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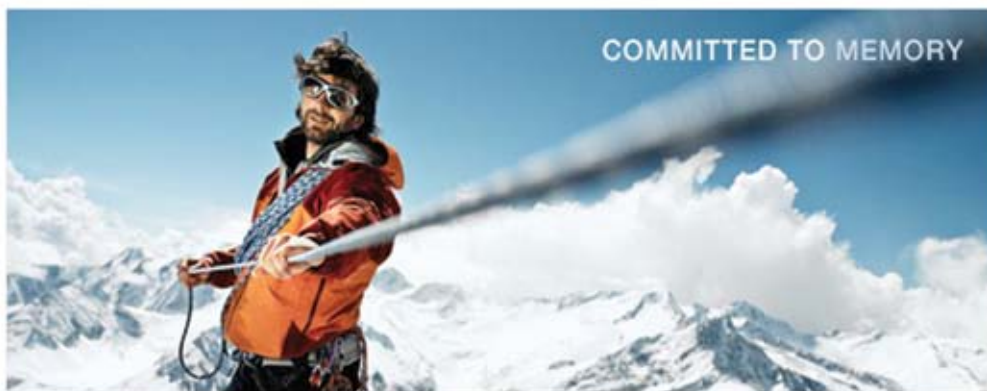
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Front Cover

Pictured is a member of the Naval Service during NBT training. Photo by Cpl Neville Coughlan

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

Editorial

Hello and welcome to our July/August double issue, which we hope will get you over the summer months. This 48-page issue contains 18 articles from the blue Seas of the Mediterranean, to green hills of the Glen of Imaal, and as far away as the beige sands of the Middle East.

It was another tough month selecting the best photographs to 'fall in' *On Parade*. This month *In Focus* goes back 70 years to discover The Forgotten Memorial a bronze statue of a dying Royal Dublin Fusilier, which now sits inside the walls of Dublin Castle. Then we look at the recent *Burning of the Custom House Conference 2017*, where many historians and authors discussed the burning of the Custom House on the 25th May 1921. We go down under to Australia for our *Veterans News*, where DF Veteran Michael Lyons, writes about his memories of UN Peacekeeping in Cyprus in 1965.

Our first extended feature covers the *Recce Commander Instructor's Course*, where Sgt Karl Byrne followed students on the course for a number of weeks to learn the skills of Recce. In *Learning the Basics*, Cpl Lee Coyle visits a three-star course with the 2 BTC, as the students complete their training in a patrol harbour.

Our front cover and first Naval Service feature looks at how the Naval Boarding Team (NBT) are dispatched to board a vessel of interest in Irish waters. Our second NS feature *Ship Shape and Ready for Action* by CPO/ERA Ruairí de Barra, who is a member of the Naval Services Fleet Operational Readiness, Standards & Training (FORST) team.

Wayne Fitzgerald

In *A Natural Progression with Global Risk Solutions*, I spoke to some DF Veterans about starting a new career in the private security sector. For *Strategic Review*, Paul O'Brien looks at how *Chemical Terrorism* weapons are used as 'the poor man's atom bomb'. Next ANSAC Credit Union makes one lucky member the owner of a new Skoda Octavia in an extra members draw and we hear about their new Annual and Car loans.

Our next two features are about the United Nations, with both about paying the utmost respect and commemoration of the memories of fallen peacekeepers. First is the *IUNVA Annual Commemoration ceremony* at the end of May, this is followed by a 50th anniversary *Memorial Service for Comdt Thomas Wickham* who was killed in action in the Golan Heights in 1967. Next up we have a short piece on FIBUA Training.

In the first of two history articles, Swedish military history author Henrik Jansson looks at the Irish and the Swedish soldiers who fought together on the red soils of Africa in *Brothers in Blue Berets*, then US author Joseph E.A. Connell Jnr writes a very informative piece on the last day of General Michael Collins in *The Big Fella's Last Journey*.

Plus, we have our regular *Tac-Aide*, *Gear Up*, *Noticeboard*, *Reviews*, and *What I Do* features.

Finally, check out our competitions and results on pages 11, 40 and 43.

Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald - Editor

DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

On Saturday 6th May at 0415hrs, 117 Members of the 109 Inf Bn lined out to support and raise awareness against suicide for Pieta House. A total of \$2,500 USD was raised for Pieta House. "I think we all know someone who knows someone who has been affected by suicide. This is the first time that *Darkness Into Light* has taken place in the Middle East."

I would like to thank the following: Bn Commander, Lt Col Stephen Howard, Coy Sgt O'Brien, Sgt McLaughlin and the members of B Coy for their generosity. Cpls Tony Farrell and Noel Poynton, who played a huge part in assisting me with the successful running of the event. Special thanks to Sgt Declan Gumley, Sgt Joanne Smith, PSS and Pte George Radford who assisted me in making this event such a success and to all those who participated. After the walk/run, all of those who kindly supported the event were invited for a full Irish Breakfast prepared by Sgt Martin Sheerin, Cook Sgt and his staff. *Words/Photo: Capt Catherine London, 109 Inf Bn*





▲ INTER EUROPEAN AIR FORCES ACADEMY

Comdt David O'Mara was awarded the Commandant's Leadership Award as the top graduate after completing a five-week Squadron Officer School (SOS) Course in Germany recently. Comdt O'Mara is seen here being presented with the award by the School Commandant, Lt Col Brian Kreitlow. *Photo: Comdt David O'Mara*



▲ MESSINES RIDGE

Pictured at Messines Ridge on 7th June 2017, L/R: IUNVA National Secretary Jim Casey, IUNVA Vice President William Gilbert, DF Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM, ONE National President Michael Carroll and ONE CEO Ollie O'Connor. *Photo: Jim Casey, National Secretary IUNVA*



▲ FR JAMES GILMORE REMEMBERED

Pictured are the members and families of the Fr James Gilmore Branch of ONE, who celebrated the ordination of Fr Gilmore at their annual mass on the 11th June 2017. In attendance were relatives of Fr Gilmore, Lord Mayor of Fingal Cllr Daragh Butler, ONE Chairman Paddy Rooney (Clane/Drogheda), ONE President elect Tom James (Newbridge) along with Noel Cullen and Anthony Kelly from the Royal British Legion. *Photo: Dessie O'Hara*



▲ 1 BDE RECCE WINNERS

Pictured recently is GOC 1 Bde, Brig Gen Patrick Flynn with members of 3 Inf Bn Recce and 84mm Anti-Tank teams. The 3 Inf Bn won the Recce Competition and came second in the Anti-Tank Competition. Well done to all involved. *Photo: Sgt Martina Cronin, 3 Inf Bn*



▲ GOC AIR CORPS VISITS UNDOF

Pictured is GOC Air Corps Brig Gen Paul Fry who paid an official visit to Defence Forces personnel who are serving in the Golan Heights with UNDOF. He is pictured here with Air Corps members of the 55 Inf Gp. *Photo: RSM John McCormick, No 5 Sp Wing*



▲ EXERCISE 'JIGSAW'

Pictured are members of C and E Coy, 12 Inf Bn RDF who participated in the Coy Exercise 'Jigsaw' from the 9th to 11th June 2017 in the Forward Observation Base (FOB) in Kilworth training area. *Photo: Sgt David Kerin, 12 Inf Bn*



▲ **MILITARY PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES**

Pictured recently is the Cadet Honour Guard en-route to Sanctuary, in Lourdes on the Military Pilgrimage 2017. Photo: Kevin Minihane former NS



▲ **27 INF BN HELPING OUT**

Members of the 27 Inf Bn completed a relay marathon over the Cooley Mountains raising money for a local school and ONE branch. Pictured is unit OC Lt Col John Kilmartin presenting a cheque for €4,000 to Jim McEaney, Charirman ONE Dundalk Branch and to Annette McArdle, Principal Gaelscoil Dhun Dealgan. The funds were divided between them. A big thanks to all those who supported this event. Photo: Jim Mc Eaney ONE



▲ **JACK & JILL FOUNDATION**

On Saturday 17th June, 2 Cav Sqn along with the help of Cpl Fionn from the 3 Inf Bn provided a weapons display for the Jack & Jill Foundation Annual Family Day. The troops were delighted to have the opportunity to get involved with an excellent cause and give the very brave boys and girls an opportunity to see some of the capabilities the Irish Defence Forces have to offer. Photo: Lt Karl Dempsey, 2 Cav Sqn



▲ **MILITARY AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS**

In June 2016, Joe Rogers was invited to a celebration of 80 years of Military Air Traffic Control in Ireland. 54 ATC members were present. Joe had the honour of being able to trace his service back the furthest, to 1950 as an Air Traffic Controller. Photo: Armn Dillon Lacey Byrne



▲ **ANNUAL WREATH LAYING CEREMONY**

ONE members' John Flower and Chris Culleton pictured with Minister with Responsibility for Defence Paul Kehoe TD at the recent Annual Wreath Laying Ceremony Irish service personnel who died at home and overseas in Wexford Town. Photo: Patrick Hogan

▲ **PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO VATICAN CITY**

Pictured is Col Michael Kiernan ADC to An tUachtarán who met with His Holiness Pope Francis. Col Kiernan was a member of President Higgins' official delegation on the recent visit to the Vatican and Holy See on 22nd May 2017. Photo: Maxwells Photography



THE FORGOTTEN MEMORIAL

To the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Boer War

BY SGT MAL MURRAY RETD



The removal of the Queen Victoria statue from Leinster House.



Royal Dublin Fusiliers in action on the Armoured Train at Chieveley on November 1899 during the Boer War.



Irish Soldier in Dublin Castle: The bronze statue of Victory (tending the dying soldier), sculpted by John Hughes RHA (1865-1941).



Retired Sgt Mal Murray, formally of 2 Cav Sqn recently posted some research on a British Military History forum with regards to the Boer War Memorial (Fusiliers' Arch) in St. Stephens Green, Dublin. Now he briefly explains further research that led him to discover a smaller forgotten memorial to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Boer War.

In a small garden inside the walls of Dublin Castle stands a bronze statue which depicts a dying Royal Dublin Fusilier being comforted by 'Erin'. Her left arm supports and cradles the soldier while in her right hand she holds a laurel wreath as she looks mournfully down on her dying son.

The statue was originally part of a larger sculptural group and was unveiled in February 1908, just seven months after the Fusiliers' Arch. Irish sculptor John Hughes (1865-1941) who undertook the statues had agreed to complete it in five years.

The statue stood at the base of a plinth upon which there was a statue of Queen Victoria. The statues were originally located in the car park at the front of Leinster House, which is now Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament).

The whole monument, Queen, soldiers and cherubim, was dismantled in 1947 and put in 'cold storage' in the then abandoned Royal Military Hospital at Kilmainham, on the outskirts of the city centre.

