



THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

AN COSANTÓIR

www.dfmagazine.ie

(ESTABLISHED 1940)

Price: €3.00 (Stg £2.70)



JUNE 2016

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LÉ JAMES JOYCE
FEBRUARY 2016

LÉ JAMES JOYCE

ISSN 0010-9460



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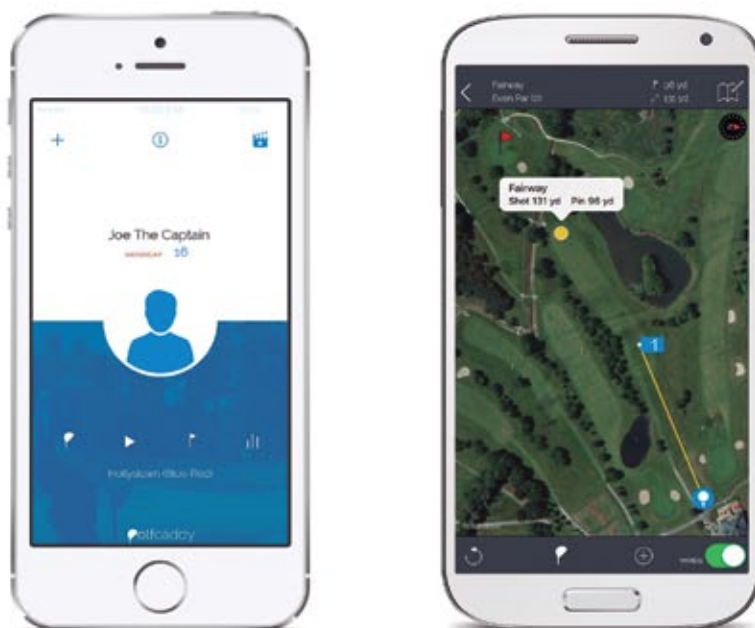
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12th June

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31st July

Westport Festival of Chamber Music

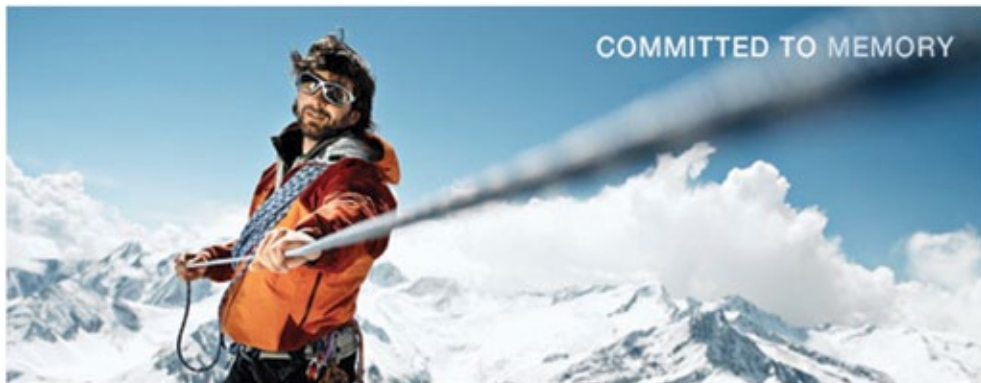
9 – 11th September

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Printer

Turner's Printing Co., Ltd
Earl Street, Longford, Ireland
Tel: +353 (0)43 3350500

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

© Published by Oic Public Relations Branch for the Defence Forces at DFHQ, Block 5, Ceant Bks, DFTC, Curragh Camp, Co Kildare, Ireland.
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Front Cover

Pictured is the brass bell on the LÉ James Joyce. Photo by A/B Davy Jones

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

Editorial

Hello and welcome to our June 2016 issue, we are halfway through the year and we still have many more stories to bring you over the coming months – if you have a story let us know.

This month's issue starts with the best 12 of your photos *On Parade*. *In Focus* looks at the opening of the *New Military Archives Building* in Cathal Brugha Bks, and in *A Day to Remember*, is a heartfelt story of 3-year-old child with a terminal illness visit to the Air Corps.

Veterans News is by Sgt Anthony Gallagher (retd) on the 2 Field Artillery Regiment Association's first day out for their annual shoot.

Our front cover story by Lt Cdr Martin Brett, OC LÉ James Joyce, *Enhancing Naval Co-operation* covers the recent Standing NATO Mine Counter Measures Group 1 (SNMCMG1) exercise. I recently met up with Defence Forces Veterans who will take on the Brecon Beacons in aid of the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind in Team Alpha Take on the SAS Challenge. Next up in *2 Bde Recruits*, Cpl Colin Delany, 2 Bde HQ followed the 80 recruits of the 58th and 59th Recruit Platoons over the last number of weeks to see how they progressed through their training.

In our centre-spread Cpl Lee Coyle covers the 53 Inf Gp UNIFIL on their *Mission Readiness Exercise* in the Glen of Imaal, which is an important part of overseas training.

For *Strategic Review*, Robert Tarrant looks at *Innovation Offset: Hardware, Software and the Future of Military Spending*. Our *In Reserve* feature is *New RDF Soldiers for 27 Inf Bn* by Lt Martin McCabe, RDF Training Officer, which looks at the latest RDF soldiers to make the grade as 2 Star Privates' in the 27 Inf Bn.

For *History*, Paul O'Brien covers the first of a number of articles on the Vietnam War, starting with *The Battle of Khe Sanh*. Our *Sports* feature The 'Fighting Micks' is by Capt SA McMichael, 1st Battalion Irish Guards and is on the first British Army regiment's Gaelic football club, playing under the name *Gardaí Éireannach*. For our *What I Do Now* feature we look at Defence Forces Veteran Declan Power, now a highly respected security and defence analyst as well as an author of many books, one of which is soon to be made into a major movie. We also have our other regular features *Gear Up*, *Noticeboard*, and *Reviews*.

Check out our competitions and results on pages 32 and 33.

Wayne Fitzgerald

Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald - Editor

Thank You For HELPING

Last month we asked you to help Peter Guerin identify an old photo he found at the back of a picture frame showing a wedding of a 2 E Bde officer between 1935 & 1950. With thanks to Col George Kerton (Retd) who replied: "He is the late Comdt John (Jack) O'Brien, born in 1925, and a member of 20th Cadet Class, commissioned in November 1948. He served in Depot Cav, 1 Armd Car Sqn and 2 Mtr Sqn, where he completed numerous escorts of honour. In 1958 he was one of the 50 Defence Forces officers who were selected to serve with the United Nations Military



Observer Group in Lebanon (UNMOGIL), Ireland's first ever peacekeepers. In September 1954 he married Margaret Lemass, a daughter of Seán Lemass (An Taoiseach 1959 – 66). Later in his career he was ADC to An Taoiseach Seán Lemass and he appears in many photographs taken during the visit of President John F. Kennedy to Ireland in June 1963. Comdt O'Brien retired in 1981 and the family lived in Ranelagh, Dublin. Sadly he passed away in 1999 and his wife, Margaret died five years later." We will now try and pass the photo along to the family.



BANNA STRAND REMEMBERED

Banna Rescue was involved in the logistical elements of the State's 1916 Commemoration to mark the role of Roger Casement, Robert Monteith and Daniel Bailey in the Easter Rising. They were honoured to host the Defence Forces General Staff at their Boathouse. Back Row (L/R): Brig Gen Philip Brennan, Brig Gen Peter O'Halloran, Maj Gen Kevin Cotter, Steve Baker (Chairman, Banna Rescue), COS Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM, Maj Gen Kieran Brennan and Brig Gen Paul Fry. Front Row (L/R): Banna Rescue Crew- Mike Ashe, Colleen Trant, Brian Crean and Tom Ward. *Photo: Brian Crean, Banna Rescue*



FIONN'S 1ST VISIT TO THE GLEN

The 3 Inf Bn Mascot Fionn visited the Glen of Imaal for the first time on Monday 25th April 2016 to see the Kilkenny troops during their Mission Readiness Exercise (MRE) prior to going overseas. Fionn looks proud as punch while in the overwatch position. *Photo: Capt Thomas Stapleton, 3 Inf Bn*



ANZAC DAY

On 25th April 2016, members of the United Irish Ex-Services Association of Australia (UIESAA) marched on ANZAC Day to represent the 6,000 Irish men and women who fought in WW1's Gallipoli conflict. <https://uiesaa.wordpress.com> *Photo: Ves Campion*



RESERVISTS RAISE THE COLOURS

Pictured raising and lowering the National Colours outside the GPO is Lt Mairhead Kelly and Sgt Peter Brennan, RDF members serving with 2 Bde CIS Coy in Cathal Brugha Bks. In 1991 Sgt Brennan (then Cpl) with the 11 Fld Sigs Coy FCA was an instructor who trained the first female recruits. Lt Kelly was part of that initial female intake in 1991. She was also the first female commissioned in the reserve. Lt Kelly will be retiring in June 2016. *Photo: Capt Martin Mulvey (AR), 2 Bde CIS Coy*



MULLINGAR'S EASTER RISING

Pictured before the start of the Mullingar Community Parade on Sunday 24th April 2016 are L/R: RSM Noel O'Callaghan, his grand-daughter Aleesha, Sgt Derek McKeivitt, Sgt John Fitzpatrick, and Sgt Paddy Poynton. The parade formed up and marched from Columb Bks, Mullingar with 2 Bde Arty Regt flag party leading the Mullingar Town Band, RDF marching block, joint ONE/IUNVA block, the Civil Defence, Order of Malta, Mullingar Arts Centre, Sub Aqua Club, Scouts and a joint schools block. The parade marched to the town centre where MC Una Maher, daughter of RSM Mick Maher (RIP), told the story of Mullingar's connection to 1916. *Photo: RSM Noel O'Callaghan, 2 BAR*



