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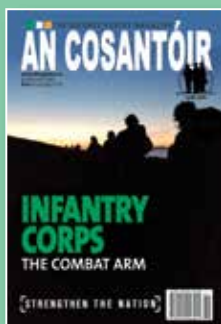
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Best wishes to the Defence Forces



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Front Cover

Pictured are students on the 6th Infantry Platoon Sergeants' Course (IPSC). Photo by Sgt Brian Louth, 7 Inf Bn

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

Editorial

Hello and welcome to our June issue, where this month's main theme is on the infantry soldier and the tools of his/her trade.

As always, your photographs and news from around the DF Community are *On Parade*. The the first *In Focus* article looks at the gruelling 25km DanCon march which took place on a very hot Easter Sunday in Kosovo, and the 2019 ANZAC Day (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) march in Sydney in April. This is followed by the heart-warming story of DF Veteran Martin Rowe's emotional reunion after 44-years with a 2-year-old girl who was missing for 19-hours in 1975. In *Veterans News*, I look at the recent Veterans Day 2019 in Collins Bks Dublin, which was held to recognise, honour, and commemorate our former servicemen and women, and their families.

Our front cover feature *Battle Stripes*, is written by Comdt Gavin Egerton, the OIC and chief instructor of NCO Training Wing of the Infantry School. The article covers the recently conducted 6th Infantry Platoon Sergeants' Course (IPSC), where 40 corporals of the Army's Infantry Corps undergo their career course for the elusive 3rd stripe. This is followed by more infantry tactics in Sgt Eric O'Brien's article on *Exercise 'Atlantic Gale'*, where 1 Inf Bn's Sp Coy (both PDF and RDF) conducted an exercise in devolved mission command, reporting procedures, OPs, CTR and deliberate offensive action.

In the colourful *'Big shoes to fill'* aviation photo journalists Geert Meuris and Michiel Peeters look at the NH90NFH taking over SAR duty from the Sea King Mk48 within the Belgian Air Component.

Next Engineer Officer 'Captain X' attached to the ARW pens an exclusive article *"Room Clear"*, looks at the Live Fire Shoot House (LFSH), which is a €1million euro investment

which has given the ARW the latest state of the art live fire training system utilising the latest technology materials and design.

In our *Strategic Review* article Paul O'Brien looks at *The Wild Geese: Mercenaries Part 1 - mercenaries*, dogs of war or soldiers of fortune, whatever name they appear under, hired soldiers were once described as the world's second oldest profession.

Our regular RDF contributor CQMS Michael Barrett (AR), 7 Inf Bn looks at *The GPMG - "The Old Reliable"*, the GPMG has been in service for over 50 years, it is a widely used weapon in service with over 80 armed forces around the world. Next, the Ordnance School have a short but very interesting piece on *How Your Equipment Works: The Ballistics of Tracer*. This is followed by *The Battle of the Platoons 2019*, where we look at a great charity event conducted by the students and instructors on the PTI course in the DFPEs.

Our first *History* article, by Defence Forces Librarian Pte Terence O'Reilly follows up on his series of infantry battalions with 2 Infantry Battalion, one of the longest serving infantry units from 1927 to 2012. This is followed by an extended extract from *Napoleon's Blackguards*, Stephen McGarry's debut novel which looks at the British Army's epic fighting retreat across Spain in 1808 during The Napoleonic Wars and pursued Capt James Ryan and his Irish voltigeurs.

Our *Sports* section features two short reports on the *CISM Orienteering Championship*, which took place in The Netherlands in April, and the *UNIFIL Inter Contingent Ladies Five-A-Side Soccer Blitz* organised and hosted by 113th Inf Bn IRISHBATT in UNP 2-45.

All this and our regular *Tac-Aide*, *Gear Review*, *Noticeboard*, *Book Reviews* and *What I Do* features.

Wayne Fitzgerald

Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald

Call for Platelet Donors

Pictured is platelet donor Pte Freddie Strutt, DFTC who was donating platelets recently. Freddie started donating platelets because of his 7-year-old cousin died of Leukaemia and his Dad died of lung cancer. He is hugely aware of the need for platelets and the shelf life of just five days. Freddie encourages everyone to give platelets. If you are interested please call Dublin 01 4322833 or Cork 021 4807429 - www.giveblood.ie/platelets - See advert on page 24.





▲ 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF RESERVE DEFENCE FORCES

Pictured on Tuesday 16th April are RDF members of 7 Inf Bn during the 90th Anniversary of the Reserve Defence Forces in Collins Bks, Dublin.

Photo: Pte Eoin O'Shea (AR), 7 Inf Bn



▲ D COY VISITS ARBOUR HILL

Pictured are recruits from D Coy, 7 Inf Bn who were part of a work party for the 90th Anniversary of the Reserve Defence Forces in Collins Bks. They visited the 1916 leaders plot in Arbour Hill to learn more about Irish history before the main ceremony.

Photo: Rec Lukasz Gancarz, 7 Inf Bn



▲ IN MEMORY SGT NOEL FITZPATRICK (AR)

Pictured is the family of the late Sgt Noel Fitzpatrick (AR), 6 Inf Bn who passed away suddenly in March 2019 receiving a plate from Comdt Pat Tobin. The plate was inscribed with his service details in recognition of the high regard in which his Army Reserve comrades held him. The presentation took place in the NCOs Mess Costume Bks, Athlone. "Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam." *Photo: Cpl C Noonan (AR), 6 Inf Bn.*



▲ PO DERMOT 'FROGGIE' HALPIN REMEMBERED

On the 14th May 2019 members of the Naval College hosted a small ceremony to mark the 5th Anniversary of the death of Petty Officer Dermot 'Froggie' Halpin. Family and friends were invited to attend, and a wreath was laid at his monument in the NC HQ garden, followed by a reception in the NCOs mess. *Photo: Naval Service*



▲ 1916 CENTENARY COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS

On the 14th May 2019, serving and retired members of the NS CIS Branch gathered for a coffee morning to mark the presentation of 1916 Centenary Commemorative Medals to CPO Cronan Doyle (Retd), and to PO Paul Cummins (Retd). It was great to see many of our retired colleagues again. *Photo: Naval Service*



▲ COLLEGE GRADUATION

Armnr Aaron Crampton, Air Corps recently graduated with a Diploma in Terrorism and International Security Studies and a second Diploma in Criminology and Criminal Psychology from City Colleges, Dublin. He is pictured at his graduation on 27th April in St Ann's Church, Dawson St. with the Dean of City Colleges. *Photo: Armnr Aaron Crampton*



▲ 1916 EASTER SUNDAY COMMEMORATION

Pictured at the 1916 Easter Sunday Commemoration at the graves of Peadar Kearney and Edward Hollywood in Glasnevin Cemetery are 2 Bde CIS members Sgt John Sargent (AR), Lt Shane Heffernan (PDF), Sgt Peter Brennan (AR). *Photo: Sgt John Sargent (AR), 2 Bde CIS*



▲ MERITORIOUS PROMOTION

Pictured is Brig Gen Patrick Flynn, GOC 1 Bde presenting newly promoted Cpl Yvonne Kearney, Legal Office 1 Bde HQ with her new Cpl rank markings. Cpl Kearney received her promotion through her education qualifications as she had recently completed a Masters in Science at UCC. *Photo: Sgt Jim Daly, 1 Bde HQ*



▲ 109TH 3* TROOP, 1 ACS

Pictured are instructors and members of the 109th 3* Troop, 1 ACS, who held their passing out parade on Thursday 16th May 2019. The 37 personnel will be posted to units throughout the DFTC and Defence Forces. *Photo: Sgt Stephen Buckley*

▲ DF SOCCER VS UK ARMED FORCES

On the 8th May 2019 the Defence Forces Soccer team played against the UK Armed Forces in Richmond Park, Inchicore, Dublin. The afternoon kick-off had a good turn out of spectators for this near annual fixture. The DF Soccer team reeling in their success of CISM qualification went down 2-1 to the UK troops. *Photo: Armnr Jamie Martin, 105 Sqn*



▲ UNIFIL TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY

On Friday 17th May 2019 the Transfer of Authority (TOA) ceremony took place in UNP 2-45 between 113 Inf Bn and 114 Inf Bn UNIFIL. Pictured is OC 114 Inf Bn, Lt Col Paul Kelly receiving the UN flag from Sector West Commander, Brig Gen Bruno Pisciotta, observed by Lt Col Keogh, OC 113 Inf Bn, BSM Stan Hurley 113 Inf Bn and BSM Pat Balfe 114 Inf Bn. *Photo: Cpl Lee Coyle, 114 Inf Bn*



DANCON - KOSOVO

BY CPL CARMEL BENNETT, AIR CORPS

On a very hot Easter Sunday, whilst most people were tucking into their Easter eggs, eight members of the Defence Forces based in Kosovo took part in a gruelling 25km

DanCon route march. DanCon is short for Danish Contingent, and the march is a tradition in the Danish Army and was established in 1972 by the Royal Danish Army. The DanCon march invites foreign troops allied with Denmark to participate in the 25km march. Participants have to wear their military boots and uniform, carry 10kg in weight, including body armour and their personnel weapon. The route consisted of undulating terrain both on road and off with the highlight been a 17-degree incline to the half way checkpoint.

Over 364 soldiers from 22 different countries took part. The march was made easier by the comradeship from all those taking part, the support from all the locals as the troops marched through their villages and towns and the chats been had by all troops from all ranks and nationalities. As flags from across the globe were proudly hung from backpacks of all participants and flew gently in the soft Kosovo breeze.

Capt Enda Caldwell, 28 Inf Bn in Finner Camp, Co. Donegal finished in the top ten in a very impressive time of 2 hours 39 minutes.

Although most suffered with tired bodies, blistered feet and extreme fatigue due to the excessive heat, it was the comradeship of all nations who spurred each other on to complete this extreme challenge. As one Danish soldier said *"The pain is only temporary but the honour of completing DanCon lasts forever."* ■



ANZAC DAY SYDNEY 2019

BY MICHAEL LYONS, UIESAA

The former Irish Defence Forces Director of Legal Service, Col John Spierin (Ret'd) from Dublin joined the United Irish Ex Services Association Australia (UIESAA) for the 2019 ANZAC Day (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) march in Sydney on Thursday 25th April. John remarked that after reading about the UIESAA some years ago in the 'An Cosantóir' he put it on his list of lifetime things to achieve!

The Irish Consul General Mr Owen Feeney attended and we were honoured to have from Melbourne, Irish Army veteran John 'Bird' Prendergast. John served in the Congo and Cyprus prior to emigrating from his native Waterford to Australia over 50-years-ago.