In 1986 the statue of Queen Victoria was presented as a gift to the citizens of New South Wales, where it now stands in front of the Queen Victoria Building in Sydney. The monument's other bronze figures remained in storage.

Then some time in the 1990s the dying fusilier was taken out of storage and relocated to the grounds of Dublin Castle, where it now stands in a secluded garden with no plaque to explain its heritage or original purpose.

Mal is available to conduct genealogical research into soldiers who served during the Great War. If you are interested inquiries may be made to milmor_1@yahoo.co.uk. ■



Pictured from L/R: Micheal Ó Doibhilín, Comdt Stephen MacEoin, Paul O'Brien, Las Fallon, Liz Gillis, CFO Patrick Fleming and Seán Hogan.

The Burning of the Custom House Conference

BY SGT WAYNE FIZGERALD PHOTOS COURTESY OF LIZ GILLIS

The Burning of the Custom House on the 25th May 1921 was the largest and most daring operation conducted by the Irish Republican Army during the Irish War of Independence (1919-21). Considered by some to be a military failure, a new public conference held on the 27th May 2017 in the Custom House, on Custom House Quay, has not only questioned this perception but has also enabled those attending to look more objectively at this major event.

Proceedings for the day commenced with Dublin Fire Brigade's Chief Fire Officer, Patrick Fleming, launching a new book, *May 25: Burning of the Custom House* (see book reviews), written by the renowned historian Liz Gillis. Followed by Gillis relating the story of the operation and some of those

involved. Historian Las Fallon in his talk 'The Fireman's Tale' told of the Fire Brigades involvement in the burning of the building and the assistance they provided to republican forces during and after the event. Military historian, author and regular contributor to *An Cosantóir*, Paul O'Brien, provided a military analysis of the mission, detailing the planning, execution and outcome of the operation. A lively Q&A followed the morning session before a break for lunch and a tour of the Custom House Visitor Centre was provided for the attendees.

The afternoon session commenced with historian Seán Hogan looking at fire as a weapon of war, which was followed by Micheal Ó Doibhilín's talk about the many civilians that were caught in the cross-

fire between republican and crown forces during the attack. Comdt Stephen MacEoin, OIC Military Archives rounded off the series of lectures by taking people through the many resources relating to the Custom House raid that are housed in Military Archives at Cathal Brugha Bks, Rathmines. The day's events concluded with a panel discussion and another Q&A with all the speakers.

The conference succeeded in its aims to promote public awareness of the operation and will, in the coming years, continue to relate the story of this incredible military operation in the centre of Dublin City.

The organisers have called for papers to be submitted for the conference in 2018, by 31st December 2017 to conference.papers@burningofthecustom-house.ie ■

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

Letters from Down Under & Memories of: UN Peacekeeping in Cyprus with the 42nd Irish Bn in 1965

BY MICHAEL LYONS, SYDNEY

In November 2014 I had the great pleasure of meeting Patrick Medway at Parliament House, Sydney, whilst attending a function to acknowledge the 50th Anniversary of Australian Federal Police presence on the island of Cyprus. Patrick was a member of the original contingent of Aussie Police to be deployed to the island and says that he has fond memories and appreciation for the Irish Defence Forces serving on the island at that time. On reflection I believe that my involvement with the Australian Police in 1965 in some way impacted on my decision to emigrate to Australia in 1970.

My memories of 50 years ago in Cyprus are very vague. I have little to show except a few photographs and the only mementos I have are my UN service medal and my original blue beret badge, both of which I wear proudly on special occasions. I suppose at 19-years of age the world is very much an adventure. One of the great legacies of military service is the lifetime friendships we retain. From our days in Collins Barracks, Cork to Cyprus, London and Australia Johnny Prendergast and I are still friends. Myles Mooney (from the Pat Lynch and the Aircords fame) and Congo veteran is a regular social friend. Two of our younger veterans Stephen Howard and County Laois-man Vester Campion keep us older fellows in line. For many years UN Veteran Dessie Kennedy (Mullingar) was very much a friend and part of the social scene in Sydney prior to him returning back to Mullingar some years ago.

Members of the 42nd Inf Bn Cyprus 1965 (Michael Lyons is sitting on the left).



I would like to thank the Irish military associations whose web sites keep us informed and connected to the past and future. Special thanks to *An Cosantóir*, the Irish United Nations Veterans Association (IUNVA). I

would encourage other Irish ex-service personnel living in Australia to join and support these associations and of course join our own United Irish Ex-Services Association Australia (UIESAA). It should also be noted that UN personnel who have served in peacekeeping missions are now entitled to full membership of the Australian Returned Service League (RSL). ■



UN Day 2016: Vester Campion, Michael Lyons, Myles Mooney and Paddy Armstrong.



Michael Lyons laying UN wreath.





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Recce Commander INSTRUCTORS COURSE

BY SGT KARL BYRNE PHOTOS
BY SGT KARL BYRNE AND
ARMIN ADAM MURPHY

“
*Time spent in
reconnaissance
is seldom
wasted*”

Field Marshal Erwin
Rommel, AKA The
Desert Fox

The Oxford English Dictionary meaning for reconnaissance is: ‘Military observation of a region to locate an enemy or ascertain strategic features’. Perfect in its meaning but it just doesn’t explain what a soldier goes through to obtain the skills involved in carrying out reconnaissance. *An Cosantóir* has endeavoured to discover exactly what it takes to make the individual soldier the professionals that they are, and how they get to the point in their career where they can pass on that knowledge to the ambitious members of the Defence Forces that undertake courses like, the Recce Commander Instructors Course.

The majority of the Defence Forces will know of the IWW or Infantry Weapons Wing as it is officially known. You may have found yourself down in the 'Combat College' in the DFTC, Curragh, wondering if you have bitten off more than you can chew. Standards are high, and they don't drop under any circumstances, no matter the course or the student, you'll 'earn' your pass if you get it from the IWW.

The Chief Instructor in the IWW, Comdt Kenneth O'Rourke said, "A *recce commander is invaluable to an infantry, cavalry or ISTAR unit commander. It is often said that the recce detachments are the eyes and ears of the commander but in reality they are much more; they are an integrated part of the unit's decision making process and intelligence cycle. The light recce detachment's skill set is a building block of the Defence Forces ISTAR capability and is increasingly relevant to our current and potential future deployments overseas. We work closely with the other wings of the Infantry School as well as the Cavalry School to ensure that the DF's recce commanders are trained to the highest standards. Recce training is an expansion of basic infantry soldiering skills. The Recce soldier is expected to be fitter, more robust and to have a higher standard of weapons handling and tactical skills than your average soldier. They raise standards and show an example to the rest of the unit and can be used by the battalion commander to conduct training and plan exercises*".

The 8 weeks course started on the 18th April and finished on the 9th June. The platoon officer Capt Jim Murray and platoon sergeant Cpl James McHugh welcomed the initial 20 students into the IWW for the course. The students came from all over the country, namely, 3 Inf Bn, 12 Inf Bn, 28 Inf Bn, 27 Inf Bn, DFTC, 1 Cav Sqn and 2 Cav Sqn. Although this is an instructors course it's worth mentioning that students of all ranks of officer or NCOs can apply including Ptes' who completed a potential NCOs course.

Week 1 begins with a pass or fail PT test, an 8 mile battle run, 2 students initially failed the test but fortunately they passed the retest.



Then onto an important aspect of reconnaissance, which is navigation, day 2 is the first day nav, a good intro into the level of navigation which is expected on the course, as within the first 3 weeks students have to pass 2 of the 3 night navigation tests to continue on to get that all important PASS. As well as signals training and a practice night nav exercise, week one finished off with a nice dip in Blessington Lakes doing jumps off the bridge and river crossing drills bring up the level of water confidence.

Week 2 starts off and the pressure started to increase with the first night nav test. Moving on through the week sees the students take on stalking and contact drills and midweek another night nav test. Students then carried out a successful river crossing exercise in Blessington before the May bank holiday.

Week 3 brings the students into a 'raid exercise' down Will's Lane in the Glen of Imaal, a brain engaging exercise designed to take the students even further from the parade ground and into the recce commander's frame of mind. The next the day is the last night nav, a test that proved too much for 3 of the students who failed 2 of the night navs and were RTU'd (Re-

turned To Unit). Moving forward with the course students then carried out Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT) over two days, firstly practicing in pairs then as detachments, as they would do as a 4 man recce detachment.

Week 4 and the course pushed on into a weeklong exercise, aptly named 'Hard Graft', this being the first 72hr exercise, carried out in the Kilbride area, it pushed the students to the limits. The exercise started off with a tutorial insertion on foot (approx. 12km), at night into a patrol harbour, then moved onto tutorial demonstrations of Close Target Recce (CTR) and Observation Post (OP), with the students being sent off in detachments to then practice what they had been shown. They used the Harris HF radio's to send and receive live data, back to higher HQ, all while in command roles of detachment commander and detachment 2i/c. Pln Sgt, Cpl James McHugh said, "The week is a perfect opportunity for the students to put into action what they had learned from the previous weeks, as well as taking on more information on construction of OPs and carrying out CTRs, with an eye towards the testing process the following week."

Week 5, test week, 72hr ex 'Black Hole'. Students were given another day

of Harris HF training before the start of the exercise then it was into command roles to be tested. Students stayed in the same detachments for the week and swapped roles as they were tested through the week. Within the detachments the students were tested on construction of their OPs, logging and reporting enemy activity and their back briefs to a company commander for further operations. Compared to ex 'Hard Graft', 'Black Hole' was an extensive push forward in intensity of enemy activity, giving the students plenty of information to log, report and send back.

Week 6 had a more relaxed pace feel to it, with students being sent to the MP School in the DFTC to carry out a basic camera course. They learned basic skills of exposure of images and how to use the camera in order to send images and live data over a Toughbook laptop to a higher HQ element. That finished, students were then given battlefield first aid lectures and practical exercises within the IWW. Learning how to apply tourniquets, dealing with gunshot wounds, treating and extracting casualties and also leaning the '9 liner' system of sending a medevac (Medical Evacuation) an explanation of which can be found online.

Week 7, and the pressure increases again with a 5 day exercise 'Dead Man Walking' carried out in Kilworth, Co. Cork. Again students are broken up into detachments and tested in command roles. This week of testing is the culmination of all the subjects the students have covered over the previous 6 weeks. The most important serials of testing were on CTR, OP construction and location, raids, medevacs, live letter drops (logistical resupplies), navigation and logging and reporting. During the week there was heavy enemy activity, which took its toll on the students and really tested their resolve as a soldier, to push on through the pain barrier and to carry out the tasks given during the exercise.