WESTMEATH COMMEMORATIONS

On Saturday 7th May 2016 as part of Westmeath Co Council's commemorative events, units from Custume Bks, Athlone took part in a flag raising ceremony in Burgess Park to mark the opening of a remembrance garden. This was followed with the 6 Inf Bn, 2 BAR and the EUBG marching through the town led by parade commander Comdt Michael Daly, 6 Inf Bn, to John McCormack Civic Square. Here a plaque for Irish Volunteer Sean Costello was unveiled. *Photo: Pte Aiden Sherlock, 6 Inf Bn*



REFURBISHED AML 90 ▲

A refurbished AML 90 was unveiled as a viewing piece in Collins Bks, Cork recently. Pictured is Capt Laura Lafferty O/C 1 Bde Cav Sqn launching the event to serving and former members of the unit. 1 Bde EO Col Brian Monahan cut the ribbon to officially launch the viewing stand along with Capt Lafferty and Sgt Seamus Barry, 1 Bde Cav Sqn. *Photo: Sgt Don Sheehan, HQ 1 Bde*



SNR/JNR RDF OFFICER DEVELOPMENTAL TRAINING ▲

The COS Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM delivered the opening address to two combined courses, the Reserve Senior Officer Developmental and Reserve Junior Officer Developmental courses in the OTW, Mil Col, DFTC on 16th May 2016. Both courses comprised of two weekends and one week of full time training (FTT). *Photo: Lt Col (AR) G Maguire, HQ DFTC*



2016 TRINITY REGATTA ▲

The 2016 Trinity Regatta marked the 150th Anniversary of the Regatta and the 100th Anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising. To mark both of these events, the decision was taken to re-inaugurate the private race between the Defence Forces and An Garda Síochána. Traditionally this rowing match took place annually, however it has been some years since it was last held. In a tight and well-fought race, the Defence Forces won back the trophy. Donagh McDonagh, President of Dublin University Boat Club at Trinity Boathouse, presented the inscribed silver cup. *Photo: Tony O'Sullivan/Courtesy of Cian Flynn, Trinity Regatta*



GOC 1 BDE ADDRESS TROOPS ▲

Brig Gen Phillip Brennan GOC 1 Bde is pictured in the NCOs Mess, Collins Bks briefing officers, NCOs and soldiers who are based there on the recently published Defence Forces Leadership Doctrine. *Photo: Sgt Don Sheehan, HQ 1 Bde*



DARKNESS INTO LIGHT ▲

Personnel from D Coy, 3 Inf Bn, Templemore took part and volunteered at the Darkness into Light run/walk on Friday night 6th May 2016 in Kilkenny. They were (L/R): Comdt Jack Fahy OC D Coy who did the run and Sgts Garry O'Shea, Denis Tierney and Cpl Dave Hayes who acted as stewards and helped out at the event in Stephens Bks, Kilkenny. *Photo: Martin 'Garry' O'Shea*



CONGRATULATIONS ▲

On Tuesday 10th May 2016, Lt (NS) Grace Fanning and Carol Brady, were married at the Riverside Hotel in Enniscorthy, Co Wexford. Lt (NS) Fanning, is OC Seamanship and Communications Training at the National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI) in Ringaskiddy. Eight of her Naval Service colleagues provided a guard of honour at the ceremony. *Photo: Evelyn McNamara, Pinhole Productions Photography. www.pinholeproductions.ie*

New Military Archives Building

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD
PHOTOS BY CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN



On 26th April 2016, President Michael D Higgins and Minister for Arts, Heritage & the Gael Heather Humphreys TD, were accompanied by Defence Forces Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM in opening the new Military Archives building in Cathal Brugha Bks.

One of the files on display was that of President Higgins' father, Lt John Higgins, who served as an Intelligence Officer in the Cork 2 Bde of the Irish Republican Army during the War of Independence. President Higgins' two uncles and aunt (Peter, Michael & Kitty) all took part and their files are available to view alongside 300,000 other files contained in the Military Service Pensions Collection, many are still being digitised as part of the on-going project.

The newly launched Military Archives also took custody of the Brother Allen Collection, kindly donated by the Christian Brothers in O'Connell Schools, Dublin. The collection includes primary documents relating to the 1798 Rebellion, the Famine, the War of Independence and the Civil War. Items of particular interest include the last correspondence from Pádraic Pearse to his mother before he was executed, the last will and testament of Countess Markievicz and an original Proclamation of the Irish Republic.

In marking the occasion of the new Military Archives building, the then Minister for Defence, Simon Coveney, TD said: *"The new building being opened today by the President will ensure the safeguarding and accessibility of the Military Archives' collections for future generations"*.

The day also marked the fourth release of material from the Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection and the Medals Series Database from the collection and its associated files. The 1916 Medal recognised those who were engaged in active service during the 1916 Rising and those who served during the period 1917-1921.

Speaking about the latest release of material from the Military Service Pensions Collection, Minister Coveney said: *"This is the largest release of material to date from the Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection, the work of which is ongoing and has transformed our understanding of the history of the period and the role of individuals and organisations in the fight for independence, as well as the tragic events of the Civil War"*.

Future releases of material from the Military Service Pensions Collection will take place over the coming years. The material is available at www.militaryarchives.ie.

After the launch a small intimate ceremony was held commemorating the executions of journalists Francis Sheehy Skeffington, Thomas Dickson and Patrick McIntyre during the 1916 Rising. The site of their executions is now a museum in Cathal Brugha Bks. Members of the men's families were in attendance. ■



OC Military Archives Comdt Pádraic Kennedy with President Higgins.



President Higgins with the family members of the three journalists who were executed during the 1916 Rising.

A DAY TO REMEMBER

BY AIRMAN RUAIRI GAYNOR, 403 SQN NO 4 SP WING

On April 23rd 2016, my nephew and godson, Ronan, who had just turned three at the time, was suddenly diagnosed with a very rare form of brain stem cancer called DIPG. The doctors gave Ronan only a short time to live, so over the last couple of months we've been organising activities and trips for Ronan and his dad Mark, mum Evelyn, and his older sister Katie to enjoy together.

On Thursday 5th May 2016 I brought Ronan on a visit to the Air Corps in Baldonnel. On arrival, Ronan was given a kid's flight suit, donated by Seán Curtis, a DF veteran and owner of the PROTAC shop in the Curragh. The tailors in Baldonnel had sewn on his flashes and 'wings', so needless to say Ronan was well up for it as we headed to No 1 Ops Wing to see some fixed-wing aircraft. Ronan thought every one of them was "awesome" but his favourite was the CASA. After he had asked what every button and lever did we headed for his favourite place, the Fire Station, where we were met by Cpl Vinny Nolan and his crew of Rescue 09.

We were taken out onto the taxiway and down to the fire training grounds in the huge Rosenbauer driven by Ronan's newest best friend 'Fireman Myles' (Armn Mooney). Suddenly, Vinny noticed a fire and put Ronan straight to work putting it out using the Rosenbauer's giant, powerful, remote-controlled water cannons.

After all this excitement it was back to the station, where Vinny and the crew presented Ronan with a model fire engine and helmet. Next stop was the Bird Control Unit (BCU) where Neil showed us Rhianna, a Harris hawk, and Samsung, a falcon, who help keep the aircraft safe from bird-strikes.

Hungry after all the excitement, we went to the dining complex where the chefs and the girls had laid on a fantastic meal for all.

Back on tour, we called to see Armn Mick Whelan in the museum before continuing on to No 3 Heli Ops, where Ronan got to sit in the pilot's seats of an AW139 and EC135. He also got to watch the AW139s taking off and landing.

Next it was the Garda Air Support Unit, where Garda Darren brought the family out onto the ramp to see Echo 256 and Echo 272. Then a call came telling Ronan there were 'bad guys' near and to give chase. Lights and sirens where in full swing as Darren and Ronan caught the bad guys.

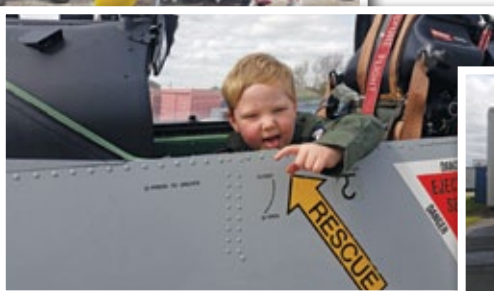
Ronan had seen grey airplanes flying overhead all day, and now it was his turn to 'fly' one. Ronan couldn't wait to jump into the front seat of PC-9 no 261 while Katie took the back seat. Mammy and daddy looked on and took loads of photos while I prayed the little rascal wouldn't pull any seat pins out or tug on the 'Pull to Eject' cord. Luckily he was under the watchful eye of Sgt Mick 'Jabber' and besides, he was too busy pressing the red buttons on the stick to fire the rockets and cannons (which were obviously not loaded).

To finish off, Capt Purcell (Engr Officer PC-9s and OC Firecrew) presented Ronan with a framed photo of a Rosenbauer with his name on it and his father with photos of all the aircraft they'd seen that day. To top it all off, the lads in the Air Corps Press Office presented them with their own Air Corps Bears as a memento of their visit.

At the end of the day the kids were wrecked but couldn't stop talking about all they had seen and done in Baldonnel.

It can be hard to explain verbally to a civilian how military life is, but we, as members of the Defence Forces, excel in showing people, through big and small random acts of compassion and kindness. These acts are what define us.

