



THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

AN COSANTÓIR

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Contents

VOLUME 76
Number 01
February 2016



FEATURES



NCO's Seminar

By Comdt Conor King



Operation 'Moonraker'

By Capt P Finnegan DCO, 50th Inf Gp



Save or Perish!

By Pat Poland

18 Pdr Gun Restoration

By Lt Col
James O'Neill,
2 Bde Ord Gp



Irish Air Corps Flight Training School

By Guy Warner



AKA Burma

By Paul O'Brien

REGULARS

- 6 On Parade
- 10 Veterans News
- 22 PDF
- 29 Tac Aide
- 32 Sport
- 35 Gear Up
- 37 Notice-Board
- 38 Reviews
- 38 What I do

Sport



28



38

What I do

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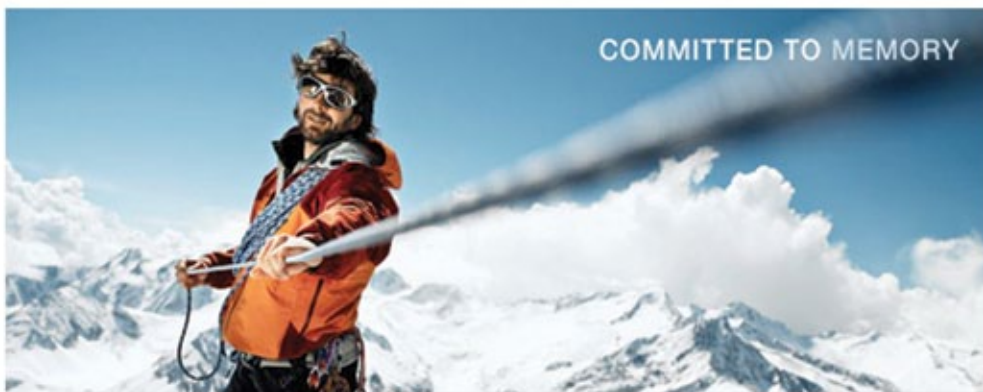
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Front Cover

Pictured is an Air Corps PC9M by a member of 105 Sqn.

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

Editorial

Hello and welcome to our first issue of An Cosantóir for 2016. I would like to thank you, the readers for your continued support from last year into 2016. This being the year of the 1916 centenary, it promises to be a very busy year for the Defence Forces. Our March issue will be jam packed with relevant articles covering that significant period of Irish history.

This month's issue has a wide variety of articles ranging from current operations to historic pieces. Our regular *On Parade* has a host of diverse pictures and happenings from across the DF as per usual. *In Focus* features articles from the official opening of ONE's Dundalk branch, a restoration of an 18 pounder gun by 2 Bde Ord Gp and also a piece on a scale model of 'LÉ Roisin'. Our first feature article *Upholders of the DF Ethos*, by Comdt Conor King, brings us back to the NCOs seminar, which was held in Collins Barracks Cork in 2015.

Next we bring you a fascinating piece by Guy Warner 'Air Corps FTS' on the Flight Training School in Casement Aerodrome, which gives us a detailed insight into the running and organisation of the school. Then to *UNDOF*, where Capt P Finnegan ESSCO, FRC 50th INF GP lays out in words one of the many joint operations that take place in UNDOF by various teams of the Irish contingent in 'Operation 'Moonraker'.

Strategic Review features an insight into the country of Myanmar in 'AKA Burma' by our regular feature writer and historian Paul O'Brien. *The 50th Potential NCOs course*, which took place in 2 BTC Dublin, gives us a look into what it takes to become an NCO and junior leader in the Defence Forces. This month's *Tac Aide* gives very good and thoughtful advice on debt management. *History* brings us *Save or Perish!* by Pat Poland, a historic look at the Paris Fire Brigade, from its establishment to the evolution of the present day service. In *Sport* the COS hosts a reception for the Equestrian community in the hinterland and on P29 a *Log Run for Charity* by Pte Ashling Smyth of 27 Inf Bn. And we have our usual regulars *Gear Up*, *Notice Board*, *Reviews* and *What I Do*.

Check out our competitions and results on pages 31 and 32.

Sgt Karl Byrne - Editor

MAJOR ALLEN, BRITISH ARMY VISITS MILITARY COLLEGE

As part of a week-long block on 'Command, Leadership and Organisational Studies', the 27th Junior Command and Staff Course recently received a brief by Maj Bev Allen from the British Army on 'Realities of Leadership in Combat'. Maj Allen is the OC of Platoon Commanders' Division in the Infantry Battle School, Brecon, Wales. He served as Company Commander in Afghanistan an impressive three times. As most of the 23 students of the 27th Jnr C&S Course will serve as Company Commanders at home and overseas in the near future, he was able to impart some salient and honest advice to them based on his experience. The brief was very well received by the students and staff of the Officer Training Wing. Photo/Text: Capt Gavin Egerton, Instructor OTW, Inf Sch, Mil Col.





NSR COMMISSIONING

On 20th November 2015 the Naval Service Reserve held a Commissioning Ceremony in Haulbowline Naval Base, Cobh. Pictured L/R: Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM, Ensigns Thomas Burke, Orla O'Shea, Kevin Whitney, and Minister for Defence Mr Simon Coveney TD. Orla O'Shea who was recently appointed as Principal Teacher of Scoil Mhaoiliosa, Knockavilla NS in Innishannon and is pictured with her class and COS and Minister. *Photos by: Cpl Christine O'Leary, HQ 1 Bde*



WORLD GALLERY RIFLE CHAMPIONSHIPS

From the 12th - 16th November the World Gallery Rifle Championships took place in Leitmar, Germany. Over 120 competitive shooters from Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, Netherlands, Australia, South Africa and Germany took part in this prestigious event. There were nine different disciplines, 1500 Gallery Rifle small bore (GRSB), 1500 Gallery Rifle Centre Fire (GRCF), 1500 M1 Carbine, (T+P1) Time and precision (SB,CF,M1) Multi target (SB,CF,M1) and T+P2 CF. Each discipline has six classifications, unclassified, sharp shooter, marksman, expert, master and high master. Competitors compete for both individual and team events. The most coveted award is the International 1500 GRSB and 1500 GRCF team event, where each country enters their top five shooters in each event. Team GB (Great Britain) were winners of both events. Team Ireland achieved third place in the GRCF, narrowly missing out on second place by three points.

There were 28 shooters from Ireland, these included Capt Ray Holohan (Air Corps), Cpl Jimmy Byrne (3 Inf Bn), Sgt Gavin Coventry (Cadet Sch) and Sgt John Cox (Retd now a DF civilian armoureder). Between them they achieved 7 Gold, 5 Silver, 4 Bronze awards. All four DF personnel are members of Harbour House Sports Club, which was founded and developed by Comdt Tommy O'Brien (Retd) and is located in Nurney in Co Kildare. The World Championships will come to Ireland in 2017. *Photo/Text: Sgt Gavin Coventry*



HAPPY RETIREMENT

On 3rd December 2015, Lt Col Des Doyle had a retirement lunch in Ceannt Officers Mess, DFTC. Pictured L/R are: 2/Lt Adam Doyle (Lt Col Doyle's son), Brig Gen Joe Mulligan GOC DFTC, Lt Col Des Doyle, Brig Gen Phillip Brennan, GOC 1 Bde and RSM Patrick Doyle, HQ DFTC. *Photo by: Sgt JJ Ryan, HQ DFTC*



CILT GRADUATION

Pictured at their recent graduation at The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) are from (L/R) is Paddy Doherty (CILT President), Cpl Ben O'Looney, Sgt Jennifer O'Neill (both J4 Logs) and Lt Col (Retd) Kevin Byrne (President elect of CILT International). *Photo courtesy of: Ruth Lanigan*



NATIONAL BRAVERY AWARD

On 10th December 2013, Comdt Enda McDonald RDF, OC E Coy, 3 Inf Bn along with Rafal Piasecki used his ladder to enter the window of burning building in New Ross, Co Wexford to rescue an occupant - thus saving his life. For their actions Comdt McDonald and Mr Piasecki were awarded a Certificate of Bravery. Comdt McDonald is pictured with Mr. Sean Barrett TD, Ceann Comhairle, on 13th November 2015, in Farmleigh House. *Photo: Comdt Enda McDonald*



1 BDE EXCELLENCE THROUGH PEOPLE ▲

Pictured at the recent National Standards Authority of Ireland Excellence Through People Awards on 4th December 2015 are L/R: Minister for Business and Employment Ted Nash, Lt Col Michael O'Connor, Comdt Paddy Maher and CEO of NSAI, Maurice Buckley. 1 Bde successfully underwent Excellence Through People assessment in June 2015. *Photo: Capt Stephen Molumphy, HQ 1 Bde*



CURRAGH LOURDES FUND

Recently GOC DFTC, Brig Gen Joe Mulligan, presented a cheque for €2,800 to Philip 'Busty' Coy (Curragh Lourdes Fund) following the hosting of a 'Gala Evening of Music & Song' in St Brigid's Garrison Church in November. Pictured L/R: Lt Stephen Cunningham (1 MIC), Lt Marie Carrigy (Mess Sec, Ceannt Offr Mess), Comdt Alan Courtney (OC HQ SP), Col Michael Meehan (EO DFTC), Brig Gen Joe Mulligan (GOC DFTC), Philip Coy (Curragh Lourdes Fund), CS Tom Mullen (Curragh Lourdes Fund), Rev Fr PJ Somers (Curragh Lourdes Fund), Mr Peter Origan (Curragh Lourdes Fund) and Sgt Colin McNamara (MP GP). *Photo: Capt Alan Fennell, HQ DFTC*

48 INF GP PLATELET CLINIC DONATION

Capt Jack Higgins and RSM Noel O'Callaghan presented a cheque for €500 to the Platelet Clinic of the Irish Blood Transfusion Service. IBTS Director of Operations Paddy Bowler accepted the cheque from the 48 Inf Gp who have recently returned from the Golan Heights. If you would like to become a platelet donor please call Dublin – 01 4322833 or Cork 021 4807429 www.giveblood.ie. *Photo: Jo Lawlor, National Blood Centre*

CPL 'JAZZY' HAYDEN RETIRES ▼

Cpl Dennis 'Jazzy' Hayden recently retired from the Defence Forces after 42 years service. Pictured is five generations of the Hayden family at his stand down parade, from L/R: Retd Sgt Major Denis Hayden (father), Cpl Denis Hayden (son), Siobhan (great-granddaughter), Denise (granddaughter) and Sean (great-great grandson). Most, if not all Unarmed Combat Instructors in the DF would have been instructed by Jazzy. *Photo by: Sgt JJ Ryan, HQ DFTC*



GOCS CUSTUME BARRACKS ▲

Brig Gen Michael Beary, GOC 2 Bde addressed all units of Custume Bks during his annual inspection recently. He thanked all units for their contribution to 2 Bde and also to the DF. Brig Gen Beary made special mention to the accolades won by Units from the Bks during the year, most notably the Cunningham Cup, All Army 81mm Mortar Competition and for the 7th year in a row the An Cosantóir 10K 6 man team event. *Photo by: Pte Aiden Sherlock, 6 Inf Bn*



1ST FLD ARTY ASSOC ▲

The 1st Field Artillery Association held their Christmas get together in the Garrison NCOs Mess, Collins Bks Cork on December 4th last. Pictured with the Association Standard are two Nenagh members of the Association Seamus Lawlor and Tony Canning. *Photo: Seamus Lawlor*

18 PDR GUN RESTORATION

BY LT COL JAMES O'NEILL, 2 BDE ORD GP

2 Brigade Ordnance Group were recently tasked with restoring two historic 18 Pdr Mk IV artillery pieces which had been on display for a number of years outside the administration block in McKee Bks. The guns were looking the worse for wear from many years of exposure to the elements.