The ANZAC Day marches are over 100 years old and were initially formed to remember the Australian and New Zealand forces that fought and made the supreme sacrifice in World War 1 especially at Gallipoli. Over 6,600 Irish-born that had immigrated to Australia returned and served side by side with the Australians in WW1, tragically 970 were killed. In recent times the ANZAC Day marches commemorate and honour those who served in all theatres of war and peacekeeping.

Any present Irish Defence Forces personal, veterans or families of veterans visiting Sydney in April around ANZAC Day please have do not hesitate to contact UIESAA. <https://uiesaa.wordpress.com/contact-us/> or on Facebook: www.facebook.com/UIESAA/ ■

A Happy Reunion

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

Martin Rowe was born in Ballyfoyle, Co Kilkenny, and moved to Newbridge, Co Kildare, at an early age when his father was posted to the Military College. Martin followed in his father's footsteps and enlisted into the Defence Forces in 1971, serving with the Depot Medical Corps. He served overseas as a medical NCO with 48 Inf Bn and 52 Inf Bn in Lebanon. In 1978 he transferred to No 1 Hosp Coy, and was attached to Army Apprentice School in Naas, until he retired from the Defence Forces in 1996.

Martin got married in 1973 but due to a course he was unable to get leave, and it wasn't until 1975 that Martin and Elizabeth finally got their honeymoon to Butlin's Holiday Camp in Mosney, Co Meath.

Martin remembers: "One morning we heard that a two-year-old child involved in a toddler competition had gone missing from the ballroom the night before and they were looking for volunteers to search for her. I volunteered straight away and we were put into teams and told where had already been searched the night before."

"When we were a couple of miles out from the camp I spotted a break in a wall that led down to the train tracks."

This was the very busy main railway line from Dublin to Belfast and some searchers were reluctant to go down to it. However, Martin didn't hesitate and hadn't travelled far down the bank when he spotted something red only a few yards from the tracks.

"It was a child holding a red ball," Martin says. "She wasn't moving and my first concern was if she was alive. When I was checking her pulse she woke and said, 'Don't take my ball!' After she repeated that a few times, I told her, 'You're ok. I'm going to bring you to your mammy.' Then I brought her back up to the road, where we were greeted by cheers from a crowd that had gathered."

Martin often thought about the incident over the years, and then out of the blue one day he got a picture text of a newspaper cutting from the time of the Butlin's incident. The accompanying text read: 'Hi, are you the man in the photo?' Martin replied that he was. The texter was Collette Ryan (formerly Maher) who had been the missing child that Martin had found all those years ago.

Speaking on Cork's RedFM, Collette, now married and living in Fermoy, said her family had tried a number of times over the years



Collette with Red ball.



to try to track Martin down. Then, one day while searching his name on Facebook, Collette came

across an old army photo on Martin's profile and matched it to the newspaper clipping she had. Luckily he also had his number on his profile.

Martin rang Collette that evening and they had a great chat about the episode that had united them four decades earlier.

The reunion story was picked up by KFM, the Kildare Nationalist, the Leinster Leader, LMFM, and then by RTÉ. Originally intending to meet in Cork, the pair were contacted by researchers from the Late Late Show, who arranged for the reunion to take place on the show instead.

Although she has no real memory of the incident herself, Collette says: "It was a 300-acre campsite, with about 5,000 people staying and an additional 1,000 coming and going as day visitors, and I was gone for nineteen hours... they could hear the cheers from the medical hospital where my mother was, so they knew I was after being found."



Martin and Collette on the Late Late Show.



UN Veteran Martin Rowe. Photo by Sgt Mick Burke

"I have so much to thank Martin for; I've had a great life, I'm a mother and a grandmother. I still get emotional now when I talk about it."

Martin is a grandfather himself; he has 3 children and 9 grandchildren. Martin says: "I also helped with the searches for Jo Jo Dollard and Deirdre Jacob, with no results. I know the family of one of those missing girls and I know what they are going through. I'm delighted to hear Collette has a marvellous life, and I wish her and her family nothing but happiness." ■

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

VETERANS DAY 2019

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD PHOTOS ARMN SEAN FOLEY, 105 SQN



On Saturday 11th May 2019 the sixth Defence Forces Veterans Day to recognise, honour, and commemorate our former servicemen and women, and their families took place at the National Museum of Ireland in Collins Bks, Dublin 7. The ceremony was officiated by the Minister with Responsibility for Defence, Mr Paul Kehoe TD, along with the Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces, Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM.

The annual Veterans Day event is to especially remember all members of Óglaigh na hÉireann who have paid the ultimate sacrifice while serving at home or overseas with a ceremonial wreath laying commemoration led by Minister Kehoe and the Veteran Associations. Wreaths were laid by Minister Paul Kehoe and the COS Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM and representing the three Veterans Associations: Brig Gen Paul Pakenham (Ret'd) President of the Association of Retired Commissioned Officers (ARCO), Jim Casey National Chairman of the Irish United Nations Veterans Association (IUNVA) and Jim Fay who is the President-in-Waiting representing the Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel (ONE).

The afternoon was started with a recital by IUNVA Pipe Band before the ministerial review of Veterans on parade and then minister's address, the offering of prayers and the wreath laying ceremony and a Defence Forces military equipment display. The Parade Commander was Lt Col Raymond Kane, OC 2 Arty Regt, and the Parade Sgt Major was BSM Graham Nuttall, 6 Inf Bn. The Honour Guard was from drawn from 6 Inf Bn and led by Lt Michael Crawley and assisted by Sgt Pryce. The main parade body was drawn from units in 1 Bde, 2 Bde, DFTC, Air Corps and Naval Service. The Army No 1 Band was conducted by Capt John Carpenter after a One Minute of Silence tunes included the Piper's Lament, Last Post, Reveille and the National Anthem. The National Flag was raised to Full-Mast by Capt Aislinn Kelleher, 6 Inf Bn and the Master of

Ceremonies was Lt Alan Rigney, 6 Inf Bn.

In recognising the service to the State, Minister Kehoe said, "I extend a very special welcome to former servicemen and women of the Defence Forces. Today is your day – a day in which the Defence Forces acknowledges your service both at home and around the world. Many retired members of the Defence Forces have served on UN peacekeeping missions all over the world. UN peacekeeping continues to be one of the most flexible and effective tools available to the international community in responding to crises around the world. It plays an essential role in stabilising regions affected by conflict and in saving lives. Since 1958, not a day has passed when the Irish Defence Forces have not been deployed under the UN blue hat, in conflict zones across the globe."

Minister Kehoe went on to acknowledge, "the commitment, dedication and service by members of the Defence Forces while on overseas service has contributed to the excellent reputation that Ireland and the Defence Forces enjoy." He also commended members of the Defence Forces, whether serving or retired, for that commitment and thanked them, their families and loved ones for the inevitable sacrifices that this has involved.

Minister Kehoe concluded by remembering, "the military personnel who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of peace. Some of you here today will remember lost friends and comrades. We will not forget those who have died while on active service overseas nor those who have died while on service in Ireland."

Later that day COS Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM quoted American author and politician Zell Miller - "It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech". The COS said he was, "Proud to be on parade with just some of our veteran soldiers, sailors and aircrew - men and women who gave decades of service at home and abroad in some of the most challenging environments in the world." ■



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BATTLE

STORIES

BY COMDT GAVIN EGERTON, OIC & CI NCOTW, INF SCH, MIL COL

The NCO Training Wing (NCOTW) recently conducted the 6th Infantry Platoon Sergeants' Course (IPSC) for 40 corporals of the Army's Infantry Corps. This important career course, essential for promotion to sergeant within the Infantry Corps, delivers the necessary education and training to equip senior corporals with the skills and knowledge to fill the role of platoon sergeant in their units on promotion. In particular, it teaches the combat service support (CSS) skills required to sustain an infantry platoon during conventional land operations. It is the platoon sergeant's job to devise a bespoke CSS plan that supports his/her platoon commander's tactical plan. This includes devising an efficient casualty evacuation plan and an effective method to resupply the platoon with ammunition, food, and water etc.

This is the 6th iteration of this course since its inception in 2011. The two major changes made to the 6th Infantry Platoon Sergeants' Course following detailed review, were the inclusion of a comprehensive block of instruction on battalion level tactics and an increased emphasis on combat fitness.

Battalion level tactics lectures were included for the first time to

challenging combat fitness assessments during the course ensured that students were well prepared for the physical robustness of the four Field Training Exercises (FTXs) during the course.

The four FTXs conducted were four to five days in duration, each beginning with a tutorial phase that covered the basic skills required for the week ahead. They covered infantry specific tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) such as fighting in built-up areas (FIBUA); fighting in woods and forests (FIWAF), ambush, reconnaissance and fighting patrols, defence and retrograde, and offensive operations.

The final exercise, FTX 'STAND ALONE', saw a Three Star Course from 28 Inf Bn along with soldiers from infantry units in 1 Bde join the 6th IPSC in the Glen of Imaal to conduct multiple platoon attacks for the students' command test appointments. The FTX culminated with three company attacks in one day. The last attack was a night attack up Camara Hill using newly refurbished Mowag APCs from 1 Mech Inf Coy to move the company to an assembly area prior to the attack. The Mowags then constituted a fire support group (FSG) off to a flank to provide pre- H Hour fires. An artillery fire support team officer from 1 Brigade Artillery Regiment called in indirect fire support throughout the attack using battle noise simulators provided by 2 Brigade Engineer Company, and giving the students a chance to practice target grid procedure to call for fire. The high tempo attack was a great way to finish the tactical training phase, but the physical challenge wasn't over just yet.



provide important context to company and platoon operations. The students were encouraged to focus on the 'bigger picture' and on how their platoon action fits into the company plan as part of a battalion operation; in particular how their CSS plan fits into that of the company sergeant and the battalion staff. It also served to arm the soon-to-be sergeants with a deeper knowledge of what an infantry battalion's conventional capabilities are in the various phases of war. The students received briefs from subject matter experts in the combat support arms, such as artillery, cavalry and engineers, who explained their roles and capabilities in supporting infantry operations.

Physical challenges are an inherent part of infantry operations. The challenges posed by terrain, weather, or time pressures must be mitigated by preparation, both physical and mental. A combination of pre-course personal preparation by students, supported by a physical training program issued by the NCOTW and a series of

Undeterred, the next day the students completed an arduous 22km march from Glenmalur into the Glen of Imaal carrying 18kg, plus body armour, helmet, and rifle. This was a highly competitive inter-section timed event culminating in a very challenging shooting competition. Ultimately it proved to both the students and instructors that, even after an extremely physically demanding week, these infantry NCOs could traverse difficult terrain carrying a combat load and then accurately engage targets as a highly competent infantry team.

While this was an arduous course, the time prior to the course invested in preparation – both physical and mental – resulted in a performance of the highest standards by the students. The importance of training for conventional land operations, underscored by the Infantry Ethos was emphasised to the students throughout the course. The members of the 6th IPSC have now returned to their respective units. They not only return equipped with new CSS skills, enhanced leadership and command ability, but also demonstrated a keen and a positive attitude to their profession as Infantry soldiers – most ably manifested in their physical robustness and mental resilience.