Ronan, Katie, their mam and dad, and I, would like to thank all those involved in making this day, a day that we will always remember and treasure. ■



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

Historical Moment for Regiment Association

BY SGT ANTHONY GALLAGHER (RETD), 2 FD ARTY REGT ASSOC

2 Fd Arty Regt was based in McKee Bks from 1943 until December 2012, when it was redeployed and amalgamated with 4 Fd Art Regt in Custom Bks, Athlone, as part of the Defence Forces reorganisation.

The 2 Field Artillery Regiment Association was established in November 2011 by serving and retired members of the regiment at an inaugural meeting held in UN Post 1, Arbour Hill.

The aim of the association is to provide support to retired members of the regiment, engage in community projects, and foster relationships within the Defence Forces and with other representative groups such as ONE and IUNVA. To date, members have participated in most 1916 centenary commemorations, including the commemorative service at Arbour Hill; the ANZAC Day dawn service held at Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Blackhorse Ave, and in the UK; and the events at the RHK, the War Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge, and the Garden of Remembrance.

As membership has grown the association has also established an extensive network of relationships with similar organisations including the associations of 5 Inf Bn, 2 Inf Bn, and the Military Police, as well as the Royal British Legion (RBL).

Tommy O'Brien presenting Paul Gifford with his 1st place pistol medal.

It is the mutual support provided by these organisations that allows our association to engage in and support charitable works.

On Saturday 9th April we held our first Annual Shoot for the Deceased Members of the Regiment, to honour and remember our comrades who have passed away. The competition was held in Harbour House Sports Club, Lougharbour, Athy, Co Kildare, which is a family-run range established by Comdt Tommy O'Brien (retd). www.harbourhouseshooting.com

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the 2 Regt Assoc to thank Tommy, Dee, Toby, Joe, and all the club members who helped make the competition such a very

special occasion for us. It was absolutely brilliant to see some of the older gunners show that they still had it and were more competitive than some of the younger gunners - I think it was for bragging rights in the mess!

After the competition we retired to the clubhouse where Tommy assisted with the medal presentation. The recipients in the pistol competition were Paul Gifford (1st), Sean Roche (2nd) and David Byrne (3rd), while the medals in the rifle competition were Niall O'Shea (1st), John Oxberry (2nd) and Paul McHendrie (3rd).

After the presentation Tommy said: "The weather has been atrocious all week but today the sun is shining; maybe St Barbara herself was looking down on us." (St Barbara being the patron saint of artillerymen.)

CQMS Paul Gifford, secretary of the association, thanked everyone for attending and reminded us: "This is a historical occasion, and we are very proud to remember our comrades who have passed on, in our first Annual Shoot for Deceased Members of the regiment."

The highlight of the day was the presentation by CQMS Gifford to the overall winner Gnr David Byrne (retd) who, with a combined score of 384, became the first winner of the plaque awarded to the winner of the Annual Shoot for Deceased Members of the 2 Fd Arty Regt Assoc - **Experto Crede** (Latin motto: Trust in one experienced). ■

To find out more visit: <https://2fara.wordpress.com/>



Paul Gifford presents Gnr David Byrne (retd) with the overall winner award.



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ENHANCING



NAVAL CO-OPERATION

BY LT CDR MARTIN BRETT, OC LÉ JAMES JOYCE

A view of FGS Donau, HMS Ramsey and BNS Primula, as seen through the gyro pelidioter on the bridge of LÉ James Joyce. Each ship is flying the Irish tricolour as a courtesy flag.

On 4th April 2016, LÉ James Joyce met with Standing NATO Mine Counter Measures Group 1 (SNMCMG1), comprising six ships from different European countries, to conduct mutually compatible exercises in the Irish Sea. Conducting common exercises with ships from other nations provides the Naval Service with the experience and confidence to operate in a multi-national environment for humanitarian and security operations.

Ireland, as an island nation on the western periphery of Europe, maintains a fleet of eight ships to patrol our maritime jurisdiction. This area extends over 200 nautical miles into the North Atlantic, and covers a total area in excess of one million square nautical miles, or an area equivalent to twelve times the land mass of the island of Ireland.

The Naval Service, as the state's maritime component of our Defence Forces (Óglaigh na hÉireann), is tasked with maintaining a continuous presence within our maritime jurisdiction, and beyond, where Ireland has interests. Our

naval fleet conducts routine maritime defence and security operational (MDSO) patrols, and, at the discretion of the government, deployments outside our jurisdiction on operations such as the humanitarian relief effort in the Mediterranean – Operation Pontus.

Whether on MDSO or foreign deployments, any of the eight ships of the fleet, can be called upon to perform a variety of tasks, or be expected to work or liaise with ships from other countries. In 2015 the government published its White Paper on Defence, which An Taoiseach says sets out “...a long-term and forward-looking approach to defence provision”. (p.iii)

In this White Paper a new and open engagement with our European neighbours and other regional entities is expressed: “Ireland will continue to engage proactively with the UN, the EU, the OSCE and NATO PfP and other states with a view to developing and deepening relationships to this end.” (p.27) At sea, such engagements involve the

NATO SNMCMG1 ships in formation astern of LÉ James Joyce during fleetwork exercises.



The bridge team on-board BNS Primula close abeam of LÉ James Joyce during transfer of stores.



FGS Dillengen with HNOMS Otrá and HNLMS Vlaardingen in the background, conducting close-in manoeuvres.



Belgium, Norway and the UK.

Like all good military exercises, the PassEx began with a planning meeting held onboard the German auxiliary supply ship *FGS Donau* with the task group commander and commanding officers of each participating ship. The meeting took place while the SNMCMG1 TG was alongside Dublin, having completed a courtesy call over the preceding weekend. The sequence of exercises, and provisional timing were agreed before the TG proceeded to sea, followed by LÉ *James Joyce*.

interactions between ships, or the cooperative collaboration of a number of ships operating as a task group (TG). When Irish naval ships exercise common areas of engagement with such task groups it is referred to as a PassEx. During PassEx evolutions, common procedures such as communications, fleetwork, humanitarian assistance operations, and exchanges of personnel, take place. In April of this year LÉ *James Joyce* had its first opportunity to exercise in a multinational environment with ships from a variety of European countries including Germany, the Netherlands,

As the ships rendezvoused outside Dublin Bay, the exercises commenced. First up was station keeping – the nautical equivalent of synchronised movements of ships working in close proximity to each other as a group. Once established in formation, the TG began ‘mailbag’ transfers, which involves two ships manoeuvring to within 25m of each other, while moving, and transferring light packages (5kg or less) from one to the other. This exercises the ‘driving’ capabilities of the captains or their officers-of-the-watch (OOWs). The dangers for such exercises include collisions or injury to personnel on deck while engaged in the transfer of stores. The *James Joyce* proved highly capable as a stable platform to work with the other ships in close proximity.

The ships resumed station-keeping exercises on completion of the transfers and conducted numerous course and speed alterations in tight formation.

In preparation for the boat transfer of personnel, the TG assumed a screen formation around the *James Joyce* with all units assuming a position within a pre-determined sector close to the *James Joyce*. Once all ships were in position, the *James Joyce* launched her MST RHIB and quickly effected a transfer of personnel to and from each ship.

The close proximity of the ships enabled the transfer to be completed rapidly, minimising the time taken to complete the evolution, and enabling the TG to resume exercises.

The final interaction between the *James Joyce* and the SNMCMG1 TG was a ‘steam past’ for exchange of ceremonial salutes; a traditional way for ships of friendly nations to bid farewell to one another. Proceeding at 22kts, passing 50–60m off each ship in line, the *James Joyce* bid farewell to the TG and resumed her normal MDSO patrolling in the Irish Sea, while the TG proceeded north towards Scotland.

The experience gained from friendly exercises is invaluable when called upon to work together for mutual benefit at sea, either for security or humanitarian necessities.

In keeping with the government policy on defence, as expressed in the White Paper 2015, LÉ *James Joyce* represented the Defence Forces professionally, and with ease; demonstrating the Naval Service’s capability to defend, protect and support Ireland’s interests at and from the sea, within our area of jurisdiction and beyond, where Ireland’s interests are involved. ■

FGS Dillengen approaching LÉ James Joyce to conduct mailbag transfers.



FGS Donau as seen from the bridge wing of LÉ James Joyce.



FGS Dillengen moves into position between LÉ James Joyce and FGS Donau in preparation for boat transfer of personnel.



TEAM ALPHA

Take on the SAS Challenge

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD PHOTOS SGT MICHAEL BURKE AND TEAM ALPHA

On 2nd July 2016, Team Alpha, comprising three Defence Forces veterans, along with a church pastor, a retired rugby player and a college graduate, will undertake a 24km mountain march across the Brecon Beacons in Wales, under SAS selection course rules, carrying 40lb packs. Their joint objective is to help raise much needed funds for Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind.

The members of the team are John Corcoran (team leader), ARW veteran and former sniper instructor; Tony Power, Bausch + Lomb Waterford's environment, health and safety manager and Defence Forces veteran; Gerard Corcoran (John's brother), also a Defence Forces veteran and a support weapons and infantry instructor; Shane O'Doherty, is an area sales manager for Tennants Building Products Ltd and has recently retired from playing rugby; and John's two sons, Jamie Corcoran, a pastor of the Lighthouse Church in Navan, and Rudi Corcoran, a DCU social media graduate who is looking after the team's social media campaign.

The event, called the 'Fan Dance' after its location on Pen y Fan (www.thefandancerace.com), it is based on the test march for SAS selection, one of the most demanding military training courses in the world.

