

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

AN COSANTÓIR



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



**MILITARY
INTELLIGENCE SCHOOL
CONCEPT TO CAPABILITY**

**VICTORY
AT ARDUOUS SERPENT
DF MEDICS TOP AMMSTE 2025**

**COS TRANSFER
OF AUTHORITY
COS LT GEN MULCAHY**

**NAVAL SERVICE
RESERVE
OPERATIONALISING AMBITIONS**



[STRENGTHEN THE NATION]



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From the editor

— *Cpl Eric Ryan, Editor An Cosantóir*

In our fourth edition for 2025 we welcome our new Chief of Staff Lt Gen Rossa Mulcahy, sharing a brief look at the former ACOS' career to date. As the Defence Forces continues to evolve, the introduction of the new Military Intelligence Service and School strengthens our intelligence capability as well as establishing a professional pathway for military intelligence personnel within the IMIS. For the first time Ireland led the EU Modular Exercise (MODEX), hosted in the Wicklow Mountains, with the Defence Forces providing valuable support to An Garda Síochána, the Irish Coast Guard, Civil Defence, Mountain Rescue Ireland and Fire Services from Dublin and Wicklow. Lt Shane Curran (CMU) led his team to victory at Arduous Serpent 2025. With consecutive titles at Arduous Serpent our medics continue to gain knowledge and impress on the international stage. With much more inside including vessels, veterans, victories we hope you enjoy this edition of An Cosantóir.

"Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment." — Jim Rohn



04



06



08





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An Cosantóir 10k Race advertisement



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COS LT GEN MULCAHY



On Friday 23rd May 2025, a ceremony was held in McKee Barracks to mark the transfer of appointment of the Chief of Staff of Óglaigh na hÉireann. Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Seán Clancy transferred the appointment of Chief of Staff of Óglaigh na hÉireann to the Chief of Staff designate, Brigadier General Rossa Mulcahy. The transfer of authority was effective from 1 June 2025, when Lieutenant General Seán Clancy assumed his new appointment as Chair of the European Union Military Committee. The ceremony was attended by the Tánaiste and Minister for Defence Simon Harris, members of the Defence Forces' Board as well as the families of Lieutenant General Seán Clancy and Brigadier General Rossa Mulcahy.

Biography of 32nd Chief of Staff, Óglaigh na hÉireann, Lt Gen Rossa Mulcahy

Lt Gen Rossa Mulcahy is a professional communications officer with over 39 years' experience in a variety of roles across the



Defence Forces as well as deployments with the United Nations and NATO.

Lt Gen Mulcahy took up his appointment as Assistant Chief of Staff in Oct 2021 and had responsibility for a range of organisational level issues including; Organisation Transformation, Capability Development, Innovation, Risk Management, Corporate Governance, and Industrial Relations, Doctrine and Cultural Transformation.

Lt Gen Mulcahy had previously served as Director of Strategic Planning Branch from Feb 2020, where he was responsible for Strategy Development, Defence Policy Programme Implementation, Defence Forces' Annual Plans, and International Security and Defence Policy coordination. From 2019 he was the Director of Communications and Information Services, with cyber being





one of his areas of responsibility. Lt Gen Mulcahy has served in all of the CIS Units within the Army; he has held appointments in the Joint Command and Staff School and the Defence Forces' Management Information Framework Section as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Lt Gen Mulcahy's educational qualifications include a B. COMM from NUIG, a Higher Diploma in Information Technology from NUIM, a B.Sc. in Management Information Systems from UCD, an MA in Leadership Management and Defence Studies from NUIM and most recently a Professional Diploma in Strategy Development and Innovation from the Smurfit Business School, UCD. He is a graduate of the Defence Forces' Senior Command & Staff Course (2008) and the US Army Command and General Staff College (2011). His overseas experience includes:

- Three (3) deployments to Lebanon with UNIFIL
- Two (2) years on deployment to Syria and Lebanon with UNTSO
- Deployment as Irish National Senior and Deputy KLE Branch at NATO's Resolute Support mission, in Kabul, Afghanistan.

He is married to Lorna and they have two daughters, Caoimhe and Laoise.

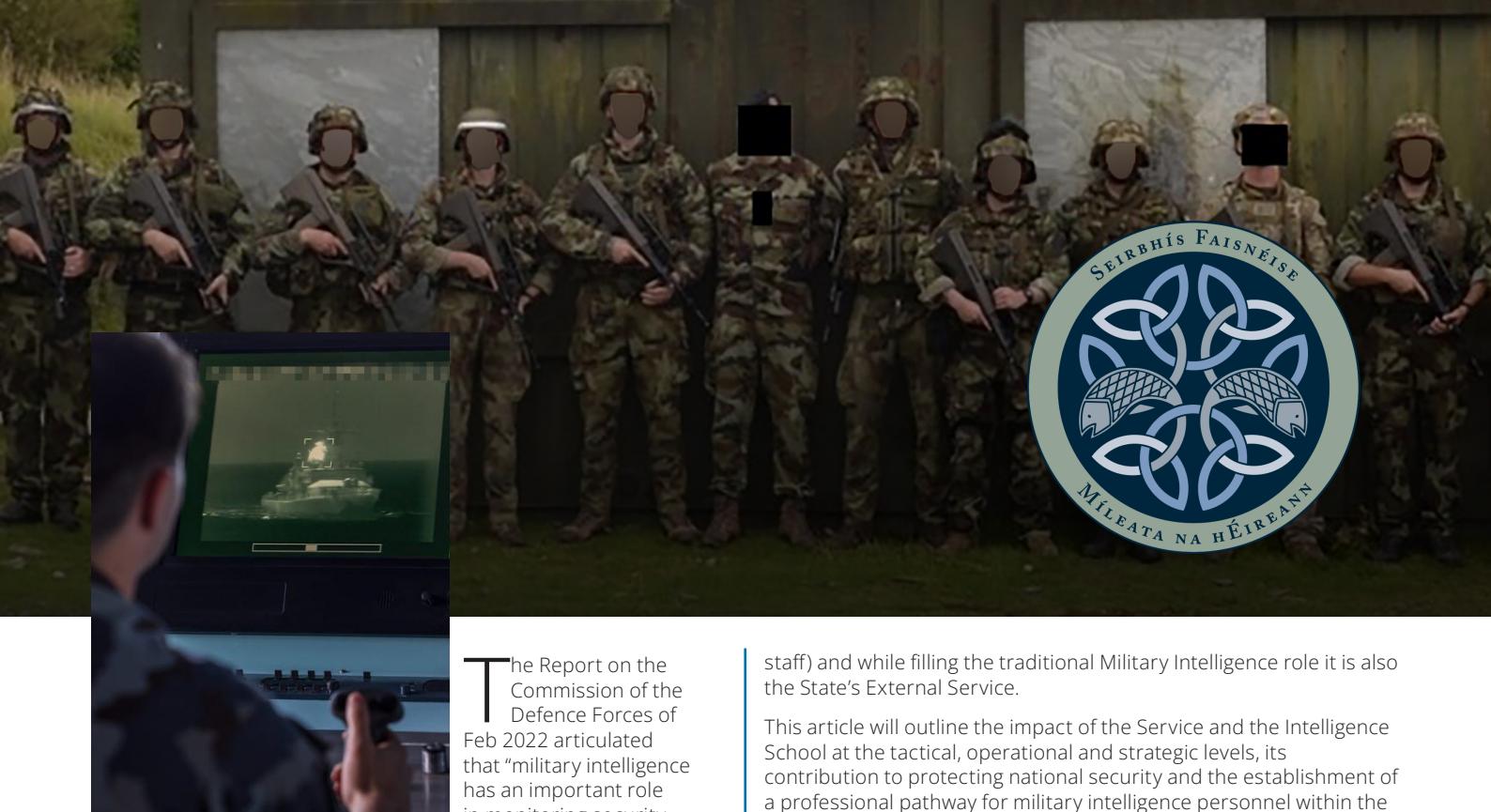


CHIEFS OF STAFF OF THE ARMY AND THE DEFENCE FORCES

NAME	FROM/TO
General Eoin O'Duffy	Feb 1922 to Jul 1922
General Richard Mulcahy	Jul 1922 to Aug 1922
General Sean MacMahon	Aug 1922 to Mar 1924
General Peadar MacMahon	Mar 1924 to Mar 1927
General Daniel Hogan	Mar 1927 to Feb 1929
General Sean McKeon	Feb 1929 to Oct 1929
Lieutenant General Joseph Sweeney	Oct 1929 to Oct 1931
Lieutenant General Michael Brennan	Oct 1931 to Jan 1940
General Daniel McKenna	Jan 1940 to Jan 1949
Lieutenant General Liam Archer	Jan 1949 to Jan 1952
Major General Liam Egan	Jan 1952 to Dec 1954
Lieutenant General Patrick A. Mulcahy	Jan 1955 to Dec 1959
Lieutenant General Sean McKeown DSM	Jan 1960 to Dec 1960 & Apr 1962 to Mar 1971
Lieutenant General Sean Collins-Powell	Jan 1961 to Mar 1962
Major General Patrick Delaney	Apr 1971 to July 1971
Major General Thomas L. O'Carroll	July 1971 to July 1976
Lieutenant General Carl O'Sullivan DSM	July 1976 to June 1981
Lieutenant General Louis Hogan DSM	June 1981 to April 1984
Lieutenant General Gerald O'Sullivan DSM	April 1984 to Feb 1986
Lieutenant General Tadhg O'Neill DSM	Feb 1986 to Oct 1989
Lieutenant General James Parker DSM	Oct 1989 to April 1992
Lieutenant General Noel Bergin DSM	Apr 1992 to Dec 1994
Lieutenant General Gerard McMahon DSM	Feb 1995 to Aug 1998
Lieutenant General David Stapleton DSM	Aug 1998 to Sept 2000
Lieutenant General Colm Mangan DSM	Sept 2000 to Feb 2004
Lieutenant General James Sreenan DSM	Feb 2004 to June 2007
Lieutenant General Dermot Earley DSM	June 2007 to June 2010
Lieutenant General Sean McCann DSM	June 2010 to Aug 2013
Lieutenant General Conor O'Boyle DSM	Aug 2014 to Sept 2015
Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM	Sept 2015 to Sept 2021
Lieutenant General Séan Clancy	Sept 2021 to May 2025
Lieutenant General Rossa Mulcahy	May 2025 to

STRENGTHENING MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

Irish Military Intelligence Service (IMIS): concept to capability



that this would be achieved by strengthening military intelligence capabilities through the establishment of a Joint Military Intelligence Service lead by a Brigadier General. Additionally, the establishment of a dedicated Military Intelligence School and accompanying legislation within a wider enhanced and modernised National Defence Academy is captured within Theme 17 of the Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP).



The primary role of IMIS today is to provide strategic warning to the General Staff and the Government of threats to Irish sovereign interests on island and to troops and or facilities deployed abroad, a role which has expanded significantly from the G2, J2 roles of old. The service also plays a role in ensuring National Security with other state agencies. It is a fully Joint service (and also includes RDF, first line reserve and civilians on

staff) and while filling the traditional Military Intelligence role it is also the State's External Service.

This article will outline the impact of the Service and the Intelligence School at the tactical, operational and strategic levels, its contribution to protecting national security and the establishment of a professional pathway for military intelligence personnel within the IMIS.

The attainment of initial operating capability (IOC) of the Defence Forces Intelligence School in June 25 marks a significant milestone in meeting the LOA 2 requirements for strengthening of the IMIS by 2028. The Intelligence School, now the Defence Forces newest school currently located in the DFTC, will underpin standards and training in the development of joint military intelligence capabilities for IMIS, across the Army, Naval Service and Air Corps and in addition the delivery of specialised multi-disciplinary intelligence capabilities (such as Human Intelligence (HUMINT), Signals Intelligence (SIGINT), Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT) and Open Source Intelligence (OSINT). The School will also support and contribute to established DF education and Professional Military Education (PME) programs with the provision of subject matter expertise in intelligence planning modules on future career courses contributing to the decision making and joint planning process.

The Intelligence School will ensure the Defence Forces remain aligned with international best practice and abreast of rapidly evolving technologies to identify and counter any potential hostile threats. Central to this has been a focussed effort in the development of a specialised professional military education stream in the area of Military Intelligence and also a comprehensive revision and development of the tactical intelligence training program in 2025. The Intelligence School has completed delivery of some of these courses already to selected personnel within Battalions,

Squadrons and Regiments of the Defence Forces.

One of the most significant developments in the training and education area is the new Joint Military Intelligence Qualification Course (JMIQC) which will take Officers and NCO's, from all Services, on a comprehensive Joint Military Intelligence training program. Following a comprehensive candidate assessment and screening



program, selected personnel have been chosen from the 53 applicants. This sees the emergence of a career-streamed program and a fundamental shift in how the Defence Forces selects and educates intelligence personnel with a clearly defined entry point and training pathway. This course will ensure that personnel who successfully complete the course are equipped with the tactical, operational and analytical skillsets required for the complexity of modern conflict and hybrid threats. The course is designed in a modular and progressive structure and grounded in real-world applications to ensure personnel can function within complex challenging domains across the full range of operations the Defence Forces participates in at home and abroad. The establishment of the Intelligence School will support Defence Forces operational requirements and contribute to the enhancement of national security and resilience. Students who complete this course will join IMIS and work throughout the country in secure IMIS designed facilities in keeping with the expansion programme to support the DF going forward. The first of these will open in the Naval Service in Q3 2025.

