air defence capabilities, including counter UAS capabilities. Wreaths were laid by the Chief of Staff, GOC 1 Brigade, Brig Gen Brian Cleary, and RSM (Retd) Podge O'Driscoll, followed by one minutes silence. The minute of silence was ended with the firing of a ceremonial 25 pounder howitzer crewed by 1 BAR and a pipers lament. Last

post was then played and the National Flag was raised from half-mast to full-mast. Finally, reveille was played and the parade was dismissed.

Serving and retired gunners then retired to Collins Barracks' dining facility for refreshments and a catch up. That night the Artillery Club hosted a dinner in Collins Barracks Officers Mess for serving and retired gunner officers to celebrate the centenary of the establishment of the Artillery Corps, and also the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Artillery Club. After 100 years, the unique bond that connects serving and former members of the Artillery Corps continues and was shown to be in good health on 01 June 2023.



*RSM (Retd) Podge O'Driscoll Laying a Wreath in Remembrance of Deceased Gunners*

# REINFORCER LA NATION

BY COMDT TADHG O'DONOGHUE

Since 2017 the DF has encouraged the development of French Language capability. TI 04/2017 'Defence Forces Foreign Language Training Policy' outlines how the DF are committed to training DF personnel in modern foreign languages with an initial emphasis on French.

The DF has engaged language training partners in Alliance Française Dublin and Alliance Française Cork to deliver a language learning product to DF personnel. Since 2017 approx. 300 DF personnel have engaged with formal language learning with Alliance Française. The majority of participants continue to examination; starting at A1 (beginner level) and progressing eventually to C1 (professional level).

## DEFENCE FORCES FRENCH LANGUAGE TRAINING

### Who can apply?

This course is open to ALL RANKS

### What level would suit me best?

**A1:** This level recognises basic knowledge. It is the most basic level at which a language is used, called the 'discovery' stage. At this stage the learner can interact in a simple way; he/she can speak about him/herself and his/her immediate environment.

**A2:** This level recognises the linguistic competency of a basic user, considered as a social actor. The candidate can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring the most common polite phrases and exchanges of information.

**B1:** At this level, the user becomes independent. He/She can maintain interaction: he/she can understand and maintain a discussion and give his/her opinion. He/She is capable of dealing with situations likely to arise in daily life.

**B2:** A B2 user has a degree of independence that allows him/her to construct arguments to defend his/her opinion, explain his/her viewpoint and negotiate. At this level, the candidate has a degree of fluency and spontaneity in regular interactions and is capable of correcting his/her own mistakes.

For more information contact: DF App French Language Space or [Tadhg.odonoghue@defenceforces.ie](mailto:Tadhg.odonoghue@defenceforces.ie)



WO Robin Finn and Lt David Kavanagh on linguistic immersion programme with 1er Spahis Regiment

A significant development in the DFs offering is the linguistic immersion program. DF students who are at B1 level and higher can apply to visit a French Military Regiment for two (2) weeks. In France the students are challenged by being fully immersed in French Military culture and of course French Language. The DF send 12 personnel (six pairs) on the program each year. It has proven to be an enriching experience for all participants so far.

### VIGNETTE 1: CAPT KIMBERLY KING, 12 INF BN

Lt Eamon Hennessey and I spent 2 weeks with the 3eme Régiment de Hussards (a Cav Sqn) which was split with one week spent in the bks in Lorraine and the second week spent in the training area in Saumur. Both weeks were directed towards pre-deployment training for the Sqn who were due to deploy to Djibouti.

**Activity 1 PDT:** Trg/stands this was done during the first week in the Battalion and there was training in all areas such as FAR, MOUT, Comms between vehicles, Section level tactics and formations and PT which included an assault course, orienteering, climbing and running.

**Activity 2 Simulato:** This was during the second week, because it was a Cav Sqn and their vehicles in theatre require them to train in AMX 10RC and the Le Clerc. This involved the whole team using computer simulators and communicating what they could see on screen and firing on targets (on screen).

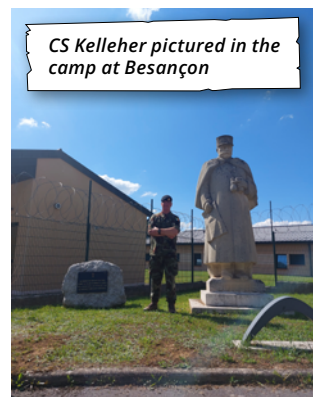
**Activity 3 Battlion Run:** The 3eme Régiment de Hussards hold a monthly unit run to build esprit de corps. Each Company marches to the main square singing their Company chant in unison. Once the entire regiment is present (approx 400) they are addressed by their Unit OC. Then the run commenced with each company following the next, totalling 15 kilometres around the local town. The unit run was a good way to build unit pride, esprit de corps amongst Companies and maintain physical fitness.

While the trip was enjoyable it was extremely beneficial in terms of communicating in french but also for AF Exams.

### VIGNETTE 2: CS CONOR KELLEHER, 1 CIS

Lt Jack Setright and I visited the 19th Engineer Regiment in July 2022 for a two week language immersion program. As part of the program, we were introduced to the Regimental Commander and his staff on the first day, after which the liaison officer outlined the program of training for the two weeks. In general this consisted of being attached to each Company for a briefing and some practical training or demonstrations. The working day was from 0800hrs to 1700hrs, usually starting with PT and from there partaking in Company activities. As the days progressed, our use of French increased and it was a source of pride that a lot of the French actually forgot that

CS Kelleher pictured in the camp at Besançon





**Lt David Kavanagh pictured with Unit LO 1er Spahis Regiment**

we were not native speakers. Thankfully, with Irish overseas service in Lebanon, Mali, Afghanistan and Kosovo, we had a lot in common with our French counter-parts. Along with the French language training, we were also introduced to the French military culture, which has many similarities and a few differences to the Irish Military culture, 'Vive la difference'. The history and traditions of the regiment were very interesting and we could only wonder in awe at the investment into unit history and traditions.

One of the highlights of the exchange was the introduction to and demonstrations of the unit's river crossing capabilities and railway-related combat engineering. To see up close the unique equipment used to enable rapid river crossing for a mechanised army and to experience practical demonstrations was fantastic. Similarly, the days spent with the railway-related combat engineering capability were a fantastic opportunity to experience something completely different to what the Irish Defence Forces are normally tasked with.