Tony says the event is: "The closest you can get to the real

SAS experience and is staffed by former SAS and Special Boat Service (SBS) operatives. The event is run under strict military protocol – a family run it certainly is not." Gerard says: "The event gives civvies an idea of what military endurance tests are like. We get joining instructions similar to attending a military course and our back-packs will be weighed; if found underweight we will be disqualified. The event was created by SAS veteran Ken Jones, who wrote 'Darkness Descending', which I highly recommend. We'll probably be the only Irish team competing and we've been training for the last seven months around the Comeragh Mountains and Mount Leinster, which is ideal as

it mimics the start of the race."

Rudi said of training for this event with military veterans: "I lived on Pearse Terrace in the Curragh for eight years when my dad was serving there, so I knew what to expect!"

Tony told us why they chose the charity as their beneficiary: "John is a full-time carer for his wife Karen, who has lost her eyesight and has been greatly supported by the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind. She has been given her own dog 'Ike', who is a life-saver for her. It costs €45,000 to train just one guide dog and there is a constant demand for new ones."

John added: "Ike has made a huge impact on Karen's quality of life, so we have a vested interest in supporting this great charity."

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind is dedicated to helping those who are blind or vision impaired, and the families of children with autism, to achieve improved mobility



Tony Power in his DF service days





John Corcoran



Rudi Corcoran



Tony Power



Gerard Corcoran

and independence. www.guidedogs.ie

Bausch + Lomb have agreed to sponsor Tony's attempt at 'invading Wales' and general manager Damian Finn said: *"It's a wonderful project, worthy of everybody's support. We have sponsored Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind in the past. It is a truly outstanding voluntary organisation and does so much to improve people's lives. I wish Tony and the team every success when they take on this very considerable challenge."*

The event will cost each team member €700, including registration, ferry crossing, accommodation and food. In addition, the team are committed to raising double that amount each for their charity and they are already over halfway to their target of €7,000. Hopefully, we can all get behind them with a few Euro and help them reach their target before they set off on July 2nd.

The team would like to thank all their supporters and sponsors, who are too many to mention. ■



Tony, Rudi, John and Gerard training on Mt Leinster. Unfortunately Jamie Corcoran and Shane O'Doherty were not available for photographs.

To help support this worthy cause please visit:

www.mycharity.ie/event/john_corcorans_event

To follow the team's progress and to give them support follow them on Facebook:

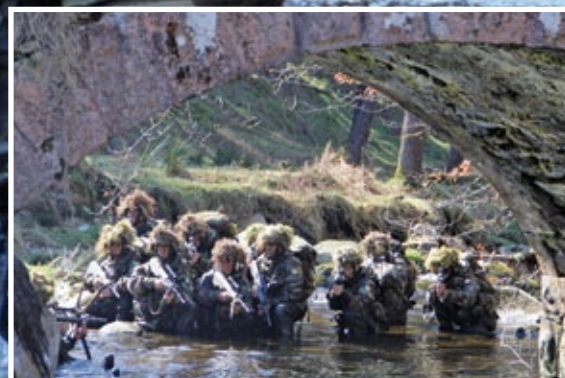
www.facebook.com/TeamAlphaFanDance2016/



2 Bde Recruits

REPORT AND PHOTOS BY CPL
COLIN DELANY, 2 BDE HQ

Over the last number of weeks Cpl Colin Delany from the 2 Bde media team has been photographing the 80 recruits of the 58th and 59th Recruit Plns. They are near completion of their 15-week training with the 2 BTC, in Cathal Brugha Bks, Dublin. Having just completed their tactical phase, they are down to 76 recruits, those that make the final transition from civilian to soldier will have their passing out parade on the 2nd June 2016, where they will receive their new rank of 2 Star Private.



Vox Pops



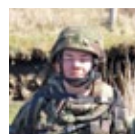
"I have just completed my leaving cert and I have a cousin in the DF. It took a while to change from civilian life, but when I felt comfortable it was sudden. The training is more mentally tough than physical, but your buddies help you through it. I found it hard being away from home, I never realised how much I appreciated civilian luxuries until I joined. I would like to go on and have a career in the ARW or be based in the 28 Inf Bn in Donegal." - **Rec Christopher McCauley, Letterkenny, Co Donegal**



"I was a maintenance worker/caretaker before joining. I've found the military change much busier and the training tough but enjoyable. The most challenging part is keeping gear clean and our accommodation 'military' clean. I would like to serve in the Cavalry Corps." - **Rec Joseph Carroll, Rathfarnham, Dublin**



"I worked as a bartender before joining. I have found the change from civilian life challenging. The training is also challenging but rewarding, the physical stamina needed to complete some tasks is the most challenging part of training. I would like to do an NCOs course and to serve overseas." - **Rec Shauna Sutton, Greystones, Co Wicklow**



"Before joining I worked in a food factory. I found the change to army life difficult at times but well worth it. I am enjoying the training a lot. Jumping into a freezing cold river covered in mud has been my most challenging part of training so far. I hope to serve much longer than my 5 year contract." - **Rec Eamonn McManus, Dundalk, Co Louth**



"I was a lifeguard before enlisting in the DF. So far I have found the change from civilian to military life enjoyable, tough and rewarding. The training is challenging and exciting. Getting up to military standard in areas such as time keeping and deportment are the most challenging. I want to work my way up the enlisted ranks in the Infantry Corps." - **Rec Edward Lynch, Ballyshannon, Co Donegal**



"I was a gym instructor before joining the DF. I found the transition to military life a big change – in a good way. I have found the training to be very good. Most challenging part for me is the early mornings. I would like to do the ARW selection course and serve in the ARW." - **Rec Dominic Donegan, Cavan, Co Cavan**



Mission Readiness Exercise

53 INF GP UNIFIL

REPORT & PHOTOS BY CPL LEE COYLE

The mission readiness exercise (MRE) is an important part of all overseas training, as it sees the culmination of weeks of intensive training and puts commanders and soldiers through a demanding series of scenarios based on the current situation and potential threats that may be encountered in the mission area.

The personnel of 53 Inf Gp, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), recently underwent their MRE in the Glen of Imaal over a two-week period. During this time the troops were faced with scenarios involving simulated explosive strikes, air mobile helicopter drills, anti-ambush tactics using a variety of advanced weapons systems, detailed planning, and traditional peacekeeping.

The 38-year-old UNIFIL mission changed significantly following the July/August 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah war, after which the Security Council introduced resolution 1701, which substantially enhanced the mission and expanded its original mandate to include monitoring the cessation of hostilities, assisting the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in establishing an area free of armed personnel between the Blue Line and the Litani River,

and assisting the government of Lebanon to secure its borders.

These changes have required extensive mobile patrolling throughout the Irish area of operations, ground holding, and monitoring along the Blue Line.

Operations are conducted on a 'high visibility, low profile' basis, with access to both armour and soft-skin vehicles for interaction with local population.

The 190 personnel will deploy in mid-May as a mechanised infantry company and a contingent support group, and will serve alongside 335 Finnish soldiers as part of the Finnish Battalion.

In addition to UNIFIL, Irish and Finnish troops have also served together in joint units in Kosovo and Chad, and both share a solid, worldwide reputation as well-trained, impartial, professional peacekeepers.

Of the 190 personnel, 68 are on their first tour of duty overseas. The remainder have accumulated 425 trips together, including Bty Sgt Patsy O'Driscoll, 1 Bde Arty Regt, Collins Bks, Cork, who has served overseas on 15 previous occasions and who will be serving with his 10th UNIFIL mission. ■





Vox Pops



"This is my first tour of duty overseas. The training has been robust and very beneficial; it has shown us how things can be calm then at a moment's notice we have to kick it into gear." - **Lt Niall Wilcox, 12 Inf Bn (PI Comd, 2 PI)**



"The training has been intense and very fulfilling. I have served in Liberia, KFOR and Lebanon before, and my family is very proud of me serving overseas again." - **Cpl David O'Kelly, 3 Inf Bn (Sec Comd, 1 Sec, 2 PI)**



"I'm a little bit nervous but looking forward to traveling, as this is my first tour of duty overseas. We have good NCOs and officers leading us. The training has been a very heavy going eight weeks but enjoyable. My parents are nervous but proud of me travelling overseas and serving my country." - **Pte Thomas Dunne, 3 Inf Bn, (1 Sec 2, PI)**



"This is my first tour of duty overseas. I've found the training very good with a lot of focus on counter-improvised explosive device (CIED) training, which is new for some of us. Independent thinking is an important part of the training." - **Pte David English, 3 Inf Bn (1 Sec, 2 PI)**

INNOVATION OFFSET:

BY ROBERT TARRANT

The US military is losing its edge. Technologies once lauded as 'game changers' on the battlefield are becoming outdated. But the Pentagon has a plan to ensure military and technological dominance for the next half century and beyond. What does this mean for military spending, innovation, and the future of warfare?

US military thought since WWII has been defined by two major rethinks. First was Eisenhower's 'New Look' policy, which created a large arsenal of nuclear weapons and delivery systems to oppose Soviet ground forces. Guided by the principle of 'massive retaliation' this policy placed Strategic Air Command (SAC) as one of the most powerful organisations in the country.