Week 8 and the tests continue. This time they are in the comfort of the nice warm and dry lecture rooms of the IWW. Class taking although not as intense as the exercises is an essential part of the course, as this confirms that the students can pass on the knowledge they have learned over the 8 weeks to students of a basic recce course which will be held in their own home units in the future. Class taking practice took place over the first two days of the week and then into the tests on the Wednesday. The penultimate day sees them undertake a general test, another way of confirming that the students had taken in the information and knowledge given.

After 8 weeks of a gruelling block programme, the course finished with 13 of the 20 students that started passing the course, 3 failing on the night navigation tests, 3 failing through injury and 1 student RTU'd himself due to personal reasons. These figures are the signs that standards don't drop and don't think you'll have a handy few weeks in the IWW and get a point for your promotion case file, you won't, you'll work every minute of every day on this course for it. This is very



evident in the results that Ireland have achieved in the UK's 'Cambrian Patrol' exercise, by claiming either silver or gold in that event since 2013. If you're thinking of becoming a Recce Commander Instructor you will want to make sure you're both physically and mentally ready, it's just not the type of course you want to be detailed to do against your will. Instructors in the IWW would advise anyone thinking of going on it to brush up on their military skills and their their fitness needs to be of a high standard. ■



Vox Pops



Cpl Barry McKenna, 27 Inf Bn

"This was my Second instructor course I have completed in the IWW. I found the course both mentally and physically challenging throughout the 8 weeks. Many military skills are honed during the course with navigation, battle prep and orders receiving a lot of attention. I enjoyed the opportunity to work with many like minded and enthusiastic soldiers"



2/Lt David Kelly, 2 Cav Sqn

"The 'Reconnaissance Commanders Course' has a steep and testing learning curve. It requires students to maintain discipline and tactical awareness at all times while being physically capable of achieving the mission. It provides you an opportunity to test yourself and your military knowledge"

Cpl Phillip Scollard, 2 Cav Sqn

"An interesting and physically robust course that refined and tuned my reconnaissance skills set. I would strongly recommend the course for all cavalry NCO's as I thoroughly enjoyed it and have no regrets taking on the challenge"



Pte Richard Carroll, 3 Inf Bn

"Physically one of the toughest courses I've taken part in and completed in the Defence Forces. A challenging course as the soldiering skills are at a much higher standard but very rewarding to be awarded the title of Recce Commander"





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Learning the BASICS

BY CPL LEE COYLE

PHOTOS BY ARMN ADAM MURPHY

The three-star course syllabus is designed to progress a soldier's training so that they can operate effectively within a unit. This includes operating successfully as a member of a section in a variety of military operations. It is also of upmost importance to ensure that soldiers are physically ready for the demands of modern battlefields and internal security environments.

Phase three of the course concentrates on tactical training and internal security training, and culminates with a final field exercise. *An Cosantóir* visited a recent 2 Brigade Training Centre three-star course as the students were beginning their exercise. They had just completed a 15km loaded march into their exercise location in the heart of the Glen of Imaal and had set up a patrol harbour. During the next few days the platoon-level tactics and basic field craft they had learned over the last number of weeks would be practiced and tested to the limit.



We met up with Platoon Commander Capt Tadhg McCarthy to give us a brief overview of what to expect as we visited different parts of the exercise area and stressed the importance of this type of exercise. *"Patrol harbours are part of their offensive role on the course,"* he said. *"It's the culmination of weeks of training for them."*

The students had set up three four-man observation posts (OPs), spaced out over the exercise area, with the specific role of observing enemy activity and relaying it to their patrol harbour. This information would then be used to paint a picture of the enemy that could be used to formulate and plan an offensive mission.

Our first stop was a visit to one of the OPs. On the way Capt McCarthy informed us about what the instructors expected from the students: *"We need to ensure they are picking up on enemy activity, as this information will be used to set up an ambush at the end of the exercise."*

taking note of every move they made. The students were quick to get into an OP routine, even with it being new to them and very different from any exercises they had completed so far.

Our next stop was to the patrol harbour, which was located in a sleepy forested area where glimpses of sunlight penetrated the thick foliage that hid a platoon of quietly operating soldiers. As we entered from the six-o'clock position a vigilant student on watch halted and challenged us.

After being allowed through, we moved into the heart of the patrol harbour where a set of orders was being given. The students listened intently as their next mission was explained to them with the aid of a detailed model of the exercise area.

Capt McCarthy informed us that over the last 24 hours the course had conducted a number of patrols throughout the exercise area with the objective of gathering information on how to disrupt and destroy the enemy. They had

Talking with some of the students we found that they certainly seemed to be enjoying getting the chance to put their new skills into practice on the ground. Their confidence had grown from their last exercise and they were finding it much easier to get into the patrol harbour routine of prepping, conducting patrols, eating, and resting when the opportunity arose.

A patrol harbour is one of the best learning environments for young soldiers as it gives them the chance to use all the field craft and infantry skills they have learned, and teaches them how to use the terrain around them to their advantage. The way they use this terrain can change from daylight to darkness can only be understood on an exercise such as this.

The patrol harbour also gives the instructors the perfect opportunity to devise a wide and varied range of tasks and missions to put the trainee soldier through their paces. This includes reconnaissance, standing and fighting patrols, each with specific objectives, such as



When we approached the position it was clear that the students had taken in the training they had been given and were putting it into practice as the OP was completely undetectable from the track and bridge that it had been set up to observe. Even close up the OP was hard to detect, and we were nearly on top of it before a watchful eye could be seen peering out from within the impressively camouflaged hide.

Feedback from the students was very positive. With this being their first time operating an OP, most seemed to enjoy the unseen aspect: the idea that their presence was unknown to the enemy who were also completely unaware of how close they were to watchful eyes

also carried out a resupply exercise.

When asked how he felt they were dealing with the exercise so far, Capt McCarthy said: *"They had a long slog into position and I'm sure some are feeling a bit stiff now, but they are working well together...they've got into a good routine and are showing good skills."*

The next patrol, which was going out that evening, was a standing patrol to recce an area for enemy movement in order to choose a suitable ambush site. Students selected for this patrol were packing equipment and loading up with ammunition. They also began to brew up in buddy pairs, in order to get enough fuel into them to sustain them for the task ahead.

ambush, listening, protection, observation, and even escort.

Paragraph 0202 of the Manual of Infantry Platoon and Section Tactics (TM201) says: *'The fundamental role of the infantry man/women has changed little over recent centuries: their tasks are still to close with and destroy the enemy, or force them to surrender, to seize and hold terrain, to dominate and control close country and finally, to carry out close surveillance.'* There is no better situation to see this in practice than in the exercise format of a patrol harbour: it is ultimately the bread and butter of infantry soldiering and is vital in producing confident, professional soldiers for the Defence Forces. ■

EXERCISE NEART



BY LT MICHAEL BRUNICARDI, 2/C NAVAL
OPERATIONS COMMAND CENTRE
PHOTOS BY A/B DAVID JONES & CPL
NEVILLE COUGHLAN

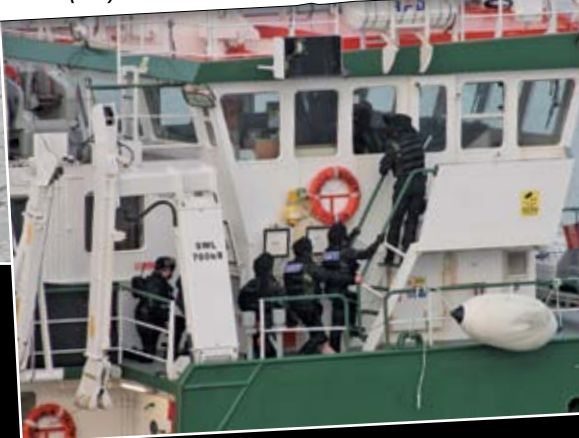
LÉ Samuel Beckett moves in covering the boarding teams in the RHIBs.



Boarding teams preparing to move.



The Naval Boarding Team (NBT) board the Vessel of Interest (VOI).



In the port of Rabat in Morocco, it is a warm evening as shady dealings are completed. Suspect cargo is loaded onto an Irish ship, *Voyager*, which is due to depart shortly and head home after a long voyage. Little does the crew know that intel is being gathered and their ship is under surveillance.

Naval Operations Command at Haulbowline receives a phone call. A Maritime Operations and Analysis Centre-Narcotics' (MAOC-N) vessel of interest (VOI) has been found and indications are it is heading back to Ireland. As a result of this phone call, the fleet operations officer (FOO) contacts the other members of the joint task force (JTF), and it is agreed to initiate a maritime interdiction operation using Irish assets. The VOI departs Morocco and heads northwards to the port of Falmouth in the UK for short stopover of 12 hours, before travelling onwards to the west coast of England and Wales. Surveillance continues. Surface and air assets are deployed and a full estimation of the ship's movements are collected and shared among members of the JTF.

This is the preamble to Exercise Neart, which is the annual maritime interdiction operations exercise carried out in real-time, over two days, in Irish waters. This year the Marine Institute's ship, *Celtic Voyager*, was used as the VOI. She had been outside Irish waters and this allowed the

development of the above scenario as she returned home.

As the VOI proceeds towards the Irish exclusive economic zone with its illegal cargo, little does it know on the morning of the 30th May 2017, that *LÉ Ciara* is over the horizon, watching. *LÉ Ciara* uses her rigid-hull inflatable boats (RHIBs) to conduct covert surveillance, gathering as much on-scene information as possible as she shadows the VOI; exercising her tactical skills and seamanship to ensure that she is not spotted.

The collected information is passed to Naval Operations Command using tactical communication methods and the Recognised Maritime Picture (RMP). One of the Air Corps's maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) is redirected to conduct a high-level flight to provide confirmation of the VOI. This tasking is carried out using the Joint Operations Centre (JOC) in DFHQ. Flying south, the MPA picks-up a target in the anticipated position of the VOI. From distance, the MPA takes photographs, which are sent to Naval Ops for confirmation. The VOI is then positively identified as the *Voyager*; its position is confirmed and the next phase of the operation begins.

On the morning of May 31st, Naval Operations Command provides further intel on *Voyager* and all assets are moved into

position for final intercept. *LÉ Ciara* is still on-scene, shadowing the VOI while *LÉ Samuel Beckett* is redirected from routine operations.

An Garda Síochána sends a detective sergeant from the National Organised Crime and Drugs Bureau to the Naval Base, where he is collected by a RHIB and brought aboard *LÉ Samuel Beckett*, which then heads for the location passed by *LÉ Ciara*.

OC *LÉ Samuel Beckett* assumes the role of officer in tactical command (OTC) of the task group, which proceeds at best speed to the location of the VOI where, as per NS MIO SOPs, both elements of the task group close in.

