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AN COSANTÓIR

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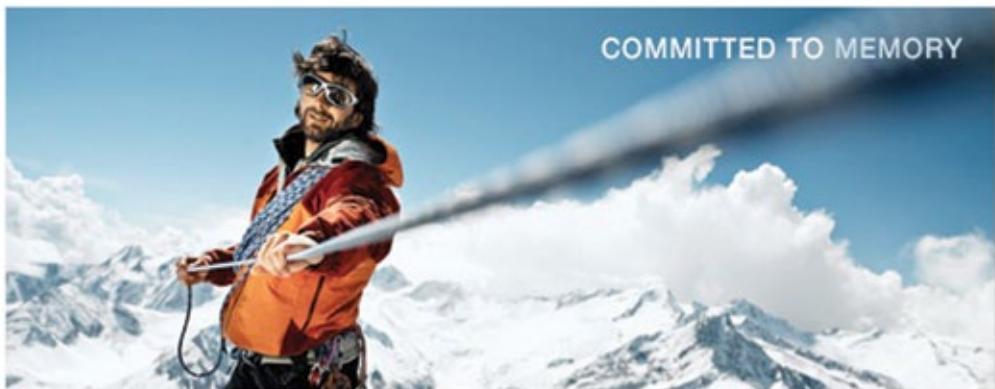
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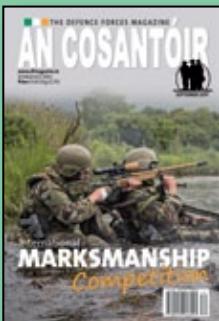
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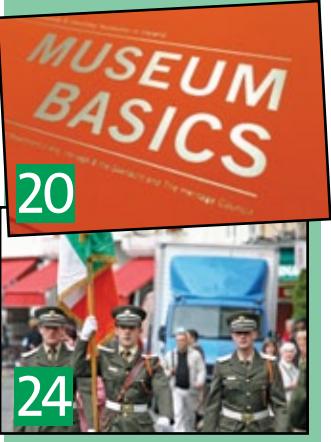
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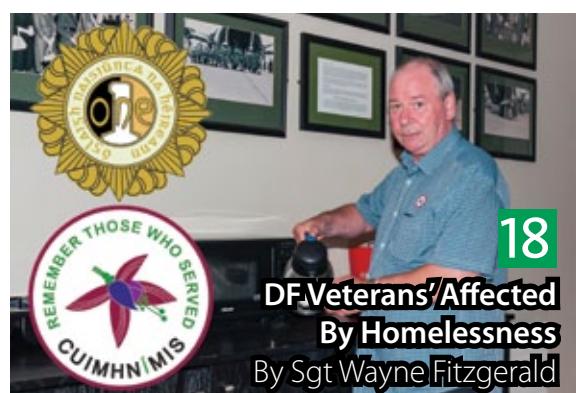
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Front Cover

27 Inf Bn Sniper team competing in the 2nd International Marksmanship Skills Competition 2017. Photo by Armn Adam Murphy

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

Editorial

Hello and welcome to our September issue, where this month's main theme is the art of shooting, with articles on marksmanship, recce, and ranges: we hope it hits the target!

We received a lot of photos since our last issue, with the best chosen to appear *On Parade*.

For our *In Focus* feature we visited the Midlands National Shooting Centre of Ireland in Co Offaly, which hosted this year's International Gallery Rifle Federation world championships in July. We also travelled to Co Meath to visit the Irish Military War Museum, the largest military museum in Ireland, covering 22 acres. Our *Veterans News* tells of our visit to Balbriggan, where Siege of Jadotville veteran Pte Terry McMahon (RIP) was honoured and commemorated by his local historical society with a plaque near his old home.

Our first feature reports on the 2017 DF Recce Concentration, which saw 10 teams competing against each other for the opportunity to represent the DF at Exercise Cambrian Patrol in the UK in October. It was also the first time a foreign military team participated, with a UK detachment from 1st Bn, Royal Irish Regiment, in the mix. Our front cover feature looks at the 2017 DF Sniper Competition, where 17 pairs of highly trained soldiers arrived in the Glen of Imaal to compete for the title of best sniper-spotter team. The competition had both national and international categories. Four international teams, from the UK, the USA and Germany, and a team from the ARW took part in the international event.

In *DF Gets a 'Bloods' Transfusion* we bring you a short piece on the passing-out parade of 145 Recruit Platoon of 3 Inf Bn, Kilkenny. This is followed by another short piece on the fourth

500 MILESTONE IN BLOOD DONATIONS



By Cpl Lee Coyle
Photo by Armn Adam Murphy

Gnr Joe O'Rourke (2 BAR, attached McKee Bks Coy) recently made his 500th donation of blood, plasma

and platelets in the National Blood Centre beside St James hospital. Joe's amazing accomplishment was acknowledged and celebrated by the staff of Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS). Joe was very modest about his achievement and said he doesn't do it for the recognition but to help others. He started donating in 1977, when the IBTS came to McKee Bks. After donating 500 times he added jokingly: "The hardest part is the needle; even after all this time I still can't get used to it". After a few years giv-

ing blood and plasma, Joe started donating platelets, which takes longer than blood donation.

Jo Lawlor from the IBTS told us how important this service is and how grateful they are for people like Joe. "He is only the eleventh person in Ireland to reach this landmark 500th donation," she said, "with only three donors in the country reaching 600 donations so far."

The IBTS needs more donors every day; if you would like find out about becoming a donor please visit the IBTS website www.giveblood.ie.

annual 12 Inf Bn Services Day, where members of the DF, the local emergency services, and the gardaí compete for the coveted trophy. In our article on ONE's annual Fuchsia Appeal, we see how it is invaluable in funding their homeless initiatives around the country, and we hear what it's like to be made homeless by a former resident of Brú na bhFiann. That's followed by an extended look at a museum basics course conducted in Military Archives and run under the auspices of the Irish Museum Association.

In our *Strategic Review* feature Capt Alan Kearney tells us how the Ordnance School delivered a cross-agency course for GSOC on Post-Event Analysis: Small Arms and IEDs, to develop and enhance the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission's capability to investigate incidents involving firearms or explosives. In *The Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes* Rev Fr Séamus Madigan (Head Chaplain to the Forces) gathers the views of three different pilgrims from this year's trip, with a look to raising interest for the 60th anniversary pilgrimage next year.

Our *History* feature, *Last Action in the Congo: 38 Infantry Battalion*, by Dr James McCafferty DSM, BA (Hons), PhD, looks at the last operational Irish unit to serve in the Congo in 1962.

For our *Sports* feature, *To Hellas and Back*, Sgt Eric Dalton (IWW) talks about his trip to Greece earlier this year with five other cross-country motorcyclists to take part in the tough Hellas Rally Raid, which has become a warm-up race for the Dakar Rally. Plus, we have our regular *Tac-Aide*, *Gear Up*, *Noticeboard*, *Reviews*, and *What I Do* features.

Finally, check out our competitions and results on pages 11, 36 and 37.

Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald - Editor

6 | ON PARADE



▲ PDFORRA RETIREMENT

DF COS Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM made a presentation to PDFORRA General Secretary Gerry Rooney, on the occasion of his retirement on the 23rd June 2017. *An Cosantóir* would like to wish Gerry all the best wishes with his future endeavours. *Photo: Robbie McAney*



▲ 31ST NAVAL DIVERS COURSE

Pictured on the 6th July 2017 is Flag Officer Commanding Naval Service, Commodore Hugh Tully, who presented the 31st Naval Divers Course with their certificates. *Photo: A/B David Jones*



▲ FUCHSIA APPEAL

Pictured on Thursday 6th July are members of Royal Meath Branch of ONE collecting in Navan shopping centre for the Fuchsia Appeal, which helps fund ONE's homeless initiative for former DF veterans. They are L/R: Paddy Tully, Branch Chairman John Tobin, and Vice Chairman Cathal Rogers. *Photo: Cathal Rogers, ONE*



▲ LTAV OPERATOR DRIVERS COURSE

On Friday 7th July 2017, 15 students drawn from all brigades of the Defence Forces completed the 24th Operator Drivers Course on the LTAV Standard Infantry Variant. B Coy, 6 Inf Bn have the responsibility for training all personnel on the LTAV Standard Infantry Variant since it began service in the Defence Forces. Officer In Charge of the course was Lt Aislinn Kelleher. *Photo: Pte Aiden Sherlock, 6 Inf Bn*

▲ ARDUOUS SERPENT

Defence Forces Medics from the Central Medical Unit took part in the British Army Arduous Serpent Competition from 28th June to 2nd July 2017, which took place in the Strensall Training Area, UK. Defence Forces Medics reached the final run off for first place, which involved four teams from the British Army and one team from the Canadian Army. A total of 22 teams took part with the Canadian Army taking first place. *Photo: Sgt Leon Clarke, CMU*



▲ 1 BDE RESERVE RECRUIT CAMP

Pictured in Fort Berehaven at the 1 Brigade Reserve Recruit Camp are Col Rory Sheerin, EO 1 Bde, Lt Col O'Sullivan, OC 1 BAR, Collins Bks and Fort Berehaven along with Comdt O'Shaughnessy OiC Course with prize winners Rec Wallace, 3 Inf Bn (Best Kit), Rec Breen, 1 BAR (Best Shot) and Rec Bateman, 1 Bde Engr Coy (Overall Best Student). Photo: Sgt John Paul Gaine, 1 BAR



▲ #MNA NA HEIREANN

On the 100th Anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising I invited all the women of the Defence Forces to change their profile picture on Facebook to one of them in uniform using the hashtags #mna na heireann #proud to be Irish. This spread across the DF members on Facebook, with females and males all changing their profile pictures. Here is a sample collage of some of those pictures. Photo: Cpl Debbie Egan, 1 Bde CMU Det



◀ FAREWELL DONAL

Pictured on the 23rd July 2017 in Ballymullen Barracks is CQMS Donal Horgan at his stand down parade after 42 years of service with Comdt Reynolds, C Coy 12th. Donal served with the 13th, 22nd, 32nd Infantry Battalions and finished with C Coy, 12 Inf Bn. Photo: Sgt Ian Sims RDF, C Coy, 12 Inf Bn

▲ DOES ANYONE KNOW THE GOOD SAMARITANS?

"Hi, I'm not sure if I'm messaging the right place but I was wondering if you might be able to pass on a message for me. On Sunday last at around 1.30 / 2pm my elderly parents were in a very serious traffic accident near the Glen of Imaal. Some soldiers stopped to help them just after the accident and stayed until paramedics arrived. They were amazing and I just wanted to let them know that we truly appreciate how they helped and talked to my parents and kept them calm. I'm not sure who they were but I think they deserve to know that their presence was really appreciated that day and we can't thank them enough. If you do happen to know who they might have been please pass on my thanks X." Ms Joanne Martin

The Good Samaritans were identified from the 1 Armoured Cavalry Squadron: Cpl Aidan Murphy, Cpl Jim Leonard, Cpl Graeme Mc Donagh and Tpr Glen Maher, who are seen here with Lt Colm Fahy. Photo: Armn Adam Murphy

▼ DANCON MARCH MALI

Pictured are members of IRCON 9 EUTM Mali who participated in the recent 25km DANCON loaded march with weapons in Bamako, Mali. The Irish troops put up a good show with all who started finishing at the front. Photo: Comdt Niall Buckley, EUTM Mali



INFOCUS

MIDLANDS SHOOTING CENTRE

REPORT AND PHOTOS BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

Left is Ireland's Jeff Kehoe Individual Centrefire World Champion and retired Capt Ray Holohan Individual Smallbore World Champion. Photo: igrf.org/NASRPC



The Midlands National Shooting Centre of Ireland (MNSCI) in Derrymore, near Blueball in Co Offaly, hosted this year's world championships for Gallery Rifle Centerfire and Smallbore in July.

The MNSCI is known throughout the world of sports target shooting as a centre of excellence, and in Ireland as the heart of shooting. It is a long-established shooting facility that covers all disciplines of the sport. Rifle ranges varying from 10 to 1,200 yards cater for all firearm calibres and there is a pistol range and also a clay pigeon layout. The facility has hosted national and international competitions and its members have represented Ireland at competitions worldwide.

The MNSCI's chairman, John Paul (JP) Craven, served with the FCÁ in the 1980s and has a number of family members serving or recently retired from the Defence Forces.

What struck me first on meeting JP was his no-nonsense approach; he was straight talking and to the point. "Safety is paramount," he told me, and this is backed up by MNSCI's slogan, 'Know Safety = No Injury'.