In order to ensure interoperability of the Defence Forces whilst engaged in approved operations under the United Nations such as UNIFIL or EU Battlegroup (EUBG) operations, the Intelligence School has also participated in international training programs within other Military Intelligence teams ensuring the DF can contribute at appropriate levels on missions it contributes to.

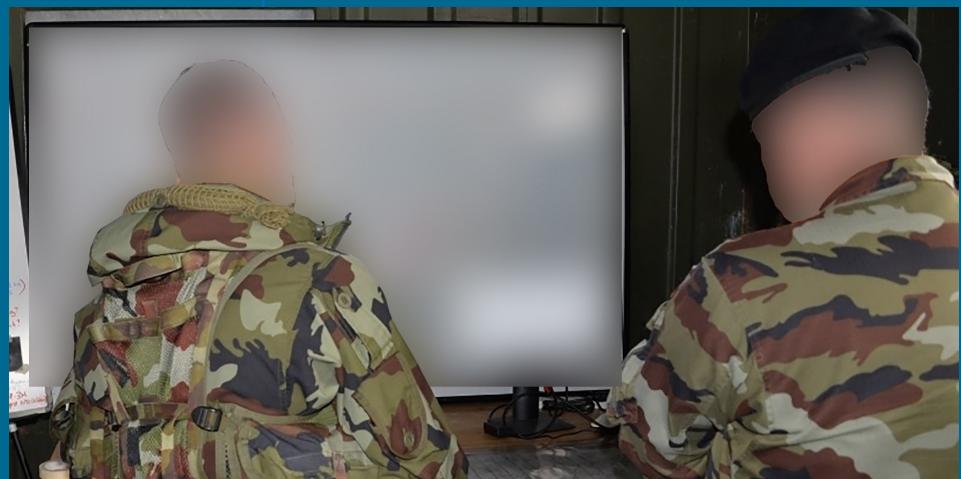
Irish Military Intelligence Service Officers and NCO's have recently attended courses at the United States Army Intelligence Centre of Excellence (USAICOE) in Fort Huachuca, Arizona and in the US Naval facility in San Diego. USAICOE is the US Army's premier installation for the training and continuous professional development of US Army Intelligence personnel. The centre is responsible for not only training personnel, but for developing and integrating intelligence capabilities, concepts and doctrine for the US Army. IMIS Officers and NCO's have undergone extensive training in recent months at USAICOE in order to ensure interoperability between partners, and relevancy and currency of land-based Military Intelligence procedures. Air and Naval students will attend similar level courses in 2026.

IMIS personnel attending USAICOE have completed the Military Intelligence Basic Officer Leader Course (MI-BOLC), designed to prepare Officers to lead an intelligence team during all phases of modern Military operations at the Battalion level, focusing on critical thinking, analysis, assessment and the all-important, Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment, key skillsets that enable the Intelligence professional to peer through the fog of war,



significantly enhancing friendly forces situational understanding. The Military Intelligence Captain's Career Course (MICCC) builds on the foundations established during the MI-BOLC, further refining the Intelligence tradecraft, expanding from Battalion to Brigade level, and preparing Intelligence Officers for future command positions. Finally, the International Officer's Tactical Intelligence Course (IOTIC - which has been attended by a Senior Non Commissioned Officer (SNCO) from 1 Bde) delivers comprehensive instruction to international partners on the fundamentals of Military intelligence in an international setting, focusing on critical thinking, analytical tradecraft and the roles and functions of Military Intelligence and how tactical intelligence supports operational needs. The skillsets acquired can support the DF in all mission deployment types abroad and on Island.

The knowledge on the application and integration of Military Intelligence tactics, techniques and procedures into the military decision making process instructed will benefit commanders at all levels and services in the DF. The newly qualified Officers and NCO's are currently instructing the next generation of Irish Military Intelligence professionals ensuring the long term benefit is a more adaptive, competent and situationally aware force, reinforcing national security, whilst also deepening international ties. Further detailed and specialist courses are conducted on joining IMIS ensuring our members are competent Intelligence professionals who can operate at home and abroad in support of Irelands interests and ensuring the security of all troops and Irish citizens are always at the forefront of our work. The IMIS team will conduct briefings throughout the DF in Q4 2025.



STRONGER TOGETHER

EU MODEX 2025 Showcases Multi-Agency Cooperation in Wildfire Response

ARTICLE BY CAPT EAMONN HENNESSY
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CAPT EAMONN HENNESSY

"Fighting Fire with Innovation: The EU Modex Exercise and the Future of Wildfire Response"

On 26th March 2025, the Irish Defence Forces took part in a landmark civil protection exercise that tested not only national emergency response capabilities but also our ability to integrate seamlessly with European partners in a complex, multi-agency environment. The EU Modular Exercise (MODEX), hosted in the Wicklow Mountains, marked the first time Ireland led such an event under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. For the Defence Forces and the RTI Office, the exercise was a critical opportunity to validate operational readiness, showcase innovation, and reinforce our commitment to European interoperability.

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE EXERCISE?

EU Modex 2025 was designed around a high-impact, fast-moving wildfire scenario in the vicinity of the Wicklow Mountains. The exercise simulated a rapidly escalating fire event threatening critical infrastructure, natural heritage sites, and civilian populations. The scenario required the coordinated response of multiple national agencies, including the deployment of Host Nation Support (HNS) protocols and the integration of international Civil Protection Modules. The exercise was led by Wicklow County Council and supported by the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM), with funding and oversight from the European Commission's Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO).

The Defence Forces' participation in EU Modex Wildfire Firefighting Exercise in the Wicklow Mountains demonstrated the value of military support to civil authorities in times of national emergency. Our personnel operated alongside An Garda Síochána, the Irish

Coast Guard, Civil Defence, Mountain Rescue Ireland, and fire services from Dublin and Wicklow. Each agency contributed in their own areas of expertise, providing evacuation centres for displaced personnel, search & rescue, area cordonning, temporary

mortuary services, high-volume pumping stations for ground assets and aerial firefighting. The Air Corps played a pivotal role demonstrating their firefighting capabilities, deploying AW 139 Helicopters equipped with Bambi buckets, to perform targeted water drops on simulated fire zones. These operations required close coordination with ground commanders to ensure accuracy while avoiding hazards in the environment. Furthermore, the Air crews provided aerial reconnaissance to demonstrate real time intelligence on fire spread, helping incident commanders make strategic decisions.

While all assets demonstrated excellent capability, the glue that held them together and assisted the responders in focusing their efforts was DECAMAP's.

INNOVATION IN THE FIELD - DECAMAP'S

DECAMAP, originally called Co-Pilot AI, was developed through the Research Ireland Defence Innovation Challenge. The team led by Prof. Tim McCarthy from Maynooth University, rose to the challenge posed by the Air Corps in 2021: "How do we enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the fire extinguishing capability of rotary-wing aircraft". The Challenge fund which is co-financed with Research Ireland, awarded the DECAMAP team €1.2M in funding to develop their solution over a 2-year stage gated process. During this period, the research team at Maynooth were paired with a Defence Liaison from the Air Corps, Comdt Jay O'Reilly (Retd). His guidance helped to deliver critical end-user perspectives on the challenge and ensured the solution proposed was feasible and viable. The net result provided a common operational picture to aid emergency responders in predicting the growth and movement of wildfires to determine where best to deploy their resources. Since finishing the Defence Innovation Challenge program, DECAMAP has received interest from global stakeholders such as CAL FIRE in California and the Spanish Air Force whom tackle wildfire events on a frequent and large scale.

During EU MODEX, Prof. Tim McCarthy and his team deployed drones equipped with multispectral and thermal cameras to detect fire hotspots invisible to the naked eye, allowing decision-makers to pinpoint flare-ups before they spread. Simultaneously,





using machine learning algorithms, DECAMAP's software analysed the terrain, wind patterns and fuel loads to predict fire behaviour. Both air and ground assets were fed the outputs of this data through live updated maps to ensure a common operational picture was established. The addition of this technology helped to ensure the exercise was a success and enhanced the capabilities of all responders. Post-exercise, DECAMAP's 3D terrain models and burn severity maps helped to evaluate the simulated fire's impact, providing critical data for future training and real-world responses.

DECAMAP didn't just support EU MODEX – it redefined the playbook for wildfire response. By merging drones, AI, and geospatial intelligence, they showcased how technology can turn the tide against fires in an era of climate escalation. Thanks to the successful partnership with Research Ireland, the Defence Forces can now pose some of the most pressing challenges across several domains to the research community developing bespoke innovative solutions that cannot be purchased off the shelf.

RESEARCH IRELAND – DEFENCE INNOVATION CHALLENGE 2024

Stemming from the success of the first iteration, a new Challenge call was established in April 2024. Challenge-based funding is a solution-focused approach to research funding that uses prizes, strict timelines, teamwork and competition directing research activities at ambitious societal problems. The aim of the Research Ireland-Defence Innovation Challenge is to develop new technologies, aligned with national defence policy, that have strong potential to deliver significant, beneficial, societal impact for Ireland.

The programme comprises three phases (following application): Concept (3-months), Seed (9-months) and Prize Award (up to 2-years). 10 teams were accepted to the Concept Phase and received funding of €20k to further develop their concept and carry-out in-depth stakeholder engagement. These projects are then evaluated by a panel of international experts and up to 5 teams are selected to progress to the Seed Phase and receive further funding of €200k which enables them to create working prototypes of their solutions and conduct a societal impact analysis. These 5 teams will then compete for an overall Prize Award of €1 million and the winner will spend the following 12 months developing and exploring methods for scaling and assessing the commercial viability of their solution.

The 2024 programme has two streams: Specific Challenges and Disruptive Ideas. In the Specific Challenges stream, four challenges were identified in collaboration with the Defence Forces and Department of Defence: Advanced Shelter Concepts, Maritime Situational Awareness, Search and Rescue and Aeromedical Emergency Dispatch. The Disruptive Ideas stream included disruptive/radical technologies across the areas of: Medical Technologies, Disaster Relief, Peacekeeping, Climate Change and Sustainability, and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT).

Currently, five research teams have received funding under the Seed Phase of the Research Ireland-Defence Innovation Challenge 2024. Members of the Air Corps, Naval Service, Ordnance Corps

and the Civil Defence are an integral part of each research team, providing organisational, operational and mission context support. This embedded collaboration with Defence personnel will enable the research teams to develop their project concepts and compete for further funding to deliver solutions to the challenges identified.

In Q4 2025, the RTI office will be engaging across the Defence Forces to identify the next four challenges which will be posed to the research community as we prepare for a third iteration of the Defence Innovation Challenge to commence possibly in mid-2026. If you have a keen interest to get involved and have a challenge that you would like to propose, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Teams receiving funding from the Defence Innovation Challenge 2024 are as follows:

Challenge	Defence Liaison	Institution(s)	Project Name & Focus
Advanced Shelter Concepts Challenge	Capt Paul Lyons	University College Dublin	MASH - Mobile Adaptable SHelter: Modular, multipurpose shelter systems.
Maritime Situational Awareness Challenge	Comdr Cathal Power	Trinity College Dublin	Sea-Scan - Vessel identification for maritime awareness.
Search and Rescue Challenge	Paul Brophy (Civil Defence)	Tyndall National Institute	PLANE - Precise Location Aerial Navigation and Estimation for SAR missions.
Aeromedical Emergency Dispatch Challenge	Lt Sean Curran	University College Dublin	ADMS - Aeromedical Dispatch Management Software - A technology hub.
Disruptive Ideas	Capt Luke Gillespie	University College Dublin	Advanced Imaging Technologies through Electronically Tuneable Lenses.

WHAT'S IN STORE?

EU Modex 2025 reaffirmed a core principle of the RTI Office: innovation is not confined to labs or whiteboards - it happens in the field, under pressure, in collaboration with partners. We encourage all units and personnel to engage with the RTI Office to explore how your ideas, capabilities, and experiences can contribute to future exercises, research proposals, and innovation initiatives. The success of EU Modex in Wicklow has already sparked discussions about expanding such exercises to other regions and hazards, including flooding, CBRN disasters, and mass casualty events. With growing geopolitical instability and the effects of climate change accelerating, preparedness is no longer optional—it is imperative.

A special thanks to our colleagues in the emergency services for their co-operation and professionalism throughout the exercise and to the Audio Visual team at An Cosantóir for their work behind the scenes in capturing all the exercise content – it doesn't go unnoticed! (LINK TO VIDEO)

If you have a concept, technology, or operational insight that could enhance Defence Forces readiness or civil-military cooperation, we want to hear from you. For more information, contact the RTI Office at rti@defence.ie.



VICTORY AT ARDUOUS SERPENT

DF Medics Top AMSTTE 2025



ARTICLE BY LT SHANE CURRAN – CMU



Exercise Arduous Serpent 2025 is the British Army's Annual Medical Services Tactical Training Exercise (AMSTTE). It is a competition-based exercise involving the evaluation of both military and medical skills, taking place at different locations each year. This year, it was based in Otterburn Training Area, Northumberland, in the northeast of England. It is a large training area comprising approx. 242 square kilometres. It is the British Armies largest firing range and used frequently by all arms of the British Army and the terrain is very similar to our own Kilworth training area.