Being fully immersed in the French military environment naturally led to an improvement in speaking French and more than anything greater confidence in speaking the language. Our French hosts were happy to assist, when needed and their hospitality was second to none. We were fortunate to be staying in the centre of Besançon, which as a UNESCO site, allowing us to enjoy tourist sites and to relax after duty hours. The French language exchange program is a fantastic opportunity not only to improve one's French, but also to immerse oneself in French military culture.

**Flags of countries that speak French**



### VIGNETTE 3: WO ROBIN FINN, NCC NS

The French Language Programme provided me with the opportunity to spend time with a French Military unit. The exchanges are undertaken in pairs, with an emphasis on language immersion. I myself spent two weeks with the 1st Spahi regiment in Valence, during a period when they were gearing up for Operation Sentinel, and it certainly was an experience, literally from the get go we did a PT run through the city on our first

morning, and our days afterwards were often spent sitting in on their briefing classes or taking tours of their barracks to be introduced to their facilities, armoured vehicles, weapons and simulation training. The

| A1<br>Beginner | A2<br>Elementary | B1<br>Intermediate | B2<br>Upper Intermediate |
|----------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 80 Hours       | 100 Hours        | 120 Hours          | 120 Hours                |
| BASIC USER     |                  | INDEPENDANT USER   |                          |

**Levels available to study with Alliance Française through the DF French Language Programme**

highlight for us, was taking part in a three day exercise, beginning with a full day on the range carrying out weapons practice with a variety of weapons and movement drills, till in the evening we packed up and slogged through the early hours of the evening and night on a route march up to a remote farmhouse, which became their HQ for the exercise period. The following days were a mix of briefs, PT runs in the snow covered forested hills around the farmhouse and monitoring the exercises that each platoon were carrying out, until we were transported back to the barracks.

From that you may think it the two weeks were packed exclusively with military events, however the French, as well as having a professional and well equipped Army, are a very sociable people, and we were regularly invited during working hours to their mess for coffee breaks and lunch, or after work hours for example, we were escorted by one of their liaison officers up to the Château de Crussol for a tour and back to a restaurant afterwards. Another kind soul brought us to his family home for wine and cheese with his parents and a more militant group of 'sport' enthusiasts brought us out for a game of tag rugby on the local astro turf pitch. I ended up so sore after that friendly match that I couldn't take part in the regiments challenge run the next day, or that was my excuse anyway.

I came away from that trip with not just some fond memories and

**CS Kelleher and Lt Setright on exercise with 19 Engineer Regiment**



**Lt Setright pictured in the camp at Besançon on the French language immersion programme**



**Comdt Tadhg O'Donoghue & Capt Niall Dungan on exercise with 92 Inf Bn in 2018 as part of the French linguistic immersion programme**

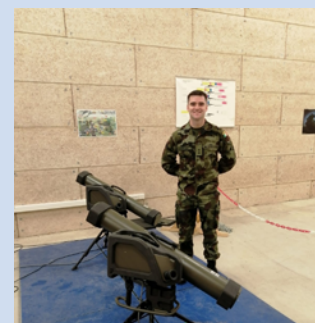


cool photos, but also a firm and healthy respect for France's Armée de Terre and the 1er Régiment de Spahis in particular. They are a professional and motivated force with a grand tradition and sense of honour and history stretching on from the First World War through World War II, French-Indochina and on, winning battle honours right up to modern times. I would heartily recommend spending time in their onsite museum to get a small taste of the great respect they have placed on their service and in the uniform that they wear.

As a final note, whatever your future plans in the Defence Forces or beyond maybe I would strongly recommend taking up the challenge of the French language, and engage with the advantages it can bring, not only to your professional but also personal career.

### GET INVOLVED IN 2023

A number of pathways are available to begin a language learning journey in the DF. As a first step, interested personnel are advised to contact [tadhg.odonoghue@defenceforces.ie](mailto:tadhg.odonoghue@defenceforces.ie) directly or preferably log onto the DF Connect app and join the 'french language learning' stream. The app is an excellent means of sharing information on courses and language immersion trips. Courses commence in September and January. They cater for all levels and students can choose between online courses, blended learning courses and 'in-class' courses in Dublin or Cork. So give it a go. Challenge yourself to learn another language in 2023 and enter into a new community of language learning. Bonne chance!



**Lt David Kavanagh introduced to French weapons as part of the immersion programme**

# THE MEDICAL CORPS STANDARD COURSE

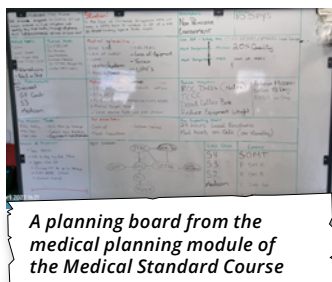
BY CPL SHANE CURRAN

**“Leadership is a highly personal, individual matter. Each leader must establish his own approach based on an internal compass using a method geared to his personality, his capabilities but always oriented towards accomplishing the mission while knowing and taking care of his men.”**

— LT GEN HAROLD ‘HAL’ MOORE

Continuous professional development is key to becoming and remaining an effective leader in both the tactical and clinical environment. Recently the Medical School successfully ran its Corps Standard course. The aim of this course is to develop key leadership and management skills, in both clinical and tactical settings, which will improve both the individual and the Medical Corps capability. The completion of this course, along with the All-Arms Standard NCO Course is essential for a Corporal in the Corps to qualify for promotion to the rank of Sergeant. The course takes place over six weeks and consists of several modules:

- Clinical Leadership for NCO's
- Medical Intelligence
- Medical Orders
- Major Incident Medical Management
- Medical Planning



*A planning board from the medical planning module of the Medical Standard Course*

At the conclusion of each module the students working in syndicates are required to prepare presentations based on real world scenarios to assess their capability and competency in each area. These scenarios challenge the students to use both medical and tactical knowledge to successfully complete the tasks, particularly in the final module where all the skills acquired are tested in a larger scale scenario. This article will explain the modules and learning outcomes contained within the course and attempt to shed some light on the skillset required to be an effective leader within the Medical Corps, indeed many of the skills will be like those required in most leadership roles throughout the Defence Forces.