The centre doesn't allow shooters to wear military uniforms, except when worn for historic military shoots or re-enactments, and in those cases the period uniforms must match the firearm in use. "No combats, no tactical shooting; it's a sport shooting centre with no exceptions!" said JP.

When I asked about the membership, JP told me that MNSCI members come from all walks of life: farmers, plumbers, engineers, IT technicians, doctors, building contractors, paramedics, and members of the Defence Forces and An Garda Síochána.

As we toured the facility it was impossible not to be impressed; the design and layout of the different ranges, such as the pistol and the long (1,200 yards) range were excellent and employ the most up-to-date technology. A system of weights is used to raise and lower the targets, which are secured with Velcro to wooden frame. The 600m 'Windmill' range has a revolving target, like a windmill blade, which is very popular with shooters as it simulates a moving target.

On July 9th the MNSCI hosted the International Gallery Rifle Federation (IGRF) World Cup, with international competitors attending from around the world, and the 20 clubs from the National Association of Sporting Rifle & Pistol Clubs (NASRPC), which is the governing body for a range of target shooting disciplines in Ireland. The NASRPC Irish Open was also hosted at the centre.

In the IGRF World Cup Ireland came first in the team events in Gallery Rifle Centerfire and Smallbore against tough opposition from Germany, Australia, South Africa and the UK, an honour they also held in 2013 after winning the World Cup in the UK.

Ireland also won the World Cup individual

on Target

events in both disciplines (Jeff Kehoe won the Centerfire and Capt Ray Holohan (retd) won the Smallbore) to make it a clean sweep on the first occasion of holding the competition in Ireland.

Centerfire (Team) result: 1st - Ireland, 2nd - Great Britain, 3rd - South Africa.

Irish team: Jeff Kehoe, Mike Nestor, Pat Grimes, Ray Holohan, Len Regan and Dennis Cummins (sub).

Smallbore (Team) result: 1st - Ireland, 2nd - Great Britain, 3rd - South Africa.

Irish team: Ray Holohan, Jeff Kehoe, Daniel O'Flaherty, Mike Nestor, Len Regan and James Connolly (sub).

Individual World Champions, Centerfire: 1st Jeff Kehoe (IRL), 2nd Gwyn Roberts (GB) & 3rd Phil Wood.

Individual World Champions, Smallbore: 1st Ray Holohan (IRL), 2nd Flippie Van Tonder & 3rd Jeff James Kehoe.

The IGRF World Cup and Irish Open was a great success with all of the nations commending the venue, Irish hospitality and professionalism of the organisers and Range Safety Officers. The World Cup winning team is now training for the next big international in Leitmar Germany in November and Ireland is already looking forward to travelling to the next IGRF World Cup in South Africa in 2019 to defend their title.

The Midlands National Shooting Centre of Ireland (MNSCI):
www.nationalshootingcentre.ie ■

Irish Military War Museum



REPORT & PHOTOS BY CPL LEE COYLE

An Cosantóir recently visited the Irish Military War Museum in Starinagh, Collon, Co. Meath to view its new extension and to take in the sights and sounds of its fully interactive tour.

The museum is privately owned and the largest of its kind in Ireland, now boasting a whopping 13,000 square feet of floor space. Opened by the Minister of State with Responsibility for Defence, Mr Paul Kehoe TD, in June 2014, the museum offers a fascinating insight into Irish participants in both world wars and other historical military conflicts.

The new extension increased the original size of the museum by almost 9,000 square feet and holds a wealth of military artefacts, decommissioned weapons and authentic clothing. Exhibits are not in the standard display cases but are generally displayed in different realistic scenarios, such as war-torn buildings and trenches from different periods. These allow visitors to feel part of the action and for a brief moment they can be whisked away to a foreign land during one of the greatest battles in history. Vehicles are also displayed in these scenarios, which show them in all their menacing superiority just as they did on the battlefield during their service; a fantastic sight for any military enthusiast.

The new extension also holds a large confer-

ence room that is available for hire for meetings, exhibitions and events.

The tour of the facility is fully interactive, allowing visitors to touch and handle the militaria on display. Fully guided tours are provided by in-house historians and automated podcast guided tours.

The museum also offers tour packages and caters for school visits and workshops for visiting groups.

After viewing the fascinating exhibits within the museum building, there is plenty more to do out on the grounds, which include a children's play area with a fully equipped playground and an enclosed picnic area with benches and BBQ facilities. For those who wish to have a party or celebrate a special occasion at the museum, there is also a fully serviced kitchen.

The outdoor site covers 22 acres and has running water, night lighting, bathroom facilities and paddock areas for camping, on request.

Also on the grounds, the museum has recreated a typical Great War trench, which gives visitors a great insight into the terrible conditions in which an estimated 210,000 Irishmen fought and died in the mud-sodden world of the Western Front.

There is also an in-house instructor available to teach visitors how to drive an original



FV432 armoured personnel carrier; a vehicle first built in Britain in 1962 and still in service with various armies, proving just how dependable it is.

Finally, the museum also offers a costume and equipment rental, ranging from period originals and high quality replicas for TV and film productions to costumes for drama groups or fancy dress.

During the year, special living-history events are held where the mannequins are replaced by re-enactors from the WWII Club, who answer questions and tell stories about the two world wars.

The Irish Military War Museum has something for people of all ages and nationalities and is a 'must see' for any military enthusiast or anyone interested in Irish history.

The museum is located just off the M1, at exit 12 (Dunleer/Collon), there is a map on their website: www.imwm.ie/contact/map/ or for more information call: 041 9819501. ■

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

JADOTVILLE VETERAN REMEMBERED Pte Terry McMahon

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD



RDF members from E Coy, 27 Inf Bn.



The parade through Balbriggan.

On Saturday 15th July, a celebration of the life of Siege of Jadotville veteran, Pte Terry McMahon (RIP), took place in Balbriggan. The astounding work of the Balbriggan & District Historical Society, who acknowledged the generous support they received from Fingal County Council and Heritage Officer Gerry Clabby, was responsible for this project to commemorate a true soldier of Ireland.



Pte Terence McMahon, Jadotville 1961.

Pte Terry McMahon volunteered to serve with 35 Inf Bn in the UN peacekeeping mission to the Congo in 1961. This unit has subsequently become known as the 'Jadotville tigers', after their heroic performance at the Siege of Jadotville, where 150 Irish soldiers fought off numerous attacks from an estimated 3,000-plus Katangan force led by Belgian mercenaries.

The idea of a commemorative plaque for Terry

in the centre of town came about after a conversation between his brother, Anthony, and May McKeon, a member of the Balbriggan & District Historical Society and former local councillor.

The day began with a commemorative Mass in St Peter & Paul's Church, celebrated by Fr Eugene Taaffe PP and assisted by Fr Liam Cuffe, who is the son of another Jadotville veteran, Sgt Geoffrey Cuffe. Following Mass a Defence Forces colour party of RDF members from E Coy, 27 Inf Bn, led a parade including members of IUNVA and ONE; local volunteer groups; scouts; and members of the Balbriggan & District Historical Society. The groups formed up outside the church, before marching to George's Square, where the national flag was raised from half-mast as the St Patrick's Brass and Reed Band played the national anthem.

The ceremony concluded with the unveiling of the plaque by the Mayor of Fingal, Cllr Mary McCamley, followed by some touching speeches.

Members of the McMahon family were present, most of whom had travelled from abroad for the ceremony, including Terry's brother, Anthony - who is also a Defence Forces veteran and served with the UN in Cyprus in the 1960s.

Reservist Cpl Ross McGee, E Coy, 27 Inf Bn, who was in the colour party, said: *"This was a proud moment for me as the McMahon family and my family are good friends, and I knew Terry as a kid."*

After the ceremony many people went to the Bracken Court Hotel, where they had the opportunity to discuss Jadotville with some veterans of the siege and were treated to a presentation on the siege, given by Col Pat Quinlan's son, Comdt Leo Quinlan (retd).

We will finish with a few more words from Cpl Ross McGee: *"Terry passed away with little note in 1997, but he was very warmly remembered during this ceremony and will be remembered in the future with this plaque placed on his old family home."* ■



L/R: Terence's brother John, Jadotville Veteran Mick Dunne, Terence's sister Julia, and his brother Anthony.

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ISBN: 978-1911013839

Irish Militaria Pre-1946

On the 28th June Conor A. Dullaghan, Ph.D. handed over a cheque for €1,000 to ONE's Fuchsia Appeal to help homeless veterans.

The War of Independence (WoI) Centenary challenge coin is a follow on from the success of the 1916 Centenary Coin. 500 of the WoI coins were made this time. So far, donations to St John Ambulance Brigade Ireland and the ONE Fuchsia Appeal have been made. All proceeds go to charity. It's also a good way to highlight the collectables group started on Facebook.

The coins are available for €14.99 each plus €5 for postage. Payment sent via PayPal to cdullaghan@hotmail.com as Friends and Family option to ensure even more goes to charity, along with your postal address.

email: 1916irishcollector@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/groups/earlyirishmilitaria

2017 DF
RECONNAISSANCE CONCENTRATION

Recce Concentration

BY COMDT KENNY O'ROURKE, CHIEF INSTRUCTOR,
INF WPNS WING, INF SCH, DFTC
PHOTOS BY ARMN ADAM MURPHY



At 1000hrs on Friday 7th July in Kilbride Camp the competitors and staff of the 2017 DF Reconnaissance Concentration stood at ease on parade awaiting the arrival of GOC DFTC, Brig Gen Joe Mulligan. Almost on cue, the wind picked up from the southwest and the clouds closed in. This was noted by a number of the more seasoned competitors, and grins and an eye roll or two, were passed knowingly. The rain started to fall as the GOC later addressed the parade and handed out prizes. As he spoke he paused to acknowledge the change in the weather, telling the parade that this was indeed "good weather for recce soldiers". He wasn't wrong.

The dismounted recce detachment is an important component of Infantry and Cavalry Corps capability and is the main building block of infantry recce platoons, cavalry troops and, in recent years, the DF's contribution to the EUBG ISTAR Company. It is the capability of this detachment that is tested as part of the DF's annual recce concentration.

Ten teams came together for the 2017 concentration to learn new skills and to compete against each other for the opportunity to represent the DF at the British Army's Exercise Cambrian Patrol in October. This year for the first time, a foreign military

team participated in the concentration, with a UK detachment from ISR platoon, 1st Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment (RIR). The 'Irish Rangers' quickly found themselves to be amongst like-minded people, as the team coach, Sgt Ken Baily, told me later: *"The atmosphere and environment that we are experiencing this week has made us feel right at home; this is how we like to train."*

Concentration 2017 aimed to present participants with a challenging and rewarding four-day exercise based on realistic offensive scenarios. The week commenced with a concentration phase early on Monday where all teams met in a disused quarry in northwest Wicklow. This phase focused on the exchange of experience and ideas, TTPs, safety checks, and rehearsals. The final briefings informed teams of how the week would be assessed and that a portfolio of score sheets would be presented to team captains at ENDEX to guide follow-up training back in their units.

After 1800hrs the focus changed and the scored competition phases commenced. Detachment commanders (DCs) attended an 'O' Gp based on a robust crisis-management operation scenario. Teams were briefed by IWW staff role-playing company and platoon commander and informed of the rules concerning the 'enemy' counter-recce unit who would be operating in the area.



The DCs of each competing team then conducted combat estimates before delivering their own 'O' Gp and conducting final rehearsals. Teams were then moved by Mowag APC to a drop-off point in the exercise area on the shore of Blessington Lake, where they secured the 'home bank', signalled a RIB waiting off-shore, and were inserted under cover of darkness by boat to their first RV. They then had seven hours to complete route reccees and identify form-up points and fire support group locations for a UN force to clear Lacken village.

Before first light the DCs reported to their next secure location, compiled their reports and availed of three or four hours rest before the commencement of the situational training exercise (STX) phase.

During this phase teams were scored for their performance at five managed stands: judging distance; reaction to effective fire; the search of an abandoned enemy area; a medical stand; and finally an obstacle crossing-point recce. Teams rolled into their final RV that evening for another short period of rest before commencing an abridged 12-hour simulated observation post

(OP) phase. This phase was conducted throughout the night and morning and tested the detachments' ability to deploy a covert OP and accurately report enemy activity. As this phase ended, teams came together again for a staff-led debrief of each team's OP site ensuring maximum learning took place.

On Wednesday afternoon the group reported to Kilbride Camp, 25km from their original starting point on Monday, for a mandatory five hours rest. Teams then transitioned from blank to live ammunition for the final live-fire phase of the competition. All of Wednesday evening was spent rehearsing close-quarter battle (CQB) TTPs.