The task group visually confirms the VOI and initial questioning is carried out on VHF. *LÉ Samuel Beckett*, as lead ship, carries out the final interdiction operation using her ten-strong boarding team, which embarks the vessel, takes control of the crew and identifies the master. Once the crew is secure on deck, the boarding team carries out an initial inspection, locating packages of illegal narcotics. At this point the detective detains the skipper and crew. ENDEX

This annual exercise uses the joint approach of all arms of the Defence Forces and the Joint Task Force. The Naval Service has directly seized over €1.5 billion of illegal narcotics in the last ten years and has participated in multiple operations in the ISTAR role under the Joint Task Force. ■

Vessel of Interest FLIR cropped long range by CASA Maritime aircraft.



Naval Service personnel pictured with the €80 million haul of cocaine that was seized from the yacht Makayabella 400km off Mizen Head in 2014.

SHIP SHAPE

& Ready for Action

BY CPO/ERA RUAIRÍ DE BARRA, FLEET OPERATIONAL READINESS, STANDARDS & TRAINING (FORST)

The delivery of a professional service by the Navy requires specific fleet standards, quality control and the monitoring of personnel and equipment in action. The standards necessary to operate the fleet are the bedrock of an effective service. Their importance is heightened when ships' taskings become more complex. It was deemed vital to establish an organic operational evaluation capability in order to meet the delivery of these requirements and to this end, in September 2008, the Flag Officer Commanding Naval Service (FOCNS) directed the establishment of the Fleet Operational Readiness, Standards and Training (FORST) Section within Naval Operations Command (NOC).

The aim of FORST is to facilitate organisational learning and continuous improvement by highlighting best practice and the fleet standardised processes required for the generation, maintenance and evaluation of our operational capability.

In 'House 50' on Haulbowline, with a small team of 11 specialised experts under the direction of Cdr Ken Minihane, FORST

achieves its mission by assisting ships' OCs through providing guidance, sea training and assessment to generate and maintain the five pillars of operational capability.

Cdr Minihane says: *"FORST has made a significant contribution to the elevation of standards within the Naval Service. We are now operating with proven confidence on an international stage."*

He also says that one pathway of growth and development that lies ahead for FORST may be *"from the point of view of accreditation of the FORST procedures, through the NATO operational capability concept: to have our assessors be accredited to a NATO standard."*

FORST is continually working to ensure that the base competency levels of core mariner skills of NS personnel serving at sea, which are inextricably linked to operational capability, are maintained to a high level of proficiency at all times. During the various training periods and evaluations these skills will be assessed externally by FORST Section.

The core mariner skills are broken into: bridge management and navigation; seamanship and ship handling; damage control and fire fighting; communications and fleet work; helo operations; above-water warfare; search-and-rescue procedures; maritime interdiction operations and naval boarding procedures; ship's protection operations; ship's organisation; command and control; and engineering casualty procedures.

By using the external evaluation and sea training provided by FORST Section, the ships will be enabled to avail of objective internal and external confidence checks and ensure a standardisation of operational capability, procedures and equipment across the fleet.

In order to achieve all that has been laid out above, FORST Section co-ordinates the efforts of Operations, Support and Naval College commands to ensure that a plan/do/check/adjust loop is completed, tailored to each ship.

Plan: FORST plans the correct approach to achieve the operational capability based on the requirements directed by OCNOC and in liaison with Support and Naval College commands.

Do: FORST co-operates with Naval College and Support commands to ensure a delivery of high quality service to the fleet that is constantly changing to meet current demands.

Check: FORST checks the standards, equipment, personnel training competencies and operational capability through assessment and sea training.

Adjust: Having worked through the first three stages, FORST will advise of the necessary adjustments to training and support efforts through feedback from the fleet after assessment and sea training.

FORST will also give feedback to OCNOC on the fleet's ability to implement policy.



Operational capability has five essential pillars: operational viability; sustainability; readiness; interoperability; and deployability. A brief examination of each will give an overview of the complexity that is required in the military maritime environment.

'Operational viability' is ensuring the ship can prevail in an operational situation. It is achieved through the synthesis of personnel, equipment, military doctrine, organisation, training and command and communications.

'Sustainability' is ensuring that capability continues and the ship can maintain a mission tasking at the required operational tempo for the duration required.

'Readiness' is the immediate ability of the ship to execute a designated mission while balancing the constraints of time and capability. Many factors combine in this; current levels of personnel, training, equipment, command, control, communications and intelligence. Readiness must be underpinned by appropriate doctrine and should be continually shaped by lessons learned.

'Interoperability' is concerned with ensuring that NS ships can operate jointly and successfully with other force elements or combined with other military organisations or civilian authorities. It entails familiarity with others operational procedures. Consequently, this requires suitable equipment, personnel, systems and infrastructural programmes, policies and procedures.

'Deployability' is concerned with ensuring that a ship can deploy to a mission area in a given time frame. It entails raising force elements to deploy nationally and/or internationally with the required training, preparation and equipment in place.

The current pinnacle of seeing the five pillars in action are the

Operation Pontus humanitarian missions in the southern Mediterranean off the Libyan coast.

A FORST team is embarked for the first seven or eight days of these missions as our ships steam south. They conduct a short but intense Mission Readiness Evaluation and Training (MRET) period onboard over this week. On completion of the MRET the ship will be at full operational capability, ready to meet whatever challenges exist in the area of operations.

Speaking on the overview of the process, Cdr Minihane says: *"I think the MRET is a fantastic development and through the mentoring style adopted by FORST, the crews of ships participating in Operation Pontus gain a significant amount of knowledge about the operation as well as proving their capability before they ever take a migrant onboard."*

Each MRET is tailored to the specific mission that the ship is assigned to at home or abroad. The MRET conducted on an Operation Pontus-bound vessel starts by having the basics reconfirmed; response to emergencies such as fire or collision and ship's protection operations, from small arms to main armament, which is tested, drilled and fired.

As these competencies are being confirmed the ship's company are still working each day to adapt their vessels for the mission by the temporary addition to the ship's superstructure of items such as washing facilities, sun shelters, and shuttering around medical treatment areas.

Then there is mission-specific training delivered by instructors with direct mission experience, such as SCPO/Sea Philip O'Connell, CPO/ERA Ruairí de Barra, and PO/HA Declan Tighe, on a wide range of subjects such as migrant handling; the use of personal protective equipment; searching techniques and intelligence gathering; gender and cultural awareness; and emergency first aid and CPR.

The training culminates in full ship's drills where rescues are simulated, through which each individual becomes familiar with their role and the location of each item of equipment is tested, checked and rechecked.

The next time these suits will be worn, these RHIBs launched, these guns uncovered, and that body armour strapped on, will be for real; when the ship is fully operational, perhaps at night with the lights of Tripoli glowing over the horizon and a migrant craft in distress to leeward with 150 persons crammed onboard. There, the balance between life and death is at close quarters. All the training and experience and the resolve of the crew is required to complete the mission without fear or failure.

The training programme for the MRET recently conducted onboard *LÉ Eithne* was designed by Lt Cdr Cian O'Mearain (Fleet Marine Engineering Officer) and Lt (NS) Jamie Cotter (Fleet Warfare Officer).

Lt Cotter explains: *"There can be little doubt in my mind that an MRET period adds to and assists in the success of a mission. This is a concept that is not entirely new in the NS: it is a vital and key enabler to mission success that we have been carrying out for a number of years. The MRET is in fact only part of the third phase of a multiphase format followed by the unit as they prepare for overseas deployment."*

"Phase 1 is the individual training, which ensures personnel have completed TOETs, annual range practises, and medical and fitness tests. Phase 2 is collective training, and is conducted by the various branches while on standard maritime defence and security

patrols. The final phase is the validation process: this is where we do mission-specific training.”

Lt Cdr O’Mearain said: “At one level this is a team-building exercise but organisationally what we are doing is proving we can turn knowledge into capability.” He offered the following example of the proving of operational capability onboard *LE Eithne*: “During the transit through the Mediterranean to Augusta, Sicily, the port propeller shaft became fouled. This vessel was able to successfully deploy surface¹, sub-surface² and aerial³ assets to carry out the necessary work and return the ship to its operational tasking in short order. We are better able to conduct these operations with FORST having had rigorous assessment and fixing the capability gaps when we find them.”

Lt Cdr O’Mearain continued: “Because there is now a culture of assessment embedded within the NS and throughout the fleet, there is no place for complacency and units are constantly preparing for and anticipating potential scenarios.”

The FORST deployment provided the author with the opportunity to speak to Cdr Brian Fitzgerald, OC *LE Eithne*, who is on his first Operation Pontus deployment. “I am looking forward to the mission,” he told me. “I think one of the reasons that you join the NS is to pursue an exciting military career that can make a difference. This particular mission is probably the highlight in terms of operational taskings that the NS has had over a sustained period.”

Cdr Fitzgerald is convinced that MRET is essential and valuable. “The NS has extraordinary experience in some of the roughest seas in the world off the west coast of Ireland and we pride ourselves as having a skill set that is finally tuned by constant operations,” he says. “The Mediterranean presents different challenges. So, to have a team of specialists with direct experience of this mission come onboard for an extended period is excellent.”

Cdr Fitzgerald was very pleased with the MRET and FORST. “I think the key thing that FORST have shown is mentoring,” he said. “FORST has developed the ability to transfer information and the instructor’s knowledge through its system. It has allowed me to witness my crew move in the space of just a week, from a routine MDSO standard to an extraordinary level of mission readiness. I don’t believe that this could have been achieved as effectively if you did not have an objective team of experienced instructors from FORST mentoring us through this process.”

At the end of the MRET I asked Cdr Minihane for his final

thoughts. “*Eithne*’s crew engaged completely with the MRET,” he told me, “and there was a significant amount of learning outcomes that have proven to us that they are now ready for operations. That training and that assessment will stand to them when they get those first migrants onboard.”

As the FORST

team made ready to depart *LE Eithne*, the crew of the NS flagship gathered on the flight-deck in the bright Sicilian sunshine in three ranks as the OC thanked them and the FORST team for their work. He spoke with great honesty about the challenges that they would face in the weeks ahead, and of his pride in the crew. He reminded them that their home, this warship beneath their feet, was the first vessel to undertake this mission in 2015, and he assured them that they would not just follow in that wake but lead.