## CLINICAL LEADERSHIP FOR NCO'S

The Clinical Leadership module takes place in the Royal College of Surgeons (RCSI)

Graduate School of Healthcare Management in Sandyford, Dublin. RCSI is Ireland's only health sciences focused university which was founded in 1784 as the national training body for surgery in Ireland. Accordingly, the Clinical leadership module is the first stage of the course, it is 10 days long and covers a range of areas including:

- Leadership & Emotional Intelligence
- Managing Oneself
- Overview of the Irish Health Service

*A simulated casualty used during pre-deployment training*



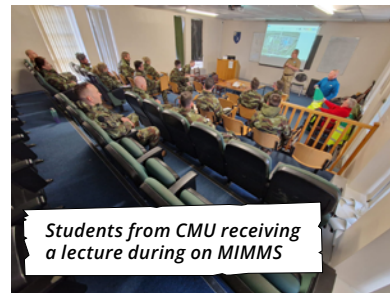
- Leading and Managing Change
- Learning Review
- Goal Setting
- Reflective Practice
- Multidisciplinary Teams in Healthcare
- Managing and dealing with conflict in the workplace
- Presentation Skills
- Introduction to Quality in Healthcare
- Process Mapping
- Introduction to Patient Safety & Risk Management
- Clinical Leadership & Management
- Learning Review Team Presentation
- Delivery of team presentations and Q&A

The various areas covered during this module develop the individual's ability to manage teams and oneself both physically and psychologically. Indeed, the area of managing oneself serves to inform the student on how to develop a “toolbox” of skills which allows them to manage themselves using good diet, physical activity, self-checks, and practices such as meditation or breathing exercises which in turn may help the individual to avoid burnout. Consequently, these skills can be used in combination with the skills of emotional intelligence to identify when team members may need to develop similar practices. The tutors leading this module come from mainly clinical backgrounds and have extensive experience working in leadership and management roles, they have a vast wealth of experience and range of skills which are key to successfully working in high stress environments.

## MEDICAL INTELLIGENCE

The medical intelligence module takes place in the Medical School, DFTC. This module develops the student's ability to find and evaluate information relevant to medical aspects of a mission and to turn this into usable intelligence. Accordingly, medical intelligence is a very important aspect of the mission as it is used to inform the mission commander of threats such as endemic disease, vector borne disease, most likely types of injury and medical assets that may be of vital importance to force protection. This also challenges the student to think not only at section/ platoon level but also to think at strategic level and examine areas such as local assets, which may be of benefit to the force commander including local medical resources. Following this, students are given an individual task of preparing a medical intelligence brief for a Force Commander, this

brief is based on a specific area of a country including countries from the Middle East and Africa where the Irish Defence Forces have deployed. Students are given several days to prepare their brief, as they would be in a real scenario, by gathering information



*Students from CMU receiving a lecture during MIMMS*

*Students who successfully completed the NATO MIMMS course in Galway earlier this year*



from credible sources such as the World Health Organisation, the UNHCR, US Centre for Disease Control and Department of Foreign Affairs. Finally, on presenting the student is questioned by directing staff and expected to provide a hard copy of their presentation and references.

## MEDICAL ORDERS

While all NCOs have some experience of extracting, preparing, and giving a set of orders during a Platoon or section attack with the goal of destroying the enemy the purpose of medical orders can be drastically different from what NCOs have previously experienced. Accordingly, the medical section may be tasked with setting up a hospital during the initial deployment of a Battalion an area which is not covered by the issued set of TAMS. This will provide a challenge to the Medical NCO as they will not simply be able to extract all the relevant information from an operation order and will have to liaise with the relevant sections, they require assistance from other specialists such as engineers and transport. Taking a scenario like this into account students are given lectures on this area based on previous experiences of the Defence Forces and provided with examples of how these medical deployments were achieved. Students are then given a scenario and must extract, prepare, and give a full set of platoon level orders which must include all relevant information and timelines. Students are also required to provide models or aerial photographs when giving these orders. During the orders session, DS rigorously question students on all aspects of their orders to ensure that every eventuality is covered. At the end of this module, students have not only gained a new skill in delivering specific medical orders, but they have also integrated the skills gained during both the clinical leadership and medical intelligence modules.



*Soldiers deployed with the 122 Inf Bn taking part in Battlefield First Aid Training with Cpl's David Kane and Shane Curran*

## MAJOR INCIDENT MEDICAL MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT (MIMMS)

In recent years there have been numerous major incidents throughout the world such as the Manchester Bombings, the Bataclan attacks, the Beirut explosion and indeed, in Ireland there was the Creeslough explosion in 2022. MiMMS is focused on dealing with such major incidents in both a military and civilian environment. The course which is run by ALSG International is run over a period of three days with online learning which must be completed prior to the beginning of the course. Students are exposed to both theory and practical lessons by



*Cpl Shane Curran instructing on a recent Battlefield First Aid course which was run in the Medical School, DFTC*

experienced instructors who have dealt with real-world scenarios. There is a steep learning curve and instructors push students to react to unexpected events which may happen during these scenarios. On the final day of the course, students are put through individual tests and finally, a group scenario where students must use their knowledge to effectively react to a scenario in which they have no prior knowledge. This module challenges students to not only think of military resources but also look at the management of civilian medical resources and forces students to make tough decisions with the main premise being that we must "do the most for the most" realising that sometimes this means making very tough decisions.



*Irish Medics from the 122 IRISHPOL Batt taking part in a major incident exercise*

## MEDICAL PLANNING

**"In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable."**

— GEN DWIGHT EISENHOWER

Medical planning is the ability to assess the mission, establish missions for subordinates and establish what resources are required to complete the mission, indeed, this module takes the students from the tactical level to the strategic level. Students must put all the knowledge they have gained together to effectively plan at a higher level. Students learn how to establish the support requirements for military operations, which is referred to as the "medical estimate". Accordingly, the medical estimate consists of two factors:



*Members of the 122 IRISHPOL Batt UNIFIL, taking part in a major incident exercise*

## FORCE HEALTH PROTECTION

This area considers health promotion and preventative medicine, which is essentially advice and actions required to maintain both physical and psychological health.

## SPECIFIC MEASURES

This area considers specific missions for the medical element of the mission, by looking at equipment and resources which are required by the medical element.