With a night's rest in camp and a hot breakfast in their bellies, the teams left early for the Glen of Imaal on Thursday morning for the final phase, which included advanced detachment-level LFTT and target grid procedure with live 81mm mortar bombs. Finally, the teams went through a realistic AFV recognition test in a simulated battle area. This day's events were amongst the most challenging events of the week and ensured that all competitors ended the week on a high. The RIR DC, Sgt Dave Browne, commented that the live-fire day was amongst the most challenging they had conducted and that the training benefit for them was exceptional.

Later that night there was time for a well-earned BBQ, setting the scene for the scores to be announced in the canteen.

Following a rigorous assessment of the results by IWW staff and consultation with the team captains, 27 Inf Bn were announced as winners with a score of 665 out of a possible 800. The Royal Irish were runners up with 580 points and 6 Inf Bn, 3 Inf Bn, 7 Inf Bn and 28 Inf Bn were 3rd to 6th respectively, with only 33 points separating them.

Recce is hard graft and one detachment commander commented: *"It's not nearly as 'sexy' as the sniper stuff; there is no badge, no 'Gucci' kit issue, and as a recce soldier you are expected to have the highest standards."*

Recce teams at the concentration were overtly passionate about their skill set because it's hard and it's rewarding, and because the people involved are positive and professional.

Finally, good luck to 27 Inf Bn on the Cambrian Patrol and we hope to see the RIR, and other international competitors, for DF Recce Concentration 2018.

The Basic Recce Course is for mature, motivated, fit individuals: if you are interested by this article and want to develop your soldiering skills, talk to a recce instructor in your unit and look to prepare for the next infantry or cavalry course. ■



2017 DF Sniper Competition and the 2nd International Marksmanship Skills Competition

BY COMDT KENNY O'ROURKE, CHIEF INSTRUCTOR, INF WPNS WING, INF SCH, DFTC
PHOTOS BY ARMN ADAM MURPHY & CPL LEE COYLE

On June 26th, 17 pairs of highly trained soldiers arrived to the Glen of Imaal for one reason; to establish the best sniper-spotter team. Twelve teams from across the Army, including one from the ARW, came to compete in the national event and five teams came to compete in the 2nd International Marksmanship Skills Competition conducted by the Infantry Weapons Wing (IWW). The international event comprised a second ARW team, two US special operations teams, a team from the UK's Royal Irish Regiment, and one from the German Navy's Force Protection Battalion. Both competitions were run concurrently, with all teams completing the same events over four days of intense activity.

For the 12 teams in the national competition, there was the chance to have their names engraved on the perpetual All-Army Sniper Trophy. The national competition specifies that teams must wear general service protective equipment (body armour, helmet, etc.) and must use the Al92 .308 calibre sniper weapon and the FN 7.62mm spotter weapon currently on issue. International teams generally used .300 or .338 calibre sniper rifles with spotters typically using a 7.62mm magazine-fed rifle.

By the end of the opening briefs, it would have been obvious to the internationals that if they wanted to win the open class event, then the ARW's international team were the team to beat. The national class had many experienced shooters, some new to competitive shooting, but the prizes were

anyone's for the taking.

Even though the rules of the competition are extensive, the competition format is quite simple. Prior to the competition, teams are given guidance from the IWW on the skills that will be assessed, but no specific details. This year, teams were informed that they would fire their primary weapons and secondary weapons across a variety of events or 'stands', by day and night, over four days.

Taking the first afternoon as an example; teams were told they would have to complete a battle run, with all combat kit and equipment, before completing three shooting stands in quick succession. The shooting tasks included a cold-bore shoot, a distance shoot and a 'know your limits' shoot.

Sniper events are not like civilian marksmanship competitions and all shoots involve additional stressors to simulate combat situations. Calculating adjustments and hitting a target at 600m can be difficult enough, but doing so after you have run to the stand, flipped truck tires and then find yourself under a strict time constraint is another thing; but nobody said it would be easy!

The final stressor was provided courtesy of the training environment in the Glen of Imaal. The US special operations team captain said the Glen was one of the most challenging range areas that they have trained in, providing difficult terrain and



mixed weather conditions. Heavy wind and rain created difficulties for teams for night shoot events and the teams that did well used team work and clear communication to quickly identify and engage targets.

Days two, three and four continued in this format and teams completed a total of ten scored events. The close-quarter shooting was technical, with multiple pistol targets, including the spinning 'Texas wheel' and the 'duelling tree'.

To complicate things further the prescribed ammunition quantity was distributed unevenly across magazines over an unknown distance course.

The final scored stands were a stalking stand and a shoot from a sub-surface observation post. Teams also participated in unscored long-range and close-quarter battle shoots dedicated to broadening the skills of the competitors.

The competition culminated in a dynamic stress shoot, which consisted of a number of stands run over a set route across the field firing area. Competitors were directed into combat



Cpl Lee Coyle spoke to participants on the 2nd International Marksmanship Skills Competition (Vox Pop):

2nd Platoon Leader, Recon Coy, See Bn, German Navy

"I have served 11 years in the Navy; our main function is to provide force protection for the boarding parties on the vessel. I became a sniper in 2009 and this is my first time in Ireland and in a competitive shooting competition. I'm finding it new and interesting, but also learning from the other teams with new training methods."

Operator US SOF

"I learned to shoot as a kid, going on hunting trips. I have been a sniper for two years and this is my first shooting competition. The conditions are good out here; it makes it more challenging when they're like this. I'm finding the competition good with a lot of areas we don't normally work in, so it makes us think on our feet."

Pte Mark Fitzpatrick, Sp Coy, 27 Inf Bn.

"I completed my basic sniper course in 2015 and this is the first time I've competed in a marksman competition. It has been good to work in this pressure environment, as it forces us to work out problems together with our spotters, making us better snipers. It also makes us trust the equipment that we have and to rely on it."

Royal Irish, Regt British Army

"There are a lot of points to take into consideration about marksmanship. We had good integration with the Irish and other nations. We are very fortunate and honoured to be invited to the competition and look forward to next year's competition to bring back the enthusiasm from this year's challenging competition. There was very good administration from the training staff throughout the competition."

scenarios where they had to complete tasks such as shooting from a riverbed or shooting a 'captured weapon'. It was evident from the teams as they crossed the finish line that they had given it their all and thoroughly enjoyed the event.

An important aspect of the concentration is the exchange of ideas that takes place between stands and after each day's events.

As teams had the chance to review their performance the final scores were checked before the winners were announced in the canteen that night. The winners of both the national and international competitions were the Army Ranger Wing, and while it may seem a matter of course that our experienced special operatives should win every year, the event is extremely competitive and the ARW teams had to fight as hard as the others to come out on top.

The runner up in the international competition was USA-Team 1 and the national runners-up were Pte McQuaid and Pte McDonald from 27 Inf Bn with 3rd place going to 1 Cn Cois. The All-Army Best Sniper went to Cpl Callanan of 1 Cn Cois and Best Spotter went to Cpl Cullinan from 12 Inf Bn.

One member of the sniper community

who is sadly missed by his comrades and whose name appears three times on the trophy is Sgt Stevie McColgan of 1 Cn Cois who passed away after an illness earlier this year. His name has now been commemorated with the Sgt Stevie McColgan Memorial Trophy, which will be awarded annually to the individual who has contributed most to the sniper community that year. It was only fitting that the first name to appear on this perpetual trophy, as voted for by his peers, is that of Sgt Davy Greene, Stevie's sniper partner when they won in 2008 and 2010.

The IWW's mission in conducting the sniper, recce and support weapons concentrations is to maintain the highest standards of skills in the Defence Forces and to ensure that competitors get the opportunity to take part in a challenging and rewarding event each year.

As stated earlier, the sniper competition is not like a civilian marksmanship competition. The objective is not just to test accuracy; this is a military competition and the sniper pair's experience and resilience under stressful conditions are just as important in their ability to take a shot in combat. ■





DF gets a 'Bloods' Transfusion

BY CPL LEE COYLE PHOTOS ARMN ADAM MURPHY

On the 20th June 2017, 35 members of 145 Recruit Platoon passed-out in James Stephens Bks, Kilkenny; the latest batch of young soldiers taking up the challenge of becoming proud members of Óglaigh na hÉireann.

It was a glorious sunny day as guests assembled on the north end of the barracks square, with the national flag proudly flying alongside. As they took their seats each received a booklet outlining the day's events. It also included a message from OC 3 Inf Bn, Lt Col Mark Brownen, congratulating the members of 145 Recruit Platoon and welcoming their family and friends to the barracks.

The MC, Lt Tobin, welcomed the guests and gave them a brief history of Stephens Bks, providing a great insight into the heritage of the buildings that surrounded them. For those unfamiliar with Stephens Bks, it was built between 1800 and 1803 to a standard plan of the time. The garrison church was added in 1852 and was converted into a sports hall after the takeover by the Free State Army in 1922. In 1969 it was given its current name in honour of James Stephens, the founder of the Fenians.

Lt Tobin also described some of the history of 3 Inf Bn, giving the guests a sense of pride in the legacy and traditions their siblings and relations would be part of in the Defence Forces. It is the oldest continuously serving battalion in the Defence Forces, having been established in 1923. The true origin of the 3 Inf Bn nickname 'the Bloods' is not quite clear. It may be due to the scarlet colour in the battalion crest or from the use of 'ox-blood' polish that they used on the brown leather shoes worn by all ranks until the 1960s, but more than likely the name came from a quirk of a former CO, Lt Col Con John Burke, who had the markers and bollards that delineated the square and grass surrounds in the battalion's former home in

Connolly Barracks in the Curragh Camp coloured red. The motto of the 3 Inf Bn is 'Dílis go Brágh' meaning 'Loyal Forever'.

The unit mascot, a two-year-old Irish wolfhound called Fionn, was also on parade with the seven NCOs and 35 recruits

GO 1 Bde, Brig Gen Patrick Flynn, took the parade and after he received his military honours, he inspected the recruit platoon along with the platoon commander, Lt Shane Flood. After Brig Gen Flynn's inspection, three members of the platoon stepped up to the podium. Rec Byrne read out the oath they had taken on enlistment; Rec Monaghan read out the DF Dignity Charter; and Rec Keating read out the Values of the DF.

It was then time for the recruits to receive their certificate of achievement; marching forward in ranks to receive their cert from Brig Gen Flynn. Next came the presentation of the award for Best Shot, which went to Pte Oisín Roche; the James Stephens award (presented to the recruit who contributed most to the *esprit de corps*, camaraderie, enthusiasm and devotion to duty amongst the group), which went to Pte Stephen Glacken; and, finally, the Best Recruit award, which went to Pte Mark Sweeney.

A very impressive foot and arms drill display was then carried out by the platoon, which demonstrated the quality of instruction and leadership they had received during their training.

Finally, before the new two-star privates fell-out to join their families, Brig Gen Flynn addressed those in attendance, saying how much of an honour it was to have family members and guests of the platoon present. He also congratulated the platoon on reaching this significant milestone and acknowledged how much pride there is in passing-out as a two-star private. He also wished them well in the rest of their training and military careers. ■



12 INF BN Services Day

REPORT & PHOTOS BY CPL MICHAEL 'RAMA' WALSH ALONG WITH CQMS SEAN O'CALLAGHAN, BOTH 12 INF BN

The 12 Inf Bn Services Day was first run in 2014, which was the 75th Anniversary of the battalion. It was the brainchild of CQMS Sean O'Callaghan to involve the other emergency services in our celebrations due to our close co-operation between the emergency services and the 12 Inf Bn over recent years with flood, snow/ice relief and searches.

From then on, it has become a much anticipated annual event with the emergency service teams getting stronger and stronger.

This year PTIs Cpl Alan Hayes and Cpl Mark Kirwan took up the reins to organise the event and put their stamp on it.

Teams are drawn from the Defence Forces, An Garda Síochána and Limerick Ambulance & Fire Services. Each team is made up of seven individuals, women and men.

What is unique to this event is each team has a former member of the Defence Forces in it.

The Services Day is made up of ten events that test leadership skills, teamwork, mental and physical capabilities of the teams.

The team tasks differ every year and this year was no different as they consisted of the follow-



ing sequence of events: 2km row with team members were allowed alternate on and off the rowing



machine; push a Nissan GS, Transit Bus and Ford Ranger 50m; Construct a wheel barrow from parts given and roll it 50m; solve a brain puzzle; stack a quantity of tyres; navigate under and over a series of hurdles; carry a large tyre over a distance; 50m log carry; drag a tyre 50m and a sprint to finish.

Finish time is taken when the last person crosses the line and then penalty time is added for obstacles not performed correctly.