The 18 Pdr Mk1 Gun was introduced in 1904 and was used during WW1. The Mk IV version entered service with the Defence Forces in the 1920's and was used up to 1974. The Mk 1 version had an over-barrel spring recuperator and a pole trail whereas the Mk IV version had a hydro pneumatic recoil system fitted underneath the barrel and a box trail. When delivered the Mk IV's had wooden artillery wheels and a limber which would have been towed by a team of horses. During the Emergency, they were converted for vehicle towing by the fitting of a Martin Parry adapter to drop the height of the axle and to provide a suspension system. This work was carried out at the Great Southern Railway workshops in Inchicore.

The weapons from McKee Bks were removed to Ordnance Workshops in Cathal Brugha Bks, where they were sandblasted to remove multiple layers of paint, which had been applied over the years. The weapons were then sent to vehicle base workshops in the DFTC for spraying. The barrel housing and the elevating and traversing system of the 18 Pdr were manufactured from phosphor bronze and it was decided to preserve these parts in their original state for display purposes. The guns were then placed in long-term care and preservation by Ordnance Corps personnel and are now in a pristine condition and will be returned to McKee Bks. ■



The finished product, painted and ready for display



The restoration team from L/R Cpl Forrester, Pte Brady, CS Gregg, Lt Col O'Neill, Sgt Groarke, Pte McDonagh, Pte Connolly



18 Pounder in the workshop for restoration

ONE Michael Mc Neela Branch

BY CPL LEE COYLE

In December 2015 An Cosantóir visited the Michael Mc Neela branch, Dún Dealgan of the ONE, based in Aiken Bks Dundalk. The branch is named after a young private Michael Mc Neela who lost his life while serving with the United Nations in Lebanon with the 64 Inf Bn UNIFIL on the 24th February 1989.

The branch opened its veterans office in Aiken Bks in January 2012. The official opening of the branch office was attended by the late Michael's parents John and Kathleen, and was performed by Lt Col Michael Dawson, OC 27 Inf Bn, who has been fully behind the aims of the organisation and has supported the opening of the office within the Barracks.

The office is manned by branch volunteers on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 2pm each week.

We spoke with the branch Chairman Mr. Jim McEneaney and the branch Treasurer Mr Michael Reid, who gave us details of their branch and their recent fundraising activities.

Their main fundraising event organised with the help of the 27 Inf Bn in a marathon challenge, a relay race of 46km across the Cooley Mountains. It finishes at St Brigid's School, who they have chosen to receive half of the money raised and the other half being donated to a local charity.

When we visited they were collecting for hampers for the homeless in Dublin and had collected enough to make up 26 hampers, which has all been donated by the members of the branch. ■



Treasurer Mr. Michael Reid and the branch Chairman Mr Jim McEneaney displaying items collected for hampers that were given to homeless people in Dublin.

A scale model of LÉ Roisin (P51)

BY LT COL KEVIN BYRNE RETD

Many thousands of young and not-so-young people, mostly males, have been making scale aircraft models for dozens of years; a much smaller number actually make scale models of warships. However, a highly skilled modeller has done wonders with a brand new 1/350-scale model of the Irish Naval Service's LÉ Roisin OPV (P51). This is Cpl Roy Kinsella of the 2MP Coy (RDF) based at Cathal Brugha Bks, Dublin.

Having acquired this new model from RB Productions, Roy described his efforts to assemble this kit: *"The kit was a total joy to build; probably the most finely produced and detailed kit I have ever built. Having built a number of 1/350 kits, I'm yet to discover a producer who could come even a close second to this detail! I highly recommend this kit, you will not be disappointed. I really hope RB Productions might consider producing more ships like this. Perhaps even LÉ Eithne in the near future."*

It is a multi-media kit, which includes resin, photo-etched parts and brass components. This kit was designed using Computer Aided Design from exact scale drawings of the full-scale vessel. The mastercast was then produced using a very high-resolution 3D-printer and care-

fully cleaned up and produced in resin before production. The brass photo-etched parts are one of the most detailed seen in this scale, while the steel photo-etched railings are allegedly almost indestructible. The beautifully detailed turned brass barrels included for the weapon systems are exceptional.

Roy has had much experience in this particular scale and he recommends taking your time with it, *"as the engineering is quite complex if not breath taking!"*

He notes that the resin parts needed very little cleaning, indicating general high precision and that all parts fit perfectly; the decals are also of the highest quality and easy to apply.

Roy was persuaded to enter the finished model in the Scalemodel World 2015 in Telford in the UK recently and was pleasantly rewarded by winning the Gold Medal in its class, surely a great result.

RB Productions is the brain child of Romanian native Radu Brînzan who came to Ireland in 1995 and now lives in West Cork with his wife; a passionate scale-model builder and the holder of many medals and awards in international scale-model competitions, Radu later produced a number of resin patterns, photo-etched components and decal artworks for various model companies before establishing his current business.

This model would make the perfect gift for those interested in Irish naval ships and is available on line from

www.radubstore.com. ■



View from Port Bow



View from Starboard Bow



View from Starboard Side



View from Port Side



View from Starboard Quarter

FROM FITZGERALD CAMP TO FITZGERALD PLACE

BY DESSY KEEGAN, PRO, IUNVA POST 25, FERMOY PHOTOS BY SGT DON SHEEHAN

What can one say to describe the official opening of our office at Fitzgerald Place, Fermoy on Sunday the 22nd of November 2015. From the coverage by our local newspaper *The Avondu* to the assistance of the Gardai, to the local residents and business people allowing us to seal off the street. The 1 Cavalry Squadron supplied tentage, 2 MOWAG APCs and a body of troops who were excellent in everything they did. The catering staff did a wonderful job in speedily serving over 250 meals. One spectator with no connection whatsoever to the Army was heard to exclaim it was

'akin to the miracle of the loaves and fishes' such was the amount of food served. The display of the Sliabh na mBan was the icing on the cake. The day which felt like a lovely Autumn day, could not have gone better.

Sgt Guiney and Tpr Fleming accompanying the Sliabh na mBan were excellent in the amount of knowledge and expertise they displayed when dealing with the many questions asked, and stayed over an hour in excess of the agreed time of departure. In the lead up to getting the vehicle I dealt with Lt Emma Harney. I couldn't have had a better person to liaise with over the phone and she was great to deal with on the ground. The three of them worked perfectly as a team and I thank all three on behalf of Post 25.

The esteem in which the members of 1 Cavalry Squadron both serving and retired are held in was evident by the attendance of so many serving and retired senior officers. Serving Colonel Jim Burns and former CoS Lt Gen Sean McCann DSM (Retd) to name but a few.

President Michael D Higgins sent a signed photo with best wishes to Post 25. On the day, the National Chairman couldn't attend, his place was taken by the Deputy Chair. Also present from the executive were; the National PRO, the Treasurer, the Development Officer, the Welfare Officer and the Parades Officer. It was very gratifying to see such support.

Pride of comment however goes to Comdt Art Magennis DSM (Retd) and Sgt Tim Carey (Retd) who sat side by side in the VIP tent reliving their exploits of the Armd Car Gp, 35 Inf Bn, Elizabethville, 1961. Art turned 97 years young in December 2015 and travelled from Dublin. Tim came out of St Patrick's Hospital Fermoy, where he's been a patient for some months. He wasn't sure he would attend the opening until I told him Art was going after which nothing could have kept him away.

Tim suffered serious shrapnel wounds when the AFV (Armoured Fighting Vehicle) was knocked out by anti tank fire as he was driving on a rescue mission to Radio College 14th September 1961. Two crew members, Cpl Mike Nolan and Tpr Pat Mullins were killed.

Special praise must go to the two most important groups.

Firstly the vets of IUNVA, ONE, the Irish Legion and the vets who are not in any association. Secondly the local people without whose support none of this would have happened. We finished a perfect day with a session in the Elbow Inn. Post 27 Portlaoise arrived down equipped with guitars, a squeeze box, tin whistle and great singers. They were very happy campers heading home on their bus.

We are 13 years established, and we've spent €13,000 renovating the premises. The renovation would not have been possible without the backing of IUNVA HQ, they assisted in every way possible. The day lived up to expectations and a tremendously positive feed back was the result. Many thanks to each of the Posts, ONE and the Irish Legion who joined us on parade. A big thank you also to the Posts which couldn't send members but did send on their good wishes. Sunday 22 November brought home in practical terms the bonds of friendship and camaraderie generated during military service particularly serving overseas long may it continue. A dvd of the parade as well as shots of the office interior and people gathering before the parade has been commissioned. It will be available for purchase at a later date. We will staff the office daily Monday through to Friday, from 10.00 – 14.00 hours and will welcome anyone who wishes to drop in for a chat, cuppa, look around or with a problem where we may be able to offer practical help. ■

Parade members remembering fallen Comrades



Plaque identifying IUNVA post 25 in Fermoy



Members of post 25 outside their newly renovated offices



Retired members of the DF pictured L/R: John O'Mahoney, 1 Mtr Sqn (1 Cav Sqn), Paddy O'Reagan, 4 Inf Bn and Michael Mc Carthy, 1 FAR.



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UPHOLDERS of the DF Ethos



BY COMDT CONOR KING
PHOTOS BY CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN

The inaugural Senior NCOs Seminar took place in Collins Barracks, Cork on 2nd and 3rd July 2015, organised by Strategic Planning Branch (SPB) and hosted by HQ 1 Bde. It was attended by 44 sergeants major, warrant officers, BQMS/RQMS and senior chief petty officers, representing all services and corps of the Defence Forces.

The seminar built on the good work of the Sgts Major Seminar and Senior Logisticians Conference held in 2014, focusing on the most senior NCOs in the Defence Forces and their crucial role in the organisation. The seminar was pitched at the strategic level and tapped into the wealth of knowledge and experience of the attendees.

The seminar's primary aim was to discuss the role of the senior NCO in today's Defence Forces, and to gain an enhanced understanding the senior NCO's role as steward of the institution, supervisor of the command climate, coach and mentor, role model, internal and external messenger, and upholder of the ethos and values of the Defence Forces: respect, loyalty, selflessness, physical and moral courage, and integrity.

A food-for-thought (FFT) paper was prepared by SPB and issued to all attendees in advance. This paper identified the equally vital but different responsibilities held by the sergeant major and BQMS, with the former as the *de facto* HR manager for a unit, whose job it is to feel the pulse of the unit and ensure *esprit de corps* is maintained, and the latter performing the role of senior logistician, focused on maintaining unit efficiency through providing effective

support to unit operations and the provision of facilities to contribute to unit welfare.

(This paper, which served as a theme for the seminar and framed discussions in syndicate and plenary sessions, is available on SPB's IKON page.)

The extensive draft competencies developed for senior NCOs through the Integrated Competency Framework also formed the basis for discussion during the seminar.

Launching the seminar, D SPB Col Kevin Cotter (now Maj Gen, D COS (Sp), who provided the General Staff vision and intent, explained its strategic context, and what the expected outcomes should be. He also spoke about the crucial position of the senior NCO in the implementation of the forthcoming white paper on defence.