Congratulations to the members of the 6th IPSC on a challenge well met! ■

AN T-IARTHAIR INA DHÚISEACHT - THE WEST'S AWAKE!

Exercise Atlantic Gale

BY SÁIRSINT ERIC O'BRIEN, 1 CN COIS

From 16th to 18th April 2019, **Complacht Tacaíochta** (Support Coy) of **An Chéad Cathalán Coisithe** (1 Inf Bn) conducted exercise 'Atlantic Gale'. The exercise was conducted in the Renville and Oranmore areas of Co. Galway. The objective of Atlantic Gale was to exercise personnel in devolved mission command, reporting procedures, Observation Posts (OPs), Close Target Reconnaissance (CTR) and deliberate offensive action. The exercise comprised both Permanent Defence Forces (PDF) and Reserve Defence Forces (RDF) elements.

Atlantic Gale began in Dún Uí Mhaoilíosa (Renmore Barracks) on 16th April with an exercise scenario brief. The briefing contained information about a hostile enemy force the 'Connemara Freedom Fighters' (CFF) and their recent activities in the East Galway area. A spate of illegal activities resulted in An Garda Síochána requesting Defence Forces support for an Aid to Civil Power (ATCP) operation. The unit immediately began training for a number of possible scenarios including vehicle ambush drills, medical refresher lessons, signals refresher lessons and infantry drills.

On 17th April 1 Cn Cois troops were given further situational updates. Overnight the CFF had been busy; they had attacked a Garda checkpoint, taken over the military range in Oranmore and captured a member of the Defence Forces. Air Corps assets had provided footage of a weapons drop in the Renville area. The CFF had also deployed reconnaissance elements in the Renmore area that were known to be reporting troop movements in and out of the barracks. 1 Cn Cois troops were then ordered to establish an OP in Renville. The remainder of the platoon deployed to a Forward Operating Base (FOB) to the south of Oranmore Range from which reconnaissance patrols were launched in order to acquire information regarding enemy strength, composition and disposition.

Due to the presence of enemy reconnaissance elements in the Renmore area, the Company Commander made the decision to deploy 1 Cn Cois troops by Rigid-Hulled Inflatable Boat (RHIB) with assistance from the Defence Forces Dive Group (DFDG). The troops embarked in Galway Harbour and made the bumpy journey across Galway Bay to the Renville area in two groups. On arrival part of the first group deployed as the OP team. The remainder of the first group and the entire second group then moved via truck to the FOB.

After a long wait the OP team observed and reported on an enemy arms drop made by boat in the Renville area. Infor-

mation gathered from this OP was reported to the Company Tactical Operations Centre (TOC) based in the FOB and then relayed to higher HQ. Meanwhile, a reconnaissance patrol in the Oranmore area had encountered a CFF member who confronted the patrol and a verbal argument ensued. This was a test of the troop's rules of engagement for unarmed and non-physical aggression, which was handled well by the patrol commander.

When the platoon consolidated in the FOB, a further information update and request was provided to the Company Commander, which required confirmation of enemy identities, weapon types and their capabilities. Various CTRs were then deployed throughout the night, which resulted in the acquisition of invaluable information and confirmed the presence of Surface to Air missiles in the CFF base.

Early on 18th April, the final information update was delivered confirming the CFFs actions and intent. The scenario changed to a conventional military operation. Support Company's mission was to neutralise the enemy's capability to carry out a terrorist attack and a deliberate offensive action was ordered on the CFF compound.

With a fire support base in place, H-Hour was 0600 and with the GPMGs providing covering fire the offensive action was launched at 0601hrs. This involved a Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) clearance of buildings and the observation tower, followed by Directing Staff (DS) carrying out a detailed assessment of the consolidation phase. During this phase, medical staff from the CMU assessed the troop's ability to prioritise and treat wounded personnel, both friendly and enemy. The Platoon Sgt was also busy dealing with enemy prisoners and ensuring that work parties were dispatched promptly to treat wounded personnel and secure prisoners.

At the end of the consolidation phase, the platoon was assembled and a hot debrief regarding the entire operation took place. Prior to the exercise, key learning objectives were laid out and the Company Commander, assisted by the DS, began to go through debrief points. These covered, planning and insertion by boat to an objective, occupying and reporting on actions from a hasty OP in a public place, conducting basic infantry drills, reconnaissance drills, reporting, signals equipment familiarity and usage, medical skills, and most importantly devolved mission command.

Devolving mission command allowed the unit to exercise an All-Arms Standard Course qualified Corporal as Platoon

Sgt and Private soldiers were offered the opportunity to act as section commanders, patrol commanders, section 2ICs and OP commanders. This provided these young soldiers with an opportunity to gain insight into the military decision-making process, mission planning and execution, and troop command with the reassurance of a DS guiding them through the processes.

The exercise ended having met all of the objectives and refreshed a wide range of skills and drills. In addition, some new SOPs were learned, tested and practised. The opportunity to act up in the capacity of a higher rank was very well received by all personnel as these opportunities would normally only arise during their career development courses on the road to promotion. To cap the tempo of the exercise off, an enthusiastic CFF party added a unique aspect of an information led exercise that adapted to the developing situation and an element of the unknown for the well-tested junior leaders. ■





Big shoes to fill

NH90NFH taking over SAR duty from the Sea King Mk48 within the Belgian Air Component

REPORT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEERT MEURIS & MICHIEL PEETERS

When in the evening of 6th March 1987, the MS Herald of Free Enterprise capsized in shallow waters about one mile off the coast after leaving the port of Zeebrugge, Belgium. 193 people died, making it the biggest peacetime maritime disaster involving a British ship since the sinking of the RMS Empress of Ireland in 1914. Due to the quick response of the Belgian Navy and 40 Smaldeel (Squadron) of the Belgian Air Force, providing SAR duty at nearby Koksijde Airbase and flying the Sea King Mk48, 346 passengers and crew were saved from the ice-cold water, of which some 30 people were rescued by Sea King. The images of the Sea King operating in the pitch-black night over the ship's wreck, winching down rescue divers into this dangerous environment to look for survivors went around the globe. It gave the people of 40 Squadron, and the Sea King in particular, a legendary status... an effect that was magnified when about five years later a popular TV series was broadcasted about life within 40 Squadron. Up to this day 40 Squadron and the Sea King enjoy immense popularity in Belgium and the neighbouring countries.

Something old, something new...

On 1st April 1961 the Belgian Air Force (after the structural reforms in 2002 renamed Belgian Air Component) formed a Heliflight operating 5 Sikorsky HSS-1 helicopters to fulfil the SAR duty. Homebase would be Koksijde Airbase, located near the Belgian coast. In 1963 a second Flight was formed with 7 extra helicopters of the type Sikorsky S-58C after which in 1974 the unit received the official status of 40 Smaldeel with a squadron motto "Aude Audenda" - "Dare what has to be dared". As it became clear that the Sikorsky with its outdated radar and navigation system was not fully equipped for long range missions over sea the Belgian Government decided in 1973 to buy five Westland Sea King Mk 48s, a British license-built version of the Sikorsky S-61, which received serial numbers RS01 to RS05. The helicopters were delivered at Koksijde on 8th November 1976, where they operated alongside the Sikorsky S-58Cs until in 1986 when the last of the old Sikorsky helicopters was being retired. In the meantime, 40 Smaldeel had built a strong reputation after numerous successful interventions, thanks to the professionalism of the crew and the reliability of the Sea King.

In 1995 the Sea Kings received an extensive upgrade with Westland in the UK and with SABCA Aerospace Industries in Belgium. The upgrade included new avionics and communication systems, replacement of the old MEL ARI 5995 radar by the

modern Bendix RDR 1500B, covering a radius of 240 km over 360°, installation of a mission planning system and an Automatic Flight Control System (AFCS), enabling the Sea Kings to operate under almost all-weather conditions. The most important was the acquirement of three FLIR 2000 F cameras (Forward Looking InfraRed), which could be quickly installed under each of the Sea Kings. The FLIR covered the 12° blind spot of the radar in front of the helicopter, caused by the exhaust of the engines and offers a clearer view during SAR missions in dark and bad weather conditions. However, maintenance became an issue for the old lady and some of the airframes were starting to suffer from corrosion around the cabin floor.

The new kid on the block... NH90NFH "Caiman"

With SAR duty lives are at stake, it is of vital importance that at least two aircraft are in operational condition at all times. Since 2005 the Belgian Government was looking for a successor of the popular Sea King and in 2007 a decision was made in favour of the NH Industries NH90. Four of the NH90s (serial number RNO1-RNO4), also named "Caiman", were ordered in the NH90 NFH (NATO Frigate Helicopter) variant as a replacement for the Sea Kings of 40 Smaldeel and the Alouettes of the Belgian Navy Helicopter, implementing that except for SAR duty the new helicopter will also fly maritime / military operations in support of the Belgian navy where it will operate from the helicopter deck of the Belgian Marine Component (Belgian Navy) M-class Frigates.

The Caiman is a modern high-tech helicopter designed and equipped for maritime operations. Powered by two Rolls Royce Turbomeca RTM-322-01/9 turboshaft engines which each provide some 2100 PK, good for a cruising speed is 260 km/h with an action radius of about 880 km, it is the first helicopter to have the fly by wire system installed and at the belly of the aircraft is the modern Thales Ocean Master surveillance tactical naval radar. The first Caiman was delivered to the Belgian Air Component on 1st August 2013 at the Marignane factory, France. Initial Operational Capability (IOC) SAR was gained already on 21st August 2015, meaning that 40 Smaldeel could participate in SAR standby with one Caiman and four trained crews available on an alternate week-to-week schedule with the aging Sea King. Full Operational Capability (FOC) SAR will be reached this year.

One by one

Prior to the decommissioning of the Sea King we've seen a series of goodbye announcements which were postponed each



time, mainly caused by delay in delivery of the new NH90NFH helicopters. In the end they were all put to rest one by one, each of the five Sea Kings on a different date:

RS01 last flight 17th December 2008 / 10,583 flight hours and 523 scrambles and put on permanent display at the Army Museum in Brussels.

RS03 last flight 29th August 2013 / 11,851 flight hours and 618 scrambles and will be put on display near Koksijde Airbase.

RS02 last flight 13th January 2019 / 12,500 flight hours and 738 scrambles and remains stored at Koksijde Airbase for the time being.

RS04 last flight 15th February 2019 / 12,219 flight hours and 703 scrambles and remains stored at Koksijde Airbase for the time being.