With the closure of the 'missile gap' this superiority was eroded. With the Soviets matching bomber for bomber and missile for missile, as well as experiences in Vietnam, the old policy was showing its limits, both militarily and financially. This led to the second major rethink, the 'Offset Strategy' as proposed by Secretary Harold Brown in the 1970s. This changed the focus to ensuring a qualitative edge in future conflicts by pursuing a range of new platforms and systems. The development of precision-guided munitions, and microelectronic technology, like fly-by-wire systems, satellites and stealth, paved the way for an ability to attack with surprise: the so called 'Reconnaissance Strike Capability', which has created a revolution in military affairs (RMA). The 'Shock and Awe' military doctrine witnessed early in the Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003 demonstrated this in its full effect.

Hardware, Software and the Future of Military Spending

Standard Missile-3, shown here in this illustration, is the world's only ballistic missile killer deployable on land or at sea. © Raytheon

However, over the last ten years the proliferation of air defence systems, the ending of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the growing prospect of a long-term national debt, has forced the Pentagon to rethink its programmes once more. The unveiling of the 'New Innovation Strategy' (more the commonly dubbed the 'Second Offset') by Under-Secretary Work seeks to gain a continuing advantage over would-be rivals. Its main interests, according to a report by the EUISS (European Union Institute for Security Studies), are robotics, autonomous systems, miniaturisation, big data, and additive manufacturing. According to the report: 'A common thread between these segments is that the cutting edge technologies are dual-use, meaning they have both military and commercial applications, or are currently led by the commercial sector.'

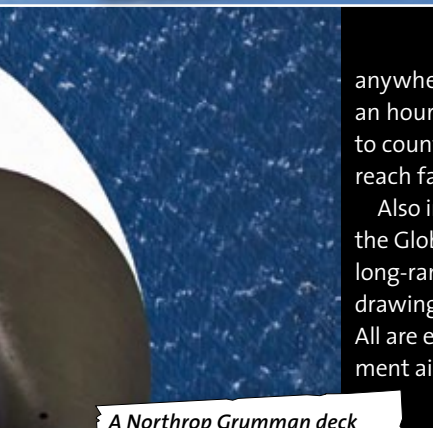
In short, the new offset is about chasing the commercial sector for military solutions and the dollars for such innovation have moved in that direction. It's also about creating, consistently evolving abilities, that are quickly adopted by the military and scaled. As Under-Secretary Work explained at the announcement of the Second Offset: "We'll be looking for promising technologies that we can do in what we call the FYDP, the Future Years Defence Program, generally about five years out. We'll identify long-range advances that we can pull up and hopefully field in the '20s, and then we'll plant the seeds for R&D, which will give us an advantage for the '30s."



AH-1Z Viper US Marine Attack Helicopter



Bell AH-1 Cobra



A Northrop Grumman deck operator, drives an X-47B unmanned combat air system



Patriot is a long-range, high altitude, all-weather solution that has been rigorously tested more than 2,500 times with U.S. Army oversight under real-world conditions. © Raytheon



The Second Offset does not require the creation of new large industries, like shipbuilding or vehicle construction. Instead, as a sum of strategies, it focuses on smaller and complementary systems, anywhere from cybersecurity, to drones, to technology for drones, or new techniques in manufacturing such systems. It also looks at how the defence sector itself does innovation.

So where does the military see it can deploy this technology and what advantages is it looking for?

One of the current military centrepieces of the strategy that ensures global reach is the Prompt Global Strike System (PGSS). Envisioned as a conventional missile that allows the US Air Force to strike anywhere in the world within less than an hour, it is part of a larger architecture to counter new defence systems and can reach far into enemy territory.

Also in development is the successor to the Global Hawk, the Triton, another new long-range strike bomber, and on the drawing board, a sixth-generation fighter. All are envisioned as high-threat environment aircraft with probable autonomy.

Planning to win a future conflict is not just occurring for the air but also at sea. Addressing the increasing vulnerability of aircraft carriers and their retreat from shore to sea has been deemed paramount. Details on doing this remain uncertain but it is exactly what the Second Offset seeks to solve.

The creation of undersea infrastructure to facilitate or resupply vessels and submarines is also proposed, as are modified missiles for submarines, akin to the PGSS, and a new generation of stealthy ships, like the USS Zumwalt, capable of carrying futuristic weapons platforms such as railguns and lasers.

Aside from the fanciful hardware, one of the primary objectives of the strategy

is to create a closer relationship between Silicon Valley and the Pentagon. Tapping into the 'new stream of innovation' is a priority for the Pentagon. Commercial ventures are also examined for potential innovation. For example, Google's Project Loon to provide internet connectivity to the world, is strikingly similar to the capabilities sought by the US Air Force in countering the loss of satellites.

Bridging the public-private divide and creating a sustainable model of innovation is challenging. Recent initiatives include the creation of the Innovation Advisory Board, consisting of 12 Silicon Valley executives to advise the Pentagon on choosing programmes, and the Defence Innovation Marketplace, for small business and stakeholders to interact with the military on projects. It is hoped that initiatives like these will not only help overcome cultural divides but also act as space where the military can reach out for solutions.

However, the strategy is facing critics inside the military, some of whose criticism reflects experiences with conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. They fear the US is preparing for a war it won't be fighting and developing weapons that will have no use five weeks into a conflict; that military budgets in these circumstances may favour the life-cycle cost of an autonomous vehicle over, for instance, a translator. These choices seem to already have been made in favour of procuring technological solutions to human problems.

Delving deeper into this leads to a debate about scenario-based planning versus capability planning for future conflicts, and the balance between autonomous and human systems on the battlefield. Little focus or attention has been received on these conflicting views, at either a policy or strategic level.

Separately, it must also be recognised that commercial R&D cycles alone can often fail to take account of the impact of technologies. Therefore, government, and sometimes the military itself, can fill an important role as the risk-taker. GPS, touchscreen technology, the internet, and even mass containerisation, have all been military programmes. Although, putting these technologies together as products has been the niche of companies such as Apple and Google and the commercial sector in general.

The New Innovation Strategy seeks to inverse this process, grabbing the commercial technology and investing in it early. This approach represents a fundamental step away from the past and requires major cultural shifts on part of the military also.


Predicting what future conflict will look like is notoriously difficulty and consequently the New Innovation Strategy is sparse on detail but big on ambition.

As it seeks to continue its role as the primary provider of world security in the 21st Century, the United States is facing challenges like all other great powers have before, and the stakes could not be higher. The prospect of a nuclear conflict with a rising power, such as China, makes one pause to realise what this means not for just international security but humanity. If the Pentagon fails in its new approach the US could take decades to recover its standing and credibility, as well as military prominence. This would have ripple effects for NATO and European security. On the contrary, if it succeeds it could be the dawn of another 'American Century', reinvigorating its military forces to face challenges in a truly global sense.

Robert Tarrant is a graduate of the University of Aberdeen Strategic Studies programme and is a regular contributor to An Cosantóir. You can follow him on twitter @roberttarrnt2. ■

NEW RDF SOLDIERS FOR 27 INF BN

BY LT MARTIN MCCABE, RDF TRAINING OFFICER, 27 INF BN
PHOTOS SGT EAMON DOHERTY, CPL STEPHEN TYRRELL,
CPL JOHN MCKENNA AND CPL OLIVER DUNNE



Reserve Defence Forces (RDF) recruit training took place in July 2015. Since then the recruits that passed out as two star privates have been incredibly dedicated and have formed long lasting friendships and a sense of comradeship, carrying out their training in a very competent and professional manner. They have all embodied the values of the Defence Forces and have transformed from civilians into dedicated and well trained soldiers. Each recruit completed the full array of lessons and star grading tests on foot drill, arms drill, Steyr rifle training including bayonet, where they showed excellent controlled aggression and skill. They have also completed tactical, fieldcraft, physical and manual handling training.



Comdt De Bruin presenting Pte 2* Ilone Hofmane with her award.



Members of the 27 Inf Bn Recruit Platoon.



These recruits represent a new era in the RDF where the need to match the very high standards set out by our Permanent Defence Forces colleagues are of paramount importance. The recruits have completed Annual Range Practices (ARPs) on the Steyr rifle with recruits Cusack and Smart achieving marksman scores showing great potential for future rifle team participation. They all completed a 24hr regimental guard duty in Aiken Bks. They performed very well in Fitness tests parts 1, 2 and 3 with a number of recruits achieving grade 1 fitness.

The recruits took part in a 24hr tactical exercise, 'Bayonet Lightning' in the Cooley Mountains, which incorporated a tactical route march, obstacle crossing, and occupation of patrol harbour and section level tactics. They also completed judging distance lessons and tests. They trained in temperatures as low as -4 degrees Celsius in a tactical scenario and learned about hygiene and sanitation in the field, tactical ration pack discipline.

These recruits have managed to balance busy personal lives, work and college commitments, and still maintain the dedication required to be a member of the RDF. This group of recruits highlight the diversity of the RDF, as they travel from counties Monaghan, Meath, Tyrone, Cavan and Louth. Their careers include a manual handling and airport security instructor, a barber, students and many trades' people. One recruit has recently been offered a position on an inter county Gaelic Football Team.

Two members of the recruit platoon are a couple, recruit Farrell is from Slane, Co Meath and recruit Hofmane is Eastern European. They have both operated under the clear guidelines of interpersonal relationships within the Defence Forces in a high intensity competitive setting and did so in a professional manner.

The platoon passing out parade took place in Aiken Bks on Sunday 13th March 2016, and was followed by a reception for their family and friends. All recruits received their two star rank marking sliders from the parade commander Comdt Enda De Bruin, 2 I/C 27 Inf Bn.