This author then briefed the attendees on the contents of the food-for-thought paper and expanded on the key themes. The draft competencies of the senior operational NCO and senior logistic NCO were issued to syndicates to facilitate discussion. Six syndicates, comprising a mixture of all services and corps, were each tasked with producing a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation on a diverse but related range of topics, to be presented to the General Staff the following day.

The topics for the syndicates were: Responsibilities of the Senior NCO to the Commander, to Subordinates, and to the Organisation; Defence Forces Ethos and Values; Coaching and Mentoring; Command Climate; The Senior NCO as an Internal and External Messenger; Role of the Senior NCO.



A formal dinner was held on the first day, which provided an excellent opportunity for further networking and discussion. DCOS (Sp) Rear Admiral Mark Mellett DSM (now COS and Vice Admiral) spoke at length on the core values of the Defence Forces, the organisation's future direction, and the crucial role that the senior NCO has to play in talent identification and management. In this talk he also elaborated on the fundamental roles of the Defence Forces, horizon scanning and key challenges; the need to develop external networks and partnerships; the importance of diversity, including the development of a diversity and inclusion strategy and action plans; and the role of all leaders in institutionalising our values.

Chief of Staff Lt Gen Conor O'Boyle (since retired) addressed the attendees following the excellent syndicate presentations on the second day. He endorsed the purpose and intent of the seminar as outlined in the food-for-thought paper, and praised the excellent level of engagement from the attendees. He reiterated the importance of effective communication across all levels of the Defence Forces, acknowledging this as a strong theme running throughout the syndicate presentations.

In relation to the White Paper on Defence, the COS stressed that the military had achieved some major breakthroughs in key strategic areas regarding the last white paper, such as the on-going refurbishment and upgrade of key equipment and platforms, and a new veterans' policy.

Lt Gen O'Boyle also supported the recommendation from one of the syndicates that a strategic HR course should be developed for senior NCOs, to enhance and validate their crucial roles within the organisation.

Assistant Chief of Staff Brig Gen Colm Campbell then gave an address on Defence Forces' Transformation. He provided the context for the current Defence Forces fiscal and human resources positions, described the strategic planning process, and stressed the requirement for operational readiness as a foundation for all DF operations, development and transformation.

A comprehensive Q&A session followed the briefings, with the General Staff fielding questions from the floor on a wide variety of strategic, operational and tactical issues, including: married quarters; commissioning from the ranks (CFR); facilities for personnel; operational readiness; ineffective personnel; the 1916 centenary commemorations; the overseas 'lead brigade' concept; veterans' policy; NCO promotions; and barracks closures.

It was heartening to witness the open and honest debate that took place within the syndicates and with the General Staff.

The analysis by SPB of a feedback questionnaire completed by all attendees yielded largely positive views towards all aspects of the seminar. Attendees requested that more notice be given of future seminars, which would enable more thorough preparation, and improve the attendance rate. The majority of attendees felt that the food-for-thought paper was interesting, thought-provoking and provided an excellent platform

for further discussion on the role of the Senior NCO.

Individual areas for progression arising from the seminar were assigned to appropriate staff structures in DFHQ with General Staff supervision exercised by SPB. Inclusion in the Defence Forces' strategic planning reporting framework will provide measurable indicators of progress, and feedback and updates will be provided to attendees to ensure situational awareness.

A special word of appreciation must go to HQ 1 Bde for hosting the event, with the quality of venue and facilities ensuring a fruitful and enjoyable experience for all.

It is proposed that the Air Corps will host the next seminar in Q1/Q2 2016. Senior NCOs will be asked to submit topics in advance to the Strategic Planning Branch for inclusion in this next seminar.



SYNDICATES IN DETAIL

No 1: Responsibilities of the Senior NCO to the Commander, to Subordinates, and to the Organisation

The Senior NCO should have their finger on the pulse of the unit and never shirk their responsibilities. They must lead by example and advise the commander on every aspect of the day-to-day running of the unit, facilitating a linkage between the Commander and subordinates.

The Senior NCO must create a working environment, which encourages subordinates to be able to approach the Senior NCO. The Senior NCO has an obligation to maintain the highest standards both professionally and socially in order to enhance and promote the organisation both internally and externally.

No 2: Defence Forces Ethos and Values

Syndicate No 2 discussed the DF Core Values, and presented two distinct examples by way of comparison: the Senior NCO's role while dealing with the Death in Service of a member of the Organisation, and the role of the Senior NCO in the Defence Forces Reorganisation. In relation to a death in service, the syndicate concluded that the Senior NCO must have respect for the family while emphasising loyalty to organisational traditions. They must and should do the right thing at all times in a dignified and selfless way to ease the burden on the family by prioritising the wishes of all involved, employing moral courage and integrity, and they should have the physical courage to maintain dignity. During a period of organisational upheaval such as a major reorganisation, the Senior NCO must possess the physical courage to be able to accept change and the moral courage to support colleagues through this transition while maintaining the integrity of the organisation. Respect for the Command decision must be adhered to, and loyalty to the Defence Forces must be maintained.

No 3: Coaching and mentoring¹

Syndicate No 3 expanded on the given definition of Coaching, by adding that Coaching creates a culture within the unit at all levels to facilitate learning and development to enhance unit progression. The syndicate posited that Mentoring is a relationship based on the sharing of experience, a deliberate pairing of a more skilled person with a less experienced person, with the mutually agreed goal of developing specific competencies within the less experienced person. The syndicate differentiated between the two Senior NCO streams when examining coaching and mentoring. Both Senior NCO streams must be able to supervise and guide personnel to achieve the highest standards continually within their respective areas of expertise. Coaching and mentoring may be approached differently from the operational and logistical streams, but share the same common goals.

No 4: Command Climate²

Senior NCOs assist in determining the command climate of a unit, as they are often the only source of continuity between Officers transitioning through units, and enlisted personnel. They develop a network of personal relationships, which ensures that they keep their finger on the pulse of the unit. Trust is developed with both superiors and subordinates through experience on operations and training, both at home and overseas. The effects of a positive command climate include high morale, low incidents of indiscipline, a 'Can do – will do' attitude and a good working environment which generates a good esprit de corps. The effects of a negative Command Climate will include low morale, disciplinary issues, a poor working environment and a 'Can't do – won't do' attitude. The syndicate proposed the introduction of a Strategic HR Course for



Senior NCOs would be of value, focusing on softer skills, such as negotiation, mentoring and messaging.

No 5: The Senior NCO as an internal and external Messenger

It falls on every DF member to portray the organisation in a positive light, both internally and externally. The Senior NCO's role as an internal messenger is to ensure that the chain of command is adhered to and that both senior and middle management can get their respective points across to their subordinates, through the use of technology, but preferably through face to face meetings where feasible. Externally, the syndicate described a move towards maintaining contact with our veterans through the formation of unit veterans' organisations and the increased use of the 'Friday Club'. Other areas to improve engagement with veterans include social media, provision of ID cards to veterans, and inclusion of veterans in military activities, to maintain contact but also to benefit from the wealth of knowledge, experience and talent that they possess. The syndicate suggested consideration of some form of Public Relations training for our Senior NCOs to enhance and validate the already vast experience and knowledge that they possess.

No 6: Role of the Senior NCO

The role of the Senior NCO includes: Leadership, Supervision, Coaching and Mentoring, promotion of Accountability and Responsibility, and as an Advisor. Delegation, advice and implementation of best practice are vital. The difference between coaching and mentoring was discussed, with the former described as task oriented, and the latter relationship oriented. Coaching and mentoring are both achieved through communication, experience and management skills. The group defined accountability as the obligation of an individual or organisation to account for its activities and this is achieved through the employment of appropriate qualifications, corporate knowledge, compliance and integrity. As an advisor, the Senior NCO must possess the ability to give sound, correct, accurate, technical and personal advice in problem solving and solution finding. The Senior NCO should be able to focus on the differences between the BSM and the BQMS streams, but more importantly on their shared roles. ■

¹Coaching is a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve, while Mentoring is a relationship based on the sharing of experience; it is person rather than process based.

²Command Climate refers to the environment of the organisation at all levels. Unlike culture, it is generally short-term, and depends on the leader and the network of personalities.

Onóir, Dilseacht, Buanseasmhacht

IRISH AIR CORPS FLYING TRAINING SCHOOL

BY GUY WARNER

The Flying Training School (FTS) at Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel, is responsible for training Air Corps pilots. Instructors and students assembled, as usual, in the Fitzmaurice Building to listen to comprehensive Met and ATC Briefs, which are always prepared and given by a cadet. Today it was the turn of Cadet Richard Cleary. The OC, Comdt Frank Byrne, thanked the student and added, *"We have a busy day in front of us, with 15 flights scheduled, let's try and stick to the timings."* One of the flying instructors, Capt Odhrán Murphy, then conducted a short Q&A session on emergency drill, asking half a dozen quickfire questions to sharpen up the cadets' minds before the working day began in earnest. Finally, Cadet Tadhg Firman had prepared a mini-lecture on flight authorisation, which he gave in an assured and detailed manner but still comprehensible to a layman such as the author. He closed with the words, *"Just because you have been authorised by a higher authority you must not thereafter go blindly out on a mission."* This aptly illustrates the open culture of the FTS, which allies military discipline to the honest admission and sharing of mistakes by the students.

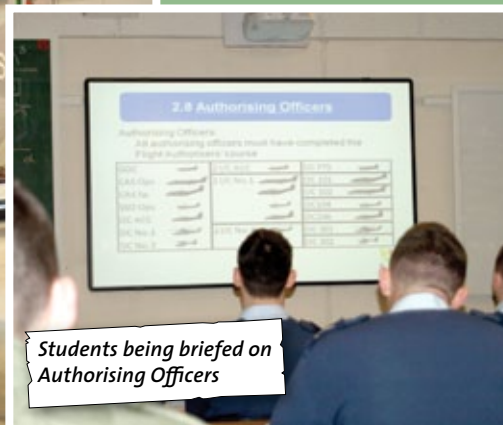
Instructor Lt Gearóid O'Briain says of the FTS, *"This is an amazing place to work. Everyone is dedicated to the cause and we hardly need to motivate our students. Learning to fly is only part of the process: we also aim to develop the character of our cadets, several of whom may return to the FTS in the future as instructors."*



Setting up the instructor's station for the simulator



Sgt Brian O'Keefe, a member of the technical staff for the PC-9



Students being briefed on Authorising Officers

Previous generations of pilots learned to fly using SIAI-Marchetti Warriors and Fouga Super Magisters. However, in 2004 these were replaced by eight Swiss Pilatus PC-9Ms; advanced training aircraft capable of taking a pupil from ab initio to 'Wings' standard.

In the months after the PC-9s arrived, FTS staff worked very hard to learn how to instruct on the aircraft, to explore its potential, to become thoroughly conversant with its systems and capabilities, to rewrite the flying training syllabus, and have a team of instructors in place for the first six students in March 2005.

The instructors' initial impressions of the aircraft were completely positive and have not changed after more than a decade. The PC-9 is stable and responsive and has excellent handling characteristics, with a jet-like feel, making it a delight to fly. It has all the qualities required of an ab initio trainer but with the ability to be much more.

The Pratt and Whitney PT6A-62 engine, flat-rated from 1150shp to 950shp, drives a Hartzell four-bladed propeller, giving a maximum diving speed of 667 km/h (0.73M), with a maximum cruise speed of 500 km/h at sea level and 556 km/h at 6,100m. It climbs at 20.7m/s and has a service ceiling of 11,580m.