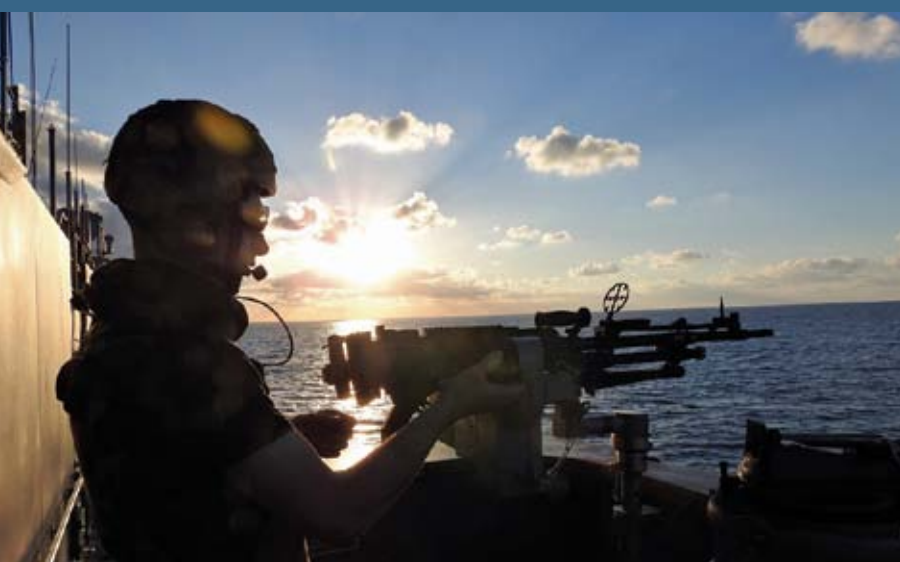
Cdr Fitzgerald also made reference to the proud history in which they would play their part, a tradition of peacekeeping and international humanitarian efforts stretching back many decades. He ended by telling his crew that the tricolour on their shoulder and its companion flying off the stern of their ship marked them as part of an Irish team who would face the mission to come in the finest traditions of the Service. ■

End notes

¹Surface assets: Rigid hulled inflatable boats (RHIBs) with inboard diesel engines; the workhorses of any ship.

²Sub-surface assets: *LE Eithne* has a naval diving team onboard. NS divers also have other ‘normal’ day roles.

³Aerial assets: *LE Eithne* is the first NS ship to deploy a drone onboard for aerial surveillance during migrant recovery operations. During diving operations it is used to provide a look out for threats to the team while sub-surface.





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A Natural Progression with Global Risk Solutions



BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

All soldiers, sailors and aircrew are taught basic security drills when undergoing their recruit/apprentice training, and with progression through the ranks, responsibilities increase.

private security sector you must be licensed and trained. This has opened another area of opportunity within the industry.

One prominent Irish security and risk management company that conducts

standard applies to all ranks: we all know how to follow instructions, how to present ourselves well, and we know about hierarchy and manners."

Danny then went on to tell me about the background to the company.



Personnel carry out regular duties, securing locations like barracks, comms centres, armouries, ships, etc. The DF also conducts specialist security courses, such as the Defence Intelligence and Security Course (DISC), which although mainly dealing with intelligence accumulation and dissemination also looks at assessing and ensuring the security of military installations.

It is hardly surprising given the above, that many personnel leaving the Defence Forces looking for a new career are drawn to the security industry.

Former soldiers have got jobs as everything from static guards, retail security operatives, door supervisors, CCTV operators, and close-protection operatives, up to security consultants. Some, with CIS backgrounds, have taken up jobs in cyber security.

These days, in order to work in the

training and certification in this area is Global Risk Solutions, based in Athlone, Co Westmeath, and with an international office in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The CEO is Danny Cluskey, a former member of the Army Ranger Wing. I met with Danny and some of the directors to get the low down on what Global Risk Solutions is all about.

The first thing Danny stressed was the benefits of military service. "As soon as people learn you are a former soldier, they take notice," he said, "because they associate it with good discipline, good time-keeping and reliability."

He went on to point out that having served with the Irish Defence Forces carries even more weight. "We are recognised as being among the best in the world," he says, "even though we tend to undersell ourselves. This high

"We set up Global Risk Solutions in 2007. We have been running security courses since 2009 and we are City & Guilds and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) accredited trainers." (QQI is the independent State agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland and has taken over the functions formerly carried out by HETAC, FETAC, NQAI, and IUQB.)

"In order to obtain a Private Security Authority (PSA) licence," Danny continued, "you need a QQI certificate, which is obtained on completion of a recognised training course. The PSA, which is the statutory body with responsibility for licensing and regulating the private security industry in Ireland, doesn't run training courses; these are provided by registered training providers validated by QQI, such as (The Security Institute

of Ireland) which Global Risk Solutions instructors are accredited through.

"In addition to PSA training, we also provide courses for those looking to work with the SIA (the UK's Security Industry Authority), and for those wanting to work as MSOs (Maritime Security Operatives) the only Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) accredited qualification based directly on the new international standard for private maritime security companies."

Global Risk Solutions director, Nigel McCormack, also a former member of the ARW, said: "Our PSA course is delivered through a blended approach with both classroom instruction and home based study. The program is 150 hours, with 50 hours of classroom instruction. GRS can package this training with cardiac first responder (CFR) training and manual handling training enabling

corporations, government agencies, dignitaries, celebrities, individuals and families.

Danny said: "Close protection typically involves a 24/7 presence with the aim of deterring any threat as well as physically protecting the client if necessary. Our 14-day training course costs €2,500 and is City & Guilds certified." ■

For more information contact Global Risk Solutions, Blyry Business & Commercial Park, Athlone, Co Westmeath. www.globalrisksolutions.ie, www.globalriskinternational.com / info@globalrisksolutions.ie / Ph: +353 906 409080



Global Risk Solutions CEO Danny Cluskey on deployment in East Timor with the ARW

applicants to be employable straight away when they receive their licence from the PSA.

"We have purpose built classrooms that can accommodate up to 40 people and provide our trainers with the ideal training environment.

"Wherever possible we offer discounts on our courses to members and former members of the Defence Forces."

As well as offering training courses, Global Risk Solutions also provides a manned security service; global risk consultancy; investigation and surveillance; and mobile security in residential and industrial areas. They also specialise in close protection and executive protection for an array of clients, including



A member of GRS on K9 security training

Chemical TERRORISM



BY PAUL O'BRIEN MA



Chemical warfare was used *en masse* during World War I, when Axis and Allied forces used mustard gas and chlorine gas in a number of offensives. The effects of such weapons were devastating, killing and maiming thousands. In the aftermath of the war many believed that such weapons would be banned but contrary to popular opinion, chemical weapons continue to be developed, many of them in secret laboratories.

Chemical weapons are considered 'the poor man's atom bomb', and today, over a century after they were used on the Western Front, they are still being employed in conflicts around the world. While a number of different gases have been used, mustard gas has re-emerged in recent times as a weapon of choice for certain groups.

It is believed mustard gas was first developed in the early 19th Century, and chemists such as César-Mansuete

Desprez and, later, Alfred Richie were credited with its initial development. However, no adverse side effects or dangers were noted in their work. British scientist Frederick Guthrie took the testing further and first noted mustard gas's irritating properties, and later work by Albert Niemann noted its blistering properties.

As chemists developed the agent, the purity of the compound increased, causing adverse health effects on

exposure. It was in 1913, when English chemist Hans Thacher Clarke replaced ingredients in the original formula with hydrochloric acid, that people began to take note. Clarke was severely injured when one of his sample flasks broke, but it was this formula and Clarke's report of his accident that set the German Empire on the way to researching and developing such weapons for warfare.

The Germans first used mustard gas effectively in 1917, against

British troops blinded by tear gas during the Battle of Estaires, 1918. Photo: 2nd Lt Thomas Keith Aitken, © IWM (Q 11586)



UN chemical weapons experts collecting samples from an alleged chemical weapons attack in Damascus, Syria. Photo: Bassam Khabieh/Reuters



British and Canadian troops near Ypres. The agent could be dispersed in a number of munitions, including aerial bombs, land mines, mortar rounds, artillery shells and rockets.

In the aftermath of the war, while Europe remained in relative peace, chemical munitions were used in the colonies as a cheap and effective way to curb unrest. The gas contaminated terrain and continued to remain on the ground for days and weeks. Clothing also

held the gas and those coming into contact with gas-infected people were in turn contaminated and made ill.

Commanders used the weapon as an area denial weapon that forced opponents to abandon contaminated areas, thereby limiting their areas of operation.

As the Cold War developed,

the opposing sides developed chemical and biological weapons and also the means of protection against such attacks.

While the deployment of such weapons and the use of chemical warfare were prohibited by the Geneva Protocol of

1925 and later by the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993, certain countries refused to adhere to these rulings, and continued to stockpile and use chemical weapons.

In the invasion of Iraq in 2003 many chemical weapons were captured and later destroyed by coalition forces but some stockpiles found their way into the hands of insurgents. These devices were used against Coalition forces in roadside IEDs, making them even deadlier.

A US military report in September 2012 stated that insurgent groups such as ISIS were manufacturing and using sulphur-mustard gas in Syria and Iraq.

ISIS has used chemical weapons against Iraqi and Syrian military personnel and also against civilians. Their technology, though limited, has enabled them to develop chlorine gas and low-grade sulphur-mustard gas. Using the stockpiles and components left over from the Ba'athist regime in Iraq, they have formed a specialist unit for chemical weapons research

In 2015 a number of attacks

against Kurdish YPG militia involved ISIS fighters firing a number of makeshift chemical projectiles. In the ensuing battles ISIS soldiers killed in the fighting were discovered to be carrying gas masks. These initial attacks were considered test cases for the future use for the larger deployments of such weapons in offensives. Mustard gas was identified in these attacks by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and also in other attacks in the region, some against civilian targets.

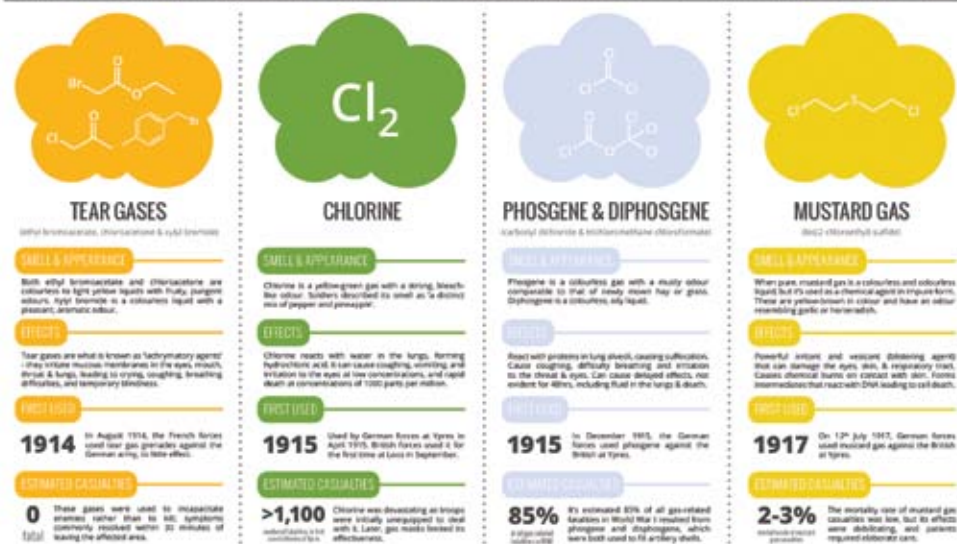
Coalition air strikes have targeted ISIS's manufacturing facilities, destroying large quantities of the gas before it can be deployed.