An Cosantóir's Cpl Lee Coyle visited Aiken Bks to chat to members of the platoon to see what they thought of the training. ▶

Vox Pops



"I am 19-years old and from Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan. I seen the recruitment advertisement on Facebook and my father served in the 27 Inf Bn, Sgt Pat 'Bilco' Cusack. I found the training intense; marching took me time getting used to. I enjoyed the tactical phase and adapting to the outdoor environment." - **Pte 2 Star Jason Cusack**



"I am 33-years old, and the 'old man' of the group. I seen a recruitment stand in the shopping centre in Navan, and then I signed up. I found out then I knew a good few people serving. I found the training an eye opener especially due to my age. The pressure makes it strangely enjoyable. Presently I am working in Dublin Airport Security." - **Pte 2 Star Ciaran Farrell**



"I'm originally from Latvia, and living in Navan 10-years now. I missed my normal luxuries during the 'on the ground' training. I am 29-years old and found my fitness has improved greatly from the military training. I'm studying part-time in accountancy and currently working for EPCO in Navan." - **Pte 2 Star Ilone Hofmane**



"There was an excellent high standard throughout, with great dedication considering the traveling distances some did. Cpls John McKenna and Ollie Dunne were the RDF lead instructors, who were of a high calibre and liaised regularly with their RDF/PDF counterparts." - **Lt Martin McCabe, Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan, 15-years service**

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Naval Base, Haulbowline

Wed 13 July 2016
1130hrs

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1st, 2nd, 3rd Senior Female
1st, 2nd Female Over 35
1st, 2nd, 3rd Over 40
1st, 2nd, 3rd Over 45
1st, 2nd Over 50
1st Over 55
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a portal to the underworld
when the sky is filled with lead
and we become creatures of the dark."*

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Medals of the Irish Defence Forces

The following text taken from *Medals of the Irish Defence Forces book (2010)* outlines how authorised medals should be properly worn.



Authorised medals include:

- Defence Forces Medals
- United Nations Medals
- European Community/Union Medals
- United Nations Mandated Mission Medals

Precedence of Medals

As outlined in Administrative Instruction A9, when worn, precedence shall be reckoned from the wearer's right to left and shoulder downward.

Method of Wear

Army and Air Corps:

Medals will be worn over the left breast pocket. Pipe bands and pipers when on ceremonial duties shall wear their medals over the Tara Brooch.

Naval Service:

Medals shall be worn by Leading Seamen and Seamen centrally on the left breast of the jumper with the clasps in line with the top of inner pocket. For all other naval ratings, medals shall be worn centrally on the left shoulder of the coat with the clasps in line with the cut of the lapel.

Multiple Medals

A single medal shall be suspended from a suspension bar. Two to five medals inclusive shall be suspended from a single suspension bar of sufficient length to carry the required number of medals without overlapping. Where six or seven medals are worn, they shall be evenly overlapped on a suitable five-medal suspension bar. The premier medal shall be fully uncovered. Where more than seven medals are worn, a second row of medals shall be worn. In such cases a maximum of five medals will be mounted on both rows before overlapping begins on the top row. The Military Medal for Gallantry and the Distinguished Service Medal will be worn individually and generally above any other row of medals.

Occasions for Wear

Unless otherwise ordered, medals shall be worn when attending:

- The National Day of Commemoration.
- The inauguration of An tUachtarán and other ceremonies attended by An tUachtarán.
- The presentation of letter of credence by an Apostolic Nuncio

designate, an ambassador or a minister designate.

- The annual 1916 commemoration ceremony.
- Commissioning ceremonies.
- The annual commemoration Mass for deceased officers and enlisted personnel.
- By officers and enlisted personnel of Guards of Honour and Escorts of Honour.
- By members of the court at courts martial.
- On state and military funerals by pall bearers; marshals; escort; firing; bearer parties and bands.
- On such other occasions as may be authorised by the Deputy Chief of Staff (Support), or the General Officer Commanding a Brigade or Formation.

Medals shall not be worn:

- At a ceremony for the award of an order, decoration or medal.
- At a banquet, formal dinner or an official reception, unless indicated by the host.
- With or on greatcoats or overcoats.
- By an officer or an enlisted person in custody.
- By enlisted personnel undergoing imprisonment or detention.

Wearing of Medals on Civilian Attire

Serving personnel, including 1st Line Reserve and Reserve Defence Forces shall not wear medals on civilian attire. Retired personnel may wear medals on civilian attire on the same occasions as when medals are worn by serving personnel, and in a similar manner.

Family Members

Next of kin should not wear the medals of a deceased family member, except when the medal is awarded posthumously. Medals are awarded to individuals in recognition of specific acts or service and should only be worn by the individual to whom awarded. Family of deceased members of the Defence Forces should only wear the following medals when the decoration is presented directly to the next of kin:

- The Military Medal for Gallantry
- The Distinguished Service Medal
- The Military Star
- The Service Medal
- The United Nations Peacekeeping Medal

Replacement of Medals

A limited facility to provide individuals with replacement medals is available through 'A' Administration Section, DFHQ, Station Road, Newbridge, Co Kildare. This only applies where the original medal has been certified lost or destroyed and only where the organisation that issued the medal offers a replacement service. At present this applies to the Defence Forces and the United Nations only. A charge does apply for this service.



For more information on the wearing of medals, you should contact Ceremonial Section, 'A' Administration, DFHQ. The Defence Forces Medal Book can be downloaded from military.ie – http://bit.ly/DF_Medal_book

HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY

THE BATTLE OF KHE SANH

BY PAUL O'BRIEN MA



At Khe Sanh, Vietnam, on the morning of 21st January 1968 a green flare lit up the dawn sky, signalling the beginning of a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) assault. Surrounded and outnumbered, there was no escape as artillery and mortar shells rained down on US Marines holding a forward observation base on Hill 861 in the opening salvos of a siege that would last 77 days and cost thousands of lives.

The main US combat base at Khe Sanh, located in the north-western province of Quang Tri, was to experience one of the fiercest assaults by the NVA during the Vietnam War. The base was in an exposed position, threatened from the north by the NVA and by enemy infiltration to the west through Laos. Khe Sanh was used as a patrol base against these threats with an airstrip that was used as a reconnaissance staging area against the Ho Chi Minh Trail, a lifeline of supplies and reinforcements for the NVA. It would also serve as a jumping off point for ground forces that were detailed to harass the enemy, explore and gather intelligence and cut the Trail in that area.

A number of minor attacks and skirmishes in the region

in the previous year had confused US Intelligence as there seemed no logic to them except to inflict casualties on the Americans. However, with these attacks, the NVA were drawing attention away from the coastal lowlands and cities in preparation for the Tet Offensive.

General William Westmoreland wanted to do battle with General Võ Nguyên Giáp's forces as he believed that in drawing them out into the open, superior American air power would then destroy the NVA completely.

However, unknown to the Americans based at Khe Sanh, the NVA had spent six months covertly encircling the base with four divisions of highly trained regular NVA troops. Their mission was to take the base from the Americans, whose 6,000 Marines based at Khe Sanh were outnumbered six to one.

The artillery barrage against the isolated Hill 861 was followed up by a series of NVA infantry assaults against the post. These were driven back by defensive fire from US 105mm howitzers, although some NVA soldiers got inside the wire and were only repulsed after severe close-quarters combat.

HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY



General Võ Nguyên Giáp



General William Westmoreland



At 0500hrs the main base in Khe Sanh was targeted by an intense artillery, rocket and mortar barrage. One shell detonated the base's arms dump and 1,500 tonnes of ordnance were destroyed, reducing the supply of heavy artillery shells for the base's guns from 11,000 down to 4,000, leaving the gunners no option other than to reduce their rate of fire to ration their ammunition.

At first US forces could not identify the NVA's artillery positions (152mm howitzers with a range of up to 17km), which were dug into granite caves across the border in Laos, giving them a huge tactical and operational advantage. However, using crater analysis to determine the direction and angle of incoming rounds, the Marines were eventually able to locate the NVA gun positions and call in an air strike by B52 Stratofortresses, dropping 30 tonnes of ordnance per plane. Though many NVA soldiers were killed, the attacks failed to destroy the gun positions as they were so well dug in.

By 6th February the siege was into its seventeenth day. Daily artillery duels and probing attacks by the NVA had resulted in little ground

being taken, and the NVA turned their attention to the US outpost at Lang Vei, 7km from the main base and the only obstacle hindering an all-out attack on Khe Sanh from the west. Guarding this outer post were 400 local troops from the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) and 24 US Marines. Assaults against the position were fierce, with the Marines forced to go on the defensive; tactics they were not used to. Soviet-built PT76 tanks supported by NVA infantry overran the camp in a matter of minutes, although the Marines and their allies fought on for several hours, destroying many of the tanks using LAW, single-shot, anti-tank rockets. Making a last stand at their tactical ops centre, the soldiers called in an artillery strike on their own position, forcing the NVA to fall back.

While a rescue mission from Khe Sanh managed to extract the few survivors out of the battle zone and return to base, the fall of the position left the way clear for an all-out attack on Khe Sanh.

By 25th February a major assault on the US base was

imminent. A recon patrol that ventured out was engaged 400m outside the wire and suffered heavy casualties.

Soon, wave after wave of NVA infantry were assaulting the main base only to be repulsed by grenades and small-arms fire. Repeated calls for reinforcements were refused as the bulk of US forces in the country were busily engaged defending against a nationwide attack that was to become known as the Tet Offensive. There was to be no ground support for the Marines under siege at Khe Sanh. To break the NVA stranglehold on the base the defenders would have to rely on the air power provided by Operation Niagara, which had been established to provide close air support, and which saw tactical fighter-bombers and B52s, operating at altitudes of 35,000ft, dropping around 40,000 tonnes of bombs, some to within 600 yards of the Khe Sanh base.