To complete this module students are placed in groups and given a mission, they must then put all the skills they have learned together to develop a large plan for the deployment of a battalion-level force working in an austere environment.

## CONCLUSION

The medical standard course equips students with the specific knowledge required to effectively operate at both a tactical and strategic level. This course is aimed at developing the capabilities of both individual NCOs and the Medical Corps as a whole. Students are pushed to think on many different levels in both a military and civilian context using all of their Medical and military knowledge. This course is essential for all Cpls in the Medical Corps to qualify for the rank of Sgt, and to enhance their Military Medical Training.



# IDFVA – HANDS ACROSS THE WATER TOUR ITALY 2023

BY FRAN "FARMER" REILLY



*The Colosseum, Rome, Italy: Dave Coffey, Fran Farmer Reilly, Eddie Mahady, Peter Downes, Vinny Murray, Christy Donovan, Noel Mc Donnell and Patrick Mc Grail.*

This tour came into being as a result of friendships being forged at the annual IDFVA St Patrick's Day parade where members of the Irish Defence Forces Veterans Association, The Irish Carabinieri Association, the 5th Infantry Battalion Association and The Irish Guards Association including other associations attend annually.

This tour will be the beginning of a strong bond and future friendships between the various national and international veterans' associations.

Members of The Irish Defence Forces Veterans Association and serving members were invited to attend the Carabinieri National Association Gathering in Ostia, Italy by The President of The Irish Carabinieri Association Mr Francesco Morelli. On arrival, we had the opportunity to stay in Francesco's Mountain village of Casalattico for a few days prior to travelling closer to Rome and staying in the Roma Capitol campsite. From there we had the chance to visit Rome and see the amazing monuments the city had to offer. We participated in various parades and watched a re-enactment of a mounted Carabinieri battle, we attended a concert consisting of carabinieri musicians who were amazing and had a special guest singer.

On our last official event the parade marshal requested our serving piper Mr Vinny Murray to lead the association section of the parade. This was a great honour and the first time a visiting association was allowed to do so. Vinny our piper did us proud. We then returned to the mountain village of Casalattico to spend a few days.

Not too far from the village was the Cassino War Cemetery. We travelled by minibus and paid our respects and laid a wreath at the Cassino War Cemetery to remember the Fallen.



*The Cassino War Cemetery, Italy: Fran Farmer Reilly, Christy Donovan, Dave Coffey, Vinny Murray, Patrick Mc Grail, Francesco Morelli, Nicky Quinlan, Peter Downes and Thomas Hayes.*

We also visited the Monte Cassino monastery and had the opportunity to do some range practice at a private range. We ended the trip with a BBQ which was organised by Francesco's wife Carmine, who made us feel welcome throughout the tour. We departed Francesco's Village in the mountains, the following day and heading towards Leonardo Da

Vinci International Airport outside Rome for our onward journey home. We had an amazing time and made some new friends in the process.

We would like to thank The President of The Irish Carabinieri Association, Mr Francesco Morelli and Mr Fran Farmer Reilly from The Irish Defence Forces Veterans Association because without either of them this trip would not have been possible. We would also like to express our gratitude to Mr Nicky Quinlan, Druids Craft and Paul Ferguson for their sponsorship and for providing personalised coins and polo shirts for the tour.



# EXPERIENCES OF A MEDICAL STUDENT IN THE RESERVE DEFENCE FORCES

BY PTE (AR) DR. DAVID KILLILEA

Like many within the Defence Forces my first encounter with St Bricin's Military Hospital was for my entry medical. A building opened in 1913 as King George V Hospital and run by the Royal Army Medical Corps, staff then had little time to prepare for war on the continent and the later War of Independence. My time there was placid in comparison. My name is David Killilea, I am a recent graduate of UCD School of Medicine and an RDF private in the CMU. UCD allows for students to undertake electives in any medical discipline to explore interests and gain a greater understanding of which speciality they wish to pursue. For me this is psychiatry. My rotation in January of this year was with Dr



*Dr Killilea outside St Bricin's Military Hospital as part of the elective*

Fionnbar Lenihan, consultant psychiatrist with the Defence Forces. It was through chance I met former director medical branch Col Mairead Murphy at a travel medicine conference in March 2022. She invited me to the CMU to make the introduction to Dr Lenihan. We agreed on dates, and I was sent the required paperwork for signing.

Just as military life is vastly different from civilian life, military psychiatry differs greatly from its civilian counterpart. Having already completed my six-week rotation through HSE

psychiatric services I was reasonably familiar with psychiatric illnesses such as bi-polar affective disorder, schizophrenia, major depressive disorder and the like. These conditions tend to be less common in the military population due to rigorous pre-screening. More common mental health issues that may be seen amongst military personnel include anxiety, suicidal ideation, mild depression, addiction and PTSD. Should one develop serious mental illness during service then an evaluation would be conducted on referral from an MO or the PSS. I learned that every effort is made to manage and incur remission of symptoms to allow a full return to duty. Nonetheless, a major difference between civilian and military psychiatry is that there is a dual duty of care. Personnel always come first but the DF's mission readiness also needs consideration during evaluation. Interventions on hand are similar to those employed by the HSE; psychotherapy, for the most part, with or without medication. One interesting therapeutic intervention I witnessed was EMDR. Eye-Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing was developed to help ameliorate symptoms of PTSD. While PTSD can result from any traumatic incident it is more common within armed forces.

PTSD requires focused therapy to soften the symptomatic burden on its carrier, with interventions taking, oftentimes, weeks if not months to achieve results. Care is currently being delivered from Dublin for those that require it, with possible future improvements to lessen the burden of travel and time off for patients. Dr Lenihan and I proposed creating a residential program whereby individuals attend a five-day course of intensive EMDR at a convenient location. Should this be successful it may become a standard

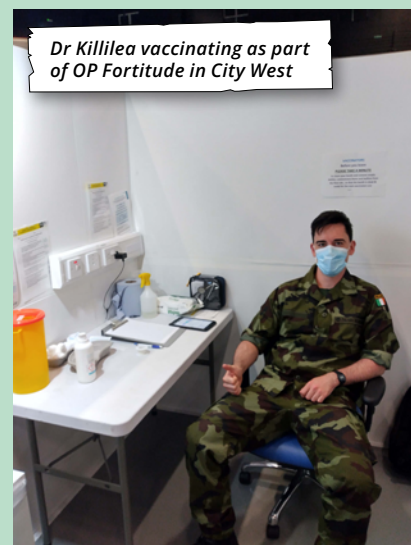
model of care delivery in the DF for PTSD. I made an application to the HSE for Intern Year Academic Track and was accepted. I will be conducting this project alongside my clinical duties. This will be the first academic track project carried out with the DF.