Instructor and pupil sit in tandem in Martin-Baker CH11-A ejection seats, specially designed for the PC-9, which give safe ejection up to the maximum ceiling at any speed above 65kts. It is fitted with a command ejection control valve, which allows the instructor in the rear seat to initiate ejection of the pupil 1.25 seconds after his own.

The avionics package within the well laid-out, comfortable cockpit is impressive: a full EFIS screen displays the primary instruments, backed up by a secondary screen. In the unlikely event that both screens fail there is a HUD (heads-up display), which was a first for the Air Corps and indeed for primary training aircraft generally. The HUD has a repeater display in the rear cockpit and mission-recording capability.

There are hard points on each wing for 0.5" machine guns and two rocket pods for 2.75" folding-fin aerial rockets; seven to a pod.

One of the aircraft's impressive capabilities is its 1,220km endurance at maximum cruise speed or 1,540km at its long-range cruise speed. Alternatively two one-hour sorties can easily be carried out, plus 20 minutes reserve.

Comdt Frank Byrne has been OC for 15 months and has seen the flying training system move up a gear to match increased requirement. Currently, nine cadets are more than half way through their

flying training, eight are at ground school, and nine are carrying out basic officer training in the Curragh. While the workload for the FTS is already high, covering the work of the School as well as additional military duties, the OC is bidding for an increase of 35% in total hours to be followed by another 20%, in order to give the larger classes their full 170 flying hours.

Hours also need to be found for monthly staff continuity training, flying instructor courses, air tests, display visits, ceremonial flypasts and exercises with the army.

With 12 to 16 flights programmed every day, depending on the weather and the availability of instructors and aircraft, it is normal for each instructor to fly two sorties a day. The six staff instructors come with experience of all aspects of the Air Corps. Two are usually lieutenants who will have graduated from the FTS a few years before, the others tend to be captains drawn from either a fixed-wing or helicopter background, with seven or eight years flying time.

Lt Gearóid O'Briain, one of the younger instructors, described the Flying Instructors Course, "It begins with six hours flying the PC-9 from the rear instructional seat, which needs a bit of getting used to." This is followed by a three-flight phase. For the first flight the trainee acts as a student, with an instructor in the rear. The second flight pairs two student instructors, teaching each other through explanation, demonstration, imitation, and assessment. The third flight has the trainee instructor in the rear seat with a staff instructor acting as a student in the front seat and making typical errors that a trainee would make.

"This takes some 40 pretty intense flying hours and is followed by another 10 hours of advanced formation work, basic fighter manoeuvres, air interception and air-to-ground firing, taking the PC-9 to the limit of its certification. The final phases are ground school, on both flying and ground instructional technique, and the study of human performance and limitations."

The nine students who have past the half-way mark of their flying training arrived in Baldonnell in September 2013, after spending nine months at the Cadet School in the Curragh undergoing basic military training.

Six months of ground school followed, comprising the same 14-subject syllabus as the civilian ATPL (Airline Transport Pilots Licence) course. In addition to being taught and tested by FTS flying instructors, the students are also tested by the Irish Aviation Authority.

The next stage was 10 hours in the Fixed Training Device (FTD), or simulator, which has been in service since March 2005. This is a fully working replica of a PC-9 cockpit complete with instrument panels, HUD and a 210-degree viewing screen onto which the instructor can project different scenarios. The FTD allows the student to gain a feel for the layout of the cockpit and to master the location of what will at first seem a daunting profusion of buttons, screens and switches, without the added pressure of actually being in the air. The students practice start-up and taxiing procedures, what to do in the event of an emergency, and the operation

of the ejection seat. It is also used by qualified pilots to brush up on emergency procedures and to practise instrument approaches.

The cadets then go to Amsterdam for g-force tolerance training in a centrifuge, experiencing up to 8g (7g is the maximum pulled by a PC-9), and hypoxia awareness training in a hypobaric chamber. Back in Ireland this is followed by sea and land survival courses.

Cadet Niall Dungan began the elementary flying training (EFT) phase in April 2015, which combines 50 hours flying with five more sessions in the FTD. This stage equates with the requirements for a PPL (Private Pilot's Licence), plus some basic aerobatics. The first solo flight of three circuits is completed after 20 flights.

Niall said, *"This was exciting but I didn't really have the time to appreciate it as I was quite busy. I didn't feel nervous, as I was confident that my instructors had faith in me and had prepared me well."*

The challenge for the student, beyond actually learning to fly, lies in the performance of the aircraft. When compared with a flying club Cessna, the PC-9 will climb out of the circuit or training area at 180kts rather than 110kts. It accelerates much faster and climbs quicker, so the student's reaction time and thought processes have to be that much sharper. There is also the extra challenge of managing a modern, sophisticated avionics package.

The next 30 hours are spent at between 2,000 and 10,000 feet, with every second or third flight being solo. Flight 56, the elementary handling test, includes circuits, forced landing, stall and spin recovery, emergency drills and aerobatics.

Basic flying training takes total flying hours up to 140, including 40 hours of instrument flying (IF), medium-level and instrument navigation, and 10 hours night flying.

Niall is enjoying the navigational exercises, *"As you gain a little more experience, occasionally you can simply appreciate the countryside and also the privilege of being a pilot with the Air Corps: a school leaver who had his first solo in the PC-9 at 19 years of age!"*

Flight 82 is the IF progress test, which, if successfully completed, gives the cadet an amber (partial) instrument rating and after Flight 98, the instrument rating test, a full IR rating will be awarded.

Forty hours are also spent in the FTD before the block culminates in the basic handling test on Flight 120. The cadets fly once or twice a day and they need to have three flights fully planned at any one time, which develops the ability to be flexible, which is

sensible, considering the nature of the weather in Ireland.

Each cadet also has a secondary military duty, for example, membership of the base welfare committee or responsibility for flight safety equipment, technical publications and charts updates, or logistics.

The final stage of the course includes formation flying and more advanced aerobatics, the culmination of which is the final handling test, which involves navigating to a target, landing, receiving a new target and leading a formation to it within five seconds of the stipulated time. He will then receive his type rating.

The last phase before the award of Wings is two to three weeks multi-crew co-operation training in the Beechcraft simulator and a crew resource management course.

Successful students join an elite group, as only 423 pilots have gained Air Corps Wings since WJ McSweeney in 1922; 37 have completed their Wings course on the PC-9, with 26 currently in the training pipeline.

None of this would be possible without the dedicated support of the technical staff in the neighbouring hangar; one flight sergeant, four sergeants and ten airmen. Sgt Brian O'Keeffe (23 years service) remains very impressed with the PC-9 as *"despite having advanced systems it is easy to maintain and has an impressive record of reliability"*.

Much of the maintenance is based on a modern diagnostic system, while the avionics are the preserve of the specialist team which also services the Learjet 45.

Four aircraft are required on the ramp every day, with one in deeper maintenance at any given time. Daily inspections and component changes are everyday tasks, with a sergeant acting as duty inspector, investigating snags, assigning rectification teams and certifying completed jobs. They also carry out 150-hour services, which can take up to three weeks; passing an aircraft to the Airframe Repair Flight for its 300-hour service, which takes up to eight weeks.

The original team undertook a five-week intensive training course in Switzerland in 2004 but all ab initio technical training is now given at Baldonnell, with visits to Stans for more specialised aspects.

There is also a resident Pilatus field service engineer, Andy Hamilton, who Sgt O'Keeffe says, *"is a real asset to FTS maintenance personnel"*.

The total flying hours for the PC-9 fleet is close to 16,000 with each aircraft clocking up around 2,000 hours.

One PC-9 has been lost. Sadly, Capt Derek Furniss and Cadet David Jevens, died when their aircraft crashed on a training flight in Connemara on 12th October 2009.

In summary, the PC-9 fulfils all the roles required of it and, in the opinion of the FTS instructional staff, has the capacity to engage the attention of pilots of all degrees of experience, from elementary to 10,000 hours.

The FTS motto in the title of this article is very apt, translating as, 'Honour, Loyalty, Perseverance', all of which qualities are exemplified by the staff and students of the school. ■



PC-9 on live firing exercise



Comdt Frank Byrne OC FTS

OPERATION 'Moonraker'

BY CAPT P FINNEGAN ESSCO, FRC, 50TH INF GP

Force Package on route to
Clearance Area



ESSC Searchers conducting
area clearance

The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) was established on 31st May 1974 to implement UN Security Council Resolution 338 (October 1973), which had called for an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Syria during the 1973 war.

Following years of relative peace in the Area of Separation (AoS) the mission changed dramatically in 2013 due to the deteriorating security situation in Syria.

The current Irish UNDOF contingent, 50 Inf Gp, is tasked with providing the Force Reserve Company (FRC), consisting of a variety of specialist capabilities, from an armoured quick reaction force to engineer specialist search clearance, in what has become a dynamic and volatile mission.

After a few short weeks in theatre, 50 Inf Gp was tasked by the Joint Operation Centre (JOC) to carry out Operation 'Moonraker', an area-clearance operation on the Mount Hermon range, which is undoubtedly key terrain for the mission as it dominates and over-watches Syria to the southeast, Israel to the southwest, and Lebanon and the disputed Chebaa Farms to the



Finds extracted during an area being cleared



Example of Safe Lanes marked following on from Area Clearance



detectors and ground penetrating radar (GPR). While modern detection equipment forms a key part of the capability

north. The task was to clear mines, unexploded ordnance (UXO) and explosive remnants of war (ERW), in order to provide the Nepalese contingent with safe areas within which to train and operate.

A force package of 24 personnel was assembled to carry out this mission, consisting of an engineer specialist search and clearance (ESSC) team, an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team, a cavalry armoured recce section, tactical emergency medical operators (TEMOs), a heavy-vehicle mechanic, and a communications technician.

The six-day mission for the FRC grouping would include travelling over 700km, passing through three countries and operating at an altitude in excess of 2,300m (nearly two-and-a-half times the highest point in Ireland).

In order to achieve the mission objectives a significant amount of preparation took place. A full staff estimate was conducted by OC FRC to ensure that all eventualities were planned and catered for. This meticulous planning process ensured all operational and mission support requirements were met to the highest standards. The FRC DCO co-ordinated a comprehensive programme of mission work-up training for all elements to ensure operational cohesiveness and the implementation of risk mitigation to enhance the safety of personnel while carrying out the task.

On D-Day the armoured convoy formed up in Camp Ziouani fully prepared for the operation and headed off to Mount Hermon, where they spent the night with their Nepalese colleagues in UN Post 12 prior to commencing the area clearance operation.

On the morning of D+3 the convoy departed its staging area at an altitude of 1,700m to the clearance area at over 2,300m, where they would operate for the next 48 hours. The tight mountain roads, edged with sheer drops, were navigated and traversed by the highly skilled drivers of the FRCs heavily armoured vehicles, including CRV and ambulance variant Mowags, and ESSC and EOD variant HX-60 armoured trucks.

At the clearance area the operational and technical command elements of the force package deployed their respective groupings: security and protection from any armed elements in the area was provided by the cavalry; TEMOs and EOD were on call for tasking as required; and an operational command link to HQ in Camp Ziounai was established. With these elements in place, the ESSC team was in a position to commence the area clearance phase of the operation, deploying a number of area clearance teams with an array of equipment and capabilities at their disposal, including Vallon VMH3CS metal

of an ESSC team, it is the training and personal experience of each searcher that is invaluable on a dangerous task such as this. In order to qualify as an ESSC team member, personnel must undergo a physically and mentally demanding course conducted in the School of Military Engineering (SME). After qualification they are required to carry out recurrency training during multiple exercises and operations each year to ensure skills are maintained at the highest standards.