With the massive destructive power of the B52s the tide of the battle turned. For two months the NVA had been the aggressors but the devastating effect of relentless air strikes, coupled with their inability to overrun Khe Sanh, were forcing the NVA to begin the withdrawal of its forces.

On March 30th, the Khe Sanh Marines counter-attacked the NVA, forcing them to withdraw further. A relief force, code-named 'Pegasus', was launched, with army and Marine forces securing Route 9, the only road into Khe Sanh from the east. By April, the base had been reinforced, bringing to an end the bloody siege of Khe Sanh. Many US commanders consider the Battle of Khe Sanh to be the greatest victory of the war.

Casualty figures numbered 897 Allied soldiers killed, with 2,000 injured, while the NVA estimated that ¼ of its force of 40,000 soldiers had been killed in action.

The US conducted a tactical withdrawal from the Khe Sanh combat base in July 1968. ■



'The Fighting Micks'

BY CAPT SA MCMICHAEL, REGIMENTAL CAREER MANAGEMENT OFFICER, 1ST BATTALION IRISH GUARDS

The 1st Battalion Irish Guards are well known throughout the island of Ireland as one of the elite regiments of Foot Guards, part of the British Army's 'Guards Division'. The regiment, currently based in Cavalry Barracks, Hounslow, was formed on 1st April 1900 by order of Queen Victoria, in recognition of the many courageous acts carried out by Irish soldiers from all the brave fighting Irish regiments in the Boer War, and are known affectionately throughout the Army as 'the Micks' or 'Fighting Micks'. (The term 'Micks', while derogatory if used in civilian life, carries no such stigma within the British Army.)

The Irish Guards takes its motto, *Quis Separabit*, (Who shall separate us?) from the Order of St Patrick. As a Foot Guards regiment the Irish Guards are involved in state ceremonial and public duties at Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, St James's Palace and the Tower of London.

HRH Prince William is Colonel of the Regiment and St Patrick's Day is the traditional celebration of the Irish Guards, when fresh shamrock is presented to members of the regiment.

The 1st Battalion, made up of five companies with a variety of supporting arms, has deployed on recent conflicts including Iraq and Afghanistan. The battalion has also recently carried out a tour of Cyprus with the UN. As well as deploying on operations the battalion has also conducted various overseas exercises in Bosnia, Latvia, Oman, Kenya and numerous other countries.

The opportunity for taking part in sport in the Micks is fantastic. Football, Gaelic football, boxing and rugby are just some of the sports we get involved with and there's also a wide variety of adventure training packages, including things like mountain climbing, skiing, sailing and white-water rafting.

The regiment has played a significant part in every large-scale operation conducted by the British Army in the last 35 years, including, most recently, Iraq and Afghanistan. Recruits to the Irish Guards go through a 30-week progressive training programme at the Infantry Training Centre (ITC) where they receive first-class training, which will stay with them for life. The training is two weeks more than the training for the regular line-infantry regiments of the British Army, with the extra time devoted to specialist ceremonial training. The current group of proud Irish Guard recruits comprises a large number of individuals from the island of Ireland (over ¾ of the total).

It was never envisaged that while two serving Micks were celebrating St Patrick's Day with a cold pint of Guinness in the presence of HRHs the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge that a conversation would lead to the founding of the current Irish Guards Gaelic football club. There is a strong urge with many of the young men within the battalion to play Gaelic games, and football is just the start. This desire, and the assistance to achieve it, is spread across all ranks within the battalion and regiment.

The club was formed, by way of a verbal proposal to the London GAA County Board on Monday, 14th September 2015. A senior Irish Guard addressed the County Board meeting to gain affiliation of the first British Army regiment Gaelic football club, playing under the name, *Gardaí Éireannach*.

Some London GAA club delegates raised concerns and after a long period of strong debate it was put to the vote, which went to a tie, 15 for and 15 against. The casting vote fell to the then chairman, Mr Noel





O'Sullivan, who decided to make history and voted in favour. This was a historic decision, not only for the GAA but also all past, present and future Micks.

We are aware that the vote was very close and understand there are some strong emotions. But we, as an Irish regiment with proud Irishmen serving in it, just wanted to play football. Recently the London County Board requested us to change our name and *Naomh Padraig* was voted for by our members; an apt name given that our regimental quick march is called St Patrick's Day.

History was cemented on the 6th February 2015 when the Mick's played their first challenge game against Harlesden Harps, a strong London-based intermediate Gaelic football team, in the grounds of Cavalry Barracks.

Although a heavy defeat ensued, the score line was secondary; this was all about achievement, team spirit and performance. An *Irish Post* journalist who was at the match summed it up well: *"The difference in experience was telling from start to finish. Nonetheless, the Guards were creating chances of their own on the muddy surface, but wayward shooting caused a sizeable number of wides. Many of their players grew up playing GAA or rugby at youth level, so the*

ball handling skills were there to be seen and that lack of confidence in front of the target could be eradicated with some much-needed shooting practice. Due to the nature of their work, the Guards will struggle to field a consistent starting XV, but with a growing pool of over 50 players to choose from, they will have no trouble fielding a team any-time soon, even if some of their players are unfamiliar with each other's names thanks to the sheer size of the barracks in which they're based. Despite the heavy defeat, those involved appear to be enjoying the early stages of their journey".

We have subsequently played in London GAA's McArdle Cup junior football competition, which has seen our performance going from strength to strength.

This has been an historic year for the Irish Guards and the GAA, particularly London GAA, and we look forward to meeting our fellow countrymen through sport. As Nelson Mandela said: *"Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope, where there was once only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination."*

The Irish Guards GAA Football Club must, and will, continue to grow and there is no doubt that we need to improve our team's skills to make us more competitive. This will come in time as the club expands in confidence, skill experience and gains an abundance of new players and members.

For us, this venture is about commitment, enjoyment, engagement with the community and the teams we play, and, above all, ensuring the Irish Guards GAA Football Club is inclusive, lasting and enjoyable. ■





DEFENCE FORCES



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For more information contact

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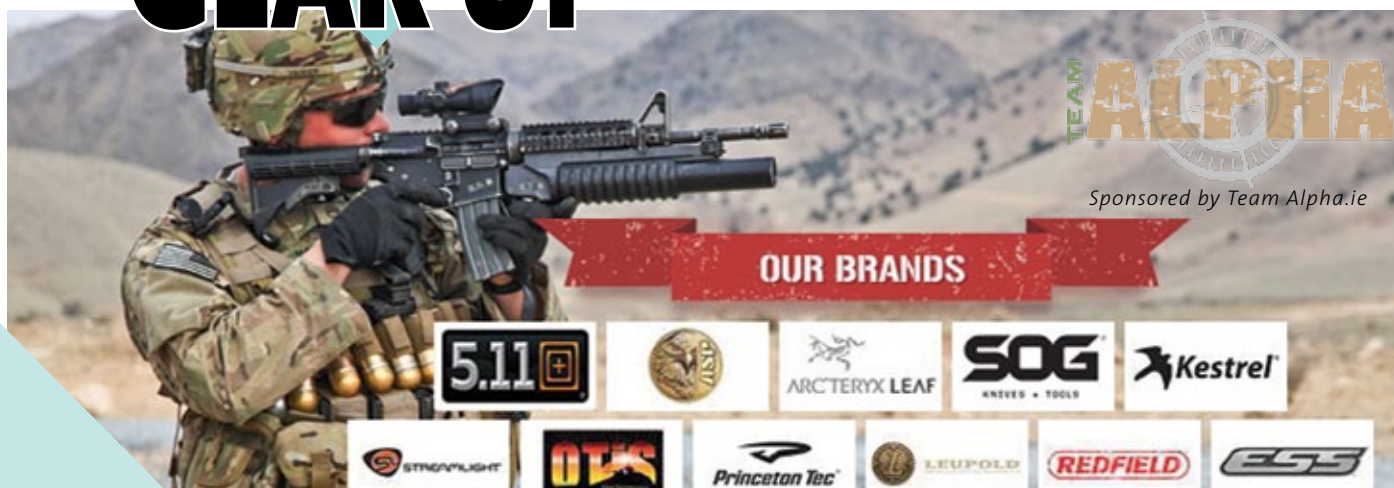
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Internal laptop sleeve keeps electronics safe. External long item carry allows access to and ease to carry long objects like rifles, bows & fishing rods. Large zipper pulls allows easy opening with or without gloves. Side compression straps to hold the load closer to the user for better weight distribution and balance. 2mm PE sheet w/ 15mm aluminum stave suspension to distribute weight for comfortability. Kodra 500D nylon material with a polyurethane coating for long-lasting durability, reliability, and water resistance.

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(www.eithnasrestaurant.com). Participation in an event such as this provides a great opportunity to team build and to promote the corporate spirit and indeed healthy competition! The race is a Sprint Distance Triathlon but with the option of a short swim course (300M) for those not ready to undertake the full 750M, which makes Glohealth Mullaghmore Triathlon an ideal starter Triathlon while still offering the challenge of a full 20K bike course and 5K run course. For those opting for the full 750M swim, this is an excellent swim courses in the clear, clean, shallow and calm waters of this sheltered beach behind Mullaghmore Head. The bike course is mostly along the wide and well-surfaced N15 while the rolling run

course offers views of Donegal Bay, Benbulbin, and the Leitrim hills, which will literally leave you breathless!