RS05 last flight 21st March 2019 / 12,222 flight hours and 707 scrambles and was handed over as educational material to VLOC (Vlaams luchtvaartopleidingscentrum or Flemish Aviation Training Centre), a flight engineering school at Ostend Airport.

Since 2001 the RS05 had been sporting a stylish black livery to commemorate 25 Years of service for the Sea King within the Belgian Air Force. The “Black Beauty” never lost her special colour scheme and maybe therefore she was destined to be the last remaining Sea King in service of the Belgian Air Component. On the 9th March at 08:00am the very last 24-hour standby for a Belgian Sea King started at Koksijde Airbase and the final flight of the RS05 was planned for the 21st March 2019. It became a proper and emotional goodbye and a fitting tribute to 43 years of loyal service for the Sea King, and all of it was widely broadcasted by the local and national media. Wheels of the RS05 touched down at the concrete of Koksijde Airbase for the very last time around 16:45hrs that afternoon. 43-years of Sea King with 40 Smaldeel accumulated for almost 60,000 flight hours, more than 3,000 scrambles and 1,757 persons rescued.

Ready for the future

1st April 06:50am the scramble alert sounded at Koksijde Airbase and the crew on standby managed to rescue five occupants from a sinking French fishing boat some 20-miles out from the coast of Dunkirk. It was six-years-ago that 40 Smaldeel had to rescue five people during one scramble, marking it the first “big” rescue operation at sea for the new Caiman.

It's obvious that the Caiman is a modern and capable helicopter which is not only fitted to provide SAR cover but one that can also be deployed for military missions over sea in support of the Belgian Navy. Probably the biggest challenge the Caiman faces will be winning the hearts of the people in the same way the Sea

King did. However, knowing the professionalism and dedication of the personnel at 40 Smaldeel there is no doubt that they will make it happen... “Aude Audenda”.

The authors would like to thank Comopsair IPR / Public Relations Office of the Belgian Air Component and the Public Relations team at Koksijde Airbase for their hospitality while offering us the possibility to photograph the Sea King. ■



ROOM CLEAR

BY 'CAPTAIN X', ENGINEER OFFICER, ARW

PHOTOS BY SGT KARL BYRNE

"Good Breach", a team of Special Operations Forces (SOF) operators quickly move through the entry point and roll through the hostage scenario as it plays out in front of them. "Status", the Bravo Team Leader (TL) asks over the Personal Role Radio (PRR) set, calmly and with purpose, not for a second looking anywhere other than his arc as he absorbs the flood of information coming back to him in a deliberate sequence. Hotel (Hostage) secure, two Tangos (Terrorists) dead. A mixture of 5.56mm, 9mm and shotgun shell casings lay smoking on the floor alongside two used stun grenade bodies. It is all over in seconds, quicker than the world's best athletes can run a 400m track lap but for the SOF operators involved, this is the culmination of years of dedicated training to become members of Ireland's elite unit, the Army Ranger Wing (ARW). Combined, the team have accumulated decades worth of military experience from operations and training on four different continents. The TL depends on the best from each member of his team every time. The margin for error is slim and consequences of mistakes are very real and extreme in these Close Quarters Battle (CQB) live fire exercises. Each operator is equipped with a multitude of weapons systems including the HK416 assault rifle, Sig P226 pistol, Benelli M4 tactical shotgun, stun grenades and breaching equipment including explosives. The close coordination and teamwork involved is crucial to succeed in the mission and only through the repeated and consistent drilling will the team ensure that they are prepared to do it for real when the time comes.



The Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT) instructor calls “End Ex” and the team files outside to review the video of how the assault went. Instinctively, they all know exactly what went right and what went wrong, they will go through multiple scenarios again and again until they have it perfect. This is the SOF way, the reason that only a dedicated few make it through the gruelling Special Operations Forces Qualification (SOFQ) process to begin with. The LFTT instructor is professional and thorough in his debrief. Doing so has become much safer and effective following the installation of a new Live Fire Shoot House (LFSH) for the unit in 2017. The LFSH is a €1million euro investment which has given the ARW the latest state of the art live fire training systems from an American based company called Range Systems Ltd based on specifications and design concept from the ARW. Utilising the latest technology materials and design, the facility is one of only a handful to meet the highest of standards in existence anywhere in the world.

The 12.5mm steel armour plate that makes up the wall is the same quality protection used in armoured vehicles. On top of these and around the entire walled surface a specialist material, cold compressed vulcanised rubber panelling called Dura Panel™ is placed. A single 2ft square of Dura Panel™ can withstand up to 2,000 rounds of 7.62mm ball ammunition fired from point blank range. To augment it, the majority of the walls where targets will be placed against, known as ‘Hot Walls’, are covered with Dura Bloc™ each weighing over 30kg and which can take an additional 5,000 rounds of 7.62mm bullets before needing to be replaced. The design also features an innovative sliding bullet proof wall structure that can cover doors and change the orientation of the hallway configuration dramatically and be changed in mere seconds by an Instructor wishing to change around the scenario. The facility can also facilitate multiple team entries allowing teams to engage targets safely whilst mov-



ing in any direction which greatly enhances the safety of all involved in the exercise and something that simply was not possible in the old timber and block shoot through facility that the ARW used to train in. What makes the facility particularly useful is that with the multitude of potential set ups from the seven rooms and eighteen doors, the variety of scenarios is virtually limitless. The facility was even designed such that it can mimic the tactical difficulties experienced by an assault team in buildings ranging from domestic houses, offices, hotels and even ship layouts.

As part of the design, a canopy roof and gantry systems for viewing drills from is also included as well as specially constructed safe to shoot furniture, a moving target robot and spare Dura Bloc™ for replacement over time. Because of the nature of SOF units and the need for deliberate and accurate firing onto designated targets according to the Mission’s Rules of Engagement (ROEs), the ARW LFSH has an expected operational lifetime of at least 30 years and possibly more with the application of careful maintenance policy and the smart management of target placement and Dura Bloc™ recycling system. SOFQ course Bravo Two will learn the basics of their trade in the facility and will be doing so in an environment made much safer through the utilisation of modern technological improvements. Meanwhile the operators of Bravo Team stack outside entrance door number three for a fresh run at a yet unknown and dynamic scenario. It is going to be a long day of drills for the team, a task they have been specially selected, trained and equipped to do. It is a job that every one of them relishes and wouldn’t want to change for the world, living up to the unit motto:

Glaine ár gcroí

(The cleanliness of our hearts)

Neart ár ngéag (The strength of our limbs)

Agus beart de réir ár mbriathar (And our commitment to our promise) ■



THE WILD GEESE

MERCENARIES PART 1

BY PAUL O'BRIEN MA



Mercenaries, Dogs of War or Soldiers of Fortune, whatever name they appear under, hired soldiers were once described as the world's second oldest profession. For centuries they have been reviled and vilified for their use in war yet they have proven to the world that well-disciplined, well trained and well paid troops can turn the tide of battle.

Since 9/11, the Private Military Contractor (PMC) has emerged onto the world's markets and the world's battlefields. They can be found pulling security for world dignitaries, securing vital installations or working for the United Nations. Whatever the case, their numbers are growing at an alarming rate causing concern for government officials who by their own admission, also use private security personnel for their own means. Since their first recorded use in battle to recent conflicts throughout the world, the contract soldier is still and always will be a subject of controversy.

In 401 BC, 10,000 hired soldiers were recruited by the pretender, Cyrus as he attempted to take the throne of the Persian Empire by force. His attempt failed but the mercenaries he had employed survived to retreat back through Asia Minor in a march that was recorded by Xenophon, a story that is considered by many to be a fitting memoir of a mercenary venture.

Many people believe that the definition of a mercenary is a freelance soldier with no loyalty, ruthless to the core, undertaking short contracts for large amounts of money, often depicted

in books and films as a gun-toting, knife wielding soldier of fortune. They may be surprised to learn that this impression is very far removed from reality.

The correct definition of a mercenary is one who fights in the pay of a power that is not his own country. Such a definition covers a wide range stretching from the French Foreign Legionnaire to the Private Military Contractors of today.

Many Irishmen have left the country to fight for England's enemies, hoping eventually to return to Ireland and throw off the shackles of foreign rule. Following the Irish defeat at the Battle of Kinsale in 1602, many soldiers joined the service of the King of Spain, the principal Catholic monarch in Europe. While many fought for their principles, there were others for whom the prospect of secure employment with regular pay and food was the goal. Adventure and the excitement of military life also attracted many who believed that a new life awaited them where they could learn a new language and raise a family in a new country while retaining their Irish roots.

Perhaps one of the most well-known groups of mercenary soldiers is the Wild Geese. This title refers to the departure of an Irish Jacobite army under the command of Patrick Sarsfield from Ireland to France in 1691. During the Williamite War (1688-1691), Ireland became a battleground for King William and King James and thousands of soldiers under their commands. King Louis XIV gave

military and financial aid to the Irish Jacobites in return for military assistance against the Dutch. While other soldiers left Ireland and formed five regiments under the command of Justin McCarthy, this new Irish Brigade were to see action in Europe. Thousands of Irish soldiers, having migrated to France formed the Irish Brigade (1688-1791) within the French army. However, in 1691, Patrick Sarsfield surrendered his army at the Treaty of Limerick. He was permitted to leave Ireland for service within the French Army. His force consisted of 14,000 soldiers and 10,000 'camp followers'. It was this exodus that became popularly known as 'The Flight of the Wild Geese'.

On May 11th, 1745 the French army numbering an estimated 70,000 men under King Louis 15th, met Maria Theresa's allied army of 50,000 men between the town of Fontenoy and Barry Wood. The French commander, Marshal Maurice de Saxe, ordered half of his forces including the Irish Brigade, to remain in reserve at Barry Wood, just north of the battlefield. The allied forces under the

a planned invasion of Ireland was cancelled, the Irish Brigade within the French army ceased to exist as a separate entity and were merged with a number of regiments of Swiss troops and then integrated into the line infantry of the French army that later fought in Spain. This prompted many Irish troops to leave and seek their fortune elsewhere. Irish soldiers found employment in the armies of Italy, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Sweden and Poland.

With the relaxation of the penal laws in Ireland in the late 18th century, the British government began recruiting Irish Catholics into the British army. This gave rise to a number of Irish regiments in the British army such as the Connaught Rangers, the Dublin Fusiliers and the Leinster regiment to name but a few.

While many chose to join the British army, others still sought adventure and excitement in the many armed conflicts that were erupting throughout the world. However, as the 20th century dawned, books and film would fuel the imagination of many who



Painting 'The Battle of Fontenoy, 11th May 1745' by Horace Vernet.

command of Duke Cumberland attacked and almost broke through the French lines but they were beaten back by a charge led by the Irish Brigade, giving victory to the French.

In the centuries that followed, the title of the 'Wild Geese' was not only to be used for Sarsfield's Army but it was to be used for any group of soldiers with similar aims that left Ireland for service in the armies of several countries, not just France. Formed into their own regiments and units, they fought alongside regular troops in a number of battles.