This year, the 12 Inf Bn won by a short margin of 13 seconds over An Garda Síochána, with Limerick Ambulance & Fire Services in a close 3rd.

The event was brought to a close with a presentation ceremony and a celebratory BBQ. ■



DF VETERANS' AFFECTED

ONE Fuchsia Appeal 2017

"I am delighted as Patron of the Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel to have this opportunity to visit this wonderful facility and it is appropriate to have these great services available to people who served Ireland at home and abroad. It is a basic right to have food and shelter and it's important to take steps to break the cycle of poverty..." Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland, November 2016.



On a dull wet day at the end of June 2017 a large number of serving soldiers and Defence Forces Veterans gathered at the Defence Forces Monument at Merrion Square West. They were not there to lay wreaths to commemorate Ireland's fallen soldiers but to support fundraising for veterans now living during harder times and in need of support. On the same day an *Irish Times* headline read: 'More than 700 former Army personnel have stayed in residential homes provided by a support organisation over the last 12 years' the article was about how former Defence Forces Veterans' were caught up in Ireland's homelessness crisis.

On the 28th June, the Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces, Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM, launched ONE's Fuchsia Appeal 2017 at the Defence Forces Monument, Merrion Square West. Minister for State with Responsibility for Defence Mr Paul Kehoe TD and the Deputy Lord Mayor of Dublin Larry O'Toole were also at the launch, which drew a large attendance.

Funds raised will be used to support former members of the Defence Forces who have fallen on hard times. ONE has to raise €600,000 annually to run its current facilities, which include residential centres in Dublin, Letterkenny and Athlone, and support centres in Dundalk and Limerick. The veteran's organisation is currently providing accommodation for up to 40 former Defence Forces members and is expanding its network of veteran support centres in regional locations that have large numbers of ex-servicemen and women.

Since 1994, over 700 former members of the Defence Forces have been provided with a place to stay and many others have been assisted in various ways.

Regarding the annual appeal, Ollie O'Connor (ONE CEO) says: *"The Fuchsia Appeal is fundamental to our efforts to protect former members of the Defence Forces from homelessness and poverty. The funds raised by the appeal enable us to help former colleagues at a challenging time in their lives. Many of these people gave outstanding service to the State and the UN but for one reason or another have fallen on hard times, since leaving the service."*

The fuchsia, known as 'Deora Dé' (God's tears) in the West of Ireland, was chosen as the emblem of the appeal as it is grows throughout the country and was always a reminder of home when seen overseas.

Ollie told the *Irish Times*, *"We hope to open another eight support centres in various barracks around the country in the next few months. Veterans find themselves homeless for the same reason as anyone else would. ...it could be a social problem, a relationship break-up or it could be because of the nature of the job, they became institutionalised and they find it difficult to live independently outside of the institution,"* he said.

He concluded, *"Veterans are very slow to come forward when they have a problem, because they're very proud. They have served all over the world, have done great things and very brave things and they will look after everybody except themselves."*

Minister Kehoe said he was proud to help launch the Fuchsia Appeal, *"Since its establishment in the early 1950s, the services provided by ONE have been very much in demand. ONE dedicates itself to looking after the needs and welfare of ex-service personnel and in*



particular, to providing practical support for those in need of accommodation."

This year was also unique in that the ONE's Fuchsia Appeal made several appearances in the storyline of RTÉ's long-running soap, *Fair City*, with ONE members making cameo appearances as extras.

In launching the appeal Defence Forces Chief of Staff, Vice-Admiral Mark Mellett DSM said it is right that we help our former Defence Forces colleagues and that, *"the ONE played an important role in providing comradeship and care for former service personnel."* ■

BY HOMELESSNESS

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

PHOTOS BY ARMN ADAM MURPHY & SGT MICK BURKE

“It’s a Home not a Hostel”

Normally, when I have written about the Fuchsia Appeal over the last six years, I have never used residents’ names in attributing quotes or interviews in order to protect their identities and not to cause them any possible embarrassment. So, we were extremely grateful that on a recent visit to Brú na bhFiann (Home of the Brave), one resident wanted to go on the record in order to give our readers a more personal insight into one resident’s story.

Tony Stafford, is a retired NCO with 22 years’ service. During that time Tony served in many locations including 2 Fd Sigs and Air Support Signals. He spent the latter part of his career working in Personnel Support Services (PSS), helping members of the Defence Forces deal with personal problems, including addiction, depression and marriage breakups. Tony did a course in addiction counselling in Trinity College and he joined the HSE as a community drug and alcohol addiction counsellor soon after leaving the DF.

“When I served as a PSS officer,” Tony told us, “I would have referred many personnel to ONE for help and advice: little did I know that in time I would find myself knocking on their door.”

A few years ago Tony’s marriage broke down and he was ordered by the court to sell the family home. After the sale he found himself without enough to buy a new home and turned to ONE for help. “Luckily my children had grown up into adults, unlike many others that go through a breakup.” Tony added.

Resident in Brú na bhFiann for the last eight months, Tony recently successfully agreed a new mortgage for a home outside the city. It will be tough as the mortgage must be paid back within a short number of years before his retirement at 65 but he still considers himself one of the lucky ones.

“We need to change the perception that everyone who finds themselves homeless are all alcoholics or ‘down and outs’,” he says. “I have met so many nice people in Brú na bhFiann; many have similar backgrounds and problems but we all have our own story to tell.”

“The last eight months have been a real journey for me personally. Homelessness can bring with it other serious issues and problems, like depression and addiction.

“However, it is with great thanks to the manager and staff of Brú na bhFiann that we have a place to call home. It must be one of the best run places in the city, and would act as a model of ‘best practice’ in the homeless sector.”

On leaving the home Tony made a submission to ONE’s board of directors with a few recommendations, based on his expertise as a counsellor and as a resident of Brú na bhFiann, on how the home’s services could be improved and further developed.

Although the Fuchsia Appeal’s main focus was during July (the month in which the National Day of Commemoration falls) the appeal runs throughout the year, once-off donations can be made on www.oneconnect.ie. All donations are greatly appreciated.

We will leave the final words on Brú na bhFiann to the driving force behind its establishment, Pat Dunleavy (RIP), who passed away in 2005. Pat along with Patrick Cassidy, Patrick Hayes, Peter Keenan, Gerard Fogarty, Barney Dowdall, Patrick McCormack, Patrick Breenan, Henry Kealy and Austin Berry was an original founding



Tony Stafford, resident of Brú na bhFiann (Home of the Brave) for the last eight months



member of the ONE’s housing initia-

tive in the early ‘90s, some going as far as mortgaging their family home to fund the first Brú na bhFiann home on Queen Street. Pat’s heartfelt message is engraved on a park bench on the home’s rooftop garden for all to read: ‘Tread softly my friend and sit by my dream. Enjoy our new home and the tranquillity it seems. Our friends and comrades visit us now. My dream is complete by tree’s yonder bow’.

SCHOLARS Poets & CURATORS

The Past is Their Future, Museum Basics Course

REPORT AND PHOTOS BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

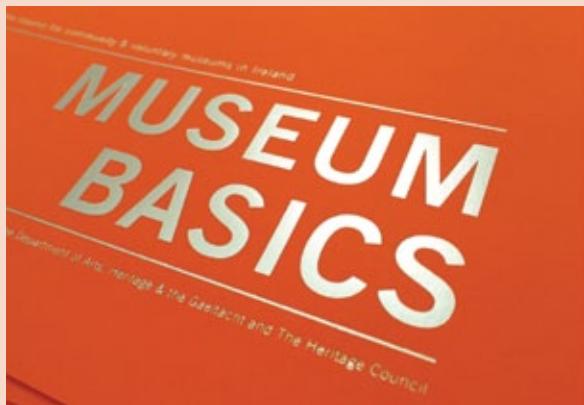
On Friday the 30th June 21 Defence Forces personnel gathered in Military Archives, Cathal Brugha Bks. Some held qualifications in military history, a few were successful authors, and at least one was an accomplished poet. What they all had in common was

museum as 'a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment'.

museum. Through the collective raising of standards across the sector, we can enrich the museum experience for all who work at, and visit, our museums."

The IMA also assists with the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland run by the Heritage Council.

In Gina's introduction she said it



a desire to learn how to become a museum curator. They were there because, in an unprecedented move, the Irish Museum Association (IMA) had agreed to run a Museum Basics Course exclusively for members of the Defence Forces. Students came from the Army, Air Corps and Naval Service and at least one curator came from a location where a barrack museum is established or is proposed to be established.

The IMA is an all-Ireland network, established in 1977, to support the Irish museum sector and promote improved standards of practice through education and research. It is governed by a limited company with a voluntary board formed by experienced museum professionals drawn from its membership. The IMA subscribes to and develops awareness of the International Council of Museums' definition of a

The course took place over four days in Military Archives, and included a host of speakers from museums all over Ireland and Europe. The course contained eight modules: Introduction to Museums; Collecting and Collections; Management and Governance; Display; Documentation; Collection Care, Education and Access; and External Relations.

OIC Military Archives, Comdt Stephen Mac Eoin, introduced the course. "It will help to maintain a Defence Forces heritage within all barracks and posts", he said. "There is a crossover between archives, libraries and museums, so it is appropriate that Military Archives be the location for this course."

Comdt Mac Eoin then introduced Gina O'Kelly, from the Irish Museums Association who told the group: "The IMA's main aim is to provide information and support for those seeking to improve their

was going to be "a 'crash course' in museums and you will not become experts, but will be very knowledgeable on the subject".

One of the other main speakers was Comdt Lar Joye (RDF), 2 Bde HQ, who is curator of the flags, firearms, swords, transport and military history collections of the Art and Industrial Division of the National Museum of Ireland (NMI), Collins Bks, Dublin. (Many readers will be familiar with NMI's award winning *Soldiers and Chiefs* exhibition that Comdt Joye was heavily involved in curating.)

Comdt Joye presented the first module, Introduction to Museums, using his experiences with the NMI and its collections. He also told the group that the Defence Forces could learn from the Heritage Council's Museum Standards Programme, and should, in time, aspire to meet its requirements.

The second speaker was Sarah McCann of Little Road Productions Ltd who told an interesting story about engaging students from Dundalk Institute of Technology to build a website for Aiken Bks museum and producing a one-hour documentary, *Aiken Barracks Behind the Walls*. The documentary, aired on LFM, was recorded in the Aiken Bks museum with Sgt Riccardo Lucchesi and Pte Peter McGuiness; both are volunteers in the museum and, coincidentally, were students on the course. The documentary was well received within the Louth area and brought some military-related stories of the barracks to the wider public. Next up was Paul Doyle, former registrar at the NMI and the inaugural keeper/manager of the National Museum of Country Life in Castlebar. Paul spoke about management and

school, Scoil Éanna, from 1910 to 1916. Brian's topic was Collections and Collecting. "Collections should be selective, focused, organised and have a public focus," he said. "That is, how will we display and what would be the publics' interest in it." He also explained how each museum should have a collections policy that lays down what the museum should collect and how, e.g. donation, loan or purchase.

"You can't tell a story by displaying everything – less is more," Brian said, explaining why selecting a few items to tell individual stories that will capture the imagination of the audience is preferable to putting all donations on display.

One of the students, Capt Larry Scanlon (3 Inf Bn), who curates the Stephens Bks museum in Kilkenny, agreed, saying: "Most WWI medals look the same, but if you manage them,

Judith Finlay, Registrar NMI, then guided the course through the Seven Steps to Practical Museum Documentation, which is a standards framework for excellence. The Heritage Council's Museum Standards Programme uses the UK's Museum Documentation Standard, 'Spectrum', which is also an internationally recognised best practice for museum documentation. This system is constantly evolving and the current version, Spectrum 5.0, contains 21 key elements, which Judith explained clearly.

Judith then brought the class through the 12 stages of the life of a museum object, starting with cataloguing, numbering by parts, and finishing with displaying. She said every object always has a 'home' location on the shelf so it can be traced. "By cataloguing and photographing each



governance, telling the students: "Most of the work is done before you get to exhibition." His first exercise was to get the students to write mission statements for the museums they worked in. He told them it was essential all organisations should have a mission statement for their museum and that this should be short, outline the museum's purpose, and be easily understood. He also said: "You need governance of the museum; not so much a board of directors but someone in governance so that if a volunteer or staff member leaves, the museum can still function and operate the same way when a new member joins." (Most military museums are the responsibility of the bks/post commander.)

The next speaker was Brian Crowley, curator of the OPW's Pearse Museum at St Enda's Park, where Pearse lived and ran his innovative Irish-speaking

each set tells a story of that soldier."