The ESSC team conducted a vigorous and intensive 48-hour area clearance in a hostile environment under the combined risk from strenuous atmospheric conditions and the explosive remnants that they were clearing from the area. As they were operating at such a high altitude, TEMOs constantly monitored ESSC team members' vital signs with heart-rate monitors and blood-oxygen saturation monitors, in order to enable searchers to work at their threshold, but not beyond, for a task that requires high levels of concentration and attention to detail.

On successful completion of the task the ESSC team handed over the cleared and marked areas to their Nepalese colleagues before forming up and preparing for the arduous return journey.

On D+5 the armoured convoy set off on its return journey, descending the demanding terrain of Mount Hermon and taking the long way home to its base. As the convoy approached their base they met with the quick reaction force returning from a routine patrol and the large combined armoured convoy rolled into Camp Ziouani as night fell on the Golan Heights.

After greetings from their colleagues in the FRC, the team were reintroduced to fresh Irish rations and were then re-administered as required for future operations and to reconstitute the FRC.

This was a job well done by all members of the force package and a unique military experience on the highest search operation carried out by the Defence Forces...so far.

Force Package following successful completion of task





AKA BURMA

BY PAUL O'BRIEN

Bordered by Bangladesh, India, China, Laos and Thailand, Burma, officially known as the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (commonly shortened to Myanmar), was formerly a British colony in Southeast Asia.

Burma gained independence from Britain in 1948 and, despite the devastation of World War II, the fledgling democracy was rich with natural resources. However, Burma is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world with over 30 major ethnic groups that include, the Burman, the Mon, the Shan, Karen, Chin and the Kachin, and the new government was faced with numerous rebellions and insurgencies from ethnic minorities seeking autonomy and other freedoms.

In 1962, fearing disintegration of the country, a military coup under General Ne Win ousted the elected government and a military dictatorship was established that is still in power today. Military action escalated against the minorities, which they believed were inferior, resulting in a brutal and bloody civil war that was to last over 60 years.

On gaining power, General Ne Win was intent on isolating and unifying Burma by force. All foreign nationals were expelled and industry was nationalised as he pursued a socialist vision that soon left the country in ruins.

Today, in spite of the pretence of 'democracy', Burma is still ruled by one of the most brutal and secretive dictatorships in the world, which routinely terrorises its own people and crushes all dissent. Government control is maintained through the use of weapons, money and religion.

The Myanmar army, the second largest active force in Southeast Asia after Vietnam's People's Army, has an estimated 350,000 troops and, according to UN sources, has the highest number of child soldiers in the world, with an estimated 25% of serving soldiers under the age of 16, some as young as 11. Many of these soldiers are forcibly recruited, taken from their families at gunpoint.

Over the years, the military has made significant investments in equipment with almost one quarter of the country's national budget being allocated to defence. Because most of their campaigns are in dense jungle, the military relies heavily on infantry and infantry support weapons. Armoured vehicles consist of MBT-2000 and T72S tanks as well as Panhard, Humber EE-9 Cascavel armoured cars. Artillery pieces range from Soviet D-30M howitzers to American M101 howitzers. Anti-aircraft missile systems consist of the Bae Dynamics Bloodhound MkII, the SA-2, and the Russian Pechora-2M surface-to-air missile system. Small arms consist of a variety of weapons, including Heckler & Koch G3 and HK33, type 81 assault rifles, Barret M82 sniper rifles and M249 machine guns.

The Burmese army is reported to systematically use sexual violence against women to demoralise and destroy ethnic minority communities in order to gain control over resource-rich areas they inhabit.

Army units often live in isolation as the frontline in the civil war constantly moves due to military commanders concentrating their forces on a particular ethnic group. Counter-insurgency tactics are brutal, with the destruction of villages and their inhabitants. Those that are not killed are press ganged into being porters, carrying munitions and equipment for the Burmese army through



Wood and minerals have been extracted, processed and shipped out, with the money being paid over to a small hierarchy within the military. Despite this wealth the UN has declared Burma to be one of the poorest countries in the world.

As Buddhism, the main religion in the country, teaches that people should be content with what they have, it has been used by the military for decades to control the population.

Those questioning the poverty and the unfair regime in the country are accused of being unpatriotic and ungrateful for what they have. Protests that have erupted have resulted in the deaths of thousands of people as the military reaction has been swift and bloody. Political activists face arrest, torture, deportation or death.

In 1988, General Ne Win stood down but was replaced by a new military junta, an act that was followed by mass demonstrations for democracy that were violently suppressed by the military.

It was at this time that Aung San Suu Kyi came to prominence as leader of the opposition. Influenced by both Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and, more specifically, by Buddhist concepts, she entered politics to work for the democratization of Burma, helping found the National League for Democracy in 1988.

Many risked imprisonment to hear her speak and in 1989 her outspoken views made her a target for the military and she was put under house arrest. Offered her freedom if she left the country, Aung San Suu Kyi refused and spent 15 of the past 21 years under house arrest. A government statement accused her of being a threat and that she was 'likely to undermine the community peace and stability' of the country.

She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights. On 13th November 2010 she was released from house arrest and continues the struggle on behalf of the Burmese people.

Democratic elections have recently been held in Burma but as they were held under the military constitution, which guarantees their dominance, the results have been nullified and the military still controls the country, despite opposition from world leaders.

Today Burma has become a major holiday destination as the junta has rebuilt the country's infrastructure and high-rise blocks dominate the cityscape of its major cities. However, unknown to many, child labour was used to modernise the country and the regime that has enslaved millions is still in place, the wars are increasing, and the death toll is mounting, as greed and profit are put before the needs of Burma's people. ■



the jungles. Considered expendable, men, women and children are also used for mine clearance, the prisoners being forced at gunpoint to walk ahead of the main force to detect mines by stepping on them and setting them off.

The army's supply of weapons and modern technology is aided by the exploitation of the country's natural resources, which generates substantial revenue for the purchase of arms. In recent years, foreign investors have also signed deals enabling them to access resource-rich areas throughout the country. Large-scale development projects, that include logging, mining hydroelectric and pipeline construction, have led to an increase in land clearance and the eradication of ethnic minority communities.



50th Potential NCO COURSE

35 students successfully passed the challenging and arduous 21 weeks Potential NCO Course that had 25 military subjects and 21 mandatory tests to pass, ran in the 2 BTC Dublin in 31st July 2015.

PHOTOS BY CPL TONY FARRELL

"As Ord Sgt you are responsible for everything the platoon do (and fail to do). The thought of this frightened me. But you have to take charge, give orders and live with the consequences of your actions." **Pte Cormack Coyle, 7 Inf Bn**

Comdt Tom McGrath, OC 2 Brigade Training Centre (Dublin/Athlone) wrote in the passing out parade booklet, "On this special occasion I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to every member of the 50th Potential NCO Course on your successful completion of this course of training. It is a demanding test of your mental, physical and psychological abilities, designed to develop the qualities of leadership and provide the knowledge necessary to qualify you to hold the rank of Corporal in the Defence Forces."

As junior leaders it is essential that you appreciate that Defence Forces leadership doctrine is values-based. You have a duty to ensure that the core values of respect, loyalty, selflessness, physical courage, moral courage and integrity are clearly recognised and understood and within your professional capacity, developed and nurtured. The challenge, which you are all well capable of meeting, is to lead in an organisation that is embarking on transformation following reorganisation.

This is a proud day for your family and friends and I would like to welcome them to Cathal Brugha Bks, Dublin for this Passing-Out parade. It is only with our families continued support, encouragement and understanding that we are in a position to undergo such courses of training or indeed deploy at home or on overseas service.

I would like to express my gratitude to the permanent and attached staff of 2 Brigade Training Centre, Cathal Brugha Bks, Dublin. Your dedication to training junior leaders of the required calibre and maintaining the highest professional standards throughout is admirable and testament to your competence and professional pride as military instructors. I would also like to thank the staff of 2 Brigade Headquarters, Officer Commanding Cathal Brugha Bks and all 2 Brigade and indeed Defence Forces Units without whose assistance and support the course could not have been conducted.

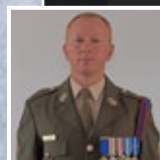
Finally to our 50th Potential Nco's, the Defence Forces rely on the highest standards of leadership at every level and as junior leaders it is incumbent upon you to promote the Defence Forces values. Comhgairdeas agus go n-eiri libh go leir." ■

"I've always felt that females in the Defence Forces are always very determined. Being mostly male orientated means that we need to push ourselves that extra little bit to keep up with the troops." **Pte Denise Byrne, Equit Sch**

"A course of this nature requires a lot of sacrifice and commitment from both students and families at home. We were able to support each other in whatever way we could to get through the hard times." **Pte Ryan Halpin, 2 Bde CMU**

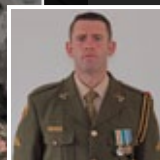
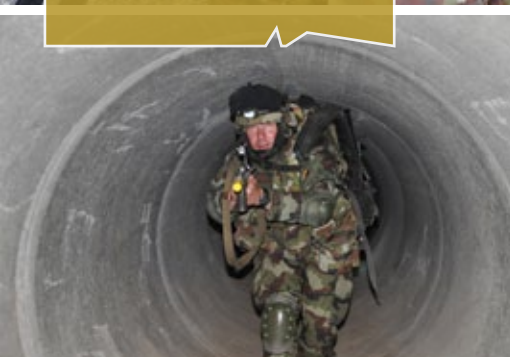


Vox Pops



"Now that the course is complete, I take a quick look back and I am grateful that I have had this opportunity to learn and grow and gain new experiences that I can carry forward and give to others to experience and learn from."