The exercise took place from the 03rd to the 08th of June 2025. Teams from CMU representing the Defence Forces have entered the event each year since 2012 and the team have always excelled finishing strong in second and third place multiple times and placing first last year for the first time. The aim of the exercise is to provide a competitive environment to test the teams and team members in leadership, command and control and the military and medical skills required to succeed in the current, contingent and future operational environments with an emphasis on endurance. The exercise theme was based around peer on peer warfare, similar to what is currently being experienced in Ukraine. The experience of CMU medics who have been involved in training Ukrainian medics as part of the training missions in Germany, as part of EUMAM (Ukraine) over the past year proved pivotal in tailoring the training for the event.

This year's competition comprised 11 teams drawn from both the regular & reserve medical units of the UK Armed Forces, Irish Defence Forces, USA & Serbian Army. Teams must comprise of eight (8) personnel, are required to have both male & female members and can include up to two non-medical personnel.

We set a clear objective from the start of our training to maintain the high standards set by previous DF teams to try build on and retain our success from the previous year. A secondary objective was to gain knowledge and experience of the stands by allowing the support personnel who travelled with us observe the drills of the other teams.

The Defence Forces team comprised Lt Shane Curran (CMU-HQ), Sgt Mick Barry (Med Sch), Cpl Denis Murphy (CMU 1 Bde), Cpl Ryan Mann (CMU DFTC), Cpl Kellie Sheehan (Med Sch), Cpl Conor Dempsey (Med School), Pte Julia Gorka (Ord Gp, DFTC), Cpl Shane McEvoy (CMU 2 Bde) and mentored by RSM David O'Connor (Med Sch), CS Martin Moules (CMU HQ), CS Philip Greene (DMB office), and Lt Eric

Redmond (CMU 2Bde).

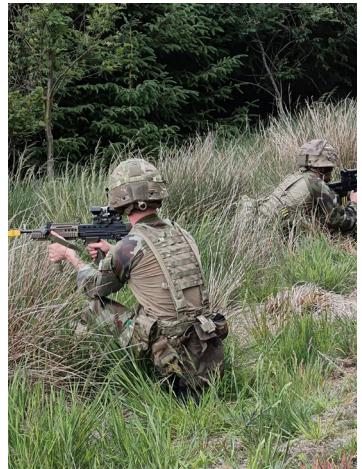
A training program based on experience gained from the previous exercises and current operations in Ukraine allowed the team to concentrate on navigation, load carriage, Orders (extraction & delivery), Weapons Training (SA 80), CBRN, Care Under Fire, Section in Attack, Patrol and survivability training.

Two members of the team, Sgt Mick Barry and Cpl Denis Murphy had been on the winning team in 2024 which added to the experience of the team and improved preparation. They showed throughout the week that this year's Irish Defence Forces team were not just here to make up the numbers and that they wanted to right the wrongs of some scenarios where they felt mistakes were made last year. It should also be mentioned that D Tpt, G7, 2 Bde HQ, ARW, 2 Bde Tpt, Ord Gp DFTC, Sch of Mil Engr, Lt Billy Kiernan (1 MIC) and Bty Sgt Paddy Clarke (CBRN Instructor 2 BAR) all had an invaluable part to play in making this year's team a success.

The exercise instruction gave an outline of the exercise where teams deployed to a pre-determined start point then moved tactically across the training area throughout the day / night in an assigned order. Movement was on foot and teams were allowed to use any roads during certain legs of the patrol. Teams must navigate to each stand and must arrive within a specific time allocated or points are deducted. At each stand teams will be scored against an established scoring matrix with a maximum score of 100 points for each stand.

The Stands are:

- Major Incident Medical Management and Support (MIMMS)
- Counter Unmanned Aerial System
- Advanced to Contact (Section in Attack)
- Survivability
- Ambush
- Medicate & Evacuate
- Dig or Die
- CBRN



The three (3) international teams arrived four (4) days before the UK teams as this allowed the international teams to get familiar with British Army weapon systems and drills. This was a three (3) day training package similar to the stands we would exercise on. This enhanced our training and confidence in the use of the British army weapons system for the main.

Phase 1 of the exercise began on Friday at 1700hrs when teams occupied patrol harbours in a nearby staging and reception area. The teams would remain in the harbour area for the next 24hrs receiving a set of orders on Saturday morning at 0800hrs followed by being supplied with ammunition and comms equipment and finally a kit inspection to ensure all teams were compliant in having the required kit..

Phase 2 started on the Saturday at 1700hrs and would continue straight for 12hrs all movement had to be conducted with the tactical situation in mind and tight timelines had to be strictly adhered to. Each team navigated a route of approx. 21km on foot completing tasks at 8 stands throughout the 12hr period. Each stand consisted of a military task with multiple elements and lasted 45 minutes to an hour. 100 marks were awarded per stand. At each stand the team i/c was briefed and orders then delivered to the team, the i/c of each team was constantly observed for their leadership skills. The eight (8) stands as mentioned above were all scenario based and very realistic.

1. Survivability was the first stand the team encountered. During this stand the team were met with a scenario of a medic who had been injured and required assistance to retrieve medical supplies and camouflage a vehicle which had been damaged. The team split in to two groups the group retrieving the medical supplies had to move into a wooded area where enemy forces had been spotted observing friendly forces movement and had set up trip flares, the ROE stated that enemy forces should not be fired upon unless they pose a direct threat. The team successfully moved through the area and retrieved the supplies without setting off the trip flare due to the exceptional situational awareness demonstrated by Cpl Shane McEvoy.

2. Medicate and evacuate consisted of treating two casualties while also maintaining security and finally moving to a pre designated for CASEVAC site. During the withdrawal the team received enemy contact and were required to move a casualty by stretcher over 800m while a manoeuvre team returned fire.

3. The advance to contact scenario was presented as a VCP which had been hit up by an enemy force. The team were required to move across open ground and locate and destroy the enemy. Once contact had been initiated and the firefight won the team managed to take the enemy position within ten (10) mins through showing speed and aggression all of which came down to the focused training and work ethic of every team member.

4. The C-UAS (anti-UAV) consisted of following a route down a valley and up the far side while crossing a river. Every time a drone was spotted or heard the REDEYE drill had to be followed with a soak time of 5 minutes before continuing.

5. CBRN consisted of the team getting into dress cat three (3) and moving into an area which was deemed at moderate risk for CBRN threat through UXO or industrial risks. As the team advanced an explosion was

heard followed by smoke. The team donned dress cat 4R and continued to move forward through the area. On the opposite side the team were brought into a clean area and had to proceed with correctly doffing their CBRN suits and going through the decontamination drills as per TTPs.



6. Dig or die was based around building a hasty defensive position while also maintaining security and staying in cover from In Direct Fire which

kept "hitting" irregularly.

7. The MIMMS encountered was initially briefed to team i/c's as being a Medical Logs stand which quickly turned into a major incident when a friendly forces vehicle patrol was hit by a UAV. The team cautiously moved to the incident and placed security before moving to the casualties. All walking wounded were moved to a pre designated Casualty Collection point with the most serious casualty being moved by stretcher. The casualties played their part in creating confusion and mayhem for the teams put the DF team scored 95/100 the team had benefited from the number of experienced paramedics & advanced paramedics as part of this year's team. This stand was setup and run by the support team from the Irish defence forces along with members of the Royal Army Medical Services to ensure fairness in marking.



8. Ambush was the final stand the team would face and arguably one of the toughest due to the physical nature of the stand and the fact that the team had covered some 20km on foot. The brief given was that an NGO sought our help in patrolling down a track to retrieve supplies, the enemy had been spotted on several occasions observing and harassing the NGOs. This stand assessed contact drills

and saw the team having to fire and manoeuvre out of the forest track over a distance of approx. 800m while providing protection for the NGO who was guiding them.

After each stand the umpire would conduct a quick debrief and provide feedback it was obvious that the DF team was scoring high points after each event. At 0500hrs After a full 12 hours on the go the team moved back to the harbour area confident that they had performed to a high standard. A parade was held at 0800hrs to announce the winners as 3rd and 2nd place were announced, all eyes were now focusing on the DF team as the winners of the de Rouffignac Shield AMSTTE 2025 was called out.

An incredibly proud moment for the team & DF to win this prestigious British Army's International Medical Exercise for the second consecutive year. They had competed against the best and won which proves the quality of both our training and people.

Arduous serpent is a superbly organised and well-run exercise, it is also a mentally and physical challenging experience from which our personnel have hugely benefitted. This event has also allowed us to demonstrate to our British and International colleagues the high standards of training and professionalism of the Defence Forces and allowed excellent relationships to be developed between the Royal Army Medical Corps and the DF Medical Corps.

I would like to finish with finally a special word of thanks for CQ Darren Mc Carthy (CMU 2Bde), CQ Suzanne Connolly (CMU 2Bde), Cpl Stephen Burke (CMU HQ) without whom we would have achieved very little during our training and preparation.



NAVAL SERVICE RESERVE

Operationalising Ambitions



ARTICLE BY CDR PHIL DICKER
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CDR PHIL DICKER

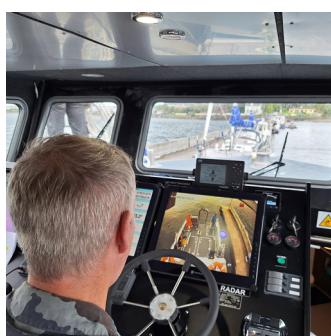


NAVAL SERVICE RESERVE FLEET REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME REACHES SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE

In September last year, the Naval Service Reserve (NSR) took delivery of the first of four new custom-built motor launches that will significantly enhance their role in the delivery of Maritime Defence and Security Operations (MDSO). These four state-of-the-art vessels will replace the four Motor Launches (MLs) that served the NSR for many years.

WHY YP?

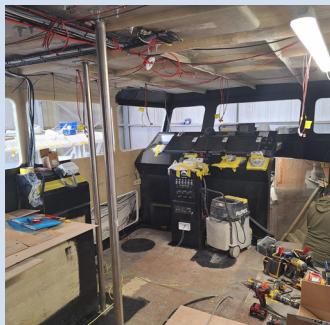
Yard Patrol or 'YP' is the official ships prefix for these new vessels. This internationally recognised designation has its origins in World War II. Following the attack on Pearl Harbour, the United States Navy leased a large number of small craft to conduct inshore security patrols of harbours, estuaries and other coastal infrastructure. The boats were predominantly crewed by experienced fishermen who fulfilled a wide variety of roles essential to the territorial defence of the US. Since WWII, the US Navy has maintained a large fleet of YPs to support its operations and training. The US YP fleet also supports research operations undertaken by the US Navy and other Government Departments.



OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The project, which commenced in Q4 2021 is a collaboration between the Naval Service (NS) and the Kerry based boat builder FM Marine Services Ltd. Based in the picturesque Valentia Island in County Kerry, FM Marine Services Ltd has a long tradition of designing and building boats for use in the wilds of the Atlantic Ocean. Over three decades, its owner Fionán Murphy has built a reputation for excellence, innovation, and reliability. Specialising in the design and construction of advanced and robust workboats and modern fishing vessels, the company has a commitment to quality and technology integration. A CYGNUS hull design has been used which is known for their speed, stability, and exceptional performance in a broad range of environmental conditions. The in-house experience of FM Marine Services Ltd and the use of a tried and tested hull form has provided an optimum solution for the achievement of the operational requirements of the boats.

The new YPs have been developed in close cooperation with the NSR and represent the culmination of several years of research and development to deliver a bespoke design for deployment in each of the four home ports of the NSR, namely Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford. The YP build Project Manager is also a member of the First Line Reserve and brings significant engineering experience to the project. The vessels will be predominantly deployed in the training role to deliver advanced seamanship and navigation training. However, their utility goes far beyond a training vessel. They will provide a platform for a range of enhanced operational capabilities for deployment in the maritime domain.



PLATFORM CAPABILITIES

The YP fleet boast a range of cutting-edge capabilities that significantly enhance the operational effectiveness of the NSR. These vessels are designed to perform a variety of missions. Their robust design will enable coastal Maritime Defence and Security Operations including surveillance, search and rescue operations and pollution control.

Some of the key features of the YP's include:

- Advanced Navigation Systems: Equipped with state-of-the-art navigation and communication systems, these vessels ensure precise and efficient manoeuvring even in challenging conditions. The advanced bridge systems, such as digital navigation charts, radar and Automatic Identification System (AIS) replicates the systems on NS ships thus providing an enhanced training platform. The YP's are a perfect platform for harbour pilotage, coastal navigation and fleet manoeuvre training.
- Enhanced Surveillance Capabilities: Featuring advanced radar and video imaging systems, the YP's provide superior situational awareness, aiding in the detection and monitoring of potential threats. The networked sensors and displays are fully interoperable with the main NS fleet and as such data from the onboard sensors can be fed into the Recognised Maritime Picture (RMP) maintained by Naval Operations Command.
- Maritime Defence and Security: The YP's will be armed with a range of small arms, the largest of which will be a 7.62mm General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG). Such capability will be sufficient to deter potential threats in the port and infrastructure security role. The real capability will be delivered in the surveillance and monitoring role. Active patrolling by vessels of this type is a key element of a layered defence that will be developed in the context of the implementation of the Commission on Defence Forces recommendations. The onboard facilities will enable the YP's to remain 'on station' for protracted periods as part of combined naval operations.
- Search and Rescue: It is not envisaged to have the YP fleet on a permanent 'on call' basis. However, if an incident arises while the vessel is deployed on operations, it will be very capable of responding to maritime distress calls. The onboard sensors and the performance of the platform mean the YP's are an ideal vessel for the conduct of inshore search and rescue. Winching trials have taken place with the Irish Coast Guard helicopter fleet to develop interoperability and in particular a casualty transfer capability. The large deck space and seakeeping of the YP's make them very suitable for such taskings.
- Pollution Control: Trials have already been conducted using YP01 for the deployment of anti-pollution booms. The large working deck and towing points make the YP an ideal vessel for the conduct of anti-pollution operations. Once deployed to their home ports around the coast the NSR will work with Local Authorities and Port Companies to develop response protocols to local pollution incidents.
- Hydrographic Survey



Once deployed to their home ports around the coast the NSR will work with Local Authorities and Port Companies to develop response protocols to local pollution incidents.