Sarah Steer, an interpretation planner and researcher at Tandem Design, was up next to speak about Display and Interpretation. Sarah went through the six principles of interpretation defined by Freeman Tildan in *Interpreting Our Heritage* (1957).

Describing museum visitors Sarah used a great analogy: "You have dippers, who have a quick look around; paddlers, who take a good look around; swimmers, who take in a lot and go all around; and the rarest breed, divers, who immerse themselves in everything and spend all day."

She also went through a brief layout and design of a museum, covering light, displays and signage, telling the students: "I cannot stress how important the laying out of text is on display boards, and to make sure they are at the right height – eye level."

object you help preserve it by allowing for fewer 'hands on' as it can be viewed and shared online," Judith said.

Sven Habermann from Conservation Letterfrack in Galway spoke on his specialist subject, Collection Care. His light-hearted discussion on a tough subject, preservation preventative conservation, which means creating the right environment and maintenance for an object to reduce any risk of damage, was very well received. He explained that objects decay physically, for instance by being dropped or touched, and chemically, by things like detergents or sun bleaching. He also discussed temperature and humidity as these can cause the most damage to an object through the formation of mould or rust. The best parameters, he said, are 18°C and 55% relative humidity (+/-5%) but must remain constant.

The next speaker was Dirk Staat,

conservator public history in Holland's National Military Museum (NMM), which opened in 2015 and is a purpose-built museum situated on a former air force base at Soesterberg. The NMM houses a combination of collections from the Military Aviation Museum in Soesterberg and the Army Museum in Delft.

Dirk's presentation of the NMM as a modern military museum was top class, and the museum looked amazing. He told the course that the NMM represents "*real people, real stories that really happened.*" Each ticket contains the name of an individual incorporated within the museum's display, which helps visitors to relate to the personal stories as they navigate through the museum.

Claudia Kohler, education, community and outreach officer for Kerry County Museum spoke about Education and Access. Claudia had a wealth of knowledge about outreach and education, subjects that often gets overlooked when thinking of museums (but are key to defining what a museum is). "*Education in museums enables lifelong learning while respecting the autonomy of the individual,*" Claudia explained. "*Education is a bridge between museums and its visitors.*"

She also spoke about how to engage the local community with a museum, be they young or old, "*as you must try cater for all age groups*".

"Most importantly," Claudia said, "is recording the demographic of your visitors on entry or by using an exit poll. It's good to know your audience by collating visitor information at year's end, as these statistics will be required if you seek external funding or grants."

She finished by saying we must change the perception that museums

are boring, silent and dusty and that they can be fun, friendly and engaging.

Aoife Ruane from the Highlanes Municipal Art Gallery in Drogheda spoke about External Communications. Highlanes is located in a historic Franciscan church known locally as the 'high lane church' to which one student, Pte Peter McGuinness, had a connection as his uncle was a clergyman there in the 60s, 70s and 80s.

Aoife explained that because of their gallery's location they had used famous paintings of Drogheda and the Boyne Valley to link into the locality and connect with local residents. How their gallery connected with local residents by looking at their location.

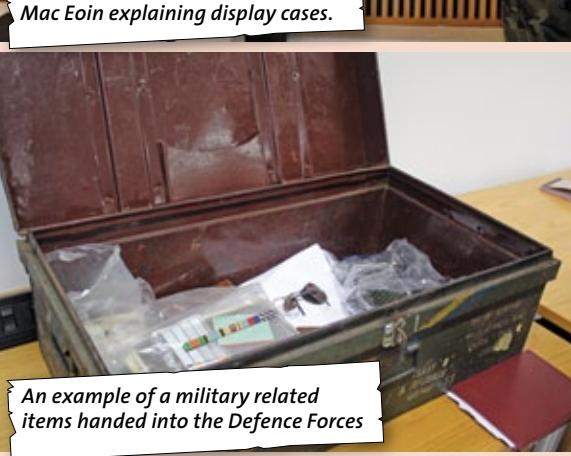
Aoife spoke about social media options and print and advertising, telling the students: "*Reputation is everything in this business.*"

ACOS Brig Gen Peter O'Halloran visited the course and addressed the students, organisers and lecturers. He thanked Gina O'Kelly from the IMA for facilitating the course, and Comdt Mac Eoin for having the vision for it. He also thanked the speakers and said that Comdt Lar Joye was "*the Defence Forces' jewel in the crown* with his knowledge of museums".

He said he was impressed with the level of information being disseminated and said it was something the Defence Forces can build on. He also said that "*barracks museums allow the Defence Forces to outreach to the public*".

On Wednesday 5th July the budding DF museum curators were dispatched with their certificates, folders, and newly acquired knowledge, to their respective museums. They will be meeting up again soon to form syndicates that will then look at each of the eight modules studied, with a view to putting them into practice so that all museums within the Defence Forces operate uniformly, and, eventually, will be able to achieve the level set by the Museum Standards Programme.

An Cosantóir plans to visit each barracks/post museum/visitors centre over the next 12 months to see how they are getting on. ■



Sgt Philip 'Sid' Allen, 6 Inf Bn (Athlone) receiving his certificate from Comdt Lar Joye, RDF 2 Bde HQ



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GSOC On Target

BY CAPTAIN ALAN KEARNEY
PHOTOS BY ARMN ADAM MURPHY



The Ordnance School in the DFTC has decades of experience in conducting international courses in a multitude of disciplines. In recent years, the school has developed an Advanced Commanders' Counter-Marauding Terrorist Attack (ACC-MTA) course and two successful international courses were conducted in 2015 and 2016, with a third planned for later this year. The prescient development of this concept prior to events such as the Paris terrorist attacks in January 2015 built up a belief among the international security community in the School's ability to provide key learning in this area.

The Ordnance School does not profess to have all the answers - far from it - but seeks to bring together class leaders in fields related to marauding terrorism, such as the US Active Shooter Awareness Programme, in order to deliver the most innovative, experiential and considered training.

Courses are directed by the School with the majority of the subject matter delivered by mixed teams; mostly ex-police officers and some ex-Special Forces personnel, from the US, UK and Western Europe. This formula, with the school providing expertise in C-IED/IEDD, has yielded positive results for many years.

A detailed 'lessons learned' process undertaken after the two previous ACC-MTA courses highlighted the requirement for an integrated and dynamic response, encompassing the emergency services, the military, academia, industry and private sector security operators with the required skill sets. Marauding terrorism has become a feature of the threat picture across the EU and no single state organisation has the capacity or capability to deal with this form of attack. Consequently, the School delivers its courses with expertise drawn from a wide range of agencies, institutions and operators. The School also provides information and assistance to other bodies. One of these is the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC).

GSOC is an independent statutory body set up in 2007 to replace the Garda Síochána Complaints Board. Its mission is providing oversight of policing in Ireland and its primary responsibility is dealing with complaints concerning the conduct of members of An Garda Síochána. Another significant GSOC responsibility is conducting independent investigations where it appears that the conduct of a garda may have resulted in someone's death or serious injury. This includes the use of force by an armed officer in the course of their work.

In 2016 almost the entire investigative section of GSOC attended a one-day information seminar on small arms and light weapons, explosives and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in the Ordnance School. GSOC personnel who attended this information day realised that they could benefit significantly from tapping into the School's expertise in weaponry, explosives, IEDs and counter-terrorism. This led to a request for the School to deliver a more advanced course in order to improve GSOC's capability to deal with events involving the use of firearms or explosives.

The outcome was a joint venture, with the School providing course content, facilities, direction and delivery; GSOC providing a training budget; and Synergy Security Solutions (security provider for GSOC and a company the School had previously worked with on the ACC-MTA course programme) providing expert UK instructors. This provision of specialist knowledge was a key course requirement and allowed Defence Forces personnel to benefit through attending some of the lectures, which covered actual operational scenarios that haven't occurred within the Irish jurisdiction.

The objective of the course, titled 'GSOC Post Event Analysis: Small Arms and IEDs', was to develop and enhance GSOC's capability to investigate incidents involving small arms or explosives, such as a marauding terrorist attack on Irish soil and a subsequent armed response by An Garda Síochána. GSOC are cognisant of this fact and of the need to ensure their capabilities are in line with best international standards.

The ambitious programme can best be described in the words of the School Commandant, Lt Col Ray Lane, who described it as: *"The greatest amount of subject matter in both practical and the-*

demonstrated through the medium of ballistic gelatine.

A briefing on gunshot wounds and blast trauma was given by Comdt Cathal Berry (OC Medical School, DFTC), and an introduction to ballistics was delivered by Comdt Will O'Meara (Chief Instructor, Cavalry School, a very competent shooter). Former ordnance officer, Comdt John Guinane (retd), representing the Firearms, Explosives and Private Security Policy Division of the Department of Justice, delivered a brief on relevant legislation, which was very well received.

Lessons developed from the experience of Ordnance School personnel involved in weapons intelligence team (WIT) operations with ISAF in Afghanistan, were provided by Sgt William Moran, who with two tours in ISAF was ably suited to delivering this piece.

The bulk of the second module was spent with ex-police and ex-military personnel from the UK delivering briefs on various complex terrorist events related to attacks involving IEDs and firearms. These briefs covered strategic, operational and tactical concerns.

Active discussions were conducted on the subsequent investigative process, where police and military personnel reacted to dynamic events and were faced with justifying their actions afterwards. This was an invaluable part of the course and selected DF personnel were also invited to attend.

The final module began with an excellent brief by Comdt Colin Duffy (Air Corps) on the use of helicopter support. GSOC have a service level agreement with the Air Corps and maximising its potential is an objective of both parties. This brief was followed by short team-focused, practical exercises in which the teams were given a scenario where an off



GSOC students and Ord Sch course support staff: Sgt Stephen McCabe, Cpl Joe Molloy (course 2/c), Rody Butler (GSOC), Capt Alan Kearney, Lt Col Ray Lane, Comdt Oisin Dawson, John Lawlor (Synergy Security Solutions Ltd) and Sgt Willie Moran.



oretical terms I have ever witnessed delivered inside one week!"

The course comprised three component modules. The first provided a base level of knowledge in small arms and IEDs; the second exposed the students to post-event analysis skills through examination and analysis of case studies and the provision of information on associated fields; the final module put this knowledge into practice through the conduct of training stands encompassing various aspects of the course.

In module one, GSOC students were exposed to a wide variety of small arms and ammunition and briefed on their respective capabilities and limitations. They were also introduced to explosives and IEDs and put through their paces with ordnance technicians assisting them in manufacturing IEDs. This was followed by a practical demonstration of various types of IEDs using military grade explosives and the recovery of forensic matter thereafter.

A practical demonstration of terminal ballistics (the study of how a projectile behaves when it hits its target) was conducted utilising assault rifles, handguns and shotguns of various types. The students were exposed to a wide range of ballistic effects such as expansion in tissue,

duty garda was involved in a targeted IED attack on a vehicle. An Air Corps heli was made available to provide an aerial recce of the area. Meanwhile, other teams were involved in training stands covering situational awareness (IEDs and small arms) and post-event analysis (investigative process).

The course ended with a final brief on operational systems, delivered by Capt Paul Shorte from the CIS Corps who kindly came in from his leave of absence to deliver the brief!

Overall, all parties viewed the course as a tremendous success. Cpl Molloy, the course sergeant, and myself, as course officer, were delighted with the outcome.

Rody Butler, Senior Investigating Officer, GSOC, said of the course: *"From a GSOC perspective the expertise and commitment of Captain Alan Kearney and Ordnance School Commandant, Lt Col Ray Lane, together with his school staff, made this course possible and relevant. Producing a programme that compacted various germane subject matters into such a short period of time. This has undoubtedly increased the organisations skillset and capability to respond to the aftermath of such incidents, in any organised multiagency response."* ■

The Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes

2017 Group Photo with all pilgrims. Photo: Viron



BY REV FR SEAMUS MADIGAN, HEAD CHAPLAIN TO THE FORCES

The International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2018 and Ireland has been a constant participant almost since its inception.

What follows are three short articles that reflect on the pilgrimage from the point of view of a mother, a cadet, and a member of the pipe band.

THE 59TH LMP: A Memorable Experience

BY CADET CÍAN HARTE, 93 CADET CLASS

It is difficult to put into words the experience one has on a visit to Lourdes as a pilgrim; even more so as a cadet representing the Defence Forces. The picturesque landscape of valleys and rivers surrounding the town, the Pyrenees on the horizon, the beautiful weather, and the town's historical legacy as a sacred place for Christians, combine to create an experience of sheer serenity.

Religious affiliation aside, Lourdes evokes in every pilgrim a stirring of one's spirituality that is difficult to define. The pilgrimage on numerous occasions made you think of those who you have lost, family members and friends, enhanced a hundred-fold by the work of Cadet Scully and his first-rate cadet choir, who sang moving songs at emotional events for the five days of the pilgrimage.