As unrest in the region continues and such gases are easy to produce, insurgent groups will carry on manufacturing and deploying them as they attempt to deny ground to advancing allied forces.

On the allied side, intelligence and round-the-clock precision bombing are targeting insurgent facilities, denying them the capability to produce their 'poor man's atom bomb'. ■

CHEMICAL WARFARE WORLD WAR I

WORLD WAR I IS SEEN AS THE DAWN OF MODERN CHEMICAL WARFARE, WITH A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT CHEMICAL AGENTS BEING EMPLOYED ON A LARGE SCALE, RESULTING IN APPROXIMATELY 1,240,000 NON-FATAL CASUALTIES, AND 91,000 FATALITIES. A VARIETY OF POISONOUS GASES WERE USED THROUGHOUT THE CONFLICT, WITH EACH HAVING DIFFERING EFFECTS UPON VICTIMS.



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For further information & references, see www.compoundinterest.com/2014/05/17/chemical-warfare-ww1/



Winning Cars and Loans WITH ANSAC CREDIT UNION

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD WITH ANSAC CEO GILLIAN DUNNE

ANSAC Credit Union was formed to promote thrift, by encouraging members to save together and to provide money to be borrowed for worthwhile purposes by its members. Today ANSAC has over 7,500 members and membership is growing every day.

On Friday 9th June

without the need for 'top ups'.

So now you can get an annual loan for things like short holidays or back-to-school time, and you could take out another annual loan for your car insurance, as long

as you are able to pay them back within 12 months or less...We also want to discourage people from going to money lenders."

For €8 every month you can enter the Members' Monthly Draw for a chance to win €10,000 (1st), €5,000 (2nd), €2,500 (3rd), €1,500 (4th), €500 (5th to 8th), or €100 (9th to 23rd). The results are displayed every month in the Member's Area on www.ansaccu.ie and on ANSAC's social media sites. Contact the credit union to enter the draw.

ANSAC's Rachel Kearns told us that everyone who was in the Members' Monthly Draw up to 31st May was automatically entered into the special car draw. Ten lucky winners also received spot prizes of €50 on the day.

After tea, coffee and some tasty buns outside Ceannt NCOs Mess ANSAC Secretary A/Coy Sgt Robbie Moore (HQ DFTC) got the raffle underway. Robbie thanked Brig Gen Joseph Mulligan (GOC DFTC) and all the ANSAC reps who organised the event: Cpl Ricky McCausland (PSS DFTC), Coy Sgt Anthony Scanlon (1 MIC), Sgt Phil Moore (DFHQ) and Sgt Alan O'Brien (HQ DFTC).

After allowing the tension to build,

Dave and Gillian hand over the cash prize to Martin (middle).



Gillian and Robbie drew the winning name from the ANSAC database: Armn Martin Gavigan (No 5 Sp Wing, Air Corps). ANSAC rep Armn Rauri Gaynor (No 4 Sp Wing) was on hand to call Martin and then handed the phone to Gillian to give him the good news. Martin wasn't convinced at first, but after family and friends rang and texted to congratulate him he started to believe it. Martin's son Ian even contacted him from UNDOF, where he is serving with 55 Inf Gp, to tell him the news was all over Facebook.

The next day Martin and his wife Martina visited Sheehy Motors to look at the Skoda Octavia and to make a decision whether to take the car or the €19,000 cash. After a second visit to Sheehy's and a long hard think over the next few days he decided to choose the cash prize.

Martin was delighted with his win and thanked ANSAC and Sheehy Motors. When he was presented with the cheque, Martin said: "I had to be practical, our son Ian is getting married in August and I'd really like to be able to help out and we could do with the extra cash."

Martin had obviously been impressed on his visits to Sheehy Motors as he later purchased an older Skoda from them. So, he ended up with a new(ish) car and some cash. ■



Picking the winner!

the credit union launched two new schemes in Ceannt NCOs Mess, Curragh Camp, with a special car draw for a Skoda Octavia Active 1.2 TSI or €19,000 in cash. Dave Brown and Megan Roche from Sheehy Motors, Naas, were on hand to discuss the model spec of the Skoda Octavia that they were providing.

ANSAC CEO Gillian Dunne explained the new loans to *An Cosantóir*: "We are launching our new Car Loan and our Annual Loan, which replaces our Express Loan and allows more than one loan at a time, subject to T&Cs,



NEW LOAN DETAILS PROVIDED BY ANSAC

ANSAC CU members could previously only have one loan outstanding at any time. Smaller loans that were required were given as 'top ups' on an outstanding loan. Now ANSAC have introduced multiple loans, this means if someone has an outstanding loan and they want to look for a small loan they can apply for an annual loan at a reduced rate. This must be paid back within a 12-month period but can be repaid quicker; e.g. over 20 weeks rather than 52 weeks. Members can have more than one annual loan outstanding at a time; maybe borrowing in June for a weekend break and then applying for an additional annual loan for Christmas.

Gillian said: "Members need to be aware of the terms and conditions. Normal procedures apply in relation to the members' ability to repay their loans; we may require bank statements and payslips to ensure we are not putting a member under any additional financial strain. This loan must be paid in conjunction with any other outstanding loans on the account."

There are no top ups on annual loans but members can apply for an additional loan on the account even if another annual loan is outstanding.

Price Comparison: A recent comparison of an ANSAC annual loan of €500 and a loan of a similar amount from Provident showed the total cost from ANSAC coming to €10.25, compared to €150 from Provident; a huge difference.

Annual Loan @ 7.9% - Interest rate 7.9% APR 8.2%

Car Loan @ 6.2% - APR 6.4%

- Research shows ANSAC's will be the cheapest credit union car loan compared to local community credit unions that are close to and in direct competition with ANSAC.
- Minimum loan amount of €3,000 must be paid directly to a car dealership or garage.
- Does not qualify for interest rebate.
- Members' ability to repay will determine loan approval.

ANSAC Credit Union	PCP Finance (Personal Contract Plan)
<p>No hidden or additional fees. No set-up or documentation fee. Repay loan quicker, no penalty. Speedy loan decision. You can sell the car on at any time. Interest paid on reducing balance. Life, savings and loan protection insurance free (subject to T&Cs).</p>	<p>Deposit required. Balloon payment at end of PCP or straight in to another PCP contract. Annual mileage set; if exceeded reduces value of car. Can incur additional fees and charges YOU DON'T OWN THE CAR!!</p>

If a member has a loan outstanding with ANSAC and they are interested in a car loan they can apply for it separately but it must be paid back within five years, max. This loan has no 'top up' facility.

It is important to remember that the money ANSAC members' borrow as a loan, is the savings of other members. To this end, it is imperative that members continue to save while paying off a loan. When a member withdraws their shares to clear a loan, they are depriving other members of their chance to get a loan.

To join ANSAC Credit Union you must be a member of what is known as a 'common bond'. The common bond of ANSAC is membership of PDFORRA. You may also retain full membership of ANSAC if you are a member of the credit

union on the day you leave the Defence Forces. ANSAC encourages its members' families who reside at the same address to apply for a Family Membership account in ANSAC to avail of the same offers. ■

Opening hours: Monday - Thursday, 9am - 5pm; Wednesday 10:30am - 5pm; Friday: 9am - 4pm. Open through lunch.
Address: 75-76 Amiens Street, Dublin
Contact details: info@ansaccu.ie - www.ansaccu.ie.
Ph: 01-8554489. ANSAC is on Twitter @ANSACCU and
Facebook: www.facebook.com/Ansac-Credit-Union-Ltd-282694051791310/
ANSAC Credit Union is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Reg no. 462CU

IUNVA ANNUAL COMMEMORATION

REPORT AND PHOTOS BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

"Our fallen heroes came from different countries and performed different jobs. They served as soldiers and police officers, and as national and international civilian staff. But they shared a common purpose, and an uncommon courage...UN peacekeeping is one of the international community's most effective investments to support peace, security and prosperity. While peacekeeping carries a tragically high price in lives lost, it brings enormous returns in lives saved."

- UN Secretary General António Guterres, at a recent ceremony to honour the 117 UN peacekeepers who lost their lives last year.

On Sunday 28th May 2017 the Irish United Nations Veterans Association (IUNVA) held its annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arbour House, Dublin. The ceremony

is held in memory of the members of the Defence Forces, An Garda Síochána and Irish civilians who have died on UN peacekeeping missions throughout the world since 1960.

In particular, this year's ceremony commemorated the 25th anniversaries of the deaths of Cpl Peter Ward (71 Inf Bn, UNIFIL) and Cpl Martin Tynan (72 Inf Bn, UNIFIL), and the 50th anniversary of Comdt Thomas Wickham (UNTSO).

Families of the deceased were present, along with members of the General Staff, representatives of An Garda Síochána, the Prison Service, Civil Defence, other veterans associations, and members of the public, to honour Ireland's fallen peacekeepers. Asst Garda Commissioner Pat Leahy, who served with the UN in Namibia, Cambodia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, the West Bank and Lebanon, was guest speaker.

Fr Séamus Madigan (Head Chaplain to the Defence Forces) and Rev Fran Grasham (Church of Ireland Chaplain to the Defence Forces) conducted prayers. They were followed by author and poet Cpl Michael Whelan who read his poem *Fallen Friends*, written in memory of peacekeepers who made the ultimate sacrifice.

A number of UN veterans read out the roll of Ireland's 94 fallen peacekeepers, 87 of them members of the Defence Forces, before a large number of wreaths were laid by dignitaries, families, and representatives of military associations, including IUNVA, ONE, the Royal British Legion, the Royal Air Force Association, and military attachés



from the USA and the UK. The honour of laying a wreath from the Defence Forces was given to Pte Graham Coyne (7 Inf Bn), Armn Dillon Lacey-Byrne (CIS Sqn), and L/Sea Erin Killeen (NSR).

In 1988, Chairman of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee Egil Aarvik, when presenting the prize for the achievements of UN peacekeeping forces to then UN Secretary General Pérez de Cuéllar, said: *"This year's Peace Prize is a recognition of and homage to one organ of the United Nations. But it ought to be understood as a serious comment on the fact that we must, united and with our whole hearts, invest in the United Nations. It becomes clearer and clearer that what has to be done to secure the future for new generations has to be done together. Our determination has to be channelled into the United Nations. This is the best hope for the future of the world - indeed its only hope!"*

In this regard it is imperative that we remember our fallen brothers and sisters who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace.