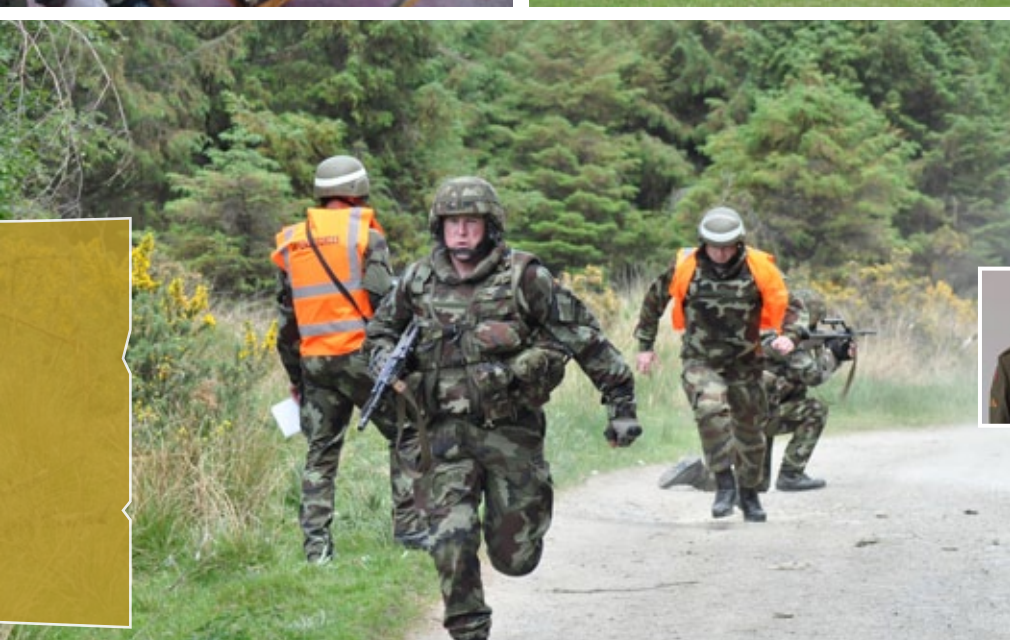
The military knowledge and skills that I have gained will be of great benefit to the troops under my command in the future." **Pte Ryan Halpin, 2 Bde CMU, Class President and senior student of the 50th Potential NCO Course**



"Now that I have completed the 50th PNCO Course, I can look back in a positive manner. I have learnt key military and leadership skills and great instructional capabilities, all of which I credit to the staff. I feel that I have grown and developed into a competent junior leader and I look forward to carrying out my new role to the highest standard." **Pte Seán Lockhart, 28 Inf Bn, family man perspective, married for over five years with four children**



"The hardest part for me personally was being away from my daughter but she was also the reason why I kept going. Carrying a lot of weight was also very challenging and I can thank being stubborn and very competitive for pulling through those parts. Through the course I have learned a lot about myself and gained a lot of experience and I look forward to carrying on everything I have learned and being the best junior leader I can be in the Defence Forces." **Pte Denise Byrne, Equit Sch, female and mother perspective**



"I think these last 21 weeks have helped me become more confident and mature. I am delighted that I built up the courage to apply for the 50th PNCO course because to date it's been the best course I have done in my army career because of the friends I have made and everything I've learnt from the excellent instructors and staff from the 2 BTC." **Pte Cormack Coyle, 7 Inf Bn, youngest member of the 50 Potential NCO Course**

Battle of Britain Anniversary *Air Show*

BY LT COL KEVIN BYRNE, RETD




20

Having played a pivotal part in the Battle of Britain all of seventy five years ago, it was fitting that the Imperial War Museum at Duxford should celebrate the anniversary in a most appropriate way by hosting a two-day air show on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th September. By good fortune I was able to attend on the Saturday and it was a memorable experience.



This photo shows only a part of the armada of Spitfires, Seafires and Hurricanes that filled the skies over the airfield for the finale of a wonderful air display.

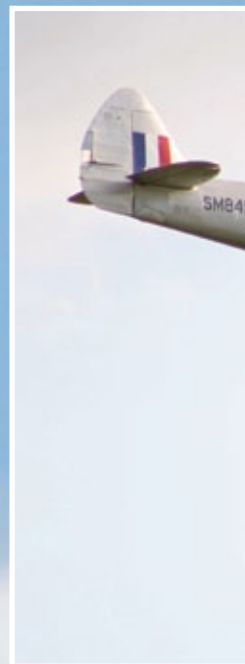
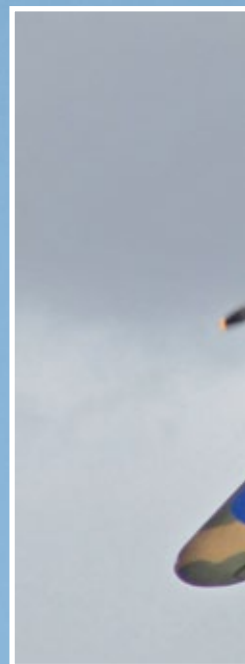


Arriving early, we noted that all of the tickets had been sold weeks before, with none available on the day, and that the expected crowds were likely to be the largest ever seen on site. The assorted car parks were clearly marked and well marshalled and the very pleasant weather ensured that summer dress was the order of the day. In passing, it is worth noting that the myriad food outlets were well stocked with prices clearly displayed and, as the day wore on, large crowds for cold drinks and ice cream were very much in evidence. If the children wanted to feel the effects of G forces or otherwise thoroughly mix their stomach contents then there were many amusements of the whirling and rotating variety to assist them. Failing that, they could experience profound motion-sickness effects by strapping into the flight simulator for a short but terrifying flight, which never actually left the ground.

Those who chose to arrive early had easy access to the various displays within the hangars, including the wonderful AirSpace, which for the first time, I think, had the drooping Concorde nose operational, to the amazement of many visitors. The American Air Museum, housing the B-29, B-52 and F-111, amongst other gems, is undergoing refurbishment and so remained closed but is slowly being re-stocked. Another, less visited hangar on air show days, was the Land Warfare Museum, home to armoured vehicles of every shape and size and well worth the effort to reflect on another type of warfare. The debate concerning the efficacy of tracked or wheeled vehicles in battle continues to this day.

Other hangars included naval types such as the Sea Vixen, Sea Hawk and Wasp helicopter, not forgetting the rare Firefly, which awaits its re-assembly. Many other types were in various states of repair or assembly, including a Sea Fury, a Corsair, a Mustang and more but my eye was taken with a pristine Beaver in civilian markings which I would like to have seen airborne; perhaps some day in the future?

The Gladiator was a highly manoeuvrable fighter in its time and this was shown to full advantage at Duxford.



Reference to the Concorde reminds us that while Duxford is principally a war museum, it is also home to the finest collection of British airliners under the auspices of the Duxford Aviation Society, whose members were present to permit access to almost all of their aircraft for a modest fee.

Prior to the flying activities, it was possible to walk the flight line for a small consideration and thousands of folk took the opportunity to do so. It was a pleasure to wander close enough to many of the aircraft that would be taking to the skies after lunch; the presence of re-enactors, dressed in period RAF uniform, only added to the authenticity of the occasion in my own view but others have taken the opposite contention, claiming that they merely serve to get on the way of a good photograph!

The show commenced at 1400 hours, as we say in military-speak, and displayed the types in RAF service at the outbreak of the war, including a Gladiator, a Tiger Moth, a Stearman, a Hawk 75 and a pair of Hawker Nimrod biplanes. Something of a surprise was the flying display involving a Hornet Moth and a Kirby Kite glider, which had been used early in the war to test the detection abilities of the radar systems, especially those arrayed along the south coast. Never having heard of this operation, I was even more amazed to hear of the trials, which included an autogyro to examine the effects it might have on the radar picture, as it was called. Because there is no extant period airworthy autogyros on the circuit a modern RotorSport Calidus was displayed, rather effectively, I thought.

No less than three Hurricanes were flown in the air display all in different colour schemes.



Late model Spitfires were on show as well and their Griffon engines differed markedly in tone from their Merlin engined brethren.



The Blenheim was a masterpiece of reconstruction and was a most welcome participant, flanked here by a gaggle of Hurricanes.



The actual start of the war was re-created using the newly restored Blenheim and three Hurricanes; the former is an aircraft for which I have waited for some years and it was well worth it. Configured as a night fighter, its short nose gives it a pugnacious appearance, although it is much quieter than I would have imaged. The battle itself was heralded by the appearance of a pair of Buchons, Merlin engined Me109s from Spain, masquerading as the genuine articles. These engaged in mock combat with the enemy stalwarts of Spitfire and Hurricanes and resulted in convincing enough dogfights.

Apart from the autogyro, two other rotorcraft had resonances for me: a Westland Scout arrived for the static display, complete with 1980s camouflage as seen in Northern Ireland, while the mighty CH-47 Chinook flew with such fluidity and to such extremes that it was a miracle nothing detached itself! Witnessing such a large helicopter performing a semi-aerobatic series of manoeuvres is not something to be forgotten easily.

It would have been too much to expect the Vulcan or the Lancaster to appear but the bombing campaign was not forgotten as resident B-17, Sally B, was fully serviceable, displaying its distinctive lines in a sprightly but safe fashion, it seemed. One or two complaints were heard in the crowd about the use of smoke to simulate flak damage or enemy fire, as it might cause concern to the uninitiated after recent air display fatal accidents; the initiated, however, hold no such reservations, knowing what to expect at a mostly military air show.

An unusual but very welcome display involved a Spitfire and a Eurofighter Typhoon in close formation, linking old and new. This was emphasised by the markings on the latter comprising green and brown camouflage and roundels from the summer of 1940. Soundwise, the raw cacophony of the jet's afterburners was in marked contrast to the subdued sigh of the Merlin.

The highpoint of Duxford is almost always the finale in which a Balbo of fighters takes to the air to engage in tail chasing of various kinds; this year's formation comprised no less than fifteen Spitfires and two Seafires, a most memorable sight. The sixteenth Spitfire may have become unserviceable, but who could complain about this great re-creation of the Battle of Britain, which remembered the Few in a fitting fashion?

Special thanks must go to Esther Baline who is the PR Manager at Duxford.

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Military Veterans Gala Ball 2016



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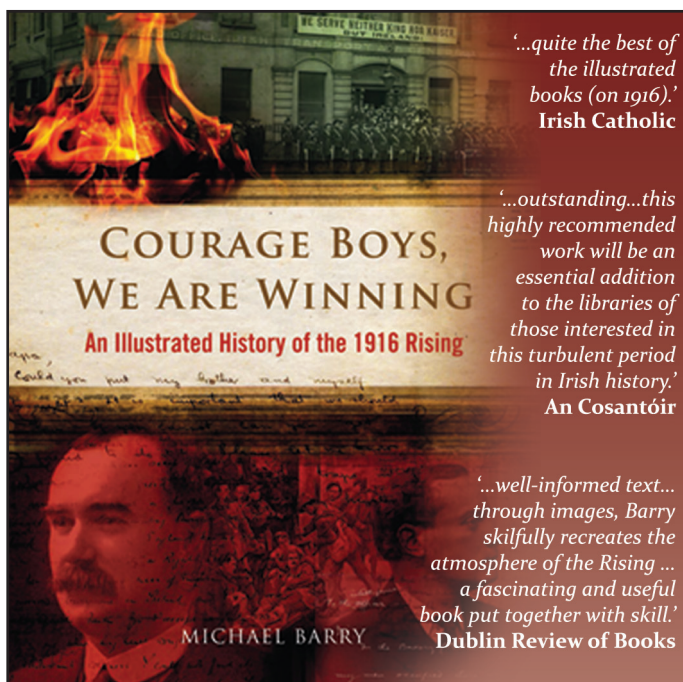
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QUICK GUIDE TO MANAGING DEBT



Debt can affect us all at some stage in our lives especially at this time of year. Check out the Personnel Support Services (PSS) quick guide to managing debt.

I'm in financial difficulty. What can I do?

The first thing to do is understand your financial situation by reviewing your financial circumstances, for example with the **free budget planner** located on the website www.consumerhelp.ie. Secondly, check if you have insurance (such as payment protection insurance) and, if you do, check your policy to see if you can make a claim.

How can I reduce my spending?

The first step is to create a budget and stick to it. Most bills are paid monthly so budgeting monthly is often wise too. To create a budget, work out how much you spend a month and compare it to how much you earn a month. The goal is to identify ways to reduce or eliminate altogether non-essential spending. Here are a few tips:

- Set up direct debits. This way you won't forget to make any regular payments, and you'll have a clearer picture of what you have left to spend each month.
- Plan your shopping list and stick to it.
- Don't make large purchases spontaneously.
- Review your service providers. Can you reduce your household bills or car insurance, for instance? Check out a price comparison website and see if you can get the same services for less than you're currently paying.
- Budget for ad hoc expenses. Set aside money for things like insurance payments, holidays or charity donations that come round once in a while.
- Save for the unexpected – for example, car or home repair bills, healthcare and other emergencies.
- It's worth considering additional insurance protection for you and your family.