The Lourdes military pilgrimage (LMP) began in 1957 as a means by which to heal the divide between French and German soldiers in the wake of the Second World War. Soldiers and chaplains from both countries were encouraged to visit Lourdes to gather and pray as one. Intended to heal the scars of war, the initiative soon expanded to include militaries from all over the world.

The Defence Forces has sent representatives to every pilgrimage since 1958 and pilgrims travelling this year included the Minister of State with Responsibility for Defence,

Paul Kehoe TD; Deputy Chief of Staff, Maj Gen Kieran Brennan; GOC DFTC, Brig Gen Joe Mulligan; Head Chaplain to the Defence Forces, Fr Séamus Madigan; Sch Comdt, Cadet School, Lt Col Ian Byrne; Class Officer 93 Cadet Class, Comdt Conor Gorey, and other staff of the Cadet School; 93 Cadet Class; and 142 Recruit Platoon, from 12 Inf Bn, Limerick.

The Lourdes visit encompassed a great many events of religious importance, as well as enjoyable and moving activities for Irish non-military personnel who travelled with us. Events we attended included the Fifteen Stations of the Cross; a bracing plunge in the sacred baths; a visit to the gravesites of Irish pilgrims buried in Lourdes; a humbling experience visiting the ill Irish pilgrims hospitalised nearby; as well as other Masses and services, all of which encompassed a packed programme of military and spiritual events.

One of the highlights and most emotive events was the children's party, organised by the Lourdes travelling body, during which the cadets had nearly as much fun entertaining the kids as the children themselves. The cadet class also took the opportunity to jog up part of the Pyrenees range to over 1,000 feet, where the views were simply breathtaking;



The Colours - Underground Basilica. Photo: Lacaze



Cadet Scully directs choir. Photo: Lacaze

ing; eagles spanning their wings over a vast horizon as far as the eye could see!

As a cadet and a member of the Military Pilgrimage, the highlight was the military processions. We marched in formation through the streets of Lourdes alongside our comrades to the drumbeat of the Defence Forces Pipe Band. The tricolour fluttered in the breeze and the bagpipes drowned out all noise before us as military personnel of many nations stood to attention saluting our national colours and civilian onlookers gazed in wonder.

The poignancy of our final procession, when the less fortunate led the column of soldiers to our final Mass, was particularly tender. All of these events and experiences combined to create an experience of pure pride and an unforgettable trip for us all. ■

A Mother's Tale

BY SELINE LOUGHMAN

When you have a child with special needs certain people enter your lives and show such kindness that it can take your breath away and really restore your faith in humanity. That is exactly what we, 15 parents and our children, experienced in Lourdes last May.

We and our children, some who had recently overcome life threatening illness, others facing daily physical, emotional and intellectual challenges, were so fortunate to be part of the military pilgrimage 2017. We spent six wonderful days in Lourdes where we experienced such kindness, warmth of spirit and compassion. Every detail had been anticipated and taken care of and not a stone left unturned to ensure that each and every child and parent was totally looked after.

It can often be very difficult to spend quality time alone with your child with special needs, having fun and simply enjoying each other's company. Other children, partners, jobs and life's daily stressors take over. Often it may be only when your child is in hospital that you get to really spend one-to-one time together. In Lourdes we all got to really enjoy being

with our children. The pomp and ceremony of the pipe band, the marching soldiers, the fun at the children's party, the sense of peace and tranquillity during the ceremonies and, of course, the nightly singing concerts, were all wonderful.

This trip was all about the children

and for the children. We, the parents, are so grateful to have had this wonderful opportunity and come away with special memories that will remain with us forever, and we are all fully committed to two years of fundraising to give other parents the opportunity to experience Lourdes as we did.

To the hardworking, relentless committee who made it possible, the biggest and most heartfelt thank you. Thanks also to the wonderful cadets who joined in with the children and pushed the wheelchairs and buggies during the parades; to the chaplains who made the Masses and religious ceremonies personal and

Brig Gen Joeseph Mulligan, GOC DFTC, Minister of State with Responsibility for Defence Mr Paul Kehoe TD, Maj Gen Keiran Brennan, DCOS Ops, Fr Seamus Madigan HCF with the DF Pipe Band



Minister of State with Responsibility for Defence Mr Paul Kehoe TD, Maj Gen Keiran Brennan, DCOS Ops with Fr Brian Whelan CF and 2-3 Star Privates, from the 12 Inf Bn. Photo: Fr Madigan HCF

poignant; to the pipe band; and to the military personnel and the other pilgrims in the Curragh group who shared their pilgrimage with us. And last, but certainly not least, a special thank you to the very special Tom Cooper, our nightly entertainer who gave each and every child such individual attention during the sing-along sessions, often playing the same songs over and over and over again!!! "Don't stop believing..." (Woof! Woof!)

To our children, we love you and thank you because without you none of this could have ever happened.

Go raibh mile maith agaibh. ■

A First Timer's View

As a first timer to Lourdes, I didn't really know what to expect. Yes you hear all the stories from people who go most years, but to experience it first hand was amazing. I couldn't get over the level of respect pilgrims showed each other. As we piped our national colours through the town, pilgrims of every nationality would stop and salute the flag.

The opening ceremony in the underground basilica was unbelievable as every contingent marched their flag into the basilica. It was only then that I realised how many military forces from around the world were represented at the pilgrimage. After the ceremony, all the bands played a quick tune as they exited the basilica. The acoustics in there were fantastic.

Saturday was the longest day for us as we had a lot of gigs. I was honoured to be asked to play a lament at a wreath-laying ceremony in Cimetière de Langelle, the town cemetery, where a lot of Irish pilgrims are buried.



The DF Pipe Band. Photo: Lacaze

BY CPL ENDA MCGRATH (PIPER)

Another highlight of the trip for me was performing *Highland Cathedral* with the British brass band that was staying in the hotel next to ours.

Lourdes is a wonderful place, full of friendly and welcoming people and I hope to return there with the pipe band in the future.

What They Said

"The ceremonies by the Chaplaincy generated a great sense of community amongst us all." - Brig Gen Joe Mulligan, GOC DFTC

"I'd like to go again next year for the 60th anniversary." - Louise Foster, Blackhorse Ave, Dublin

"It was another truly amazing journey. A huge 'thank you' to the Chaplaincy and the DF." - Col John Courtney (retd)

"Savage pilgrimage, yet again!" - Brian Gillen, Civil Defence.

"What a wonderful experience!" - Maj Gen Kieran Brennan, DCOS Ops

"A real privilege for the cadets; they gained so much." - Lt Col Ian Byrne, Military College

To find out about how to travel with the 60th International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes 2018 contact the office of the Head Chaplain to the Forces, DFHQ, McKee Bks, ph: 01 804 2637/2638 or visit www.militarychaplaincy.ie ■

MARKSMANSHIP PRINCIPLES

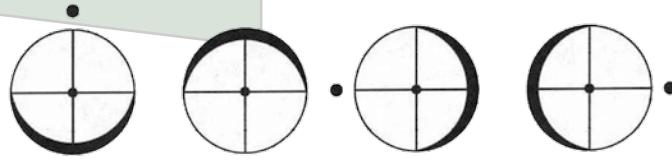
Sniping and Marksmanship can be summed up in the comments of Jeff Cooper the creator of the 'modern technique' of handgun shooting, "A fine marksman with a second rate rifle is far more effective than the reverse."

It is essential that soldiers are capable of firing their rifle accurately under battle conditions. This can best be achieved if the soldier understands and applies the following marksmanship principles.

Position and hold: Adopting a correct weapon position and hold must afford the maximum degree of support to the weapon.

- Firm body contact through multiple points, i.e. left hand, right hand and shoulder.
- The weight of the weapon should be supported with the least amount of muscular effort.
- Firm grip on the weapon to control weapon without straining (while firm enough to pull rifle back into shoulder).
- The muscles should be relaxed and not put under extreme tension to avoid muscle tremors.

Natural Aim: Weapon should point naturally towards the target. If excessive physical effort is required to hold weapon at the target, it will result in the bullet being directed away from the point of aim. This effect is caused by the movement of the weapon in an attempt to settle where influencing forces are equal.



Sight Alignment: Ensure you have a full field of view with no shadows. Improper eye relief or sight alignment will cause scope shadow. This will result in improper shot placement.

Also the TA31(DF) ACOG sight is designed to be used with both eyes open for ranges up to 300m for quick target acquisition and engagement (Snap Shooting).

Shot Release and Follow Through: There are three distinct areas of concentration and coordination to master this principle.

Breath Control: The natural process of breathing causes body movement, which must be controlled. There are three aspects of the breathing cycle that are important.

- During the normal cycle the lungs are neither completely filled nor emptied.
- After breathing out there is a natural pause.
- The whole cycle takes approx. six seconds.

As a natural pause occurs after breathing out, it's logical to extend that pause to six or seven seconds to enable the shot to be released. To oxygenate the body to assist concentration, two deep breaths should be carried out before restraining the breathing.

Trigger Operation: The trigger must be operated without disturbing the position, hold and sight alignment. Before the shot is released a certain amount of slack and trigger pressure should be taken up. To do this it is necessary to:

- Ensure the right hand hold is correct to ensure correct location of the trigger finger.
- Take first pressure before beginning to aim.
- Operating the trigger by squeezing and not snatching it.

Follow Through: It is possible for the firer to respond to the trigger action whilst the bullet is still in the barrel and this can cause a shot to be misplaced. It is essential that the shot be followed through to the target. As the shot is fired, the trigger must be held to the rear, the firer's eye must remain open and must watch any movement of the sight. The firer should remain still until such movement has settled.

Sniper Marksmanship

The other factor to be considered when firing at distances that sniper would normally engage at is ballistics, this is defined as the science that deals with the design, firing, flight, behaviour and effects of ammunition.

There are three types of ballistics that affect ammunition these are:

- Interior: What happens to the bullet inside the weapon.
- External: The flight of the bullet from the muzzle to the target.
- Terminal: What happens to the bullet after it hits the target.

This understanding of ballistics begins with the knowledge of ammunition so they are aware of its capabilities and how they function.

Interior Ballistics: Effects on a bullet within a rifle are Recoil, Muzzle Breaks and Jump (Shockwave in the barrel).

External Ballistics: There are several forces that act on the bullet in flight and affect its trajectory. These are Muzzle Velocity, Gravity, Drag, Coriolis Effect & Spin Drift and the Effect of Wind.

Terminal Ballistics: The bullet's design, as well as its impact velocity, plays a huge role in how the energy is transferred. It is often referred to as stopping power. ■

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LAST ACTION IN THE CONGO

38 Infantry Battalion

BY DR JAMES MCCAFFERTY DSM, BA (HONS), PHD

The 38th (Irish) Infantry Battalion was the last Irish unit to engage in combat operations with UN forces in the Republic of the Congo. Formed on 1st November 1962 and commanded by Lt Col P J Delaney (Mil Col), the battalion left Ireland on 7th November 1962, transiting through Leopoldville to Elisabethville in Katanga, and by 18th November were on station at Camp Prince Leopold Farm.

38 IrBatt arrived at a time when all road and rail routes into Elisabethville had been blockaded by Katangese gendarmerie, although the city and its airport remained under UN control. Freedom of movement was thus denied to UN forces, with air transport being their only means of logistical support. For their part the UN forces also had roadblocks on all routes into the city.

Opposing the 650-strong Irish unit and other UN forces in Elisabethville were Katangese Gendarmerie forces estimated at some 3,000. Gendarmerie armour was reckoned at six *Staghound* armoured cars, each armed with one 37mm cannon, one 0.30-inch and one 0.50-inch Browning machine-gun. The dispositions of Katangese armoured vehicles is not given in the 38 IrBatt unit history.

The gendarmes were armed mainly with FN 7.62mm rifles and light machine-guns of the same calibre and make. They were also equipped with 60mm and 81mm mortars, and some 57mm anti-tank weapons. The Katangese air force was estimated as having between 32 and 38 aircraft, of which eight were Fouga jet-trainers – equipped with machine-guns and capable of carrying light bombs. The dispositions of

You must understand therefore, that there are two ways of fighting.

By law - or by force. The first way is natural to man, the second to beasts. But as the first way often proves inadequate one needs must have recourse to the second.

So a prince must understand how to make nice use of the beast and the man.

Niccolo Machiavelli - 'The Prince'



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these aircraft are not given in the 38 IrBatt unit history.