- Hydrographic Survey

and Underwater Operations: The YPs are equipped with a towing gantry specially designed to support the operation of towed systems such as the NS towed array side scan sonar. This will significantly enhance NS sub-surfaced search capability in harbours and inshore waters. The YP's are also configured to support diving operations with a large working deck and a ladder platform on the transom. The stationing of these vessels around the coast will offer the NS Diving Section an additional platform for the conduct of diving operations thus facilitating a rapid and sustainable deployment in response to incidents. The platform stability also lends itself to the conduct of hydrographic operations in coastal and inshore settings.

• Performance: The GRP hull has a low-profile radar and magnetic signature is designed to withstand harsh marine environments. The CYGNUS hull design and build has been proven in the harshest of conditions by the fishing industry. The robust design means the YP's offer durability and longevity, ensuring sustained operational capability. Powered by twin Cummins engines, the YP's can reach impressive speeds in a range of conditions. This speed, combined with responsive manoeuvrability makes this a very capable platform for the conduct of operations in the maritime domain. This performance will enable a robust and resilient capability in response to maritime incidents and operationalise effective patrolling of Ireland's extensive coastline and inshore waters.

The integration of these enhanced capabilities makes the YP fleet an indispensable asset for the NSR, enabling them to fulfil their mission of safeguarding Ireland's maritime interests effectively.

LEVEL OF AMBITION

The NSR's contribution to national defence is multifaceted. In times of crisis, the reserve force can be rapidly mobilised to augment the NS across a range of capabilities by providing much-needed personnel and expertise. The NSR also plays a critical role in maintaining a persistent presence in Ireland's coastal waters and major ports. This presence assists in the deterrence of illicit activities such as smuggling of illegal cargoes and illegal fishing. The acquisition of the YP's returns the NSR to a baseline level of capability enabling seamanship and navigation training and the conduct of localised maritime defence and security operations in support of the NS. However, the design and build of these vessels offers significant potential for the development of enhanced military capabilities in support of the achievement of Level of Ambition (LOA) 2.

The YP's are an ideal platform for the operation of remotely piloted aerial, surface and sub surface systems. Some trials have already taken place to prove the concept. As the YP's move towards Full Operational Capability (FOC) the additional capabilities will be developed to align the NSR with the wider DF level of ambition.

CONCLUSION

The acquisition of these four new vessels marks a significant milestone in the modernisation of the NSR. These state-of-the-art vessels enhance the NSR's operational capabilities and contribute to the achievement of Ireland's strategic defence objectives. With their advanced navigation systems, endurance, manoeuvrability and robust construction, the YP's are poised to play a crucial role in safeguarding Ireland's maritime interests.

The naming of the YP's will observe the tradition of naming vessels after figures from Irish mythology. The fleet of YP's will be named after the four Children of Lir.

YP 01 Fionnghuala

YP 02 Aodh

YP 03 Conn

YP 04 Fiachra



14TH SEMINAR FOR LEGAL ADVISORS BY THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR MILITARY LAW AND THE LAW OF WAR, GALWAY 2025

ARTICLE BY LT CIAN Ó MÓRÁIN

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY COMDT JIM MURRAY



The International Society for Military Law and the Law of War was founded in Strasbourg in 1956, and has been based in Brussels since 1988. Its stated aim is to study and disseminate international humanitarian law, military law and the law of peace operations. The Society has a current membership of around 700 members, including legal advisors (both civilian and military), judges and prosecutors. Further, it publishes a biannual peer reviewed journal, the Military Law and the Law of War Review. With this in mind, the Society organises various congresses, seminars and other educational events around the world, including seminars for military legal advisors. In 2023, the 13th Seminar for Legal Advisors of the Armed Forces was held at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York.

The 14th Seminar for Legal Advisors of the Armed Forces was held from the 20th to the 23rd of May 2025 by the Society and was organised with the support of the Irish Defence Forces. The Seminar was held at the Galway Bay Hotel in Galway, with Galway Bay looking especially scenic due to the week's fine weather. Over the course of the Seminar, participants heard from a variety of experts on a range of legal fields from artificial intelligence to the protection of peacekeepers.



A key focus of the Seminar was on international humanitarian law. Also known as the Law of Armed Conflict, international humanitarian law is one of the oldest areas of international law, with the dual aim of both protecting non-combatants and restricting the methods of conducting hostilities available to combatants. It is vital for states to ensure adherence to its principles, particularly via dissemination. Further, the gathering of experts and practitioners from across the globe enhances the sharing of information and best practice to maximise the effectiveness and adherence to international humanitarian law. Adherence to international humanitarian law is vital in military decision making, given it enhances both operational effectiveness and prevents the alienation of local populations, while promoting the moral standing of the military personnel.

The cornerstones of international humanitarian law are the four Geneva Conventions, which were drafted in the aftermath of World War II and are designed for inter-state conflict, paying little attention to civil wars or internal uprisings. Even in international armed conflict, international humanitarian law is currently facing issues, such as the atrocities being carried out in Ukraine and Gaza. Further, the development of 'grey zones' are especially concerning,



with ambiguity over the legal regime that applies in areas such as maritime security and cyber-attacks.

The Seminar proceedings commenced on the 20th of May where a welcome reception was held, with welcome remarks by Professor Wolff Heintschel von Heinegg (European University Viadrina) who is also the Society's president. The Seminar was then addressed by Brig Gen Caimin Keogh (Irish Defence Forces) who as General Officer Commanding of the Irish Army's 1 Brigade, welcomed the Seminar's participants to Galway.

Seminar proceedings commenced on the morning of the 21st May, with the opening ceremony being conducted by Col Richard Brennan (Irish Defence Forces Legal Service and the Society's Director of the Seminar for Legal Advisors) and Professor Siobhán Mulally (Irish Centre for Human Rights, University of Galway). The Seminar was then addressed remotely by the Irish Defence Forces Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Rossa Mulcahy who stressed the importance of international humanitarian law to the Irish Defence Forces, particularly given Ireland's strong peacekeeping tradition.

After a photo of the conference participants, the first panel commenced on Proportionality Under International Law in Today's World. The panel was chaired by Jessica Dorsey (Utrecht University) while the presenters were Dr Sigrid Redse Johansen (Norwegian Directorate of Public Prosecutions), Dr Rogier Bartels (the International Criminal Court) and Dr David Turns (Swedish Defence University).

The next panel was on the Protection of Peacekeepers, Including in Case of a Robust Mandate of the Peace Force, or in Case of Resumption of Hostilities Between Former Parties to an Armed Conflict, chaired by Professor Ray Murphy (Irish Centre for Human Rights, University of Galway), with the first presentation by Dr. Barbara Sonczyk (Hague University of Applied Sciences). The panel was then given a presentation by Major General (Retired) Adrian Ó Murchú (Irish Defence Forces) who drew on his operational experience in peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations.

The final panel of the day was on AI Applications in the Military Domain: Navigating Between Mitigating Risks and Using Opportunities. This panel was chaired by Professor Wolff Heintschel von Heinegg (European University Viadrina) with presentations by Jessica Dorsey (Utrecht University) Anna Rosalie Greipl (Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights).

The following day, the morning commencing with a panel on Economic and Social Rights of the Members of the Armed Forces chaired by Emmanuel Jacob (Euromil). The presenters were Rebecca Petra Mikova (Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance), Lt Col Keith Reichert (Canadian Armed Forces) and Lt Col Conor King (RACO). Of particular note to the Irish Defence Forces was Lt Col King's presentation which highlighted the role of representative organisations in advocating for the economic and social rights

of their members and PDFORRA and RACO's engagement with international organisations such as Euromil and the European Committee on Social Rights to ameliorate the pay and conditions of their members.

The next panel of the day was International Law Perspectives on the Cyber Warrior in Hybrid and Full-Scale Conflict chaired by Professor Shane Darcy (Irish Centre for Human Rights, University of Galway). The presenters for this panel were Professor and Brigadier General Paul Ducheine (University of Amsterdam and Netherlands Defence Academy) and Commander Kat Aubrey-Horvath (Canadian Armed Forces).

The next panel on The Legal Framework for Coast Guards and Navies to Protect Critical Infrastructure at Sea had a strong demonstration from the Irish Naval Service. It was chaired by Capt (NS) Patrick Burke (Irish Defence Forces Legal Services Branch), with presentations by Lt Cdr Shane Mulcahy (Irish Defence Forces Legal Services Branch), Frederik Rogiers (Ghent University) and Professor (Emeritus) Terry Gill (University of Amsterdam). A key focus of this panel was undersea critical infrastructure and the legality of protecting such critical undersea infrastructure from interference.

The next event was a special presentation on the international Society for Military Law and the Law of War and its ongoing and future projects, presented by the Society's Assistant Secretary General, Alfons Vanheusden. This was followed by another special presentation on Enhancing Stabilisation and Strategic Partnership in a Post-Conflict Environment by

Major Ludovica Glorioso (NATO Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence) which focused on developments in security sector reform. Major Glorioso's presentation was followed by a presentation on water security by Dr. Mara Tignino (Geneva Water Hub), who highlighted the importance of maintaining water systems during peacebuilding operations. The conference was then brought to a close, with a concluding speech by Col Richard Brennan.



The next day, conference participants were invited to take part in a hike of Diamond Hill in Connemara National Park or a day tour of Connemara, providing some physical activity after days of intense academic discussion.

Overall, the Seminar was a fascinating event to attend, with the diversity of speakers and topics covering a range of challenges in international law and contemporary security. The strongly international aspect of the Seminar ensured participants could learn from a variety of experts from military personnel, diplomats and academics, with a particular focus on the complex environments within which international law operates.

The 15th Seminar for the Society will be taking place in September in the Belgian city of Bruges. More information can be found at the Society's website, <https://ISMLLW.org>



An Cosantóir Magazine Launch

The DF Info Office recently held events to launch the An Cosantóir magazine, to both acknowledge the contributors and to take the opportunity to bring together like minded personnel from across the Defence Forces community. The first event, for the Mar/Apr edition, took place in Ceannt NCOs Mess, DFTC, kindly facilitated by RSM (Retd) John Murray and the Veterans coffee morning which takes place on the last Thursday of every month. We were joined by the full Houlihan clan who featured in PODF in that edition. Their family have a combined service of 467 years and it was an honour to be joined by BQ (Retd) Larry Houlihan and RSM (Retd) Mike Houlihan. The second event, for the June/July edition, took place in McKee Bks NCOs Mess, prior to the Army Teams event hosted by the COS. This edition focused on the success of these teams at various international locations as well as our regular features. This launch was another great success, with all contributors taking the opportunity to address the attendees on what contributed to their success and what being a member of their Army team meant to them and their unit. We intend to continue with these events, and will be coming to a barracks near you over the coming months.



A CONGO STORY

ARTICLE BY DAN WHELAN POST 11 IUNVA
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY DAN WHELAN

A chance meeting at a ceremony in the Glencree German Military Cemetery, Co. Wicklow, last year brought together individuals with a shared interest in the Congo, forming the basis of a meaningful relationship that has since developed into ongoing collaboration. The ceremony was attended by the German Ambassador His Excellency Mr David Gill; The British Military Attaché, Lt Col Sean Grant; The American Military Attaché Lt Col Thomas Nolta; Brig Gen Stephen Ryan GOC 2 Bde; Mr Pierrot Muller Ngadi, the WUSME (World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises) Ambassador in Ireland, a Congo Native as well as members of Post 11 of The Irish United Nations Veterans Association (IUNVA).

We met at the event to honour the named and unnamed fallen soldiers buried in the graveyard. Thirteen Members of Post 11 IUNVA were guests of the Ambassador. The invite was to myself, a Post 11 Member who co-ordinated our attendance at the event. Following the event, I chatted with Pierrot over coffee and in doing so realised our mutual connection – Kinshasa. My father, the late CS Peter Whelan, Ord Corps DFTC, on his Return from UN Service in the Congo in 1962 with 36 Inf Bn named our family home 'Kinshasa'. Kinshasa, formerly Leopoldville, is not only the capital of The Democratic Republic of the Congo, but also where Pierrot is originally from. I introduced Pierrot to two members of our group in attendance that day, Joe Guidera 36 Inf Bn, and Tossy Sheedy 36 Inf Bn, who had also served in the Congo. Our conversation over the day revolved around the service of young Irish men who left home to carry out duties in a far-away country in the service of peace. This led to an invitation from Pierrot for our Congo members to attend an event in the Roger Casement Summer School in Dun Laoghaire, where one of our members, 'Congo' Joe Mallon as he is fondly known in Army Circles, was also asked to speak.