Entry can be made online at www.triathlonireland.com - Full race details online: <http://healthinsurance.glohealth.ie/glohealth-mullaghmore-triathlon-1/>

If you have any questions or queries on the race, accommodation, or any other matter, please do not hesitate in contacting us. - MSC Triathlon Club. queries@msctri.com

WORD SEARCH

1916 Proclamation Signatories

CROSS OFF THE WORDS IN THE LIST AS YOU FIND THEM.

Word searches are fun, they also bring benefits you may not realise and can play an important role in keeping you mentally fit.

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C L A R K E U Y T C S W U L Y
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H M U Z I L A S H W N H T A L
G R O N S R U T P N D P C P R
A Y O X M E U N O G Z D T Z Z
N I D A V P M C K D D P K Q Z
O X D E J M W A L E E G T C P
D A A H P E S O J I T W D O M
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IRELAND'S AVIATOR HEROES OF WORLD WAR 2 - VOL. 2

Author: John C Hewitt
Publisher: Mercier Press (April 2016)
www.mercierpress.ie
ISBN: 978-1781173886
Price: €30
Pages: 288

John Hewitt's second volume shines a light on the participation of many brave Irishmen during World War 2, which is referred to as the Emergency in Ireland. In his first volume John covered primarily the Ulstermen who fought and many of whom also died as aircrew during World War 2.

Because of wartime censorship Ireland was largely unaware of the sacrifices made by some of its citizens in defence of democracy. This volume concentrates on the exploits of some of the southern born airmen and also from the six counties.

The life of Wing Commander Brendan 'Paddy' Finucane DSO, DFC, is covered in detail as are the lives of the aircrew from both sides of the social spectrum. Extensive research and anecdotes from people who knew them, that paint vivid pictures of the hazards they endured in combat. Experience gained did not necessarily guarantee survival in the deadly arena of modern aerial warfare. Sadly thirteen of the airmen featured were lost in action.

This volume is a worthy addition to the military aviation shelves, which up to now for various reasons has mainly ignored the sacrifice of the airmen from the island of Ireland.

John Hewitt is a lifelong aviation enthusiast and worked as a British Airways engineer for 30 years. He was involved in the mapping of World War 2 crash sites in Northern Ireland and spent 40 years interviewing RAF Fighter Pilots and Bomber Aircrew from all over Ireland. **MB**



HARRY CLARKE'S WAR Illustrations for Ireland's Memorial Records 1914-1918

Author: Marguerite Helmers
Publisher: Irish Academic Press (January 2016) irishacademicpress.ie
ISBN: 978-0716533085
Price: €26.95
Pages: 264

Ireland is known world-wide for the saying "*The Island of Saint's and Scholars*". Can one include from Scholars, artists? If so the name of Harry Clarke must be remembered.

His stained glass windows and his designs may be found in many of the Bewley's café's in Dublin.

Harry Clarke was born in 1889 and he became a highly skilled artist, who originally started his working life as a graphic artist. In 1923 Harry Clarke was given a commission to illustrate the pages of *Ireland's Memorial Records 1914 - 1918*. Three events of importance which involved the Irish Military divisions, Gallipoli, the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme.

It is surprising that by the time the new Irish Free State evolved, the state went ahead with the War Memorial Records. Of the original 100 sets only 11 sets remain. One set of eight volumes can be seen in the Irish National War Memorial in Islandbridge Dublin.

For both tourist and all those who have an interest in both art and military history, a visit to both the Irish National War Memorial in Islandbridge would be a pleasing experience.

Both these commemorative works are characterised with decorative margins that reflect the arts and crafts movement with Celtic motifs throughout. His figures are accompanied with familiar symbols of round towers, ruined houses, wolfhounds, gravestones along with the forms of war of that period: infantrymen, trenches and silhouettes of biplanes.

Marguerite's book combines rare illustrations with an easy to read written text. **SS**



PEACEKEEPER

Author: Armn Michael J Whelan
Publisher: Doire Press (April 2016)
www.doirepress.com
ISBN: 978-1907682469
Price: €12 - Free World-Wide Shipping

Sometimes readers are put off by poetry collections, which seemingly hinge on one theme, the military for example – so let's get something out of the way. Armn Whelan's debut offering "*Peacekeeper*" has enough variety in its presentation of scenarios, its reportage and its reminiscences to maintain interest and guarantee it many rereading's whether or not the topic war is your usual preference.

Much could be made of the unique perspective that Whelan's profession serving in the Irish Defence Forces and as a UN peacekeeper in South Lebanon and Kosovo brings to the subject.

But it's as important to realise that the poet's authority comes as much from his own fatherhood and humanity as from his military role. Equally the uses of metaphor and perspective seen throughout the collection are as informed by his other profession, as a military historian.

The poems show a respect for the locals as fellow fathers and sons, wives and daughters, tinged with regret at their aggression as combatants in interminable disastrous warfare. Violence directed both toward each other and the peacekeepers.

Frequently grim this first collection from Whelan has enough peppering's of beauty to keep it from being a masochistic carnival. There is neither a glorification of war nor a fetishisation of weaponry. Works like "*Distant Whisper*" and "*Through the Steyr AUG....*" elegantly point out the near mystical quality of how a gun can undo the miracle of life. *Peacekeeper* is not a pleasant read, and it shouldn't be. Whelan's is a vivid and unique voice with an insightful vulnerable masculinity. I look forward to reading more in the future. **RB**



THE POWER OF THE SPOKEN WORD

BY PAUL O'BRIEN

Mckee Bks NCOs Mess was the venue for a talk entitled *1916 and the Mobilisation of Sentiment, conducted by crisis manager and risk consultant, Declan Power, on April 14th.*

A former member of the Defence Forces, Declan gave a detailed talk that examined the aims of the Rising leadership and how they differed from conventional military concepts.

Many examine history with the benefit of hindsight and Power's talk looked at this aspect, and how we, as individuals or groups, when examining a nation's history, may be collective and selective.

Were the Irish Volunteers right in staging a rebellion in 1916? Did they have a clear mandate to stage an insurrection? Should they have waited until the end of WWI to see if Home Rule would be granted as the British Government had promised? What about those Irishmen that joined the British Army to fight in the war?

The talk covered these topics and more. Topics that were controversial in 1916, and even today may cause contention: the sentiment successfully mobilised among the Irish populace in the aftermath of the Rising regarding the event and its participants is still evident today.

A lively debate followed the talk with a number of the audience directing statements and questions to the speaker. These were all answered in turn, the audience enjoying the interaction with Declan.

One aspect of the evening's discussion was that the Rising was an important event in the history of the Defence Forces (*Óglaigh na hÉireann*), and its involvement in the recent commemorations was testament to this.

Declan Power is a security/defence analyst and writer currently working with the European Commission on projects involving counter-terrorism (CT), countering of violent extremism (CVE) and civil-military engagement. He also consults and advises for the corporate sector, including a number of Irish companies working or planning to operate in volatile regions.

A former career soldier, Declan served in the three combat arms of the Irish army and later in DFHQ on a variety of operations both at home and abroad. He continues to deploy on UN and EU missions.

In 2012 he was part of an Irish/Swiss government-funded team that researched and developed a system of crisis management for international humanitarian organisations. He was the project leader for the

successful field phase of implementation during deployment in South Sudan 2014-15. Later that year he was also a panelist/contributor to the 2015 White Paper on Defence. In addition to attending the military college, Declan has also completed a degree in journalism with Dublin City University and is a graduate of Peace and Conflict Studies from Trinity College Dublin and the UNHCR's Emergency Management program.

He instructs on various civil and military crisis management courses, including UNOCHA's Civil-Military Staff Planning Course, NATO's CCOE School and the UK's Brunel Centre for Intelligence and Security Studies (BCIS).

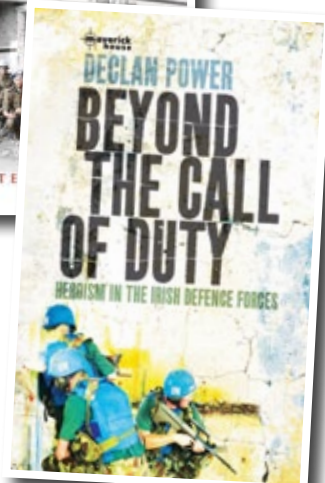
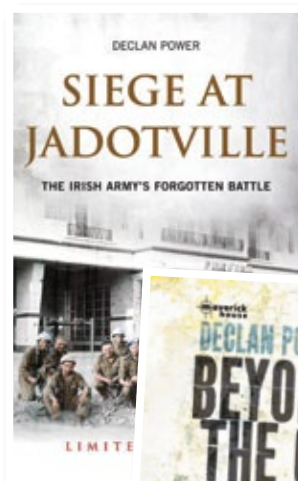
Declan is the author of a number of articles and papers on security affairs, including 'From the Congo to Mali' (Irish Studies in International Affairs 2013), which examined Ireland's contribution to international peace support operations. He also wrote 'Siege at Jadotville' (Maverick House 2005), one of the few books dealing with the Irish experience of UN service during the Congo mission. The book has been adapted for film by Parallel film, directed by Dubliner Richie Smyth and is due for release by Netflix later this Autumn.

Following 'Siege at Jadotville', Declan has been working on 'Beyond the Call of Duty', the stories behind the awards of the Military Medal for Gallantry. Only eight have been awarded since the foundation of the state. Declan seeks to tell the contribution of the soldiers who earned these decorations, serving their comrades and country. Publication date is set for later this year.

When not deployed abroad, Declan provides analysis to both broadcast and print media on security and defence matters. This varies between writing analysis pieces for print and online media as required to more frequently entering the public debate on matters of security, terrorism and defence. ■



Declan Power





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