Other UN forces in Elisabethville comprised an Ethiopian battalion, a Tunisian battalion and three Indian battalions: 4th Rajputani Rifles, 2/5 Ghurkhas and 4th Madras Rifles. The weaponry of these UN forces is not recorded, nor is the strength of UN air assets in Elisabethville.

In Camp Prince Leopold Farm, 38 IrBatt was engaged in ground and helicopter reconnaissance, trenching works and weapons training. The battalion included a troop of 120mm heavy mortars – the largest calibre weapon used by the Irish army in the Congo. Remarkably, almost without exception the personnel of this troop were drawn from the same parent unit - 4 Field Artillery Regiment from Mullingar, Co Westmeath.

The tense blockade in Elisabethville persisted until Christmas Eve, 1962, when Katangese gendarmerie opened fire on UN positions. Later that day a UN helicopter was shot down, killing six members of the Indian UN contingent. 38 IrBatt went on alert, but no further incidents occurred until the night of 27th/28th December, when heavy small-arms and mortar fire erupted from Katangese positions and water and electricity supplies to the Irish camp were cut off. 38 IrBatt took up defensive positions and doubled-manned all guard posts.

On 28th December, the president of Katanga, Moise Tshombe, made an abortive attempt to stop his own forces firing: this attempt failed, and Indian UN troops in brigade strength commenced a series of attacks. The Irish 120mm heavy mortar troop was detached to the Indian brigade during this phase of operations directed against radio communication centres and gendarmerie positions.

In addition, two Irish Ford armoured cars were detached to the Ethiopian battalion, which was engaged in opening the road from Elisabethville towards the town of Kipushi, and a subsequent assault on the town, which lies on the border with Zambia, about 25km southwest of Elisabethville.

The strategic significance of the assault

on Kipushi is not recorded, although the ordnance report in the 38 IrBatt unit history details the discovery and destruction of 'eight hundred and sixty eight aerial rocket

bombs' found at Kipushi airfield. While no reference is made to any Katangese military aircraft being found at this airfield, it may be deduced that the action against Kipushi had the strategic aim of capturing the airfield and any military equipment there. The role of 38 IrBatt in this attack was to act as a reserve and to reinforce the Ethiopian troops.

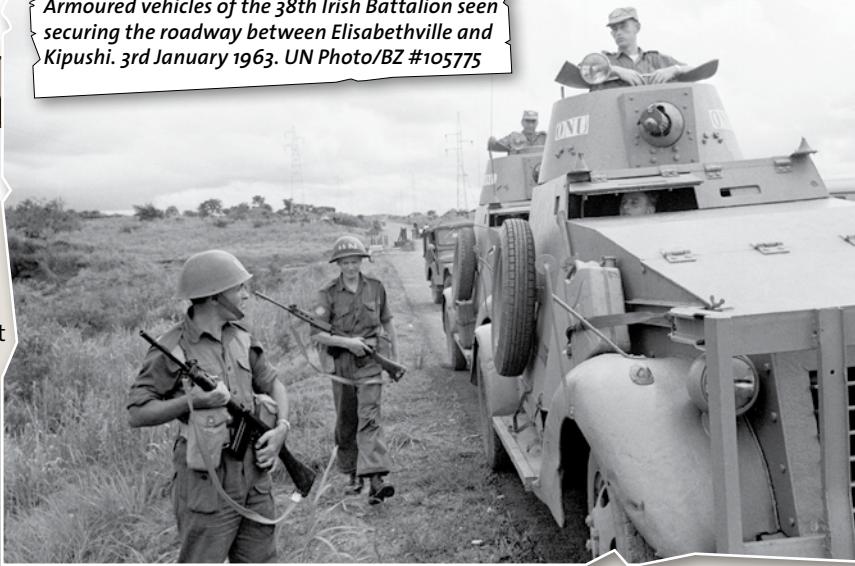
The Kipushi operation began on 29th December and concluded on the morning of 30th December when 38 IrBatt passed through Ethiopian lines, advanced on Kipushi and 'Having met a truce party about one mile short of the town, the battalion entered the town peacefully'.

For the next several weeks, 38 IrBatt, supported by their armoured car group (less one section detached to the Ethiopian battalion), occupied Kipushi, attending to the needs of many refugees, maintaining law and order and taking over abandoned gendarmerie stores of weapons, ammunition, mines and explosives.

The Irish heavy mortar troop detached to the Indian brigade had been in continuing action in Elisabethville before moving to support the Ethiopian battalion on an attack on a gendarmerie strongpoint, known as 'Simba Hill', *en route* to Kipushi. At the conclusion of the latter action, the heavy mortar troop supported their own Irish battalion as they closed on Kipushi.

Following the Kipushi operation, the heavy mortar troop was moved back to the Indian brigade as they assaulted Jadotville and then Kolwezi. This meant that the men who manned the 120mm mortars

Armoured vehicles of the 38th Irish Battalion seen securing the roadway between Elisabethville and Kipushi. 3rd January 1963. UN Photo/BZ #105775



were in action on a continuous basis from 28th December 1962 to 21st January 1963. In this period 38 IrBatt's heavy mortar troop fired a total of 225 rounds.

The battalion's unit history describes their effect:



Irish troops are seen guarding the Banque du Congo in Kolwezi. 1st March 1963. UN Photo #105709

The devastating effect of the 120mm mortar on the Katangese gendarmerie has been borne out at all stages of the operation. The efficiency of the 38 Battalion Heavy Mortar Troop and its application to duty has been evidenced in the many public statements and citations given by all concerned.

The report of the heavy mortar troop in the unit history lists a number of conclusions, intended as guidance for future operations on the basis of 'lessons learned'. The main points were the importance of highly-skilled crews and that each gun-towing vehicle should be capable of also carrying ammunition. (The Land Rover vehicles used by 38 IrBatt were not power-

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ful enough to tow the weapon and carry crews and ammunition also.)

While 38 IrBatt Armoured Car Group reported the good condition of the Ford armoured cars that they had taken-over from 37 IrBatt, their report continues by excoriating their poor radio communications, due to want of an adequate supply of radio batteries.

The report states that in the early days of service in Elisabethville, the group carried out daily patrols on the three principal routes to and from the city to the airport. Then, at the end of December 1962, when 'the 38 IrBatt took the field on active service', one section (two armoured cars) of the armoured car group was detached for

elements. The operational orders issued for the period of offensive action from late December 1962 to early January 1963 instruct that on the advance to Kipushi 'Armoured Car Group will lead the advance and search by fire both sides of the road'. It is, therefore, reasonable to deduce that possibly all 17,000 rounds of Vickers ammunition expended by 38 IrBatt were fired by the Ford armoured cars.

By 11th February 1963, all of 38 IrBatt had moved to Kolwezi, where they were engaged in patrols in and about the town and its approaches. They also detached an infantry company to Kolwezi airport.

When the Katangese Gendarmerie capitulated at end January 1963 the central

been lost in the Battle of Jadotville in September 1961, and in Kolwezi the battalion occupied the camp that had been used to hold 'A' Coy, 35 IrBatt, as prisoners of war.

In November 1962, as 37 & 38 IrBatts were on rotation, a party comprising an officer from 38 IrBatt Armoured Car Group and three officers from 37 IrBatt recovered the remains of Trooper Anthony Browne, missing after the Niemba Ambush on 8th November 1960.

Irish newspapers reported on actions involving 38 IrBatt, but not to the same depth as they did on the actions in Elisabethville and Jadotville in 1961/2. On 29th December 1962 the *Irish Independent* carried a report headlined 'No reports on Irish

A total of 6,000 Irishmen served in the Congo from 1960 – 1964. Irish soldiers engaged in fighting, suffered injuries and fatalities, with 26 losing their lives with nine killed on the 8th November 1960 in one action alone, the Niemba Ambush.

Katanga: Indian and Irish troops within 15 miles of Jadotville'.

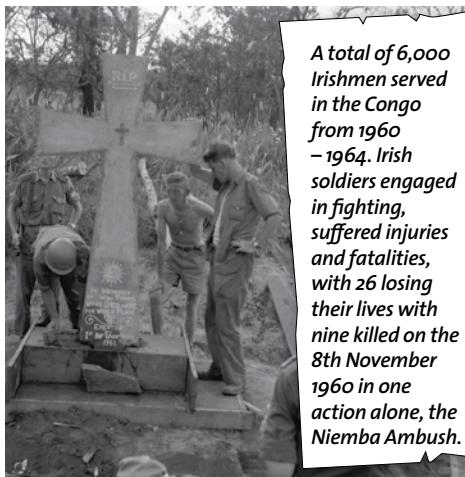
Thankfully, the part played by 38 IrBatt in this UN operation, which brought about the final capitulation of Katangese forces in 1963, did not go un-noted by Irish print media.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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



Indian troops manoeuvring an armed vehicle in an area between Elisabethville and Jadotville. 3rd January 1963. UN Photo #184413



operations with the Ethiopian battalion. The unit history records the remainder acting with the leading elements of 38 IrBatt:

This leading section (of armoured car group) actively engaged the enemy on the move from SIMBA HILL to KAFUBA BRIDGE and led the advance of the battalion into KIPUSHI (sic).

Regrettably, the armoured car group report does not give any details on how they 'actively engaged the enemy'. However, 38 IrBatt statistics on ammunition expenditure notes that just under 17,000 rounds of .303in Vickers ammunition were fired. The unit history does not detail infantry action on this advance on Kipushi, nor the use of Vickers machine-guns by infantry

government's *Armée Nationale Congolaise* (ANC) placed registration teams in Kolwezi, where 38 IrBatt 'co-operated with the ANC teams in enlisting ex-gendarmerie who wished to join the ANC'.

38 IrBatt remained in Kolwezi, engaged in a peaceful routine of patrolling and guarding, until their repatriation in the period 24th April to 7th May 1963.

While clearly involved in aggressive military operations, the absence of detail on infantry action by 38 IrBatt is regrettable, as, consequently, it cannot be compared with other Irish units in action.

While in Kipushi, 38 IrBatt Armoured Car Group recovered from Union Minière workshops one of the armoured cars that had

TO HELLAS and Back

BY SGT ERIC DALTON, IWW, DFTC

I always loved motorbikes and I got my first one as soon as I got my first job. The seed was planted and it just kept growing. When I joined the army I had hoped to get into 2 Cav Sqn but it wasn't an option and I spent 14 years serving with 2 Fd Arty Regt. When I joined up I wasn't using my bike any longer, so I sold it. Even though bikes faded into the background from then that seed was still there.

Then, about five years ago when the re-org happened I found myself in the unit I had always wanted, 2 Cav Sqn. Once there I did the Basic Dispatch Riders (DR) Course and, shortly after, the DR Instructors Course. At the same time with a look to the future I did my Advanced Driving

in the Curragh Camp. I really enjoyed this and purchased an off-road racing bike shortly after. I was now determined to make a go of it and improve my skills both on and off road so I could pass on what I learned to my students when instructing. This was to start everything in motion to fulfil a dream of competing in a long-distance endurance rally; something like the Paris to Dakar event, where my bike and I would have to be self-contained, and where I would have to do all the work and the navigation.

I began training at Aaron Rider Training in Finglas with retired sergeant Peter Bookey, a former DR instructor in the Defence Forces who had raced in two Rally Raid events.

As part of my training I started to do an event called the Paddy Dakar every September in Doon Co Limerick. This is a charity event that is run in recognition of those Irishmen who competed and finished the Dakar Rally. It was here that I met the five lads that I would eventually compete with in an endurance rally in Greece.

Having met and talked to the Irish Dakar finishers it became apparent that we couldn't raise the money to compete in the Dakar Rally, which now takes place in South America. Instead, we decided to set our sights on the Hellas Rally Raid in Greece, which is seen as a warm up for the Dakar.

It still took two years of preparation and saving to get my bike built into a rally bike; buy new personal protective equipment/riding gear; learn to read a road book (the method of navigation used) and read it while riding as fast as possible; learn more in-depth bike maintenance; get my personal affairs sorted, such as specific insurance for the bike and myself; and get my head ready for what was going to

be the toughest thing I had ever done.

On the 20th of May this year I found myself standing in the registration line in Greece with rally champions, endurance champions, professional riders and amateurs alike. (The professionals race in a class of their own but they are still there, and get no better treatment than anyone else.) The bikes are divided into different classes depending on engine size and riders in each class compete to win their class and against everyone else to win the overall race. There were 208 riders signed up on for the Hellas Rally Raid 2017 edition.

The following day we headed off on a prologue that would decide our starting position on day one of the rally proper. The prologue consisted of 75kms of riding as fast as you possible could in order to achieve a good starting position and I ended up in 110th position.