Joe Mallon served two trips to the Congo, with 33 Inf Bn (Aug 1960 – Jan 1961) and 35 Inf Bn (June 1961 – Dec 1961). Joe was invited to give a small presentation to the invited guests about his journey as a 16 year old forming up on the square in McDonagh Barracks in The Curragh Camp, Co Kildare and his Service as a young soldier in the UN mission to the Congo. He talked about leaving the square in McDonagh Barracks with the packed lunch of 'Bullybeef' sambo's, an orange, a banana and an apple. He was dressed in the old bulls wool military uniform and the 303 weapon of the Defence Forces at the time.

After the event our Congo Veterans were asked lots of questions on their Service and posed for photos with the Congolese Delegation that were present.



Joe was introduced at the event by the Chairperson on the night, Miss Mamy Nzema Nkoy and Miss Congo Éireann for his Presentation.

The Event itself was a great success for us as Members of IUNVA and of course our Congo Veterans.

This led to an additional invitation for our Congo/IUNVA Veterans to Africa Day, which Celebrates the African and Filipino Multicultural Society, the Congolese Anti Poverty Network (CAPN) and Honouring our Congo Veterans for UN Service in the Congo 1961 to 1964. In attendance for this event which took place in The DLR Lexicon Library and Cultural Centre Dun Laoghaire, were our chairperson Tony O'Reilly, Pat O'Neill, myself and our Three Congo Veterans – Joe Mallon, Joe Guidera and Tossy Sheedy.

At the Event we were entertained by a Native Congo Dancer/Warrior wearing traditional clothing made from Raffia threads as displayed in the image.

A mini fashion show of both countries finished the event, with an elegant display of the raffia outfits by models from both countries.

At the presentation by Miss Congo Éireann and the Cathaoirleach Mr. Jim O'Leary and Councillor J.P. Durkan, a former Garda who did UN Service in Cyprus. Joe was presented with a Glass Plaque inscribed with the following: CAPN Honouring the Service of our UN Peacekeepers in the Congo 1961-1964

This Event was also a Huge success for us as a small group of Veterans to be Honoured by the Congolese people living in Ireland.

We were asked again about Peacekeeping on UN missions across Africa where our Comrades have served.

Again another Successful day out for our Congo Veterans.

The Three lads won't mind me saying that they are all over Eighty Years Young and Delighted to talk about their Mission in The Congo. ONUC 1960 1964

IUNVA is about our Veterans and the Stories of UN Service over the Last Seventy Years or So. Also not Forgetting those who Paid the Ultimate Sacrifice and did not Return Home to Family and Loved Ones. Never Forgotten

Ar Dheis De go Raibh a Anam .

DF FAMILY DAY





**DEFENCE FORCES
FAMILY SUPPORT DAY**

Saturday, 9th August 2025
Wildlands Adventure Park
Galway H91 WYV2

Register: www.military.ie/familyday
For further: info@military.ie

MILITARY ARCHIVES AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY DIGITISATION AND CONSERVATION PROJECT

ARTICLE BY COMDT DANIEL AYIOTIS



AFTER THE DECADE OF CENTENARIES

You could say that, in one way, the Military Archives was a victim of its own success during the Decade of Centenaries, becoming synonymous as the custodians of records chronicling the fight for Irish freedom, at the expense of public awareness of our wider collections and statutory remit. This is understandable, given the fact that the Military Archives holds the most significant collections of archival material covering the revolutionary years 1913-1923 of any archival institution in the state. Furthermore, the Military Archives' highly specialist military and civilian staff have earned a reputation for a standard of public service provision unsurpassed by any other national or local cultural institution. Collections including the Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection, Bureau of Military History 1913-1921 Collection, National Army Census 1922, Collins Papers 1918-1922, and the Civil War Operations and Intelligence Collection, have expanded, deepened and democratised our collective understanding of, and engagement with, the turbulent, formative years of our state.

However, this institution is far more than simply a revolutionary archive. The Military Archives is the statutory 'place of deposit' for the records of the Defence Forces, Department of Defence and Army Pensions Board, under the terms of the National Archives of Ireland Act, 1986. This places a legal obligation on both the military

and the department to transfer records over thirty years old to the Military Archives for public inspection (as opposed to the National Archives), meaning that our records span the entirety of the Defence Forces' and Department of Defence's history. In the post Decade of Centenaries period, we have made a conscious effort to promote a deeper awareness of our post-Civil War era collections. One of our latest projects will achieve this by granting online access to our very substantial collection of aerial photography dating from the mid to late 20th century.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Among the Military Archives' holdings is a very significant quantity (tens of thousands) of aerial images and associated plotting maps created by the Air Corps from the 1940s to the 1990s. These images constitute a significant visual record of the evolving Irish landscape during the last century and have proved valuable to researchers in recent years for reasons ranging from legal boundary disputes, to historical exhibitions and publications, to inquiries into the Tuam Mother and Baby Home (historical images being examined for evidence of disturbance to land due to burials).

This unique collection also includes images taken during Operation: Sandstone. Initiated in 1946 by the UK Joint Intelligence Committee at the request of the US Chief of Naval Operations, this top-secret project's purpose was to conduct a topographical survey of the coastline and beaches of Ireland and Great Britain that would have been vital for an American counter-invasion from the sea had Russia invaded during the Cold War.



The team at the Military Archives has been adamant about the need to make this collection more widely accessible for a long time, well aware of the value of the information it contains. However, despite a limited digitisation of a quantity of these images over a decade ago, they have never been made accessible to their full potential as

DUBLIN PORT

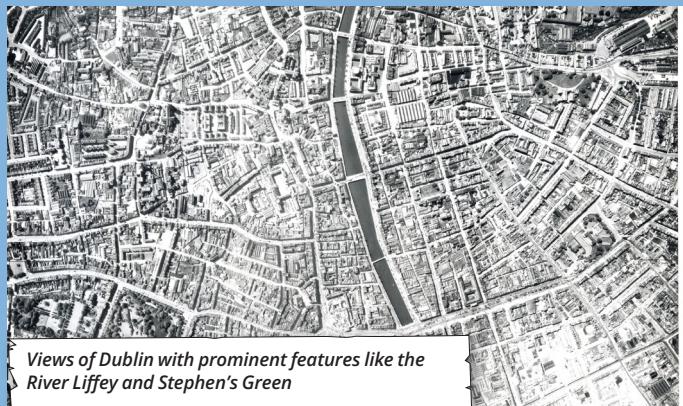
GAS COMPANY INSTALLATIONS FROM WEST END OF HANOVER

QUAY - GRAND CANAL QUAY

PAN 16

www.military.ie





a collection of national importance. The main reason for this is that the technical capability to do so was unavailable until now – though our partnership with the National Collection of Aerial Photography (NCAP).

The National Collection of Aerial Photography (NCAP)

The NCAP, based in Edinburgh, Scotland, is one of the largest collections of aerial imagery in the world, containing tens of millions of images (several petabytes of data) originating from both the UK and internationally. Similar to the Military Archives, the NCAP is a recognised 'place of deposit' of the UK National Archives under the Public Records Act, 1958. NCAP operates under Historic Environment Scotland (HES), the public body responsible for the care and promotion of Scotland's historic environment. The NCAP team, world leaders in their field with the latest high-tech equipment at their disposal, work in collaboration with archival institutions across the world that hold collections of historical aerial imagery to preserve, digitise and make their collections accessible online. Most notably this includes an exclusive relationship with the United States National Archives & Records Administration (NARA), the federal government agency responsible for military declassified aerial and satellite imagery.

THE BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH NCAP

This partnership is about far more than simply 'digitisation' – very often when people unfamiliar with the archival profession think of digitisation projects they focus on the scanning aspect. In reality, an archival digitisation project involves several work streams, of which the actual digitisation or scanning is most often the quickest and least complex part.

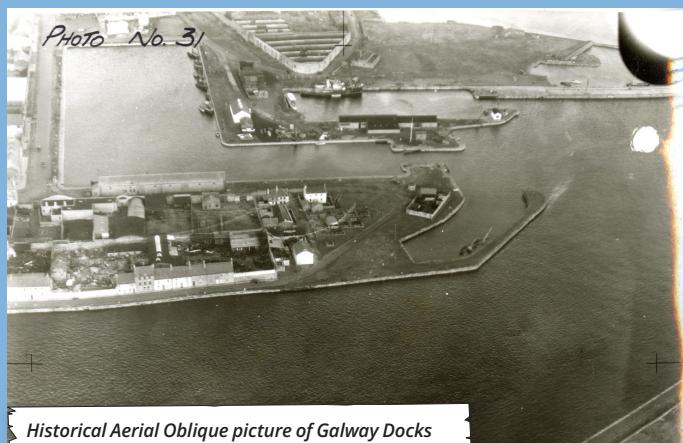
The majority of this aerial photography is on aircraft film reels, which requires very specialist cleaning and conservation processes, as well as printed photographs and plotting maps. Some of the reels are beginning to exhibit signs of physical deterioration due to their age, including early stages of 'vinegar syndrome', and so physical conservation is a priority and is being conducted by the NCAP team prior to digitisation. NCAP will also rehouse the reels in new bespoke, preservation-grade plastic canisters, replacing the old and damaged

metal ones. The team will carry out the necessary cataloguing (meeting professional archival description standards), collation and application of metadata, geolocation, hosting and dissemination of the images via the NCAP GeoPortal, which will also be accessible via a new collection landing-page on militaryarchives.ie once all of the material goes live. This is a project that the Military Archives team is particularly proud to have in progress; no other organisation in Ireland or Europe have the NCAP's range of expertise in the field of historic aerial imagery, making them uniquely placed to provide the Military Archives with the required suite of professional services.

They say that 'success has many fathers', and it is true that this couldn't have happened without the work of members of the Military Archives past and present and our colleagues across the organisation, particularly the Air Corps, DF Finance Branch and Department of Defence. Due particular mention, however, is recently retired deputy head of the Archives, Commandant Sarah Colclough, who took the reigns as project manager and brought it over the line before hanging up her uniform. It was her dedication and belief in the national value of this collection that ensured its success and will be a fitting legacy to her time at the Military Archives when it is completed in 2026.



Hook Head Lighthouse



Historical Aerial Oblique picture of Galway Docks



PEOPLE OF THE DF

NAME:

CHRISTOPHER O'SULLIVAN

RANK:

SGT

CURRENT UNIT:

1 BTC

UNITS SERVED:

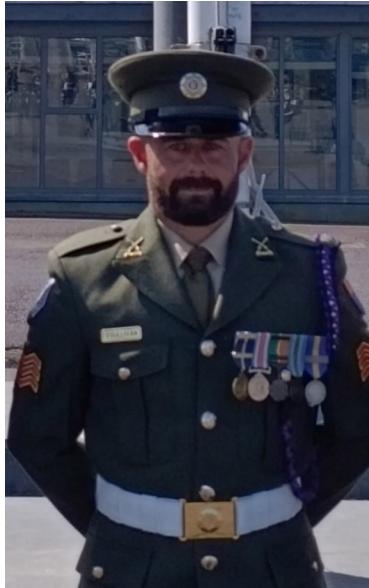
1 BAR, 1 BTC

YEAR JOINED:

2006

MISSIONS OVERSEAS:

98 INF BN CHAD, 45 INF GP UNIFIL,
113 INF BN UNIFIL



CAN YOU GIVE ME A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR CAREER SO FAR?

I began my journey in the Defence Forces in December 2006, training with the 12th Battalion in Clonmel, an intense experience that laid the foundation for my career. After completing training in 2007, I was assigned to the 1 Brigade Artillery Regiment, as it's now called. I underwent a gunnery course in Mullingar, qualifying me to operate weapons like the 81mm mortar, 120mm mortar, and 105mm gun, which prepared me for overseas service. In 2008, I deployed to Chad, a life-changing mission that remains one of my greatest experiences. In 2014, I served

with the Reconnaissance Company in UNIFIL in Lebanon, navigating complex operations. From 2015 to 2016, I completed the Potential Non-Commissioned Officer (PNCO) course at 1 BTC, a key step in my leadership growth. In 2018, I undertook the Artillery Standard Course, leading to another UNIFIL deployment that year. Between 2019 and 2022, I completed courses in the RBS 70 anti-aircraft system, map and navigation instruction, and the .50 Heavy Machine Gun. During this time, I trained recruit platoons and potential NCOs, sharing my expertise. In 2022, I transferred to 1 BTC as a Corporal, completing the All-Arms Standard Course and the Infantry Light Support Weapons Course. Promoted to Sergeant in 2023, I served as Platoon Sergeant for the 171 Recruit Platoon and successfully interviewed for my current role as a Training Sergeant at 1 BTC. In 2024, I completed the



Delivering orders to my first recruit platoon as Platoon Sgt

Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT) course and led the 174 Recruit Platoon as Platoon Sergeant. In 2025, I finished instructing the 25th PNCO course, continuing my passion for shaping future soldiers.

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO JOIN THE DF?