Psychological and psychiatric staff are a mix of civilian and uniformed personnel. There are two clinical psychologists and one psychiatrist working within the CMU. There are a further two

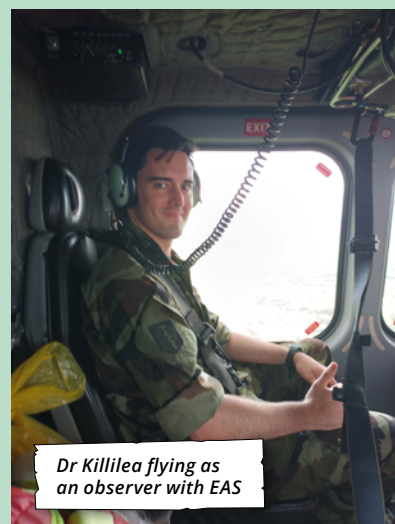
attached psychiatric registrars who receive training one day per week. The HSE provides an opportunity during higher specialty training for physicians to explore 'special interests' which one is currently undertaking in military psychiatry, with the other on secondment from the Armed Forces of Malta. The department also collaborates on research and duties with MOs, PSS and RDF personnel resulting in a lively, stimulating, and collegiate environment. As an RDF member I felt very welcome throughout my time there.

The medical experiences I have enjoyed as an RDF member have garnered jealousy from classmates. I was able to contribute to Op Fortitude serving alongside PDF personnel through vaccinating in Citywest, I have flown as an observer with the EAS and have gained first-hand teaching on combat and psychological first aid. I have discovered how crucial and demanding the role of a military psychiatrist and MO is, and how important it is to keep military mental health services funded and appropriately staffed. I would recommend a rotation with the CMU to any medical student as well as a career in the RDF. Should any future medical student wish to rotate through a DF medical facility they are encouraged to contact, with their request; Medical Branch, CMU, St Bricin's Military Hospital, Infirmary Rd, Dublin 7, D07 DC84

I would like to acknowledge the following people for helping arrange and make possible my elective at the CMU; Dr. Lenihan, Col Murphy, Col Markey, Comdt O'Callaghan, and Lt Ecock.



*Dr Killilea vaccinating as part of OP Fortitude in City West*



*Dr Killilea flying as an observer with EAS*

# DF Sports & Clubs Update

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

## SOCCER

The Irish Defence Forces men's soccer team played Crumlin United on 17 Oct 23 in Pearse Park Astro, Dublin 12 to commemorate the 6-month anniversary of Airman Glenn Fullam who tragically passed away in April. The match



**SOCCER: Brig Gen Campion making a presentation to Crumlin United Manager**

finished 2-2. Brig Gen Campion made a presentation to Crumlin United on behalf of the DF and a presentation was made to Glenn's children of money raised by UKAF player Tom Claisse.

Glenn played for both teams and has left a huge void with both. But the clubs are filling that void by creating a bond between DF Soccer and Crumlin United with players/staff from both sides already working together for fundraisers etc this year. This is in addition to the AC supporting a tournament in the summer where a fundraiser was held for his family. #neverforgotten



**SOCCER: Crumlin United Team**



**SOCCER: DF Soccer Team**

## GAA

On Thurs 19th Oct Defence Forces football and hurling played AIB in the first game of the 2023 representative series. The game this year were hosted by AIB and took place in Croke park, this year marked the 40th Anniversary of this



**GAA: DF Football Team at Croke Park**

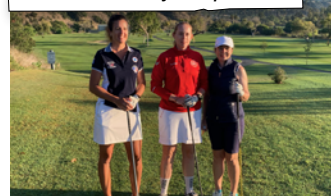
fixture between the DF and AIB and was fitting that it was held in Croke Park. In football the game was well contested by both sides but AIB eventually came out winners but thankfully Df hurlers won the second game to leave it honours even on the day. In future games this year DF football and hurling will look to compete in fixtures v Bank of Ireland and An Garda Síochána.

## GOLF

**GOLF: Sgt Niall Kennedy and Capt Mark Doyle at the CISM Golf Competition**



**GOLF: Comdt Elaine Guinan at the CISM Golf Competition**



**GOLF: Irish delegation at CISM Golf: Back L-R: Cpl Joe Hannigan, Cpl Richard Finn, Comdt Regina Foley, Sgt Niall Kennedy, Sgt Brendan Healy, Front L-R: Comdt John Fitzgerald, Capt Mark Doyle, Pte James Everard, Brig Gen Brendan McGuinness, Comdt Elaine Guinan and Cpl Jennifer Kingston**



The 14th CISM World Military Golf Championship was held in San Diego, California, USA from 01-08 Oct 2023. Over one hundred competitors from 17 countries participated in the competition played on the Admiral Baker Golf Course. The Defence Forces team was composed of six male and three female golfers. Chief of Mission was Brig Gen Brendan McGuinness, GOC, DFTC.

There was success for the Defence Forces with the Men's team winning a bronze medal and Cpl Joe Hannigan winning bronze in the Men's Senior category.



**GOLF: The Irish Team before the opening ceremony**

## ATHLETICS

### Track and Field

The Defence Forces Centenary 'All Army' Outdoor Track and Field Athletics Championships was held in The Watershed complex in Kilkenny on 13 Sept 2023.

The event had many noteworthy and creditable performances with great competition in all events to become a Defence Forces Champion. Col Sheerin EO 1 Bde kindly presented prizes which gave this event the gravitas of a centenary event for all those involved. The Mulcahy Trophy for best overall athlete was awarded to Comdt James Ledingham who also won the 800m, 1500m and 5000m events. A full list of results can be found on the DFAA Athletics IKON page.