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they are the sons of God.' Matthew 5:9 ■

Memorial Service for Comdt Thomas Wickham

BY LT COL ROBERT KIELY, CHIEF OBSERVER GROUP GOLAN
PHOTOS BY CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN, 55 INF GP, UNDOF

On 7th June 2017 a memorial service was held in Camp Ziounai on the Golan Heights to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of Comdt Thomas 'Tommy' Wickham who died in the line of duty two days after the start of the Six-Day War between Israel and Syria in 1967. At the time Comdt Wickham was operating as an unarmed UN military observer (UNMO) for the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) when he was shot and killed while trying to relieve observer positions on the Golan Heights.

Attending the memorial service were Irish UNMOs currently serving in the Golan Heights, Jerusalem and South Lebanon. Also present was a large representative body from 55 Inf Gp, the Irish unit currently serving with the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) on the Golan Heights.

The ceremony included a prayer service led by 55 Inf Gp padre, Rev Fr Pat Mernagh, followed by the laying of a wreath by myself, Lt Col Robert Kiely, Chief Observer Group Golan, and concluded with the playing of the Last Post, a minute's silence, and the raising of the national flag to the strains of Reveille. Fr Mernagh celebrated Mass afterwards in the Camp Ziouani church.

Comdt Wickham was an artillery officer and instructor in the Curragh Camp, Co Kildare. He

had extensive overseas service, having completed several international military courses throughout Europe and seeing action in the Congo with 38 Inf Bn in 1962/3. He was also a football enthusiast, much like his father who had been secretary of the FAI for 30 years. Comdt Wickham was a Defence Forces representative to the FAI and had accompanied them to Istanbul as an official, just weeks before deploying to the Golan in 1967.

Significantly, Comdt Wickham is the most senior Irish officer to be killed on overseas service and the only member of the Defence Forces to die on active service in Syria.

June 5th 1967 saw the outbreak of the Six-Day War and, unfortunately, two days later Comdt Thomas Wickham, the husband of Patricia and father of three, made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of peace. His remains were repatriated to Ireland where he received full military honours, rendered by members of the Defence Forces.

As I said at the memorial service, it is important that we remember those members of the Irish Defence Forces who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of peace. Today, we have 587 personnel serving in 10 missions around the world, often in dangerous conflict zones. As well as commemorating Comdt Wickham and his service to Ireland and to the United Nations, our memorial service was also a reminder of Ireland's and the Defence Forces' long-standing and historical commitment to the United Nations and to peace in the Middle East. ■



Lt Col Kiely at the wreath laying.



Rev Fr Pat Mernagh CF, leads the assembled parade in a prayer.



Members of 55th Inf Gp remove their head dress for the Last Post.



A Fijian bugler, serving with UNDOF, plays the Last Post.



FIBUA

Training

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD
PHOTOS BY ARMN ADAM MURPHY

‘Fighting-in-built-up-areas [FIBUA] is uncomfortable, unnerving, noisy, dirty and, as it is usually done in small groups, demands high skill and courage.’ Canadian Army Staff

College

The urban battlefield has been used during the Easter Rising in 1916 in Dublin, and in later during the Second World War in the built up cities of Stalingrad and Berlin in 1940s. During the Cold War, NATO troops manoeuvred through the streets of Berlin and across Europe, in preparedness for a war that never came. Back in Ireland from the late 1960s, ‘The Troubles’ in Northern Ireland brought the battlefield to our streets for over three decades.

The battlefield has now moved from the open hills and trench warfare of the countryside, to the very streets we live on, an evolution that has seen the combat environment change, FIBUA brings that battle much, much closer.

With the increase in populations in these towns and cities, it has made FIBUA inevitable in today’s battlefield. The fact that these cities and towns hold vital ground, which is usually important in the control of territory, has made this an extremely difficult and demanding task for all military forces.

FIBUA is taught as part of the tactical block on the syllabus of training for the Infantry Platoon Sergeants course, which tests the students in offensive and defensive operations, command & control, urban camouflage, entering, clearing and moving through buildings, including combat service support (CSS) during FIBUA.

Pictured are students on the current 5th Infantry Platoon Sergeants course undergoing their FIBUA training during a CBRN threat in the Military Training Facility (MTF) in the DFTC. The Infantry Platoon Sergeants course is being conducted by the NCO Training Wing, of the Infantry School, Military College. ■

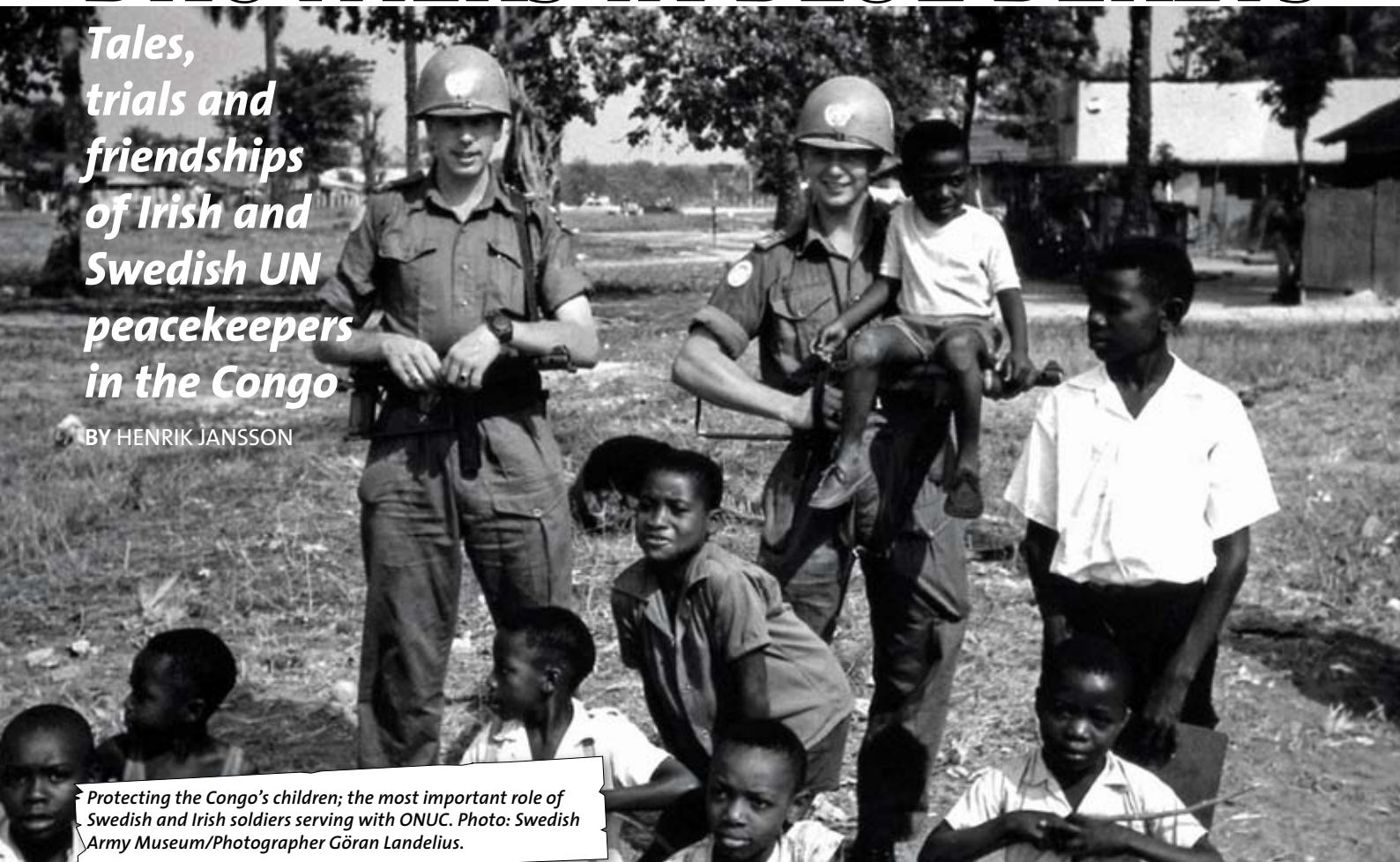


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BROTHERS IN BLUE BERETS

Tales, trials and friendships of Irish and Swedish UN peacekeepers in the Congo

BY HENRIK JANSSON



Protecting the Congo's children; the most important role of Swedish and Irish soldiers serving with ONUC. Photo: Swedish Army Museum/Photographer Göran Landelius.

On June 30th 1960, the Congo, previously a Belgian colony, gained its independence. Due to its rich natural resources and human greed, the newborn country was soon thrown into civil war, as several factions quarrelled about who was to lead the country and how it should be divided. Another human urge, to do good by your fellow man, drove Dag Hammarskjöld, the Swedish Secretary General of the UN, to react quickly and the Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC) peacekeeping operations was established by UN Resolution 143 on July 14th. Sweden and Ireland were among the 29 countries that soon sent soldiers to the Congo.

Secretary General Hammarskjöld's rapid action in persuading the UN Security Council to adopt Resolution 143, was quickly strengthened by the adoption of two further resolutions: 145 (July 22nd) and 146 (August 9th).

Less than a week after Dag Hammarskjöld asked the Swed-

ish government for help, Swedish peacekeepers had boots on the ground after its UN battalion stationed in the Gaza Strip was diverted to Léopoldville. Ireland's 32 Infantry Battalion, one of two battalions formed specifically to serve with ONUC, departed Ireland for the Congo on July 27th, and was joined a month later by 33 Infantry Battalion.

Both nations had very little experience in military operations abroad: this was the first full Irish unit to participate in a UN mission, and Swedish soldiers had very little experience in armed combat. It was obvious that there would be a steep learning curve.

The Congo in 1960 was a divided country. President Joseph Kasavubu and Prime Minister Lumumba were based in the northwest, in the capital, Léopoldville, while Moïse Tshombe was leading a bid for independence for Katanga province in the southeast. On top of this, the small, diamond-rich area of South Kasai had proclaimed independence as well. In addition, many

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Belgian paratroopers were in the Congo to protect and defend Belgian citizens and probably Belgian interests as well.

It was into this fray that the young soldiers of Ireland and Sweden were thrown. Not properly equipped and with little or no experience, these young men were mustered on the red African soil to fight an enemy that was sometimes elusive and vague. Very soon, they had their baptism of fire when an Irish patrol was ambushed in Niemba on November 8th 1960. Stig von Bayer, a Swedish interpreter assigned to assist the Irish troops with translations, had warned them about the danger posed by the indigenous Baluba population. A few days later the Irish patrol was ambushed and nine soldiers out of 11 were slain. Meanwhile, the Swedish soldiers were tasked with guarding train routes out of Elisabethville, and ended up in fierce fighting with the indigenous tribes allied with the Katangese.