My grandfather and uncle both served in the 4th Battalion at Collins Barracks, which sparked my interest in the military. However, the defining moment came during my transition year in school when the Army conducted a recruitment campaign. Their stories of adventure, camaraderie, and service inspired me, and I knew instantly that joining the Defence Forces was the path I wanted to pursue.

WHAT WAS YOUR PROUDEST MOMENT SO FAR IN THE DF?

Becoming a Sergeant was a significant milestone, but when I reflect deeply, my proudest moment was serving in the EUFOR mission in Chad in 2008. At just 21, being part of such a meaningful operation in a challenging part of the world was incredible. It taught me resilience and teamwork, lessons that have stayed with me and shaped my career.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST CHALLENGING MOMENT SO FAR IN THE DF?

Being away from my family during overseas deployments is always tough, especially with young children at home. The emotional strain of separation is a significant challenge, but the support of my loved ones and colleagues helps me persevere through those difficult times.

CAN YOU GIVE ME A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF A TYPICAL DAY IN YOUR JOB?

As a Sergeant overseeing training courses—whether for weapons, recruit induction, or NCO development—my day focuses on ensuring everything runs smoothly. I coordinate with instructors to confirm that students receive top-quality training and have all necessary resources, from equipment to materials. Planning and preparing for field exercises is a major responsibility, ensuring all equipment is ready and tasks are executed effectively. I also mentor students, addressing their needs to create a supportive learning environment.





Returning from 113 Inf Bn UNIFIL. During that trip I also came home for Christmas to surprise my daughter during her visit to Santa

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE ABOUT TO DO RECRUIT TRAINING?

Stay physically fit and be eager to learn. Don't fear mistakes—they're part of growth. Embrace each moment of recruit training with pride, as it's a unique experience that builds lifelong friendships. Looking back, it's one of the best parts of your career, and the memories you create with your peers will stay with you forever.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY THE MOST ABOUT TRAINING PEOPLE IN THE DF?

I love watching students' progress through their courses, seeing their skills, confidence, and personalities evolve. Whether it's a civilian becoming a Private or a Private advancing to Corporal, witnessing their sense of pride and achievement is rewarding. Knowing I've helped them through challenging times and fostered their teamwork gives me a deep sense of fulfilment.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THE FUTURE?

I'm currently preparing for a training mission with EUMAM in about a month, focusing on getting everything in order for this exciting opportunity. In the next year or two, I hope to complete a Senior NCO course to further my leadership skills. Beyond that, I'm open to new challenges within the DF, whether it's another deployment or a specialized role.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE QUOTE?

I was inspired by a speech from Admiral William McRaven, and this part resonates with me: 'If you make your bed every morning, you will have accomplished the first task of the day. It will give you a small sense of pride, and it will encourage you to do another task and another and another. By the end of the day, that one task completed will have turned into many tasks completed. Making your bed will also reinforce the fact that little things in life matter. If you can't do the little things right, you will never do the big things right. And, if by chance you have a miserable day, you will come home to a bed that is made—that you made—and a made bed gives you encouragement that tomorrow will be better.' This reminds me that small, disciplined actions lead to greater success.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO YOUR 18-YEAR-OLD SELF?

Seize each day and live every moment fully, as you never know what lies ahead. Embrace opportunities and challenges, as they shape who you become.



Graduation for Level 7 Minor in Leadership Management and Defence Studies through the Defence Forces



WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEBODY WHO HAS GOT A PLACE ON AN NCO COURSE AND WANTS TO PREPARE?

Preparation is everything. Maintain a strong level of fitness and sharpen your tactical awareness. Navigation is often the most challenging part of the NCO course, so practice with a mentor in tough terrains like mountains, then test yourself alone, reversing routes to build confidence. The course will guide you, but your success depends on applying yourself fully to every task.

WHAT SKILLS THAT YOU HAVE GOT FROM THE DF DO YOU FIND HAVE PREPARED YOU BEST FOR LIFE?

Communication has been transformative for me. I used to be nervous speaking in groups, but leading briefings and training sessions has built my confidence. Timekeeping is another key skill—being early is a DF principle that translates to all areas of life. These skills have made me more effective both personally and professionally.



AN EMERGING THREAT LANDSCAPE

ARTICLE BY MARIYAM HASHAM PHD

With General Séán Clancy appointed as the new head of the European Union Military Committee, the role of Ireland's Defence Forces and its military intelligence capabilities will grow in importance. This is the first time Ireland has had such a role. It comes at a time when the threat landscape is more complex than ever before. The EU sits in a Europe that is questioning some of its long-held norms about security, out of theatre operations, and the nature of the current threat landscape. The pressures on Irish peacekeepers, intelligence services, and the armed forces will only intensify from May of this year, when General Clancy took up his post.

Geopolitics is once again the driver of deteriorating security environments and the rise of non-state actors with malevolent intentions, but it is no longer the geopolitics of old, with its clear categories of nation states and their established structures and diplomatic channels. There is now a proliferation of fragmented and volatile states across the globe, often subject to violent fighting over claims of contested legitimacy. The rise of non-state actors, such as Hamas or the Wagner Group who have access to vast resources and form their own intelligence sharing networks, is a growing complication for military thinkers looking at how to best deploy Ireland's peacekeeping units and address intelligence needs. overshadowing all this is the increased volatility of American defence and security interests under a new administration. For Ireland, the impact of an increasingly complex security landscape will be in decision-making about deployment of Irish peacekeepers, the importance of intelligence, and the strategic oversight of tangled, often messy security threats that seem to defy neat categorisation.

AN EMERGING AND COMPLEX THREAT LANDSCAPE

Five trends help describe how the threat landscape is evolving. Complex geopolitics shapes the environment, while sub-state



actors, digital technologies, changing roles for institutions, and uncertain intelligence approaches reveal flashpoints and undercurrents that drive violence.

COMPLEX GEOPOLITICS

Geopolitics is once again a key driver for military decision-making. The UK is looking at

Ireland as part of a wider rethinking of its defence posture, focusing specifically on Northern Ireland for strategic and resource decisions, and on its wider relationship with the Republic because of Russian activities along Europe's border. Geopolitics is also driving fresh thinking on EU security paradigms, due to the proximity of the Russian-Ukraine conflict and the spillover impact of other conflicts and crises that impact Europe.

As old conflicts reignite across the Middle East, new problems emerge in the China-Russia-North Korea region. The fall of the Assad regime in Syria rearranges existing security and power relations in ways that are still unfolding. What impact this will have on Iran, which both supported the Assad regime, and used Syria as training ground for its proxy armies, is unknown. Israel is taking the opportunity to do serious damage to Iranian assets while the new Syrian regime finds its footing. Iran, while appearing to be tightly controlled by its theocratic rulers, has deepening internal fractures that make it less stable than it appears. Israel and Gaza, once again in conflict, dominate diplomatic and security responses in the Middle East and abroad. Violent civil conflict continues in Yemen, Libya, and Iraq with no sign of cessation in sight. The growth of jihadist movements, from the Horn of Africa to the Sahel region have made the area a haven for criminal gangs, traffickers, and arms dealers and generated humanitarian crises on a massive scale.

Russia's expansionist ambitions, whether invading Ukraine or pushing against the perimeters of Poland, Finland, and the Nordic



countries, dominates security assessments in Europe. However, Russia's growing closeness to North Korea and some of the more volatile African countries gives Putin extra weapons and resources, which can replace what he loses in the continuing war in the Ukraine. Russia can intensify the conflict for longer periods of time, and widen its reach across Europe even if decisive victories seem out of reach.

China, an enigmatic player on the world's stage appears to be increasing its diplomatic and economic engagement in world affairs, especially in Africa and the Gulf States. At the same time, it is edging closer and closer to border excursions with its neighbours, India and Bhutan. India and China have long standing territorial disputes that occasionally flare up into conflict. Additionally, China's Belt and Road Initiative has strengthened relations with Pakistan, an alliance that China is using to thwart India's entry as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. As tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, long allies, edge towards outright conflict, it would be foolish to overlook the galvanising effect this could have on a range of jihadist groups.

A plethora of trade, defence, and intelligence agreements have tied countries together so that impact in one area often cascades across the other. For Ireland, oversight of EU security and military functions increases the need to understand critical geopolitical patterns.

SUB-STATE ACTORS

Malevolent sub-state actors operate outside of the traditional mechanisms of state and diplomatic engagement and rely on informal networks for logistics, funding, and operations. Often it only becomes apparent that a group exists when a spectacular terrorist attack or a dramatic spike in intelligence chatter occurs. Sub state actors, like Al Qaeda and Daesh, have been around for over a decade. As attention has focused on Hamas and the Iranian proxies along the arc of resistance, Al Qaeda and Daesh (or ISIS as it is more commonly known) have taken the time to refine their strategies, increase reach across disparate groups, and replenish their supplies. Many sub-state actors operate in a decentralised way, making it more difficult to gather intelligence on size, scale or networks. Terrorism has an extended reach through smaller incidents - stabbings, low level bomb making, vehicles, and lone wolf attackers who are allied to large groups but not controlled by them.

DIGITAL SPHERE

Innovation and advances in digital technologies have brought many benefits, but from a threat perspective, the ease of access to 3D printing, bio substance dispersal systems, AI, and data harvesting is a concern. The weaponisation of technologies such as AI, drones, or autonomous vehicles gives sub-state actors an enormous arsenal of unpredictable resources that can be deployed in out of theatre operations with minimal risk to operatives.

Terrorist groups are highly motivated to seek out technologies that give logistical and tactical advantages. Digital communications, encrypted messaging, and virtual reality in particular have given groups an enormous edge in building vast, undetectable networks in diaspora communities and conducting complex operations at home. Social media platforms, very resistant to legislation and regulation, are critical for radicalising new members. Deepfakes and editing of operations to look like online gaming live streams is bypassing traditional methods of detection and prevention.

INSTITUTIONAL WEAKNESSES

Political institutions are only as good as the social contract that gives them authority - when that contract weakens, or when the institution separates from the people and from its roots, it becomes less competent at its mission, less able to flex and respond to changing threats or new actors. Public criticism of the UN, NATO, OSCE, and

other bodies has grown louder in recent years. Contentious political issues and severe humanitarian crises have revealed existing institutions to be less competent and more divided by internal politics at a time when public trust is at an all-time low. Deploying institutional resources cohesively is more difficult now than in previous decades.

UNCERTAIN INTELLIGENCE

Geopolitics, technology, and the increase of heavily politicised narratives will impact how defence and security intelligence is conducted. The incoming American president has a notoriously fraught relationship with the USA's intelligence agencies and security protocols, often publicly going against them when meeting leaders such as Putin or Kim Jong Un. For Ireland, and for other US allies this complicates intelligence sharing protocols, credibility of intelligence, and requirements for safeguarding national intelligence. Open source intelligence, the particular needs of commercial companies involved in Irish infrastructure and maritime projects that impact national security, and corporate espionage add another layer of complexity to traditional intelligence approaches. Penetrative operations by Russia, China, Iran and others who see Ireland as the gateway into Europe are a new feature, one at odds with Ireland's open, neutral culture and can include bots and social media disinformation campaigns as well as old fashioned Humint.

As Gen Clancy takes up the leadership of the EU Military Committee, the Irish government is also reassessing defence and intelligence decision-making. It is a cliché, now to say, the world is more complicated. But, like many clichés there is a grain of truth in it. Simmering conflicts are exploding, extra state and sub state groups are as powerful and resourced as nation states, global narratives are polarised, and geopolitics is once again a critical driver in statecraft. A deeper understanding of the threat landscape is crucial for operational and intelligence planning as Ireland's role in the world shifts to meet the challenges.

Dr Mariyam Hasham has over a decade of experience in geopolitical analysis and terrorism studies, first at the Royal Institute of International Affairs and later at the Royal United Services Institute where she helped set up and lead the Homeland Security and Resilience Studies Unit. At the UN Tribunal for Rwanda, she profiled death squads behind the genocide. In the commercial sector, she has worked as a geopolitical analyst for the energy and technology sectors, specialising in the design and build of bespoke intelligence systems. She was one of three on a major UK project - Project Unicorn - which assessed London's ability to withstand catastrophic terrorist attack. Her PhD, from Kings College Department of War Studies, was on the role of identity narratives and terrorism in the IRA. She is currently researching and writing her first book on terrorism and developing data visualisation systems for terrorism, geopolitics and conflict, and emerging threat groups.



THE MARINE INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT 1922-1923

ARTICLE BY NOEL R CLANCY PC. MB.OCH. MRCGP. MICGP. LSM.

The Irish War of Independence ended with the declaring of a Truce in July 1921, leaving a totally exhausted, bankrupt, country. The last thing Ireland needed was further strife and that unfortunately is what it got. Out of the ashes it had to emerge to fight another bitter war. The new Provisional Government now sought, from its recent enemy, monetary funds. A Free State Army had to be established, in time, to total 36,000 men all requiring clothing, provisions, weapons and pay.

On the 5th December 1921 a 'Treaty' document was signed thus ending hundreds of years of partial occupation by English forces in Ireland.

On 6th January 1923 Dáil Éireann voted on its acceptance; sixty four Deputies in favour, fifty seven against.

On the 10th January the leader of the opposition Mr Eamon De Valera took his dissenting TDs out of the Chamber. The 'Dáil' met on the 14th January 1922 and established a Provisional Government, Arthur Griffith being elected President. On 31st of January a Free State Army was established at Beggars Bush Barracks Dublin.