The Defence Forces Athletics Committee hopes to expand its

**Track & Field: Lt Col MacEoin passing the baton to Cpl Loughman in the Medley relay**



**Track & Field: Comdt Kedney 2 Bde Mid Flight**



**Track & Field: Women's 100m sprint was a highly competitive and closely ran event**



2024 events and training schedule to cater for the levels of interest shown in these events and to promote participation in Defence Forces 'Athletics for all'.

### Cross Country

The annual CISM regional cross country event is scheduled for 13-15 Dec 2023 in Belgium.

DF participation has not yet been confirmed. In order to provisionally plan for DF participation, the An Cosantóir 10k on 11 Oct was a trial race for selection of the DF CISM team (6 men and 3 women). Final selection will be subject to individual recommendation by OCs and approval by the DF athletics selection sub-committee, and will be based on performance in the trial race and/or current form race times.

Upcoming events: DF Cross Country DFTC 09 Nov 23, Indoor Athletics Q1 2024 TBC.

### ROWING

The Irish Defence Forces Rowing Club recently ran its latest "Learn to Row Camp" from Fermoy Rowing club with a maximum total of 16 students partaking. During this course the students learnt how to use rowing

**ROWING: Phoenix Regatta**



machines correctly, rowing specific exercises and rowing techniques on the water.

From these 16 students, the club sent forward three crews drawn from all over the country to represent the Defence Forces in an

invitational regatta which was run by Phoenix Rowing Club, Islandbridge, Dublin. On the day our athletes made it through to three finals, winning two, on what was a fantastic return. These crews now join our current senior crews in winter training in preparation for Rowing Ireland Regattas and international events in Q3 of 2024.

If this is a sport you might like to try or get involved in please feel free to contact Senior Coaches: BQMS Dave Williams – [dave.williams@defenceforces.ie](mailto:dave.williams@defenceforces.ie), WO/Prog (NS) Robin – [robin.finn@defenceforces.ie](mailto:robin.finn@defenceforces.ie) or Pte Rob Diffley – [robert.diffley@defenceforces.ie](mailto:robert.diffley@defenceforces.ie)

### KICKBOXING

Pte Tyrone Cronin, of Moyross, Limerick pictured along with OC 12 Inf Bn Lt Col Carroll and A/BSM 12 Inf Bn CS Griffin holding the seven (7) kickboxing national and world championship belts that he has amassed over the last number of years.

Pte Cronin is due to travel to Tuscany, Italy in the coming weeks looking to regain the Unified World Gold Medallist belt.



**Kickboxing: Pte Tyrone Cronin, of Moyross, OC 12 Inf Bn Lt Col Carroll and A/BSM 12 Inf Bn**

# OPTIMISING CAVALRY TACTICS THROUGH INTUITIVE DECISION MAKING

BY LT STEPHEN M. DOYLE, CAVALRY SCHOOL MA STUDENT AT UCC SCHOOL OF HISTORY

Throughout the history of Warfare, few combat units have carried the aura and majesty of the Cavalry. From the iconic image of Napoleonic Hussars thundering across the battlefields of Europe to the light dragoons who spurred their way into history during the American War of Independence, cavalry forces have traditionally embodied a unique blend of mobility, shock action, and flexibility on the battlefield. As warfare evolved, so did these equestrian soldiers, transitioning from horse-mounted combatants to mechanised units in modern armies. Today, the role of cavalry, while different from its historical origins, retains the essence of adaptability and mobility. This article examines how to best prepare cavalry forces, taking lessons from history while meeting the challenges of 21st-century warfare.



*Le Trophée 1806  
4th Dragoon  
Regiment*

Historically, both hussars and dragoons played pivotal roles in warfare due to their versatility and mobility on the battlefield. Hussars, originally from Hungary in the late 14th<sup>1</sup> century, were renowned for their light cavalry roles, especially in reconnaissance and irregular warfare. With their exceptional horsemanship and high mobility, hussars were often deployed for swift hit-and-run attacks, harassment of enemy lines, disrupting supply routes, and sowing confusion and disorder in enemy ranks. On the other hand, dragoons, a term originating from the 16th century French Army<sup>2</sup>, were unique as they were trained for both mounted and dismounted combat roles. They could ride into battle swiftly but dismount and fight as infantry, combining the advantages of mobility and tactical versatility. Dragoons were often used for scouting, patrolling, and providing flexible and quick responses to changing battlefield conditions<sup>3</sup>.

Relating these historical roles to contemporary conflicts, we can draw parallels with modern light and mechanised units. Light cavalry forces akin to the hussars would excel at reconnaissance, scouting and surveillance. They offer the superior command the ability to rapidly deploy forces, disrupt enemy plans, and gather intelligence, similar to their historical counterparts.

The dragoons' concept is embodied in modern-day mechanised units that can move quickly across the battlefield in armoured vehicles but can also dismount to engage in infantry warfare. These units are essential for flexible responses in unpredictable modern combat scenarios, particularly in urban environments. They offer a balance of speed, protection, and firepower, making them invaluable assets in contemporary conflict.

Integral to this brand of the manoeuvrist approach to warfare is a Mission command philosophy.

Description automatically generated Centred on a decentralising decision-making authority to empower subordinate commanders and has long served as a force multiplier on the battlefield.<sup>4</sup>



*40mm Grenade Machine Gun  
being loaded on the LTAV*

Historical campaigns, from the lightning manoeuvres of Napoleon's Marshals<sup>5</sup> to the audacious operations of Rommel's Panzer divisions<sup>6</sup>, have demonstrated

its effectiveness. It allowed these leaders to harness the ingenuity, initiative, and adaptability of their officers & NCOs, thereby adding depth, speed, and responsiveness to their operations. In today's era of high-tempo and often asymmetric warfare, the need for such an approach is even more significant. By enhancing the intuitive decision-making capabilities of subordinate commanders, we can foster a more agile and responsive military structure. Understanding the commander's intent becomes paramount, not as a script to be rigidly followed, but as a strategic framework that provides the 'Left & Right of Arc' within which they can improvise and adapt. This approach doesn't only reduce planning time but also enables the early deployment of cavalry forces, thereby enhancing the superior commander's course of action (COA) development. The prowess of our cavalry forces, combining mobility and firepower, can be best exploited when led by commanders empowered by mission command philosophy.