In 1803 French leader Napoleon Bonaparte created an Irish Legion, comprised of Irish exiles given commissions in the French army. When

sought to become soldiers of fortune.

Look out for part two 'The Dogs of War' which will be in July's issue. ■



Painting 'Retreat of the ten thousand, at the Battle of Cunaxa' by Jean Adrien Guignet.

THE GPMG

The Old Reliable

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

On Saturday 27th April 2019, the sounds of the General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMG) were to be heard firing on the Kilbride Military Camp Range, as the Dublin based 7 Inf Bn C Company (RDF) conducted range practices and qualifications for NCOs and Privates on the Steyr rifle, USP pistol and the 7.62mm General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG).

For 10 of the Company's 2-star privates, this Range was their initial firing of table 9, the table for first time firers of the GPMG, they would have to achieve a passable score, a prerequisite for their upgrading to 3 star private.

For most RDF infantry soldiers, getting to the point of actually firing the GPMG takes place about 1 year into their Defence Force careers. The GPMG is the second DF weapon they must be qualified on, the Steyr rifle first.



As infantry soldiers it is an essential requirement as the machine gun is a section level weapon, and each soldier in the infantry section must be able to use the weapon as efficiently as their own personal rifle.

Once qualified on the GPMG, the RDF soldier will afterwards receive regular continuation training with the machine gun, and will fire and qualify on it at the very least on a bi-annual basis. This is essential, because as already stated, the GPMG is a section level weapon, and as such will be used on all RDF tactical training and also on all PDF exercises RDF members are involved in.

The GPMG itself has been in service for over 50 years, it is a widely used weapon, in service with over 80 armed

Then the current conflict in Afghanistan broke out in the mid 2000s, with many NATO armies taking some part in this conflict. This conflict would be a light infantry ground war, mostly platoon and company level. Much of this infantry fighting turned out to be a longer range than expected, between 600 and 800 meters, and sometimes much further. 5.56mm calibre weapons, including the machine guns, struggled to reach the enemy positions, never mind 'win the fire fight'.

This was where the GPMG began to return to favour; it was quickly retrieved from various stores and re-issued alongside the 5.56mm machine guns. Soldiers in the field favoured it for combat because of two main principles - it



forces in the world, many of which make their own locally built versions - to date over 200,000 gun units have been constructed. The FN Herstal Company in Belgium manufactures the version used by the Defence Forces.

As the C Company RDF soldiers may have noticed while firing the GPMG on the range, it is a sturdy weapon, robustly built, capable of absorbing rough use for long periods without maintenance, other than changing the barrel.

For the infantry the GPMG is used in the smallest military unit - the section, where its main purpose in combat is to suppress the enemy and 'win the fire fight'. Overall the GPMG is arguably the best weapon of its class in the world.

However, its main drawbacks would include its calibre - with its 7.62mm ammunition not been compatible with the sections 5.56mm rifles. Its weight sometimes not good for carrying on long periods, and the belts in which it is fed, can sometimes sag, preventing quick operation.

During the 1990s these issues were deemed important enough to be addressed by many armies, some of which converted their infantry platoon weapons to various versions of 5.56mm Light Machine Guns (LMGs). These weapons were lighter to carry than the GPMG, were compatible with their rifle ammunition, and were magazine fed - so erasing the problem of sagging ammunition belts.

The 7.62mm calibre GPMG seemed to be becoming of a begone age, just like the old .303 weapons which were once in worldwide use.

was reliable and robust in combat conditions, and more importantly it had further range, able to hit targets beyond the range of the 5.56mm weapons.

The GPMG has been in service for 50 years now, and will still be in service somewhere in another 50 years time, it is a genuine "Old Reliable". ■

TECH INFORMATION

Name:	FN MAG GPMG
Manufacturer:	FN Herstal, Belgium
Entered service:	1964
Calibre:	7.62mm
Weight:	10.9Kg
Length:	1,260mm
Range:	1,800m
Sight:	Rear Ramp Type
Mode of Fire:	Automatic Fire
Ammunition Feed:	50 Round Belt
Rate of Fire:	650-1,000 Rounds/Minute

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You cannot become a platelet donor if:

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- IBTS, National Blood Centre, James's Street, Dublin 8
- IBTS, Munster Regional Transfusion centre, St Finbarr's Hospital, Douglas Road, Cork

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- Another school day
- Another summer day
- Another laugh
- Another chance



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- You can register your interest on www.giveblood.ie
- Text PLATELET to 53377 (to receive platelet donation information)
 - Fill in the platelet application form (free post)
- Call to book an assessment - Cork 021 4807429, Dublin 01 4322833

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THURSDAY 13 JUNE: NEWBRIDGE LIBRARY
18:45pm Reception
19:15pm *Unsettled Landscapes: Ancestry*, Mick Tierney
19:55pm *Technological Advances in the First World War*, Liam Kavanagh
20:45pm *Kildare and the Irish War of Independence*, Mick Murphy

FRIDAY 14 JUNE: RIVERBANK ARTS CENTRE, NEWBRIDGE
18:00pm Reception
19:00pm *Flowers of Ireland: The Quakers*
20:00pm *The Battle of the Boyne*, a panel discussion with Irish veterans, facilitated by Sgt. Wayne FitzGerald, Editor of *An Ceannas*

SATURDAY 15 JUNE: RIVERBANK ARTS CENTRE, NEWBRIDGE
9:00am - 10:00pm Full day of presentations from noted historians Dr. Myles Duggan, Dr. Brian O'Donnell, Dr. Liam Lacey, Dr. Eoin, Dr. T. John Dwyer and Dr. Mary McAuliffe

Topics: The Battle of Kinsale; Dorothy Macauley, Irish Novelist in WWII; IRA Border Campaign 1956; Margaret Kennedy; The Irish at the Battle of Little Big Horn

1919 REVISITED

SATURDAY 28 SEPTEMBER: MCAULEY PLACE, SALLINS RD., NAAS
9:00am - 11:00pm Inauguration of presentations and debate with James Lavelle, TD, and historians Dr. David McGillich, Dr. Gillo, James Dunne and Maria Corrigan

In association with the Friends of John Devine

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Áine Carroll, CCPC's Director of Communications and Policy

CCPC's Financial Capability and Well-being in Ireland in 2018

Financial Capability and Well-being in Ireland in 2018



We talk a lot about the importance of looking after our physical and mental well-being. What is less talked about is how to improve your financial well-being. Regardless of your income, everyone has to make decisions on a daily basis on how to manage their money. It is easy to fall into a rut of living for pay-day or sometimes using your credit card to bridge the gap in between. The decisions we make are influenced by our financial capability and the impact of those decisions is seen in our financial well-being.

Last year, we commissioned Ireland's first report on financial well-being and the results were very interesting. We found that the vast majority of people are doing fine and meeting their current financial commitments. However, we found that just over half (52%) of people we surveyed have little resilience against financial shocks such as; sickness, redundancies, retirement or unexpected financial costs.

Financial well-being is not about being rich, rather it is about controlling your day to day spending so that you have savings to put aside. Life is inherently unpredictable and so it is important to plan for those rainy days as well as your retirement days.

What can you do to improve your financial well-being?

Financial well-being is influenced by a combination of the money you have, how you use and manage that money and your inclination to save. Improving your financial well-being doesn't have to mean drastic steps and limiting yourself to a stringent budget. You need to be able to live so you have to be realistic and you will be surprised how a few small changes can make all the difference.

1. Clear your debts

The first step we suggest is getting on top of any outstanding debt that you have. Interest rates on credit cards and personal loans are considerably higher than the interest you will earn on savings. Ideally if you have outstanding debts, you should focus your efforts on paying down those first. This may mean using a little or all of your savings. But the short term pain will pay off and before you know it you will be back to saving.

If you haven't already, set up a monthly standing order or direct debit for the same date that you get paid. Along with helping you

avoid late payments, which can affect your credit rating, this will allow you to budget how much you have to spend for the rest of the month. Avoid if you can paying the minimum payment.

2. Get the best rate

Make sure you are getting the best rates for mortgages, savings, credit cards and current accounts. This might sound like a lot of work, but our financial comparison tools on www.ccpc.ie do the homework for you. There are savings to be made by shopping around for financial products.

3. Become an active saver

Taking a little time to look at how you spend your money and where you can possibly make changes will help you work out how much you can afford to put away on a weekly or monthly basis. Once you know where you are you can work out where you want to go and set your financial goals. Having reviewed your finances you may be surprised at how much extra money you have left over. Choosing to put your money into a savings account is a good way to set aside money but make sure to find out about the terms and conditions you are signing up to. There is a regular savings comparison tool on our website that shows you the various savings accounts available and the interest rates on offer. Finally, building up your savings, is important, but keep an eye that you are not paying into a savings account whilst using your credit card. ■

More information on financial wellbeing and the tools available can be found at www.ccpc.ie.



• ORDNANCE CORPS ARTICLE SERIES •

How Your Equipment Works: The Ballistics of Tracer

REPORT & PHOTOS BY CAPTAIN ORDNANCE SCHOOL, DFTC

The Steyr Mod 14 rifle fires 5.56 x 45 mm ammunition. The meaning of 5.56 x 45 mm is not as obvious as it may seem. 45 mm refers to the length of the cartridge case – not the bullet. 5.56 mm refers, not to the ammunition, but to the barrel through which it's fired! You may recall that the separation between a rifle barrel's 'lands' defines the calibre – in this case 5.56 mm.



● **Figure 1:** 5.56 x 45 mm "SS109" Ball Ammunition.

For a bullet to be fired at speed, it needs to 'obturate' in the barrel. Simply put, propellant gases must not escape the barrel before the bullet. Remember that the gases

are what push the bullet down the barrel and towards the target. (Mortar ammunition has a plastic 'o-ring' to achieve this.) Small-arms achieve obturation by squashing the bullet into the barrel. Think about this! Before firing, the bullet's wider than the rifling (at approximately 5.69 mm)! During firing, the projectile is squashed, becoming slightly longer and slimmer as it travels down the barrel.



● **Figure 2:** Side profile of SS109 Ball Ammunition. Note the cannellure used to crimp the cartridge case to the Bullet.

Standard "ball" ammunition has a lead body with a copper outer lining (known as a jacket). The jacket covers all

but the base of the bullet – as seen in Figure 3. SS109 Bullet Base and Pre-Fire Diameter. The un-jacketed base is very important since it allows for the bullet to change shape when engaging in the rifling. This is also where the pyrotechnic composition is placed for tracer ammunition.



● **Figure 3:** SS109 Bullet Base and Pre-Fire Diameter. Note the exposed core.