On 26th February an IRA Convention was held at the Mansion House in Dublin repudiating the Treaty and appointing its own Executive. Irreversible change began to happen on 2nd May 1922 when 'Nationalists' (pro-treaty) and 'Republican' (IRA) forces began exchanging fire in Kilkenny City. Envoy's impose peace as Nationalists seize Kilkenny Castle. It then became obvious, that an all-out civil war was imminent.

The Free State Authorities moved, rapidly, to take control of coastal waters, major ports and rivers to stop 'Irregular' forces gun running activity. This was effected by the establishing of a prototype customs and port control department named 'The Marine Investigation Department'.

Comdt Joseph Vize, a Wexford native with long standing republican ties dating back to IRB membership in 1913, and extensive merchant shipping involvement, was appointed as GOC Marine Investigation Department on 20th March 1922.

With the support of the British Colonial Office, Lieutenant General 'Ginger' O'Connell, acting on behalf of the Authorities, purchased four Great War submarine chaser purposed motor launches from the British Admiralty on 11th May 1922.

Under the responsibility of a Commander Blay RN the flotilla set out from Southampton intended for 'Kingstown' (Dún Laoghaire).

On the way seas got rough and Motor Launch (ML) 2 having struck some object began taking water. Though receiving continual pump out, and support towing, the vessel sank on 19th July, its crew transferring to another launch. A further problem arose when a fire broke to the rear of ML 4 but was contained. In spite of upheavals the remaining launches reached port.

The Civil War began in earnest on 28th June 1922 with the attack by Nationalists on the Four Courts, Dublin, then a Republication held building.

On 12th July 1923 Comdt Vize was promoted to Major General OC Coastal and Marine Service, the latter comprising both MID (Military Intelligence Division) and Coastal Infantry.

Department Vessels

River work was undertaken by the use of the three ex RN wooden motor launches; ML 1, ML 2, ML 3 each measuring 80' 0" in length, 19' 0" in beam and 5' 6" in draught. In support were a number of wooden steam launches. Engine room size of the ML was 8' x 12" and was equipped with 2 American standard engines. According to one of the engine room staff, Second Engineer Heffernan, the engines had a maximum horsepower of 440 and was capable of a speed of 22kts.

The vessels were dispersed as follows; Waterford harbour – 1 launch, Cork Harbour – 1 launch, Limerick – 2 launches. It is most probable that the remaining 'lost boat' was destined for Dublin with all vessels to cover the main approaches from England. It is surprising there was no comment about the need to cover Drogheda Port.

Measurement for the two steam launches, by number, were

190' length 57' 2"; beam 12' 4" draught 5' 1" speed 9kts

199 length 60' 2" beam 14" draught 4" 10" speed 10.3 kts.

Patrolling vessels were also supplemented by two 'drifter' type boats named Inisherer and John Somers respectively. The former was 65 foot in length, 17 foot 7 inches in beam and with a draught of 8 foot. The latter we are told had a length of 80 feet and both had a speed of 8 kts.



National Army troops land in Fenit in August 1922 as part of a major offensive against the Anti-Treaty Forces

All vessels appear to share a common complement being a Captain, Chief Officer, Chief and Second Engineer plus 4 AB deck hands. Each vessel flew the tricolour to the rear.

Uniforms of Personnel

Non-commissioned officers wore merchant navy type uniforms, being navy-blue double-breasted reefer jackets, navy slacks the uniform being completed by polo neck jumpers. Officers wore an appropriate officer style uniform with merchant naval type rank markings on the lower sleeves

The cap badge was then shared by all army personnel being the letter FF mounted on a small ring bearing the words 'Oglaigh na hÉireann' and the lot being mounted on a representation of a sunburst.

In respect of rank markings each captain wore on the lower sleeve four $\frac{1}{2}$ inch gold rings and one curlicue Chief officer 2 gold rings and curlicue, and first officers one ring and curlicue

Service Organization

Coastal Organisation Structure

The coastline was divided into four Areas, each under the control of an Area Officer:

- Area 1: Narrow Water to Carnsore Point
- Area 2: Carnsore Point to Bearehaven
- Area 3: Bearehaven to Westport
- Area 4: Westport to Moville

A further subdivision created eight Districts, each overseen by an Inspector:

1. Narrow Water to Dublin
2. Dublin to Carnsore Point
3. Carnsore Point to Cobh
4. Cobh to Bearehaven
5. Bearehaven to Limerick
6. Limerick to Westport
7. Westport to Killybegs
8. Killybegs to Moville

Each District was further divided into Stations, typically numbering between 3 and 5 per District. Each Station was manned by between 3 and 34 Searchers.

Total Establishment

The Department was commanded by Major General Vize, supported by three Staff Officers operating from Portobello Barracks, Dublin.

Field personnel included:

- 4 Area Officers
- 8 Inspectors
- 164 Searchers

Instructions to Inspection Staff were issued directly by Major General Vize.

The following instructions are issued for your guidance, to assist you in the proper performance of your duties:

- Search of Vessels: All ships' cargoes, crews, and passengers are to be examined with a view to preventing the illegal importation of arms.
- All prohibited imports, unless covered by a proper permit of importation, are to be detained.
- When searching vessels, exercise the utmost vigilance. No goods—whether baggage or effects—are to be removed without prior examination.
- When examining baggage, behave with politeness to passengers, and show due care in handling their effects.
- Masters, officers, and members of the crew are to be treated with due civility.
- All ship cargo must be thoroughly and carefully examined, with particular attention paid to suspicious-looking articles.
- Any member of the Department found accepting bribes, or prerequisites of any description, will be liable to court martial and instant dismissal.

Cost of the Service

Among the Service documents preserved in the archives is one which shows clearly how the Administration of the day viewed the cost of the Marine Investigation Department (MID):

"That the administration of the MID is exceedingly expensive to the State may be garnered from the figures for four weeks of the Establishment, which do not include Pension and Special Services."

The figures for a four-week period were as follows:

- Area 1: £1,215-4-3
- Area 2: £722-2-2
- Area 3: £533-12-4
- Area 4: £287-2-8

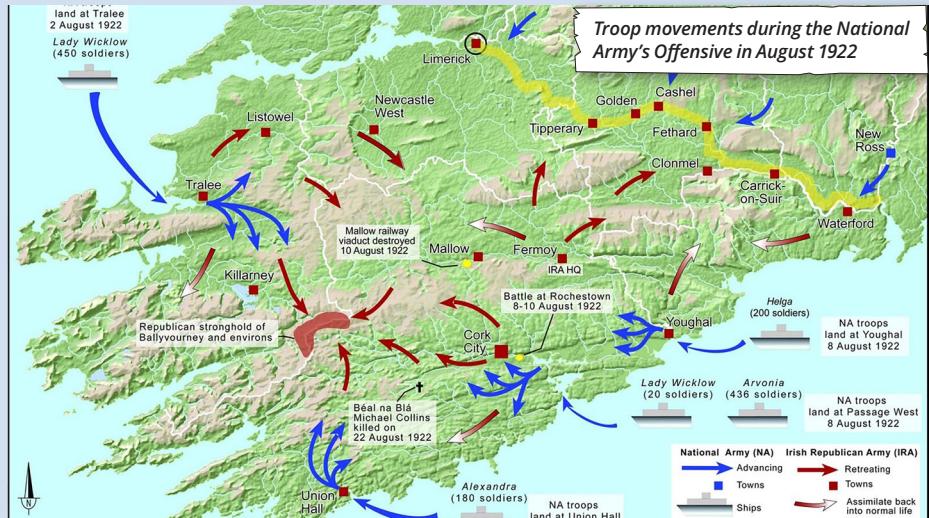
Total Cost: £2,758

Administration

A further complaint is contained in the contents of a folio document, stating:

"That the administration of the MID is exceedingly lax may be gathered from the following:

- No definite instructions exist, or have ever existed, at Dun Laoghaire regarding:
- Duties to be carried out by the MID
- Arrest, detention, or seizure procedures
- Methods of search
- No Report Book is, or has been, kept indicating the description of passengers, incidents, arrests, or general movements.
- No written instructions have ever been issued in respect of courtesy or notice of search."



Utility

The Department's own final conclusion on the Marine Investigation Department reads:

"That the MID is a perfectly useless Department, constituting an expensive luxury of the State and calling for immediate disbandment, which may be deduced from the following:

- Its duties, as outlined in the official letter already quoted, are already provided for and should be carried out by the Customs officials.
- The latter should search not only all passenger luggage but all ship cargoes and quarters.
- The only difference between Customs officers and the MID is that the latter have, and the former have not, the authority to conduct a personal search without a Magistrate's Order."

Figures from the MID support this contention:

- Week ending 3 November 1923:

No seizures outside the Port of Dublin. The four seizures made in that port were items that should not have been dealt with by the MID. Three were arms ordinarily carried by ships' officers; the fourth was a consignment of cartridges - a legitimate commercial transaction.

- Week ending 27 October 1923:

Only two seizures outside Dublin - one in Dun Laoghaire, one in Limerick.

At Dun Laoghaire, nine MID officials drew a wages bill of £40-11-0 for the period 30 September - 3 November 1923. During that time there were only six seizures, all previously declared to the Customs officials.

Final Decision

The last document reviewed contained the following comment by the Chief of the General Staff to the Department of the General Staff, Park Gate Street, on 15 November 1923:

"The service rendered to the State is not, in my opinion, commensurate with its heavy expenditure. I desire for your careful consideration the question of abolishing this Service entirely, and having the duties performed by this Unit devolve upon the Customs authorities."

The MID was officially disbanded on 1 December 1923, with the following statement published in *An tÓglach*, 15 December 1923:

"The Service known as the Marine Investigation Department will be disbanded on the 1st December 1923, and the General Officer Commanding Coastal and Marine Service will arrange for the demobilisation of Officers and men of the Department."

From that day, the MID passed quietly into Irish military history, to be but forgotten.

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Soldiers aim off with their Lewis automatic machine guns during the Naval Landings on Cork

SPORTS & CLUBS

WOMEN'S SOCCER



The Defence Forces Women's Soccer Team proudly represented Ireland at the inaugural CISM 7s Tournament in Belgium. Competing against military teams from across Europe, the team delivered a series of impressive performances and secured 4th place out of 7 – a fantastic achievement at this highly competitive international event.

Their commitment, teamwork, and fighting spirit were on full display throughout the tournament, reflecting the best of the Defence Forces both on and off the pitch.

Cpl Shannon Thomas (Team Captain) won the individual award of Player of the Tournament.

The Irish team were awarded TEAM of the tournament due to their sportsmanship on the field and friendly nature off the field.



WOMEN'S RUGBY

The Defence Forces Women's Rugby team travel to the UK soon to partake in the Women's International Defence Rugby Competition (IDRC 2025), to see fixtures and results follow their official Instagram page @defenceforces_womensrugby



MEN'S RUGBY

July 2025

On 02 July 25, DF Men's Rugby held the Hooker Regan 7s Tournament in Cashel RFC. Over 70 personnel and 6 Teams took part in this tournament. The winners were Collins Barracks who defeated DFHQ/DFTC in the final. This marquee DF Sporting occasion was supported by various units across the DF including DF PRB, 1 Bde Ord Gp, 1 Bde CIS Gp and 1 BAR. The other teams who competed were 3 Inf Bn, Custume Barracks, The NS and Cathal Brugha Barracks.

August 2025

DF Men's Rugby are preparing for an away fixture against the Dutch Military Rugby Team on 30 Aug 25 in the National Rugby Stadium, Amsterdam. The team will travel to Amsterdam from 28-31 Aug 25. This fixture further strengthens our cooperation with the Dutch Military who are keen on developing rugby in their organisation. A training day will take place on Wed 20 Aug 25 to prepare for this fixture.



DEFENCE FORCES ROWING CLUB - END OF SEASON REVIEW [2024/25]

As the sun sets on another incredible season, it's time to reflect on a year of hard work, fierce competition, personal bests, and unforgettable moments for the Defence Forces Rowing Club and its members. From cold winter mornings on the water at the National Rowing Centre to championship finals under blue skies, this season has truly showcased the spirit and strength of our club and more importantly its members.

Performance Highlights

This year saw impressive achievements across all crews.

Our senior competitive crews delivered standout performances throughout the season. Notable highlights include strong finishes and wins in the Skibbereen Head, Cork Regatta, Cappoquin, Castleconnell St Michaels and most notable the national championships where the club picked up its first ever national Championships winners medals with Pte Danny Scanlon and Pte Dave Collins rowing to the clubs first ever national title in the Masters B Category.

All of this being a quite remarkable season for the club who only some three years ago did not exist and is now lead by former three time Olympian, and two time world champion Ms Sanita Pursporla.

Sanita has implemented her own continuous improvement programme that involves a High Performance mentality backed up by a technical yet simplistic method of rowing, the components of this were some hard work in the gym or on the water, one which our athletes, both social and competitive, have gained so much from. This has led to immense growth and determination, with several rowers

making the leap into the senior competitive crews by mid-season and their dedication has paid off with solid results.