This year brought a new challenge to the Hellas Rally Raid... rain! It had never rained during any of the previous Hellas Rally events and it made an already tough rally even tougher. Although there were on and off thunderstorms that brought torrential rain, it meant the temperatures where kept down and that suited me just fine. However, we had made a poor tire choice, picking a tire we thought would last us throughout the rally but now it was like we were on ice. This led to me having a major crash on day two that saw me lose a lot of time. I had finished stage one that day with the fastest time of the Irish who had travelled together and we went into the second stage on a high. At around the 42km mark I crashed and went off an embankment. It took over an hour to get the bike back on the road and it had suffered damage to the electrics and the navigation equipment,



Instructor (ADI) exam with the Road Safety Authority, achieving a pass as a category A motorcycle instructor.

During the basic DR course I got my first chance to ride an off-road bike on a dedicated off-road course



© HIMOINSA Team
Dani Oliveras



Sgt Eric Dalton



which would set the tone for the remaining four days.

I had gone from starting with just the hope of finishing, to seeing myself doing well, to doctoring the bike through the rest of day two and through the remaining four days to the finish.

The race days were made up of approximately 250kms of racing in the mountains, split between three stages with liaisons of approximately 150-200kms broken up between each stage.

At the end of the day seven, I crossed the finish line in 136th place in what is now deemed to have been the toughest Hellas Rally Raid to date.

I have to say that I feel the years of riding both as a DR and an instructor in the Defence Forces have made me a more capable and confident rider and really provided a foundation for where biking will bring me in the future.

All the riders I have come across in the Defence Forces are of the highest standard, and this is down to the training they receive. For anyone who has an interest in biking, I would recommend looking at the Defence Force as a possible avenue to achieving their goals. ■



Irish competitors and their bikes: Eric Dalton, Ronan Twomey, Damien Fitzgerald, Noel Donnelly, David Rynhart and Massio Coppola.



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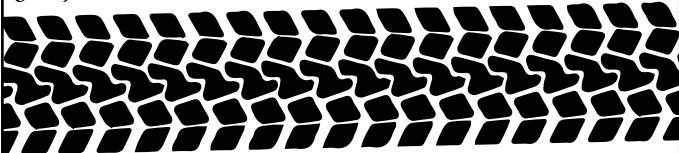
BIKERS SHED

Is a place for all bikers no matter of gender age or experience to come to share experiences or help a fellow biker buddy out, learn and teach making more experienced riders, reducing road deaths. All Are respected, valued and belong, and can comfortably use and pass on their practical skills and knowledge.

- Learn maintenance and road craft – each rider is a teacher and a learner, each having different levels of skills, professional and practical, to share collectively.
- Can come together and help out fellow biker friends.
- Can just come and have a chat and a cuppa.



Derek Gannon is a serving member of the Defence Forces and a motorcycle enthusiast, he set up the Bikers Shed with a friend for other like minded people: *"The Bikers Shed is free to use and works on donations, we are currently looking for any tools i.e. spanners, sockets etc. you may have gathering dust, which will be put to good use. All donations greatly received."*



Motorcyclists are over-represented in collision statistics in Ireland: less than 2% of licensed vehicles but 10% of road deaths. They are six times more likely to be killed on Irish roads than any other road user. According to the road collision fact book, 29 motorcyclists were killed and 494 injured on Irish roads in 2007. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) figures, a motorcyclist is two to three times more likely to be killed in Ireland than in other European country.

Check us out: www.facebook.com/groups/bikershed
or email: bikers.shed@gmail.com



ADVENTURES BEGIN HERE...

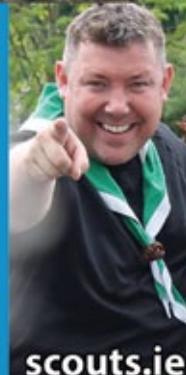


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COMPETITION

For a chance to win a 5.11 C5 Phone Case, sponsored by Team-Alpha.ie answer the following question:

How much is the 5.11 Tactical Rapid Assault Shirt on team-alpha.ie?

Send your answer along with your name, address & contact number to An Cosantóir's address or by email to subs@military.ie by the 20th September 2017. Winner will be the first correct entry drawn. **Last month's winner was:** Tarlach Doorley, Co Kildare.



NOTICEBOARD



The Defence Forces Classifieds is a closed Facebook community for serving members, ex members and families of the Defence Forces to share, swap, sell or give things away that they no longer need. With nearly 6,000 members with regular offers from information on businesses or services that offer a discount to Defence Forces members. The aim is to help each other out in whatever way we can. The page also has some fantastic giveaways like vouchers, gift cards, hampers and lots lots more.

CESSNA PAST AND PRESENT

Aviation author and *An Cosantóir* regular Guy Warner, is looking to talk to some Cessna people past and present. If you worked with the Air Corps Cessna fleet over its long extinguished career from 1972 to present, please get in touch with Guy. His email is: gwarnero6@aol.com

WORD SEARCH

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.

RECCE/SNIPER

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K L O E U E B I N R M D X O E
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S C O P E N N B K P E I W R T
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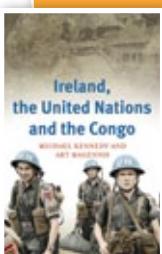
Last month's winner of the PROTAC €50 Voucher was Shane Donnellan, Co Galway. Closing date is 20th September 2017.

IRELAND, THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE CONGO A MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC HISTORY

Authors: Michael Kennedy & Art Magennis
Publisher: Four Courts Press (H/B 2014, P/B March 2017)
www.fourcourtspress.ie
ISBN: 978-1-84682-656-6
Pages: 288
Price: €24.95
 Now available in Paperback.

In 1961 Irish United Nations peacekeepers went into combat in the Congolese province of Katanga. It was the Irish Defence Forces' first experience of active service since 1923. Irish diplomat Conor Cruise O'Brien headed the UN mission in Katanga. Former chief of staff of the defence forces, Lt Gen Seán MacEoin, was in overall command of UN troops in Congo. Irish units suffered casualties and had prisoners taken as the fighting in Katanga continued. The crisis now facing Taoiseach Seán Lemass became the most delicate and dangerous chapter in Ireland's foreign relations since 1945.

Based on a first-hand account of the fighting by an Irish cavalry officer, previously unseen UN archives and the papers of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold, this book covers 18 critical



months from July 1960 to December 1961, which almost tore the UN apart and which brought the realities of UN membership to Ireland. Military and diplomatic history, this book is an Irish perspective on a defining moment in the history of the UN, the Cold War and modern Africa.

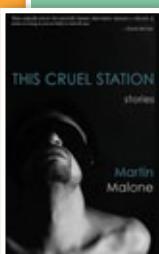
Michael Kennedy is the executive editor of the Royal Irish Academy's *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy* series. He has published widely on modern Irish diplomatic and military history. Comdt (Retd) Art Magennis served with the Defence Forces from 1940 to 1979. He undertook two tours of duty in Congo and was second-in-command of the 35th Battalion's Armoured Car Group in Elisabethville, Katanga, in 1961.

THIS CRUEL STATION

Author: Martin Malone
Publisher: Doire Press (June 2017) www.doirypress.com
ISBN: 978-1-907682490
Pages: 144
Price: €12 P/B Free Worldwide Shipping

'This Cruel Station' is a compellingly acute chronicle of history's sly, inexorable requisitions; these surgically precise but essentially humane observations represent a collection of stories as strong as you are likely to read all year. - Patrick McCabe

This Cruel Station is a collection of stories delving into what it is like to be Irish and new Irish today. Inspiration for them was drawn from the small happenings of everyday life, allied with imagination and 'What if?' A writer, to my mind, has to slow the world down for his eye to catch the minute detail of life for his story. I like to write in such a way that leaves the reader with some work to do, to make sense of, disagree with, engage with a character or not. I try to write in as



simple a style as possible, but with hidden depth. That is what I hope to achieve: that the style will encourage the readers to engage with these passing ships and their cargo of tough themes.

Martin Malone a former soldier with six tours of duty to Lebanon and Iraq is the author of seven novels, a memoir, two short story collections and several radio plays. His first novel *Us* won the John B Keane/Sunday Independent Literature Award and was shortlisted for the Kerry Ingredients Irish Fiction Award.

SHADOW OF THE TWINS

Author: Alan-James Kelly
Publisher: Independently Published (16th Dec 2016) www.amazon.co.uk
ISBN: 978-1220151991
Pages: 392
Price: €3.35 ebook/€11.90 P/B

"It is the silent among us who scream the loudest" Jack C. Regan is a soldier's soldier. From the outset, where we meet him in a Colombian forest, he is mission focused with almost fevered dedication. You are immediately drawn to the young man's loyalty to unit and mission, this dedication is not lessened by discovering his dark past. As you begin to learn about and understand the workings of his dark mind you realise that he is simply a killer. A remorseless, unsentimental, talented killer.

Special Forces tactics worldwide Post 9/11 proclaimed the need for a new type of soldier, one that could apply JJE (Judge, Jury & Executioner) justice to those whose intent was to replicate the attacks of that fateful day. The US SOF deeply secretive Dark-Eye unit was developed to cancel those threats posed to America and J.C. Regan was the template that the team was founded upon.

On learning of his sister's violent death Regan slips the shackles of the Dark-Eye



Unit and releases his demons onto an unsuspecting town in central Italy, the town where the twins who killed his sister live in almost royal immunity to the law. The local mafia, led by Marco and Mauro Gasco silenced a journalist who was focusing unwanted light upon them,

not knowing that by killing Kathy Regan her brother Jack would focus his mind's darkest desires onto their organisation.

Regan's actions are brutal and shocking to read but, in the overall scheme of how his mind works and his undying loyalty to his dead sister, it becomes understandable and it is hard not to cheer him on as he scythes his way through the criminal organisation. **MW**

NAME

PATRICK MCDONALD

RANK

PTE/SNIPER

UNIT

27 INF BN

BY CPL LEE COYLE

PHOTOS ARMN ADAM MURPHY

What inspired you to join the Defence Forces?

"I imagine like most soldiers I knew from a young age it was something I wanted to do, nobody grows up fantasising about sitting at a desk pushing buttons all day. I always knew it was a possibility and as I got older my interest grew, I learned more about what we do and the work we've been doing overseas. I knew after that, it was something I wanted to do."

What Challenges did you encounter in your preparation for the sniper Course?

"Physically I had to prepare, so I hit the hills with a backpack and a map. I felt this gave me an advantage going into my battalion's preliminary phase, as places on the course were limited."

What were your expectations prior to completing the sniper course? How did they compare in reality?

"Like everything in life we try to imagine how things will unfold to best prepare, but expectations rarely meet with reality and this was no different. I was asking all the snipers from my unit about the course trying to paint a picture for myself but what I found was a lot different than what I had imagined. I found mentally it was more challenging, but surprisingly more enjoyable."

Can you tell us about the sniper course modules?

"The sniper course is designed to develop and test each candidate on the seven sniper skills:

Sniper Knowledge (1), Shooting (2), Stalking (3), Judging distance (4), Map Reading (5), Camouflage and Concealment (6) and Observation (7).

Each of these stands must be passed at least once during the 8 weeks

(including badge week). 4 stands must be passed during badge week, whatever you haven't passed before badge week becomes one of those 4 needed. If you need 5 stands going in, then you must pass 5 and so on. There are plenty of opportunities to pass each."

What about your post sniper course development?

"It was put to me recently that becoming a sniper is not unlike an apprenticeship, and I would have to agree. The course gives the sniper the basic skills that are needed to progress, but it's down to each sniper to get involved and develop these skills."

Can you tell us about your experiences of being a qualified sniper in the infantry Corp at home or overseas?

"I've been lucky enough to serve both at home and abroad as a sniper, working alongside other units, which I enjoy. In 2012, I served in the EUBG working as part of a Recce unit in ISTAR Coy, I got to

work with some of the best soldiers I've met to date. Then in 2014, I travelled to South Lebanon with the 1st Mechanised Infantry Company, another outstanding unit. I believed I've been fortunate with the things this course has allowed me to do and places it has brought me."

The sniper course requires enormous commitment and is very physical; can you give us some advice for new applicants to prepare for the next sniper course?

"To anyone thinking about doing the basic snipers course, take the leap. There are endless rewards for a course that can be so enjoyable at times. Try to arrive with a good standard of fitness and map reading. Approach the snipers in your unit and enquire about prelims. The course is not as impossible to pass as some may make out. Getting my sniper badge was one of the stand out moments of my career, I would encourage anyone interested to go and get theirs." ■



Pte Patrick McDonald with his 27 Inf Bn Sniping Team partner Pte Colin McQuaid at this year's International Marksman Competition.



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