The problem with ball ammunition is that it's hard to see the 'fall of shot'. Hence, we modify the ball bullet to create tracer ammunition. So

how does tracer work? Tracer ammunition uses a pyrotechnic mix in the base of the bullet (where there is no jacket) to emit light. In fact, two different pyrotechnics are used. The first pyrotechnic composition burns 'dark' to protect

the user's eyesight. It then ignites the primary tracer mix mid-flight. Therefore, tracer light is best viewed from directly behind it.

So now that you understand how tracer ammunition works, let's discuss the ballistics of tracer. What does 'ballistics' even mean? It's a broad term, which encompasses everything experienced by ammunition from being fired, to when it impacts a target. It's broken into four groups: internal; intermediate; external and terminal. Soldiers are interested in ballistics – whether they realise it or not! The range is described by internal, intermediate and external ballistics. The effects on target are described by terminal ballistics. So then, what are the ballistics of tracer?

Preferably, ball and tracer ammunition should perform identically. Tracer ammunition is longer – to fit the pyrotechnic composition. This alters the ballistics. Recall that the pyrotechnic mix burns away during flight. Hence, the mass/weight of tracer bullets change! This further complicates the ballistics. Engineers design tracer ammunition to ballistically-match the flight of ball ammunition to a certain point. After this point the trajectories diverge. Also, once the pyrotechnic mix has burned-out, the fall-of-shot is difficult to see.

Engineers try to balance the point of tracer-burnout with that of ballistic-matching. Soldiers are interested in the ballistics of tracer, up until it deviates from the trajectory of ball ammunition. Since this can't be seen, the point of tracer-burnout is used as the planning range. For those being fired at however, ball and tracer ammunition are indistinguishable!

● **Learn more:** Ammunition Examiners are responsible for the safe-storage, inspection and destruction of all 'natures' of service-ammunition. Armourers and Armament Artificers are responsible for the inspection and repair of all firearms. Ordnance Corps' technicians have a wealth of knowledge and are always happy to discuss their trades!

● **Further reading:**

Bailey, A. and Murray, S. G., (1989), *Explosives, Propellants & Pyrotechnics*, Volume 2, Shrivenham: Brassey's.
Courtney-Green, P. R., (1991), *Ammunition for the Land Battle*, Volume 4, Shrivenham: Brassey's.
Ordnance Corps (2016), *Ballistics Precipis*, DFTC, Defence Forces.



¹Named after the Minie Ball projectile.

THE BATTLE of the PLATOONS

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD PHOTOS BY SGT MICK BURKE

On the 10th April the Battle of the Platoons 2019 took place in the Defence Forces Physical Education School (DFPES), DFTC. The event was run by the students of the Defence Forces Physical Training Instructors (PTI) course being conducted in the DFPES and in aid of Saint Gabriel's Ward, Temple Street Hospital and the Gavin Glynn Foundation. Saint Gabriel's Ward specialises in neurosurgery and craniofacial surgery and the care for patients with both general surgical and medical conditions. The Gavin Glynn Foundation was created to help other children and their families battling cancer and who need to travel overseas for treatment.

Battle of the Platoons is a ten-person team competition with six events of physical fitness.

The team can only move onto the next event once they have fully completed by all the personnel on the team. There would be three teams competing against each other from different barracks.

Event 1 - Power Event: with 300 Pull Ups, 600 Push Ups and 600 Air Squats required to complete.

Event 2 - Bike Event: All ten personnel had to complete 5km on five spin bikes allotted to each team. Once the first five members completed their 5km they changed over to allow the other five team members complete their 5km. Teams completed 50km in total before they could move onto the next event.

Event 3 - Rowing Event: The full team had to complete a kilometre on the rowing machine, so each team completed 10km in total before they moved onto event 4.

Event 4 - Pool Run: The teams had to complete a 40m run in the pool in shorts and t-shirts. On completion it was down to the assault course.

Event 5 - Running Track: The complete team had to do 4 laps of the running track in DPM uniform, sport shoes and helmets together as a team before they could move onto the next event.

Event 6 - Obstacle Course: The final event saw all ten team members compete all ten obstacles on the course. Once all ten team members had completed the course they made their way to the finish line.

The results of the Battle of the Platoons: 1st place ARW CTC Team (1hr 28mins), in 2nd place 3 Inf Bn (1hr 34mins), the Air Corps (1hr 41mins) came in 3rd place and the 1 ACS took 4th place.

WELL DONE TO ALL THOSE WHO TOOK PART AND TO SGT TOMMY SHEAHAN, THE INSTRUCTORS AND PTI STUDENTS IN THE DFPES ON THEIR GREAT CHARITABLE WORK. ■

€3,800 was raised for Saint Gabriel's Ward, Temple Street Hospital and the Gavin Glynn Foundation. The money was raised from fundraising in the Whitewater Shopping Centre, Newbridge and from the Battle of the Platoons.



Sgt Tommy Sheahan donated €1,300 to Haemophilia Children's Research which he raised while serving in Lebanon in 2018. Pictured is Sgt Tommy Sheahan and his wife Hazel and brother Garry and family, two of the boys have haemophilia.



Comdt Murtagh Brennan, OC DFPES presents the Dan O'Connell Perpetual Trophy to Sgt Tommy Sheahan on behalf of the ARW CTC team. The Dan O'Connell Perpetual Trophy, plaques, best soldier and winning teams' trophies are all kindly sponsored by Dan's wife Carmel Hayden.



Cpl Mikey Kelly received the 'Best Student' award on the PTI Course.

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2 INFANTRY BATTALION



BY PTE TERRENCE O'REILLY,
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The original 2 Infantry Battalion was raised in Roscrea in February 1923 and following the end of the Irish Civil War, was transferred to Finner Camp and disbanded in May 1925. Six months later, another 2 Infantry Battalion was raised and stationed in Dublin from 1927.

During the Emergency Years, the battalion was headquartered in the RDS as part of the 2 Infantry Brigade. In 1942 it participated in the massive Blackwater Exercise which involved a 150-mile march across the country, a month of divisional level exercises in County Cork and then a march back to Dublin.

By the 1950s, the battalion was based in Cathal Brugha Barracks in Portobello. It marched again to the Blackwater in 1956 as part of Exercise Youghal and from 1957 carried out border security patrols in the face of the IRA 'border campaign', based out of Dundalk Barracks and Cavan.

Members of the battalion served throughout the deployment to the Congo from 1960-1964, serving largely with A Company. Particularly notable was the assault on 'The Tunnel' on December 1961, when A Company went into action shortly after deploying in Elizabethville. Pte Andrew Wickham (25) of Ballyfermot was platoon radioman and was shadowing his platoon commander when both were killed in action. Of the 25 Distinguished Service Medals (DSMs) awarded to members of 36th Battalion, four were awarded to members of 2 Infantry Battalion (Lt JJ Norton, Lt PJ Feeley, Cpl D Mannix and Pte J Murray).

In June 1971, another overseas fatality occurred when Pte Brendan Cummins died while serving with UNFICYP.

Members of the battalion served throughout the deployment with UNIFIL from 1978-2001, again serving largely with A Company. Cpl Gregory Morrow and Pte Thomas Murphy died under particularly tragic circumstances at Tibnin Bridge on 27th October 1982.

Despite particularly heavy ATCP and overseas commitments,

the battalion continued to hone conventional infantry skills, for example its participation in Exercise Shannon in 1983.

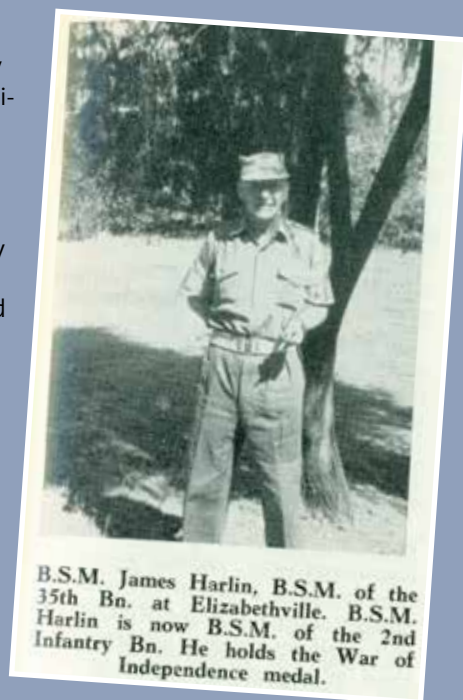
In the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Corporal (and subsequently promoted Sergeant) Michael Carruth won the Gold Medal in Welterweight Class, Ireland's first Gold Medal for Boxing.

In late 2003, the 27 Infantry Group drawn largely from the 2 Infantry Battalion was deployed to Kosovo. In March 2004, ethnic violence exploded throughout the region leaving 19 people dead, 600 injured and thousands displaced.

Throughout this period, the 27 Infantry Group remained on the frontline quelling the disturbances in a manner that received widespread acclaim, from the international media in particular.

2 Infantry Battalion was amalgamated with the 5 Infantry Battalion as part of the Defence Forces reorganisation of 2012 and remained in Cathal Brugha Bks as the newly titled 7 Infantry Battalion.

The 2 Infantry Battalion Association for veterans was formed shortly after the 2012 reorganisation. ■



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Napoleon's Blackguards

BY STEPHEN MCGARRY

The British Army's epic fighting retreat across Spain in 1808 during The Napoleonic Wars provides the inspiration for Stephen McGarry's debut novel, *Napoleon's Blackguards*.

The Peninsular War, Battle of Corunna, Galicia, Northern Spain, January 1809. The French have been doggedly pursuing a retreating British Army across Northern Spain for three weeks. The British have fought a desperate rearguard action at great cost and have finally made it to the Spanish coastal town of Corunna and begin loading up their cavalry onto their transport ships to ferry them safely back to England. But there is not enough time to load up the infantry, and they are forced to make a stand and fight the French with their backs to the sea...

'The French divisions finally arrived and an order of battle was hastily drawn up. Captain James Ryan, Voltigeur Company, 2nd battalion, Irish Legion and his Irish voltigeurs waited in front of the column as the order to advance was sounded. A raucous roar rose as the French assault columns stalked out, followed by platoons of drummers vigorously beating out the pas de charge. Ryan listened as the men waited for the pause between the drum rolls to unleash their war cry, 'Vive l'Empereur!' He smiled as he chimed in with them.

He knew that from four-hundred yards away, the British could now make out the French blue uniforms, the outlines of the men's shakos and the battle standards of their glistening golden Eagles hoisted high in the sun. 'En avant! En avant!' the French officers yelled. 'Tuez! Tuez!'—'Forward! Forward! Kill! Kill!' Ryan heard Corporal McGowan, skirmishing beside him, singing 'Whiskey in the Jar'. Ryan sang along with him before he ran for cover to reload.