Training & Club Development

Throughout the season, our coaching team has worked tirelessly to support the growth and technical development of every athlete. Investment in new equipment by J7 personnel and in particular Comdt Sarah O'Regan and CQMS Jacinta McInerney have both been very supportive and helpful in procurement of new kit and equipment and facilitation in rowing camps which has provided our crews with the tools they need to succeed on the water.

We also introduced many new initiatives, like a winter training camp, strength & conditioning program, or mental performance workshops, which have been well-received by all athletes.



Pte Dany Scanlon of 1 BDE transport and Pte Dave Collins of 11 BDE ORD COY, winners at the final Regatta of the season in Men's double Category

Community & Culture

This season wasn't just about racing either. We will celebrate our club spirit and effort this season in the coming weeks through events such as our Summer BBQ, where our club members will no doubt discuss the long slow distance (LSD) erg sessions, and very cold but memorable winter training periods in a cold National Rowing Centre, (NRC). The camaraderie, support, and commitment shown by members both on and off the water have been nothing short of exceptional.

As part of our organisational outreach efforts this year, the club will run its next Learn to Row Camp in Fermoy Rowing Club running from the 18th of August to the 22nd helping to introduce rowing to new audiences and strengthen ties with our local community.

Looking Ahead

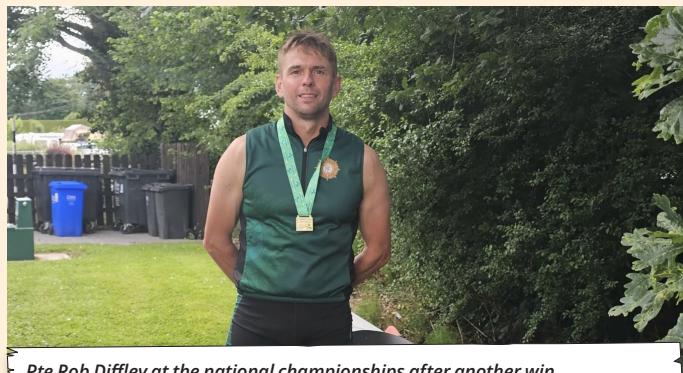
With a strong foundation and growing momentum, the future looks bright for our club. We are currently mid-way through a new purposely built rowing shed/gym in Cork for our members to train in and boat storage, and coupled with High Performance Coach Mrs Sanita Purspora intentions to stay in the role of High Performance Coach, we



Members of the club on a dull training spin



Members about to start a 20km row at the national rowing centre



Pte Rob Diffley at the national championships after another win

look forward to another successful year ahead of rowing. For now as we move into the off-season, our focus shifts to recovery, reflection, and preparation for what promises to be an even more successful year ahead, where we have 9 members travelling to Germany in early Oct to participate in the clubs first ever internal regatta.

Here's to pushing harder, rowing stronger, and more controlled aggression in the pain cave that is rowing in the season to come.

A heartfelt thank you goes to our dedicated coaches, volunteers, committee members, without your passion and tireless contributions, none of this would be possible.

To our athletes—your resilience, determination, and team spirit define who we are as a club. Every stroke, early morning, and blister was worth it and there was a lot of blisters!!!

If rowing is a sport you might just have wondered what it feels like to sit in an Olympic racing standard boat and race in a pressure environment or perhaps you just want to hop in a boat and enjoy the experience of it in a social capacity, then perhaps you should come along to our next camp or feel free to reach out to myself on dave. williams@defenceforces.ie or Pte Rob Diffley on Robert.diffley@defenceforces.ie for further info and we will get you rowing.



No 6 High Performance Coach Ms Sanita Purspora overseeing training

ON PARADE



Members of the Air Corps participated in Operation Plane Pull in support of Ronald McDonald House Ireland Charity



6th class students from Scoil Naomh Micheál explored the Naval Base and ships



The JITC held an induction day for members of the 06th and 07th Recruit Platoons



The JITC's 04th and 05th Recruit Platoons raised €590 for O.N.E. by recycling drinks bottles during their courses



The NS 63rd Cadet Class along with members of the Navy hosted a fundraiser for Irish Guide Dogs, helping raise vital funds and supporting guide dogs across Ireland



Members of the Defence Forces proudly marched in Dublin Pride



IRISHPOLBATT conducted a 5km charity event in aid of Tibnin Orphanage. The amount raised was \$670 and will be matched by the CIMIC team for the donation



The Irish Naval Yacht Squadron, sailing on Táilte, secured 1st place at the Kinsale Sovereign's Cup 2025



Comdt (AR) Liam Crawford J7 DFHQ on his conferral by CISM of the prestigious award of Grand Knight of the CISM Order of Merit. This award was made by CISM HQ to Comdt (AR) Crawford at the recent 55th CISM World Military Shooting Championships in Norway in recognition of his dedicated commitment to CISM shooting, in particular his contribution as a CISM Shooting Judge, over the past 22 years

ON PARADE



The 3rd Infantry Battalion's Sniper Team competed at the 2025 Danish International Sniper Competition. Against a stacked field of top international teams, they delivered consistently strong results across challenging woodland scenarios featuring drone integration and real-world combat simulations



The Force Commander of UNIFIL, Major General Diodato Abagnara, conducted official visits to UNP 2-45, 6-52, and 6-50, where he received comprehensive ground briefs and gained first-hand insight into ongoing operational activities



Lt Gen Mulcahy inspects parade prior to the commissioning ceremony of Lt Scully held in DFTC



L.É James Joyce and HMS Mersey exchanging a naval salute. HMS Mersey was outbound after a port visit to Cork



Members of 2 BDE TPT, NSRC and the Joint Recruitment Office participated in a joint capability and recruitment display at the National Truck Show in Mondello Park



Members of the Army, Air Corps and Naval Service on parade for the National Day of Commemoration in Kilmainham



DF Band Members performing at the National Day of Commemoration



Scouting Ireland in partnership with the Air Corps hosted Spectre 2025 to allow SI youth members experience the Irish Military Aviation Sector in conjunction with elements from the Air Adventure skill within the One programme



To finalize their MOUT training the 7BN's 2-3* Platoon assaulted Poolbeg power station through a RHIB insertion

ON PARADE

The Corps of Engineers recently completed their annual two week exercise in Kilworth Camp, Co. Cork. Sappers of the Corps were put through their paces during the 96hr ground exercise



Sub-lieutenant Oisín Anderson and Ensign Martin McHale of the 63rd Naval Cadet Class were commissioned as officers of Óglaigh na hÉireann. This proud occasion marks the culmination of 22 months of intense training, led by class Officer Lt Robert Fabby and class NCO PO/Seaman David Foley



The DF Women's Rugby Team making good use of their equipment during a training day



The 1 BDE Army Reserve 2 Star Course were given a demonstration on the functionality and capabilities of the 1 BCS Close Reconnaissance Vehicles during a 72 hour exercise in Kilworth



CQMS Damian Downey and Capt John McCandless attending a recruitment and information stand for the Army Reserve 28 Inf Bn at the Inishowen Agricultural Show, Carndonagh, Co Donegal



The Open Water Swim Camp was held in Galway in July, a hugely successful camp with some challenging conditions in Galway Bay



2 BTC's 61st Potential NCO Course being put through their paces on Battle PT



The 6 Inf Bn team emerged victorious at the DF Sevens championships in Galway



S/Lt Evan Tobin from Limerick Unit Naval Service Reserve pictured receiving his new rank markings

ON PARADE



Members of 7 Inf Bn held a weapons display at this year's Bray Air Show



A member of 3 Inf Bn covering off while on exercise in Kilworth



Two new Direct Entry Officers were proudly commissioned into the Irish Navy
S/Lt Alan Phayer - Operations Branch
S/Lt Adam O'Flynn - Electrical Branch



DF Band members on parade for the 2-3* Star Course passing out in Cathal Brugha Barracks



Comdt Geoff Curran eyes up another jump whilst in the air at the Dublin Horse Show



Pipers in attendance at the Dublin Horse Show



RDF members got the opportunity to meet the Lord Mayor of Dublin at the National Services Day



Members of the DF Camogie Team participated in proceedings at the All Ireland Camogie Finals in Croke Park

FROM THE ARCHIVES



ARDUOUS SERPENT

BY CPL DARREN MCDADE



Exercise 'Arduous Serpent' is a British Army Medical Service dynamic competition with a format that not only facilitates but develops the attributes of leadership, command-and-control, military and medical skills in a challenging but enjoyable environment.

When volunteers were sought for a team from the Defence Forces to compete it presented a great opportunity for members of the Medical Corps to work alongside British Army medical personnel who have gained valuable knowledge from their experiences in Afghanistan and other high conflict missions.

It would be fair to say that the British Army (BA) represent the gold standard in training, education and the introduction of new practices in combat medical skills, so any exposure to their training methods could only be of benefit to Irish Medical Corps personnel.

Competing teams were required to be comprised of ten, with two substitutes. Further, each team must include both sexes and at least seven of the team had to be Medical Corps personnel, the remaining three could be drawn from other arms or services.

The Defence Forces team selected from those who volunteered comprised Lt Steven Keane (1 Arm Cav Sqn) and nine medics: Cpl Darren McDade (2 LSB), Cpl Brian Corrigan (2 LSB), Cpl Eddie McInerney (1 LSB), Cpl Martin Moules (5 Sp Wg), Cpl Sue Brennan (DMC), Pte Stephen O'Hanlon (2 LSB), Pte Gary Doyle (2 LSB), Pte Adam Boland (LBH), Pte Stephen Leonard (LBH), with Lt Col Anthony Corcoran (DMC) and Coy Sgt David O'Connor (2 LSB) as the two subs.

In preparation for the competition the team concentrated its training on a wide range of topics including: the orders process



(extraction and delivery); weapon handling (Steyr); personal fitness (this was important as the team would be required to travel approximately 28kms in 36 hours); personal and team assault course skills; BCDT, BATLS, and Casevac procedures (including care under fire); general medical tactics; familiarisation with foreign weapons (including AK 47, RPG 7, PKM, AR 15, Marakov pistol); basic field craft; infantry platoon tactics; mine-handling and awareness; patrolling; radio communication skills; CBRN; Navigation (day and night); and counter-IED.

We were greatly assisted in our training by the ARW, 1 Arm Cav Sqn, the Medical School and the Cadet School. For example, ARW personnel briefed and trained us on weapon systems that we may encounter, such as SA80, AK 47 and the M16 (our proficiency in weapons handling was subsequently remarked on during the exercise), and members of 1 Arm Cav Sqn trained us in mounting and dismounting from soft-skinned and armoured vehicles, as well as tactical formations and contact drills. The Medical School assisted us in our medical training

and provided us with a HQ for our administration.

Before taking part in the competition we set ourselves a number of goals. One was to represent the Defence Forces and the Medical Corps in a highly motivated, competent and professional manner. We also wanted to observe the BA's training methods. Our last goal was to make contacts for future training and knowledge-sharing opportunities, as military medicine is dynamic and constantly changing.

The exercise began with equipment checks and briefings before receiving specific deployment instructions. Once released, teams deployed to STANTA (Stanford Training Area) into harbour areas under tactical field conditions. At a given time, teams moved from their harbour area to a grid reference to carry out an appointed military task, which was assessed and scored. On completion of the task teams received a new grid reference and another task, which had to be completed by a cut-off time. This continued over a distance of approximately 18kms and the tasks included: assault course; constructing a 12x 12 tent; dealing with a 'dirty' bomb; setting up a treatment facility; extracting a casualty from a minefield; conducting a recce of potential MTF and HLS sites.

After this phase teams moved to a second harbour area where the exercise concluded with an endurance march, which culminated in an obstacle course.

At the end of the competition we were pleased to have finished eighth out of 19 teams, and third of the regular units). The position we achieved reflected the amount of training we had put in and our drills and efforts were positively commented on through feedback we received from other teams and exercise directing staff.

We made a number of observations and conclusions after participating in this exercise. One conclusion is that a strong emphasis should be put on scenario-based training, as this enhances the sense of realism that is required to gain the best performance from the medic. It would also allow medics to be exposed to a wide variety of incidents, allowing them a better understanding and knowledge if they encountered them for real.

During the exercise communications to higher HQ was vital. Information at each stand had to be passed on accurately using the correct request form. Good voice procedure is fundamental to this process, which allows for a rapid deployment of emergency resources in a prompt manner and allows other services to prepare for the possibility of incoming casualties. In addition, in the BA all personnel carry a MIST report card behind the front plate of their body armour. This allows for accurate information to be passed quickly if the individual becomes a casualty.



The BA has learned through missions such as Afghanistan that the use of helicopters and highly trained medical personnel has proven to deliver outstanding frontline care on the battlefield, and also reassures the troops that if injured in the field the expertise is there on call. However, working with any equipment or machinery requires training and practice. With that in mind medical personnel of all ranks should be familiar and confident working with all kinds of vehicles, helicopters and, moreover, should be competent in setting up a landing zone and marshalling an approaching helicopter, by day and by night.

The BA's Medical Services put a large emphasis on tentage and all medical personnel are trained in tent erection. This allows them to become self-sufficient and highly proficient in the setting up of field hospitals.

Overall, while Exercise 'Arduous Serpent' was mentally and physically challenging, it was a great learning experience and I would recommend participation to anyone with an interest in developing their career in the Medical Corps. The opportunity to work alongside experienced BA medical personnel in a learning environment can only be a positive step forward for Medical Corps personnel. ■





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