Are there any resources available to help me reduce my spending?

There are several price comparison websites like www.bonkers.ie and www.compareireland.ie that can help you save money. They offer a free comparison service on household bills (gas, electricity, home and mobile phone, broadband and mortgage) quickly, easily and without hassle.

How can I reduce what I already owe?

Once you have a monthly budget and start reducing your current spending, contact your lenders and creditors. There are lots of ways we can help you tackle your debts. Impartial advice is available from the PSS and websites such as www.consumerhelp.ie or the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) www.mabs.ie offer valuable information and advice on saving money and tackling debt.

HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY

SAVE OR PERISH!

BY PAT POLAND

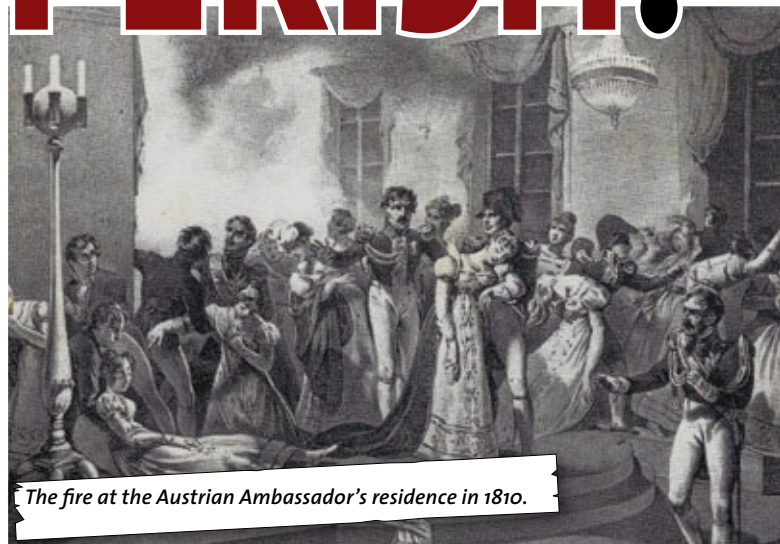
From the turmoil years of the First Empire, through the 'Year of Revolutions' of 1848, the 1871 Commune, the German occupation of WWII, to the recent awful massacres, one organisation has been a constant presence on the often bloody streets of Paris: the Paris Fire Brigade, or the *Brigade des Sapeurs-Pompiers de Paris* (BSPP) which commemorated its 200th anniversary in 2011 and whose motto is *Sauver ou Périr* (Save or Perish).

On a lovely Parisian summer's night in 1810 a grand ball was held at the Austrian Ambassador's residence to celebrate the marriage of the Emperor of France, Napoleon Bonaparte, to the homely, 18-year-old Marie Louise, daughter of the Austrian Emperor – a political match.

Summer came late to Paris that year, but when it finally arrived the city sparkled with magic. All that first day of July, frock-coated flunkies fussed to and fro about the palace, ensuring everything was perfectly in place for the distinguished guests. The Ambassador had even ordered a case of the Emperor's favourite tippie, the sweet white Chateau d'Yquem from the Sauternes region of Bordeaux. After dinner, in the specially-constructed wooden ballroom, the best of Pommer champagne flowed, and everyone, not least Napoleon and his new bride, was having a good time. Nobody took the slightest notice of the open French windows and the voile curtains flapping in the balmy evening breeze coming up from the Seine. And nobody noticed when the curtains wafted gently up against a nearby sputtering chandelier.

Then, disaster struck. Someone spotted the incipient blaze and screamed 'au feu!'

As the flames coiled along the ceiling, panic gripped the revel-



The fire at the Austrian Ambassador's residence in 1810.

lers. The roaring, crackling noises grew louder by the second. Napoleon and Marie-Louise were quickly ushered out through a side door onto the front lawn. Messengers were dispatched into the city for the fire engines. The crowd waited...and waited. After what seemed an eternity, the firefighters arrived – many of them old men who should have been retired years previously – and vainly tried to extinguish the flames with their antiquated equipment. Napoleon, clutching his wife's arm, quietly seethed with rage. After 23 hours the fire effectively burned itself out, but not before ten people had perished and dozens were seriously injured. The Ambassador, Prinz Schwarzenberg, was badly scarred and Napoleon's heavily-pregnant sister, Caroline, was dragged out. She later miscarried.

A firefighting corps had been established in Paris as far back as 1716. A 66-man unit, it was created in the aftermath of a series of disastrous fires that had levelled great swathes of the city. Initially effective, during the years of revolution and great political turmoil its discipline and training deteriorated to the point of incompetence.

So, by Imperial Decree No 971 on 18 September 1811, the Emperor instituted the crack *Corps des Sapeurs-Pompiers de Paris* (which roughly translates as 'Engineer-Pumpers'), as an integral part of the *Grand Armée*. It was a seminal moment in European fire service history.

Initially at battalion strength, with 576 officers and other ranks, it was upgraded to a regiment in 1867. In 1875 it was incorporated into the army Corps of Engineers (*Génie*), and two years later its status was changed from regiment to that of full brigade.

Today, sadly, the exploits of Paris's firefighters, with their distinctive silver-coloured *Gallet* helmets, are only too well known to us from our television screens. The brigade's main area of operations is the City of Paris and the surrounding *départements* of Seine-Saint-Denis, Val-de-Marne, and Hauts-de-Seine with a



Firefighters in action during the German bombardment of Paris in 1871.

HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY

Firefighters attend a casualty at the Bataclan theatre.



Paris firefighters on parade during Bastille Day, standing (right) is General Périco, CO



Paris Fire Brigade on parade during Bastille Day. Note the FAMAS assault rifles



450 females), 2,000 of whom have chosen to do their national service in the brigade. Ranks are those of the military, divided into three categories: line firefighters (recruit to chief-corporal); sub-officers (sergeant to sergeant-major) and officers (sub-lieutenant to general).

Operational personnel are usually engaged for five years. They must have French nationality, be between 18 and 25 years old, and have at least a vocational training certificate.

Selection is three days long, with sports tests, psychomotor

population of almost ten million. It also serves the Guiana Space Centre of Kourou Guyane, the Military Rocket Test Centre in Biscarosse, and the huge gas plant at Lacq-Artix.

It is the largest fire brigade in Europe and the third largest in the world, after Tokyo and New York. Paris firefighters number over 9,000 (including

tests, medical examinations, interviews, etc. Officers are recruited while at university.

Basic training takes place at Fort Villeneuve-Saint-Georges where, along with firefighting and first-responder techniques, recruits undergo military instruction, including the use of firearms. Operationally, the brigade is divided into three *groupements*, or divisions, each commanded by a lieutenant colonel. They operate out of 81 fire stations and have a fleet of some 463 vehicles, including 66 ambulances (the brigade is also responsible for the emergency medical service). Medical doctors, nurses, and firefighter-paramedics staff the mobile pre-hospital trauma teams.

In a recent year, the incidents responded to by the three *groupements* of the Paris Fire Brigade numbered as follows: 1st Group - 163,081; 2nd Group - 136,078; 3rd Group - 150,376. Due to its expertise the BSPP is frequently consulted by other countries for advice in handling difficult rescue operations, immense forest fires and chemical disasters. They are widely regarded as pathfinders in their profession, responsible for coming to the aid of countless people every year.

Featuring prominently, therefore, on the 'family tree' of our modern Fire Service is a billowing curtain on a balmy Parisian summer's evening in 1810. ■

About the Author:

Pat Poland was a member of 1 Fd MP Coy FCA at Collins Bks, Cork. He is retired from the Fire Service and hold an MA (Hons) from the School of History at UCC. His first book, *For Whom the Bells Told: A History of Cork Fire Services 1622 – 1900*, was published by History Press Ireland in 2010. Volume 2 is a work in progress.

Christmas reception

FOR THE EQUESTRIAN COMMUNITY

BY LT COL MICHAEL DAWSON, OIC PUBLIC RELATIONS BRANCH
PHOTOS BY SGT KARL BYRNE

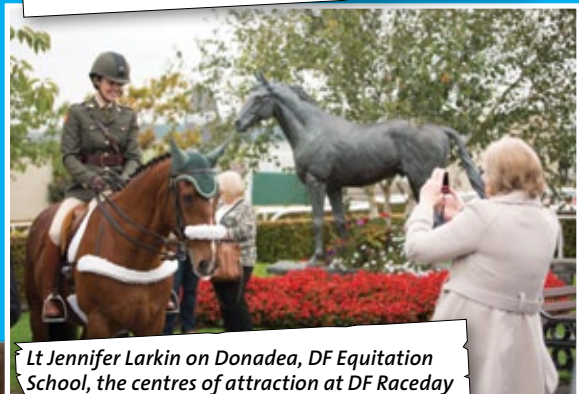


The Chief of Staff, Vice Admiral Mark Mellett, recently hosted a Christmas reception in the Defence Forces Training Centre (DFTC) for members of the equestrian community in the hinterland where the opportunity was taken to discuss current collaborations and our mutually exciting futures. The history of the Defence Forces in the Curragh is inextricably linked with the equestrian community with over 50 licensed horse trainers on the periphery of the Curragh Plains and the DFTC situated in the centre of the 5000 acre Curragh lands. The Defence Forces Equitation School was founded in 1926 to promote Ireland and the Irish horse. Since then the Equitation School has continuously provided riders to the Irish show-jumping and event teams. Defence Forces competitors have represented Ireland at Olympic, World and European Championship level in Show-jumping and Three Day Eventing. The Equitation School is located in McKee Barracks Dublin and has a very active yard in the Curragh Camp. Through the participation of its riders in various national equestrian bodies, the Defence Forces Equitation School aids in the development of riding and general equestrian development by passing on the invaluable training and experience gained by its competitive riders. ■

Enjoying the reception' L/R Mr. John Oxx senior trainer, Mr. Paul Hensey Curragh racecourse manager and Mr. Michael O'Rourke Turf Club A/CEO



The COS and GOC DFTC sharing stories with Senior Curragh trainers Dermot Weld and son Mark Weld



Lt Jennifer Larkin on Donadea, DF Equitation School, the centres of attraction at DF Raceday



Jockey Billy Lee rides the winner of the DF race at the Curragh 2015

LOG RUN FOR CHARITY

27 Inf Bn

BY PTE ASHLING SMITH, 27 INF BN

On 22nd December members of B Coy, 27 Inf Bn based in Gormanston Camp, participated in a Christmas Charity Log Run through Drogheda. The log run was over 12Km, from Laytown finishing up at St. Peter's Church, West Street. As well as completing the run DF members were shaking buckets in Drogheda Town and the Pipe Band also played them along. The charity log run was in aid of the Gary Kelly Cancer Support Centre situated in Georges Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth. It is a support centre for people living with cancer, their families and those who care for them.

Gary Kelly was a professional footballer at Leeds United F.C. and an Ireland International player who donated €750,000, part proceeds of his testimonial match held 7th May 2002 to a cancer related project in Drogheda. Many local businesses in Drogheda and surrounding area matched Gary's generosity by donating time, material and labour to the project. Gary said, the memory of his sister Mandy who died from breast cancer in 1998 prompted him to put something back from his successful career in soccer. ■



Cpl Rath J. (in civies) and Pte Byrne D. collecting much needed funds.



Piper Pte Donnelly (B Coy, 27 Inf Bn) plays the charity runners along.