Ryan had just shot another British officer when he spotted a highland regiment advancing. He recognised their uniforms and

their tam o' shanters as the Black Watch regiment as he had fought against them in Ireland. The Scottish Highlanders streamed out with bagpipes skirling. The sergeants thumped the men forwards, cursing in Gaelic, as pipers strained out the Jacobite lament; 'Johnny Cope, are ye waking yet?' A flame-

haired Highlander hadn't seen Ryan when a ball lodged into his chest and an ensign spun around violently from the force of Ryan's musket ball hitting him in the shoulder. The wounded ensign cursed back loudly in Gaelic 'Mac diolain!' which Ryan knew to mean 'son of a bastard.'

Suddenly, he heard shouts of joy coming from the French behind him and breathed a sigh of relief when he saw the British retreating. He looked around, paused, and listened and took out his lucky charm, and vigorously rubbed the bog oak amulet for comfort. He couldn't see any of his men. He rubbed his eyes and peered through the smoke. The British were counter-attacking! He saw what looked like a battalion of redcoats running with fixed bayonets towards him, he momentarily froze in horror. As he reached nervously for a cartridge from his hip bag, he cursed as his clay pipe fell and snapped.

'Huzza! Huzza!' the red-coats shouted. The war cry buzzed in Ryan's ear and he turned and saw the French troops behind him retreat....'

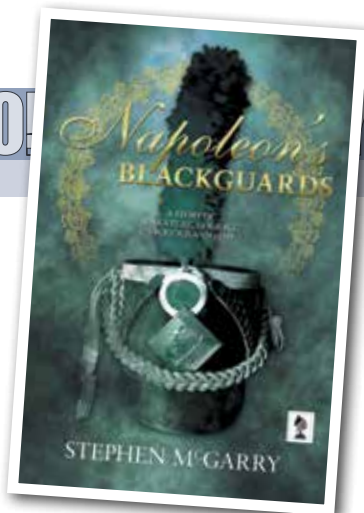
The above passage is an extract from *Napoleon's Blackguards*, an action-filled adventure story about an élite unit of Napoleon's Irish Legion campaigning in Northern Spain. It is set along the ancient pilgrimage route of the *Camino de Compostela* during The Peninsular War; this was a part of the Napoleonic Wars, which was fought for control of the Iberian Peninsula.

The Peninsular War began when Napoleon invaded Portugal and sent his Grand Army through Spain, but the Spaniards soon learned that Napoleon had plans to invade Spain herself. This sparked the Spanish War of Independence against the hated invader, while in England, it became known as The Peninsular War.

In 1808, the British Expeditionary Force landed in Portugal to help remove Napoleon's grip on the Iberian Peninsula. A 30,000 strong British Army, commanded by Sir John Moore, marched through Spain, intending to make battle in the north of the country with the French II Army Corps under Marshal Soult. The British were confident of victory, their light cavalry had recently defeated several squadrons of French cavalry at Sahagún and their blood was up and they were ready for a fight.

However, the situation soon changed dramatically for the British. Moore was close to making battle with Soult, when Spanish guerrillas supplied him with critical intelligence on the enemy's movements. He was told that a larger French army under the personal command of Emperor Napoleon was coming up from Madrid, while Soult's army was advancing to his north. Moore feared that he would be caught in a pincer movement and decided to retreat.

So began the British 250-mile harrowing retreat across Spain, over mountains and narrow paths in the depths of winter. The 2nd Irish battalion of Napoleon's Irish Legion were garrisoning the town of Pamplona at the time and were ordered to join the race to catch



Irish Legion flag reverse

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up with the British before they escaped. Many Irishmen had fought against Moore when he had served in Ireland in '98 and were eager to settle the score - this time on equal terms. Alas, Moore's retreat was so fast, that the Irish battalion were ordered to give up the chase and halt at nearby Burgos. One can almost taste Irish frustration at being unable to engage the old enemy.

While the British continued their force march and fought a desperate rearguard action back to the coast, discipline soon broke down. The British army suffered terribly. Many were lost due to the cold and to the snow, or were cut down by French cavalry who had pursued them, biting at their heels, along the march. After three weeks of misery, the remnants of the British army trundled into the coastal town of Corunna, in Galicia, where the Royal Navy were to ship them back to England.

Napoleon's Blackguards follows the events of Moore's epic Dunkirk-style retreat to the coast over 200 years ago. Captain James Ryan, a veteran of the 1798 Irish Rebellion and his élite Irish

roads and paths to Corunna.

Background to the Irish Legion of Napoleon: After a brief period of peace in the Treaty of Amiens, France was again at war with Britain. In 1803, following lobbying by Irish generals in the French Army, Napoleon created a light infantry battalion called *La Légion Irlandaise* to lead an anticipated invasion of Ireland. They comprised Irishmen who had fled the 1798 Irish Rebellion and Irishmen, or sons of Irishmen, who had served in the Irish Brigade of France under the ancien régime. The Irish light infantry unit was still, at this time, an under-strength battalion and was essentially an officers' unit as it was expected that when they landed in Ireland a local raised cadre would swell their ranks.

However, following defeat by a combined Franco-Spanish fleet by the British at Trafalgar in 1805, the anticipated invasion of Ireland was taken off the table. These Irishmen were, of course, too valuable to be wasted, and instead they joined the French army on campaign in the Low Countries, Germany and Spain. The number



Map of Battle of Corunna



The Peninsular War Regions

voltigeurs pursue the British through the snow and mountains and finally make battle with him at Corunna. Ryan is obsessed in his quest in catching up with an albino, a Captain Darkford in the 4th Light Dragoons who murdered Ryan's family back home in Ireland. He is suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (this medical condition wasn't recognised as such until later on in the century). He doesn't understand why he is having night sweats and why his arms are shaking. He has seen too much horror to come out unscratched. Before Ryan can catch up his nemesis, he has to fight duels, is captured and brutally tortured by Spanish guerrillas and has to lead a mission to retrieve the Irish battalion's cherished battle-standard eagle. Ryan's quest in the pursuit of the evil Darkford continues all the way along the difficult snow filled mountain

of Irishmen in the ranks soon dwindled due to battle losses, desertions or disease and their ranks were filled with many different nationalities, including many Poles, but they were still led by a tough, hard fighting Irish core. At its peak, the Irish Regiment, as it became to be called, comprised four battalions, with a regiment headquarters, numbering 2,000 men. The Irish Regiment was disbanded after Napoleon went into exile after Waterloo, drawing to a close a 125-year tradition of Irish service in France.

Stephen McGarry is a former member of the Naval Service Reserve (formerly *An Slua Muiri*), Cathal Brugha Bks, Dublin. *Napoleon's Blackguards* is reviewed on page 37. ■



Stephen McGarry

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CISM ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIP



BY COMDT MAEVE O'GRADY, AIR CORPS HQ

The Netherlands Armed Forces hosted the Regional CISM Orienteering Championship in Harskamp from 8th to 11th April. Athletes from the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Slovenia, Sweden and Ireland competed.

The format of the competition involved two races over two days with the winner decided by total time. The Irish team consisted of Col Brendan Delaney (DFTC, Team Coach/ Chief d Mission), Cpl Colm Hill (DFHQ) and Pte Josh O'Sullivan AR (1 Field CIS Res).

The first race was held at Leusderheide and the course tested athletes across the full spectrum of navigational skills and physical ability. The terrain included thick forest, open ground with thigh deep heather, and wide loose sandy tracks. Maintaining speed across the heavy terrain tested physical fitness to the limit. After the event, it came as a welcome surprise to see two Irish in the top 5 with Cpl Hill finishing 3rd and Pte O'Sullivan finishing 5th.

The second day was held at Beekhuizerzand. The start list for the second day was a reverse chasing start, with the leading athlete overnight starting last with the slowest athlete starting first. This ensures that there is pressure on all athletes not to be caught and to do the catching to move up the results board. This format also adds to the atmosphere at the arena where, in theory, each athlete that arrives will have gone faster. The terrain was different to the first day. The runnability was greatly increased. There was no heather to contend with, only a large swath of open sand. The hills and contour detail were smaller and less defined. This resulted in the pace and navigational challenges going up, added to the pressure of knowing there is the slim chance of a CISM Medal.

The motivation was high in the Irish camp and could be seen by Cpl Hill catching his 2-minute man by the first control. This set the tone for the days racing. Fast paced and on the edge both physically and technical with a fine balance between risk versus reward, trying to run a straighter line in the terrain with the possibility of an error or running around on the track system and adding more distance that would only greater increase fatigue.

At the end of the days racing, Cpl Hill secured his 3rd position while Pte O'Sullivan maintained his 5th place by 11 seconds from a hard charging member of the Belgian team. ■



Cpl Colm Hill and Pte Josh O'Sullivan



UNIFIL INTER CONTINGENT LADIES FIVE-A-SIDE SOCCER BLITZ

BY SGWN BRONAC KELLY, 2 CIS COY

On Friday 26th May 2019, 113th Inf Bn IRISHBATT organised and hosted the UNIFIL Inter Contingent Ladies Five-A-Side Soccer Blitz in UNP 2-45. All battalion's in Sector West, along with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) were invited to take part. On the day teams from Malbatt, Ghanbatt, the Force Commanders Reserve (FCR) and Irishbatt participated in the blitz. There were six group stage games, where each contingent played against each other. Irishbatt played each of the other contingents, won all three group games, scored ten goals and conceded none.

The first semi-final saw Irishbatt play Malbatt, but the Irish girls were much too strong for their opponent's and won out 4-0. The second semi-final saw The FCR play Ghanbatt, which was a much tighter affair and went right down to the wire, with Ghanbatt emerging as eventual winners.

The final was a very hard fought contest, and a much tighter game for the Irish girls than they had against the same opponents in the group stage. Ghanbatt, along with their Army of supporters and their brass band were really up for the contest. Irishbatt took the lead half way through the first half through a brilliant strike from Cpl Jen Kingston (1 Bde Tpt Coy). After this, the Irish girls controlled the game at the back through Pte Ciamh Grays (Mil Col) organisational skill, developed, no doubt, through her experience with Wexford Youths, and roving breaks orchestrated by Cpl Shelley Kehoe (DFHQ) and Pte Aisling Byrne (Ord Sec, DFTC).

The Irish goalkeeper on the day was Sgt Lorraine Walsh (No 1 Ops Wing), who not alone frightened the opposition with her vocal chords but also her own team mates into not conceding any goals. Irishbatt won the final 1-0, which was observed by OC 113th Inf Bn, Lt Col Caimin Keogh and a large crowd from all four contingents. Lt Col Keogh made presentations to all participating contingents and was very pleased to present the winning trophy to Irishbatt Capt Pte Ciamh Gray. The top goal scorer for the competition was Cpl Shelley Kehoe with six goals. The Irish squad all contributed to the winning of this event and



a brilliant day was had by all.