While modern communication systems have undoubtedly enhanced operational capabilities, an overreliance on them can potentially undermine the essence of the mission command philosophy. This philosophy requires fostering a culture of trust and mutual understanding between superior commanders and their subordinates, something that cannot be achieved through technology alone. The operation that led to the demise of Osama bin Laden is often lauded as a model of military precision and coordination. However, the image of President Obama, Secretary Clinton, and their top military advisers, intently watching the operation unfold in real time from the White House Situation Room<sup>7</sup>, opens a discourse on the risks of over-involvement by higher command in tactical operations.

This level of engagement, made possible by advances in communication and surveillance technologies, can unintentionally lead to a style of micromanagement that runs counter to the principles of mission command. While it can be tempting for superior commanders to exploit these technologies to exercise control over every aspect of an operation, it can restrict the freedom of action needed by subordinates on the ground; this can stifle their initiative, agility, and responsiveness - key elements for success in complex and rapidly evolving situations.

Higher echelon commanders must resist the allure of delving too deeply into the tactical sphere, instead focusing on their own institutional levels of war. Modern communication and surveillance capabilities should be used as tools for enhancing situational

awareness and understanding, not as means of enforcing control. Commanders must remember that these technologies serve to supplement, not replace, the established principles of command and control. The art of command lies in understanding when to direct, when to monitor, and most importantly, when to trust subordinates to do what needs to be done. Thus, while technological capabilities evolve, the principles of effective leadership and command remain constant.

Examining Napoleon Bonaparte's command style offers valuable insights. In his 1805 Ulm Campaign, Napoleon demonstrated a profound reliance on his Marshals' competence. After providing a clear intent to his Marshals - to cut off Austrian General Karl Mack von Leiberich from retreating and force a decisive battle - he relied on their ability to adapt to the unfolding situation and entrusted them to act autonomously within his strategic framework<sup>8</sup>. With limited communication, Napoleon could not direct every move, nor would he have desired to; instead, he had to trust his subordinate commanders to interpret his intent and make decisions that would achieve the desired end state.

This level of trust allowed for increased operational tempo and decision-making at the point of contact. Napoleon's Marshals could use their initiative and local situational awareness to exploit opportunities without waiting for explicit orders, thereby maintaining momentum and keeping the enemy off-balance. In contemporary dynamic military environments, commanders should remember these lessons. While leveraging modern communication technology for increased situational awareness and coordination, they should resist the temptation to control every aspect of the operation. Instead, by creating a shared understanding of the mission's intent, fostering trust, and empowering subordinates, they can foster an effective mission command environment that truly harnesses the potential of their forces.

So, how should we adapt the training and education of today's Cavalry Commanders?

While the Irish Defence Forces may not currently boast heavy armoured units (MBTs), it is crucial to appreciate the formidable versatility of light and medium cavalry forces when optimally employed. Blended with mounted direct fire support, these units can exert substantial battlefield influence, especially when granted the requisite freedom of action.

In the context of the Three-Block War — a scenario where military forces may be simultaneously tasked with combat, peacekeeping, and humanitarian aid within a confined area<sup>9</sup> — such a blend of forces becomes particularly effective. Light and medium cavalry can perform rapid scouting missions, providing timely and accurate situational awareness to command structures. This close to real-time information stream can enable commanders to make informed, proactive decisions rather than reactive ones, significantly increasing the effective use of time. These forces can also conduct armoured reconnaissance or provide the capacity to 'fight for information', a critical function in identifying favourable conditions for engagement or creating them where they don't exist. By identifying the enemy's strength, disposition, and intentions, scouting can tilt the balance of the fight, enabling commanders to strike when and where their force has the upper hand.

Training modern cavalry commanders to make intuitive decisions

<sup>1</sup>Szabó, 2010 <sup>2</sup>Tucker, 2001 <sup>3</sup>Letrun, 2014 <sup>4</sup>Shamir, 2011 <sup>5</sup>Connelly, 2005 <sup>6</sup>Macksey, 1997 <sup>7</sup>Woodward, 2010 <sup>8</sup>Bowden, 1997 <sup>9</sup>Ben-Ari et al., 2010 <sup>10</sup>Gavin Egerton "Abandon Perfection"

akin to their historical counterparts requires a blend of structured education, real-world experience, and continuous feedback. Regularly updating training methods, integrating new technologies, and keeping commanders informed about the latest tactics, techniques, and procedures, whilst also studying the strategies and tactics of past cavalry commanders provides the foundation. By analysing the successes and failures of previous campaigns, commanders can cultivate a sense of battlefield rhythm and flow; the Cavalry School's recent initiative, Virtual Battlefield Tours, plunges junior leaders into historical conflicts, prompting them to engage in group discussions and share perspectives on various battle phases.

The Cavalry School have also transitioned to more realistic 'free play' training exercise scenarios that replicate the complexities of modern warfare. Such exercises have more fluidity and dynamism, and push commanders to rely on their intuition rather than static plans. We are also attempting to develop more Immersive Virtual Reality Experiences; just as historical horsemen often began their training as youths, modern commanders should be exposed to a variety of real-world tactical situations early in their careers. This cultivates a 'gut feeling' over time. We have developed a more candid and open feedback mechanisms, abandoning perfection<sup>10</sup>, and fostering a mindset of accepting mistakes. This helps commanders understand their decision-making processes and refine their intuitive skills. We are emphasising greater flexibility; this teaches commanders to adapt to evolving situations, as within the sphere of reciprocal influence, commanders must feel comfortable pivoting their plans based on the situation on the ground.

We are learning to cultivate a culture of trust; superior officers should trust their commanders' intuitive decisions. This trust, once established, bolsters a commander's confidence in their own intuition, and while intuition is vital, commanders should also be trained to quickly weigh the risks and benefits of their decisions.

Integrating emerging technologies, like Virtual / Augmented reality or sophisticated simulation tools, into training programmes can go some way to bridge the gap between historical scenarios and current challenges, and offer commanders a panoramic view of warfare. Breaking the 'status quo bias' is not about discarding the old but about discerning which elements of the past can be seamlessly married to the innovations of the present. It's a balancing act between reverence for time-tested strategies and an insatiable hunger for evolution. Only by acknowledging the inertia that sometimes accompanies tradition can we craft training methods that truly prepare our cavalry units for the challenges of the contemporary battlefield; however, it is also worth noting that, while technology and tactics have evolved since the days of historical horsemen, the principles of intuition, adaptability, and trust remain constant.