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OUR REVIEWER SGT ROBBIE BYRNE, INSTRUCTOR CADET SCH, MIL COL, DFTC SAYS...

I found the design very light, excellent feel around the face and head. I don't see the need for the design gap in-between the arms, can snag on the helmet. Excellent when running I found the glasses did what it said on the label, they stay on your face, no sweat drops inside the lens, no steaming up when going in from outside to inside. When on the range I found the glasses helped me with my shooting again they did what it said on label. Kept them in my battle vest for the week and found them very robust. **9/10**

OUR REVIEWER SGT ANNE KELLY, AIRCRAFT INSPECTOR, AIR CORPS HQ SAYS...

Comfortable, snug fitting glasses. Excellent for training, especially cycling as they provide full peripheral vision and don't seem to adjust the light intensity. As they remain firm on your face throughout wear, it seems like you are not wearing any glasses at all. Although I would recommend fitting them on before purchase, as they are quite large fitting, so to get the full benefit of the wrap around effect they must be a snug fit. **9/10**



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For a chance to win a Princeton Tec Charge MPLS Olive Drab Red LED worth €89.75, kindly sponsored by www.team-alpha.ie, answer the following question:

How much are the Hatch Armor Tip PPG2 Glove Black on team-alpha.ie?

Send your answer along with your name, address & contact number to An Cosantóir's address or by email to subs@military.ie by the 21st February 2016. Winner will be the first correct entry drawn.

Last month's winner was: Alan Breen, Co. Kilkenny.

NOTICEBOARD

Winter Lecture Series 2016

Glasnevin Trust & Trinity College Dublin presents a series of lectures '1916: Rebellion, War and Commemoration in Ireland and beyond'.

28th January 2016 'Life and crime in the city before the Rising' Pdraig Yeates, SIPTU.

4th February 2016 'They shall be speaking for ever': remembering the Abbey rebels.' Fearghal McGarry, Queen's University, Belfast.

11th February 2016 'War, risings and rebellions beyond Ireland - the strategic context of 1916' David Murphy, Maynooth University.

18th February 2016 'There seems to be something wrong with our bloody ships today': Re-evaluating the Battle of Jutland (1916) Ian Speller, Maynooth University.

25th February 2016 'Divided history in a divided society: Commemorating the Rising and the Somme in Northern Ireland' Marie Coleman, Queen's University, Belfast.

3rd March 2016 'From shoe box to window box, commemoration of the First World War in Ireland from 1919 to present day.' Tom Burke, Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

All lectures will be held in the Museum's Milestone Gallery, Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin 11. Tickets for each lecture are €10. To book the series of 6 for €50, please contact the Museum booking department (o) 1 882 6577 or email: booking@glasnevintrust.ie

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Q M S M I H C W Q X M X M D L
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A R F L L Z R E G G I R T C B
N D E M O J N P Z T B D S Z C
B M T G H Y P K O J C J L P Q
L U Y V O M G A V Z U R Y M L

CATCH
COUPLING
DROP
HAMMER
HOLDING
MECHANISM
OPEN
SAFETY
TRIGGER

LECTURE SERIES 2016

At the National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology, Kildare Street presents 'The Archaeology of a Decade of War'

11th February *The Landscape of the 1916 Rising* - Mr Lar Joye, Curator, National Museum of Ireland, will examine the 1916 Rising from a military history point of view, looking at the events of the rebellion and the battlefield today.

3rd March *Beating the Retreat?* The final hours of the Rising in Moore Street - Mr Franc Myles, MUBC, MIAI, Archaeologist, discusses his investigations of the interiors of the buildings on Moore Street and Henry Place, offering an archaeological perspective on the Rising in central Dublin.



COMPETITION €50 VOUCHER

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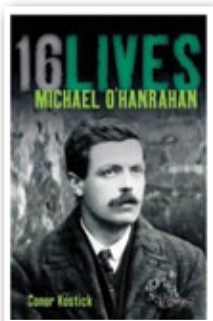
Last month's winner of the PROTAC €50 Voucher was George Sharpe, Monasterevin, Co Kildare. Closing date is 21st February 2016.

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16 LIVES, MICHAEL O' HANRAHAN

Author: Conor Kostick
Publisher: O'Brien Press (October 2015)
www.obrien.ie
ISBN: 9781847173355
Price: €14.99
Pages: 272



Michael O'Hanrahan was one of 16 people executed after the 1916 rising. Probably one of the lesser known of the executed, at least to this reader. The author explains why he believes Michael was executed. This was probably a combination of several factors, including, intelligence reports which had observed him in contact with other leaders, his entering and leaving No 2 Dawson Street, the Volunteers headquarters as observed by the G men, and he was as an Irish Volunteer Officer at the head of his Volunteers after their surrender.

Ten distinct chapters take the reader through the stages of Michael O'Hanrahan's life, starting with Michael's Father, Richard who was a member of the IRB and a "corkcutter" by trade. The reader will also learn some social history along the way. Michael was born on 16 January 1877 in New Ross into a family whose values included, education and republicanism. Michael chose not to sit an exam for the civil service as employment would have required an oath of allegiance to the Queen.

He, as an adult along with his siblings set about learning the Irish language, Michael been the most passionate. He joined the Gaelic League on 4 March 1898 (age 21) and set up evening classes in Carlow for the teaching of Irish. Michael also worked for various publications including Fainne an Lae (1898) and An Claidheamh Soluis.

Michael kept himself busy and was involved in various organisations, such as the Gaelic League, the Irish Volunteers, possibly the IRB, An Comhairle Náisiúnta (National Council), St Laurence O'Tooles GAC in Dublin, and various publications. He established a Gaelic League branch and a Workingman's club in Carlow.

When the family moved for business reasons to Dublin, Michael began to use his skill for organising at a National level. He was an Officer in the Irish Volunteers from the outset in 1913 in a Dublin Unit. He was also a novelist, having wrote "A Swordsman of the Brigade" published in 1918, "Patches" and other work which was never published having been confiscated during raids at his Dublin home. Michael was passionate about Nationalism, the Irish language, and other related interests. I found chapters 8,9, and 10 of most interest, as they cover Michael the Fighter, Prisoner and the aftermath. You cannot help but feel Michael's passion for what mattered to him and sense the sadness at the end for Michael, his Mother and the siblings he left behind. **DK**

DE HAVILLAND MOSQUITO

Author: Philip Birtles
Publisher: Fonthill Media
 (November 2015)
<http://fonthillmedia.com>
ISBN: 798-1781554944
Price: €36.00 H/B
Pages: 272



I was pleased to see this book up for review as the Mosquito holds a special place in my aviation interest and history as one of the first films that I ever saw was '633 Squadron' and from the moment that I saw that beautiful wing and heard the beat of those two Merlin's I was hooked for life. I grew to appreciate this aircraft as the multi-role machine that it was. Years passed and my own career in flight matured and led to a face to face meeting with one of the type at Casement Aerodrome in 1986. It looked well, sounded great in the air and on the ground and it was displayed very well indeed.

The Mosquito was unusual and for all the right reasons and this book spells out in detail and easy to read layout why it was so. It is laid out in two parts – construction and operations – and tells an intriguing story of ingenuity and clever design awareness. At a time when metal was in short supply and was classified as a strategic material and aircraft construction personnel experienced in metal construction techniques were also in very short supply what else would you choose to make the worlds' fastest fighter out of but wood? Wood was not a strategic material, it could be worked on by the workforce of the whole furniture industry (which was idle NOT making furniture) and furthermore the dispersed nature of this soon-to-be-strategic industry lent it a certain immunity from enemy air attack. The design was 'clean' aerodynamically speaking, powerful and well-armed and it left the earlier mark of Spitfire in its dust by some 20mph!

The book is very well laid out and presented, and it outlines in detail the many changes made to the various marks of Mosquito to better suit them for the many roles and missions that they were employed in during the war. It is also very well illustrated by what seems like a picture of every one of the near 7000 Mosquito's ever built, although it actually covers all marks produced in either England, Canada or Australia!

The author captures the versatile innovative nature of the Mosquito, giving a very detailed read, with interesting anecdotes drawn from combat operations in the many roles in which the Mosquito flew. I enjoyed the read and recommend it to any student or admirer of one of the most remarkable aircraft of the Second World War. **'By Brig Gen William Paul Fry, GOC AC**

WHAT I DO

NAME

DAVID USSHER

RANK

CQMS

UNIT

ORD SCHOOL,
DFTC

When I finished post primary school in 1975, I got a job working as an industrial photographer in rotary screens, which was based in Newbridge. I worked there for a number of years, but by the early 80s Ireland was in the throes of a recession and people were being made redundant.

I always had an interest in the military since I was a young boy, so I decided to enlist. On the 23rd August 1983 I enlisted in the Curragh Camp and underwent my recruit training with B Coy, 3 Inf Bn (The Bloods).

On completion of my 3 star course I was asked to join the Battalion Pipe Band under Sgt Mick Carroll, because of my interest in music as I was involved locally as a church organist. I completed a six-month Pipers course in the Army School of Music and a Senior Pipers course in 1985. I have continued to play the pipes ever since.

In April 1986 I travelled overseas to Lebanon with the 59 Inf Bn, UNIFIL, which I enjoyed seeing another country. The January of the following year I completed a Potential NCOs course and was promoted to pipe band Cpl in HQ Coy of the 3 Inf Bn. While not performing band engagements, I was employed as a Ledger Clerk in the QMs Office. On completion of a Standard NCOs course in 1994 I was detached to the Pharmacy of the Curragh Military Hospital, and promoted to Sgt in October 1996. I spent 6 happy years in the Medical Corps assisting the Pharmacist and sharing responsibility for accountability of all medical supplies and equipment for the hospital.

I completed a CQMS course in the School of Administration in 1999 and was promoted to CQMS in the Ordnance School based in Clancy Bks. I wasn't stationed in Dublin long as Clancy Bks was soon closed, in December 1999 the Ord Sch moved to the DFTC Curragh Camp and I have served as the school CQMS since then.

As part of a very busy Logistics team, I am responsible for the day to day running of a large and varied Ord Tech account and Museum account.

The school is responsible for the training of all ordnance corps personnel in their various roles as Armourers, Artificers, EOD Operators and Armourer, Artificer, Instruments (AAI's). I am responsible for the issuing, maintenance and procurement of all tools and equipment, weapons, explosives, and ordnance equipment. The school has one of the best-equipped workshops in the country. Being responsible for the procurement, accountability and maintenance of all the workshop machinery and equipment, which includes the cutting, fitting and welding shop, it keeps me very busy.

Since 2004 the Ord Sch has ran EOD/CIED and other courses for international students from all over the world and is held in the highest regard for its expertise from military and civilian agencies. I am also responsible for the logistics in running these courses i.e. feeding, accommodation, equipment, transport etc. On a daily basis I am responsible for all barrack services items issued to the school, and the overall upkeep of the school building including heating, lighting and plumbing, while overseeing cleanliness, energy management and waste management.

I continue to play music both in and outside the DF, for many occasions including stand down parades, cadet commissionings, funerals, St. Patrick's and Christmas celebrations and I have travelled to many parts of the world because of this.

I have served almost 33-years in the Defence Forces and have enjoyed the varied and interesting work and challenges that it brings. I have made many good friends and colleagues in that time. I plan to stay in the DF until my retirement at sixty, but until then, I will continue to enjoy my time in the Irish Defence Forces. ■



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