The squad consisted of ten members: Capt Aine Gilmore, Lt Sinead Ni Bhrian, Sgt Lorraine

Walsh, Cpl Shelley

Kehoe, Cpl Jen Kingston, Cpl Ashleen Keady, Pte Ciamh Gray, Sgwn Bronac Kelly, Pte Aisling Byrne and Pte Julie O'Brien. ■



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MILITARY HISTORY LECTURES JUNE 2019

SUNDAY 9TH JUNE, AT 2PM - Dr. Marie Bourke will present her lecture 'Irish Artists and the Great War 1914-1918' in the Museum of Country Life, Turlough Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo. All welcome - free but booking required via email: educationtph@museum.ie or call 094-9031751.

THURSDAY 13TH JUNE, AT 6.30PM - Mike Taylor will present his lecture 'Beyond the Somme: Brig Gen Frank Crozier and the Welsh Bantam Brigade' to the Antrim and Down Branch Western Front Association in PRONI, 2 Titanic Boulevard, Titanic Quarter, Belfast. All welcome.

13TH - 15TH JUNE, 3RD IRISH MILITARY SEMINAR - Co. Kildare and the War of Independence will feature as part of the 3rd Irish Military Seminar to be held in Riverbank Arts Centre, Main Street, Newbridge. Talks include: Jadotville with Leo Quinlan; The Battle of At Tiri, a panel discussion hosted by Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald and Irish UN veterans; Irish Neutrality in WWII; IRA Border Campaign 1956; Margaret Skinnider and the Easter Rising; The Irish at the Battle of Little Big Horn. - See advert on page 24.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION

Saturday 8th June, at 11am in St Paul's Church, Glenageary, Co Dublin.

This year marks the 75th year since D-Day. Irish men and women volunteered and took part, and many have died either during the conflict or since - The Dun Laoghaire Branch of The Royal British Legion is holding an Ecumenical Service of Commemoration in St Paul's Church, Glenageary, to celebrate the memory of the Irish men and women who served in the Allied Forces during World War II and that of all who served their countries in WWII, but particularly, to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings. Interested in attending please contact Hon Sec RBL Dun Laoghaire Branch dunlaoghaire.secretary@rbl.community ASAP to reserve a place or call the Centre: 1800 992294 (Free from ROI)

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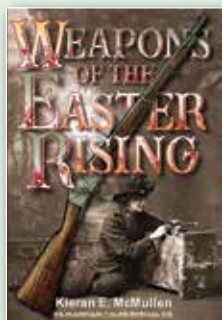


BOOKSBOOKS

WEAPONS OF THE EASTER RISING

Author: Kieran McMullen
Publisher: Kilmainham Tales Teo
 (September 2018) <https://kilmainhamtales.ie>
ISBN: 978-1-908056-21-4
Pages: 128
Price: €12.50 + P&P

Kilmainham Tales have released a fabulous little gem in their special series with *Weapons of the Easter Rising* (#03) by retired US Army Lt Col Kieran McMullen. Kieran admits that he had this book on his table for quite a while, he is a weapons collector and firearms instructor and can trace an Irish relative back to the GPO in Easter 1916 – who better to write on this subject.



The book is well laid out with photographs and illustrations, the sections cover revolvers and pistols, long guns including the Mauser, Lee Enfield, Martini-Enfield, shotguns, machine guns, artillery, pikes, bayonets, swords, explosives, ammunition, including .303, .43 and an interesting piece on the Dum Dum controversy. The book is described as “*not claiming to be the definitive guide to every weapon used, this book – copiously illustrated with photographs and illustrations (many of the Author’s own collection of historic weapons) and written with the lay reader in mind – is the ideal introduction to this hitherto overlooked but vital aspect of the Easter Rising, 1916.*”

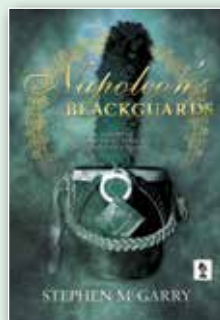
Kieran describes not only the weapons used by the rebellious Irishmen, but also those the British Army used in retaliation.

He has written many books since his retirement from the military after 21 years, he is a veteran of the Korean DMZ and Operation Desert Storm, he also served 14 years in law enforcement. He is also a trained shooting reconstructionist and firearms instructor, he has a BA in Irish History and an MA in Human Resources. He is the author of several books of fiction on Sherlock Holmes and his many mysteries. <https://kieranmcmullen.com> **WF**

NAPOLEON’S BLACKGUARDS

Author: Stephen McGarry
Publisher: Penmore Press LLC (April 2019)
www.penmorepress.com
ISBN: 978-1-946409-62-1
Pages: 342
Price: €16.80 PB, €4.95 eBook

Stephen McGarry’s debut novel *Napoleon’s Blackguards* builds on his previous work, *Irish Brigades Abroad: from the Wild Geese to the Napoleonic Wars* (September 2013), which was named as one of *The Irish Times* Best Books of 2014.



Napoleon’s Blackguards features Captain James Ryan, a veteran of the 1798 Irish Rebellion and his élite Irish *voltigeurs* who pursue the British troops through the snow and mountains to finally battle with them in Corunna. Ryan is obsessed in his quest in catching up with an albino Captain Darkford of the 4th Light Dragoons. Darkford had murdered Ryan’s family back home in Ireland.

Ryan is suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (the medical condition PTSD wasn’t recognised as such until later on in the century). He has seen too much horror to come out unscratched.

“*Before Ryan can catch up with his nemesis, he has to fight duels, is captured and brutally tortured by Spanish guerrillas and has to lead a mission to retrieve the Irish battalion’s cherished battle-standard eagle. Ryan’s quest in the pursuit of the evil Darkford continues all the way along the difficult snow filled mountain roads and paths to Corunna.*”

Read an exclusive extract in our history section on pages 30-31.

Stephen McGarry is a former member of the Naval Service Reserve (formerly *An Slua Muiri*), Cathal Brugha Bks, Dublin. He spent many years in Belgium where he explored the Continent’s links to Ireland. **WF**

BURNING ANGELS (WILL JAEGER 2)

Author: Bear Grylls
Publisher: Orion (May 2016)
ISBN: 978-1409156871
Pages: 416
Price: €4.50 ebook / €9.00 PB

We are all familiar with adventure survivalist and TV star Bear Grylls. Many wouldn’t know he has written over 22

books, including the international #1 bestselling autobiography *Mud, Sweat & Tears*. Among these are his hugely popular titles *Survival Guide for Life* and *True Grit*, a bestselling novel *Ghost Flight* and his *Mission Survival* fiction books, which have sold over 4 million copies in China alone.

Burning Angels follows on from Bear’s first fictional novel *Ghost Flight*, whose main protagonist Will Jaeger is still searching for his missing wife and son. Reeling from their first adventure in the amazon looking for secret Nazi cargo plane, the surviving team members reunite to search for their captured team members before going on another adventure.

This time it centres around a prehistoric corpse entombed within an Arctic glacier, a jungle island overrun by rabid primates and another plane hidden beneath a mountain, packed with a Nazi cargo of mind-blowing evil. This time out it’s Will Jaeger’s turn to be The Hunter. **WF**



NAME

KARL MCENEANEY

RANK

CORPORAL/VIDEOGRAPHER

UNIT

AUDIO VISUAL SCHOOL, INFO OFFICE,
PR BRANCH, DFHQBY SGT WAYNE
FITZGERALDMAIN PHOTO
BY ARMN JAMIE
BARRETT

Karl grew up in Dundalk and went to Ó Fiaich College secondary school in the town. He joined the Defence Forces in 1998 at 17 and did his recruit training with CTD East in Gormanston Camp before being posted to 27 Inf Bn in Monaghan, where he underwent a number of infantry weapons courses, including .5 HMG, 81mm mortar, and Panhard APC gunner.

After three busy years on the border Karl left the Defence Forces to travel, heading to Australia for over a year.

Returning to Ireland, Karl felt he had made a mistake leaving the Defence Forces and applied successfully to rejoin in May 2003, this time in Aiken Bks, Dundalk.

"I had to do my recruit and 3 training again" Karl says, "– it was tough, but enjoyable."*

"Then in 2004 I travelled on my first overseas mission, to Liberia, which was a culture shock! It really makes you appreciate what you have at home when you see the world as a peacekeeper."

On his return from overseas, Karl moved from Dundalk to Co Meath and started a family with wife Lorna. Looking for a transfer closer to his new home, Karl obtained a posting to the Records and Data Management section of 2 E Bde HQ in Cathal Brugha Bks.

"This was a big change, going from an infantry soldier to admin clerk, as I had no admin experience."

In 2008/09 Karl completed a Potential NCOs course, and was promoted into Manpower, 2 E Bde HQ. In 2010, Karl travelled overseas again, as section 2i/c with APC Coy, 102 Inf Bn, to Chad.

"This was the last battalion on this mission, so we were extra busy with the withdrawal. It was a great experience as an NCO."

On his return he was posted to the 2 E Bde HQ orderly room, where he completed the Orderly Room Cpl and the Orderly Room Sgt courses.

"As a special project with the Brigade Adjutant's office I worked on the sub files for the new promotion board system. I also instructed on an Orderly Room Sgts course."

After 11 years in 2 E Bde HQ,

Karl was ready for his next challenge and applied for a vacancy he saw advertised for a corporal videographer in the Audio Visual School, DFHQ.

"I had an interest in video and editing and this seemed to be a very interesting job. I was successful in the interview and was posted in April 2017. On the first day on the job I was filming in Áras an Uachtaráin!"

"I went straight onto a number of editing courses in Final Cut Pro X, Graphic Motion 5, and Intensive Colour Correction; all in Filmbase in Temple Bar, Dublin. I also completed an eight-week Introduction to Film Production course in Pulse College – which opens up the opportunity for a two-year diploma in Film Production starting in September 2019."

In just over two years Karl has filmed and edited over 40 videos for PR Branch. These are shared all over the DF social media channels, internally on IKON, and on www.military.ie. One of his high points was the video to commemorate Ireland's 60 years of continuous peacekeeping in June 2018. The video, which uses archive footage and President Kennedy's voiceover from his visit to Ireland in the early 1960s, was completed under the guidance of film editor Niall Campion of VFX, and is one of the Defence Force's most successful videos in recent years, with 105,000 views on social media, and was played for 80,000 spectators in Croke Park at halftime during the All-Ireland hurling final.

"Last year I produced a video for the Air Corps Trainee Technician Scheme that has over 208,000 views to date. This most popular video this year was in connection with the recent commissioning in the Curragh. It included footage of President Higgins signing the presidential scrolls in his private study."

"I'm very privileged to be working in PR Branch. We are very busy, but seeing your work being shared and published is a great reward. We also have another big project in the pipeline for this summer!" ■





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