*I want to express my appreciation to Comdt Joe Tynan for our discussions on intuitive decision-making. Likewise, my understanding of Mission Command has greatly benefited from the knowledge and perspectives shared by Comdt Gavin Egerton. Their expertise has been instrumental in shaping my perspective on these topics.*



**Napoleon takes the surrender of General Mack and the Austrian army after the Battle of Ulm in 1805**



**Close Reconnaissance Vehicle (CRV) off roading**

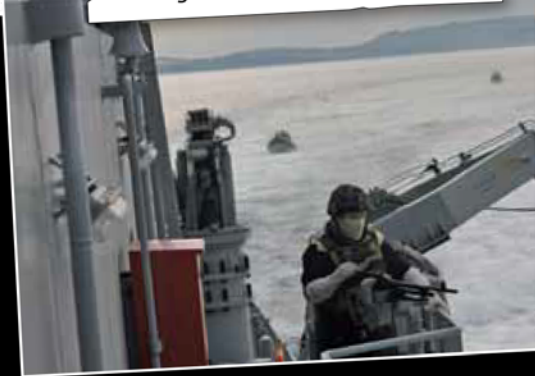
FROM THE ARCHIVES  
An Cosantóir Volume 77 Issue 06, July/August 2017

# EXERCISE NEART



BY LT MICHAEL BRUNICARDI, 2I/C NAVAL  
OPERATIONS COMMAND CENTRE  
PHOTOS BY A/B DAVID JONES & CPL  
NEVILLE COUGHLAN

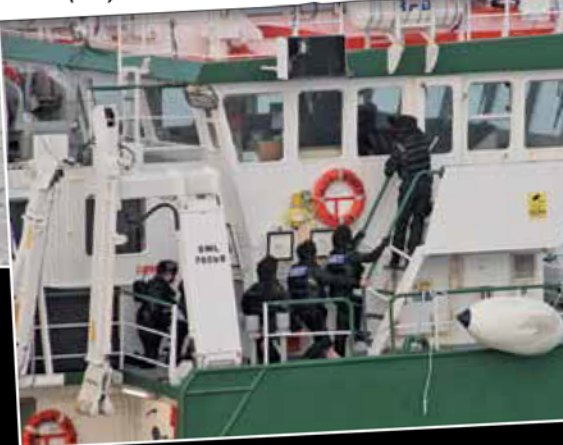
*LÉ Samuel Beckett moves in covering the boarding teams in the RHIBs.*



*Boarding teams preparing to move.*



*The Naval Boarding Team (NBT) board the Vessel of Interest (VOI).*



In the port of Rabat in Morocco, it is a warm evening as shady dealings are completed. Suspect cargo is loaded onto an Irish ship, *Voyager*, which is due to depart shortly and head home after a long voyage. Little does the crew know that intel is being gathered and their ship is under surveillance.

Naval Operations Command at Haulbowline receives a phone call. A Maritime Operations and Analysis Centre-Narcotics' (MAOC-N) vessel of interest (VOI) has been found and indications are it is heading back to Ireland. As a result of this phone call, the fleet operations officer (FOO) contacts the other members of the joint task force (JTF), and it is agreed to initiate a maritime interdiction operation using Irish assets. The VOI departs Morocco and heads northwards to the port of Falmouth in the UK for short stopover of 12 hours, before travelling onwards to the west coast of England and Wales. Surveillance continues. Surface and air assets are deployed and a full estimation of the ship's movements are collected and shared among members of the JTF.

This is the preamble to Exercise Neart, which is the annual maritime interdiction operations exercise carried out in real-time, over two days, in Irish waters. This year the Marine Institute's ship, *Celtic Voyager*, was used as the VOI. She had been outside Irish waters and this allowed the

development of the above scenario as she returned home.

As the VOI proceeds towards the Irish exclusive economic zone with its illegal cargo, little does it know on the morning of the 30th May 2017, that *LÉ Ciara* is over the horizon, watching. *LÉ Ciara* uses her rigid-hull inflatable boats (RHIBs) to conduct covert surveillance, gathering as much on-scene information as possible as she shadows the VOI; exercising her tactical skills and seamanship to ensure that she is not spotted.

The collected information is passed to Naval Operations Command using tactical communication methods and the Recognised Maritime Picture (RMP). One of the Air Corps's maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) is redirected to conduct a high-level flight to provide confirmation of the VOI. This tasking is carried out using the Joint Operations Centre (JOC) in DFHQ. Flying south, the MPA picks-up a target in the anticipated position of the VOI. From distance, the MPA takes photographs, which are sent to Naval Ops for confirmation. The VOI is then positively identified as the *Voyager*; its position is confirmed and the next phase of the operation begins.

On the morning of May 31st, Naval Operations Command provides further intel on *Voyager* and all assets are moved into

position for final intercept. *LÉ Ciara* is still on-scene, shadowing the VOI while *LÉ Samuel Beckett* is redirected from routine operations.

An Garda Síochána sends a detective sergeant from the National Organised Crime and Drugs Bureau to the Naval Base, where he is collected by a RHIB and brought aboard *LÉ Samuel Beckett*, which then heads for the location passed by *LÉ Ciara*.

OC *LÉ Samuel Beckett* assumes the role of officer in tactical command (OTC) of the task group, which proceeds at best speed to the location of the VOI where, as per NS MIO SOPs, both elements of the task group close in.

The task group visually confirms the VOI and initial questioning is carried out on VHF. *LÉ Samuel Beckett*, as lead ship, carries out the final interdiction operation using her ten-strong boarding team, which embarks the vessel, takes control of the crew and identifies the master. Once the crew is secure on deck, the boarding team carries out an initial inspection, locating packages of illegal narcotics. At this point the detective detains the skipper and crew. ENDEX

This annual exercise uses the joint ap-

proach of all arms of the Defence Forces and the Joint Task Force. The Naval Service has directly seized over €1.5 billion of illegal narcotics in the last ten years and has participated in multiple operations in the ISTAR role under the Joint Task Force. ■

*Vessel of Interest FLIR cropped long range by CASA Maritime aircraft.*



*Naval Service personnel pictured with the €80 million haul of cocaine that was seized from the yacht Makayabella 400km off Mizen Head in 2014.*



# AN COSANTÓIR WINNERS 2023