In August 1960, the Swedish and the Irish battalions were both transferred to Elisabethville in Katanga province, where the real conflict was about to erupt. It was here that the early bonds of friendship formed, as the Swedish and the Irish camps were situated not far apart. From early on, operations were conducted in unison and training was also conducted together.

At the beginning of 1961, both forces received armoured cars to facilitate safer and more heavily armed transportation. The Swedes got five Swedish KP-cars with twin-mounted, water-cooled, 8mm, M36 Browning machine guns, while the Irish side received old but sturdy Ford Mk IV armoured cars armed with single-mounted, water-cooled, .303, British Vickers machine guns.

In 1961 the UN stepped up its efforts to bring peace to the country. Several peace talks were conducted during spring and by summer the only big obstacle left was Katanga and Moïse Tshombe, who refused peace. The decision was taken to enforce the UN resolutions by force and on August 28th Operation Rum Punch saw the arrest of many of Tshombe's white mercenaries and officers. This operation was not as successful as hoped and another operation, Morthor, was planned and carried out



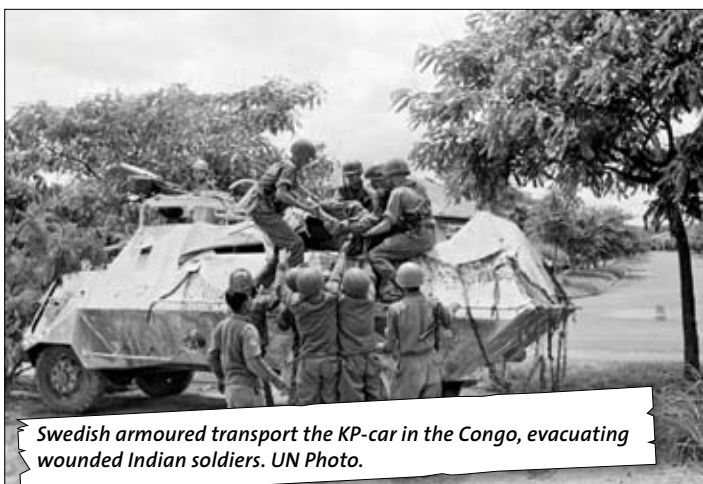
*Irish soldiers being instructed by Swedish officer Captain Kjessler.
Photo: Swedish Army Museum/Photographer Göran Landelius.*

on September 13th. The Irish and Swedish worked together to carry out a number of tasks in Operation Morthor. One of these was the attempted apprehension of Minister Munongo, where two Irish armoured cars aided a company of Swedish soldiers.

Early in the morning of September 13th the combined force of Swedes and Irish arrived in their vehicles under fire outside Munongo's villa. Hastily the Swedish soldiers entered the compound aided by machine-gun fire from the Irish armoured cars. The mission failed, however, as the minister had abandoned the house earlier. As the raiders withdrew under protection from the armoured cars, several gendarmerie soldiers opened fire on the column, and in the ensuing gun battle Swedish soldier Kenneth



Irish armoured transport in the Congo, the Ford Mk IV. UN Photo.



Swedish armoured transport the KP-car in the Congo, evacuating wounded Indian soldiers. UN Photo.

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Roos was hit twice. He was hastily medevac'd and survived.

Operations Rum Punch and Morthor convinced the Katangese that the UN forces were fully on the Congolese government's side and they acted accordingly. As Operation Morthor began to unfold on September 13th 1961, a large force of Katangese gendarmerie approached the Irish garrison of 155 soldiers from A Company, 35 Infantry Battalion, in the mining town of Jadotville. The purpose of this attack can be disputed, but the probable reason was to capture the Irish soldiers and use them as a bartering chip and hostages in the coming conflict.

The Katangese sought to gain an advantage by attacking in the morning during Mass, but the guard on duty quickly realised what was happening and started firing his weapon to alert his fellow soldiers. Swede Lars Froberg, another interpreter attached to the Irish company, was in bed when gunfire erupted, shattering his window and splintering the wood in his quarters. Lars jumped out of bed and sought out Commander Quinlan, staying by his side during the entire siege. The interpreter clearly remembers the heroism and professionalism of the Irish soldiers under fire and how they conducted themselves exceptionally, despite the fact that many of them were in their first fire fight and that they were vastly outnumbered.

Attempts were soon made by UN forces to aid the Irish in Jadotville. In a joint Swedish-Irish-Indian push towards the besieged outpost, a column of vehicles attempted to break the siege. Swede Kjell Andersson was leading a detachment of jeeps aided by two KP-cars as part of the column. When they came under gendarmerie fire, the KP-cars returned fire with their twin-mounted machine guns and silenced the threat. After they picked up Indian Ghurkha soldiers at the airfield, they continued towards Jadotville. During the early hours, a Katangese Fouga Magister jet appeared and bombed the column of vehicles. The Fouga came back no less than four times to harass the column and drop its bombs and Kjell still remembers the coolness of the Gurkhas who decided to have lunch during the fourth bombing run!

Arne Björklund was a driver in one of the two KP-cars, which were to play a large part in the safeguarding of the entire column. As they approached the bridge at Lufira, the UN force realised the crossing was heavily defended and it was not long before bullets started to hit the armoured sides of the KP-cars. The twin-mounted M36 machine guns were a formidable force multiplier and laid down heavy fire on the gendarmerie positions. The UN forces then began discussing the tactics, with the Ghurkhas wanting to attack at night while the Irish wanted to attack right away.

The UN force tried its utmost to pass the bridge but the fortifications and the determination of the veteran mercenaries holding the bridge proved too much and they were forced to withdraw after taking several casualties. The withdrawal was no less difficult and the column came under heavy fire several times. However, they succeeded thanks to the heavy fire from the two KP-cars and the Irish Ford cars.



Swedish KP/car engaging the enemy with its twin M36 machine guns. UN Photo.



Irish soldiers relaxing in a foxhole in Jadotville. Photo: Irish Military Archives.

After the attempt to reach Jadotville, the Irish commander, Commandant Caine, concluded that it was thanks to the bravery of the Swedish soldiers and the sturdiness of the Swedish KP-cars that most of the force had made it back alive through the gauntlet of fire that followed the withdrawal. The Indian commander on the scene concurred.

Back in Jadotville, the Irish held their own against the attackers and even managed to maintain their sense of humour as the besieged company radioed out: *"We are holding out to the last bullet; could do with some whiskey."*

Lars Froberg also remembers the frustration when a Katangan Fouga started bombing the Irish positions at Jadotville at its leisure. In addition to the threat from the aircraft, Katangan 81mm mortar shells landed indiscriminately all over the camp and sniper fire was ever present.

However, what got on Lars's nerves most of all was the phone in his office. There was only one telephone line in the camp and it was situated in Lars's office. Only incoming calls could be made, not outgoing, and the line was used to conduct all negotiations with the Katangese. In addition to the negotiations, the Katangese used the line to constantly threaten the Irish and their Swedish interpreter about the horrible things that would be done to them if they did not surrender immediately.

On September 16th a UN helicopter flown by a Norwegian pilot and Swedish co-pilot approached the camp with supplies. Katangese fire swarmed like angry bees around the helicopter trying to bring it down but against all odds the pilot managed

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to land the aircraft. There was no way out for the helicopter, but this was secondary as the Irish direly needed the supplies. It was also heaven sent for Lars as he got two fellow Scandinavians to talk to during the ensuing month-long imprisonment.

By this time, the Irish mortar crews had zeroed in on the Katangese mortars and managed with well-aimed fire to knock out all their guns and gun crews. This was a major blow to the morale of the Katangese soldiers and many tried to desert. By this time, Katangese losses numbered several hundred dead and many more wounded, and the attacking force was down to approximately 2,000. On his side Commander Quinlan had managed to keep all his soldiers alive, with only a few wounded. The supplies of food, ammunition and water for the Irish were, however, very low.

Unable to breach the steadfast Irish defence of its lines, the Katangese offered a ceasefire on the evening of September 16th.

Negotiations for the ceasefire were being conducted, when the Katangese minister of interior, Munongo, suddenly appeared on the scene, intent on meeting the Irish commander. This caused Lars Froberg to come up with a daring, and somewhat reckless, idea to surprise the minister with a hidden pistol. Then, with the minister as hostage, all UN personnel would make their escape. The plan, be it good or foolhardy, never came to fruition, however, as the minister never came close enough to the daring Swedish interpreter and Irish commander for them to spring the trap.

As his men were out of ammunition, Commandant Quinlan accepted Minister Munongo's promise that UN personnel would not be harmed, and they surrendered, spending the next month as POWs in Hotel l'Europee in Elisabethville before being released in a prisoner exchange.

During the September fighting, Dag Hammarskjöld continued working hard to establish peace. Then, on September 18th while flying to Rhodesia for peace talks with Tshombe his plane disappeared. It was found later crashed in the bush with all of its crew and passengers dead, including Dag Hammarskjöld.

The threat posed by the Katangan air force and the death of Dag Hammarskjöld prompted the UN to ask Sweden for air support for ONUC. The Swedish swiftly acceded to the request and by October 4th 1961, J29 Tunnan fighters and reconnaissance planes had arrived in the Congo from the Swedish F22 Air Force Regiment.

These odd-looking Swedish planes wreaked havoc on the Katangese air force and quickly established absolute air superiority.

This was welcomed by all the UN forces on the ground and especially by the Swedes and Irish who stood and cheered as the Tunnans roared over the streets of Elisabethville. If ONUC had received air support right from the launch of the mission, the outcome of the Siege at Jadotville would undoubtedly have been different.

Aided by the Tunnans, and UN Resolution 169 of November of 1961, which gave the UN forces even more author-

ity to use force, operations continued. In December 1961, Operation Unokat was conducted, bringing Katangese forces to their knees and ending on December 19th with all of the rebel capital, Elisabethville, under the UN flag.

Tshombe signed a peace treaty on December 20th in which he recognised the state of Congo. However, he clearly had no intentions of being held to his word, as the peace was broken several times after the signing. During 1963-1964, the Swedes and the Irish were engaged in intense fighting; just as fierce as during the eventful autumn of 1961. As before, operations and the leadership of the UN force were carried out through cooperation between the Irish and the Swedish contingents.

Eventually, when the battle alarms faded and the smoke had cleared in 1964, the Irish and the Swedish soldiers came out the other side of what can arguably be described as one of the toughest UN missions. Not only because the participating UN forces were ill prepared and ill equipped, but because the enemy was not entirely clear and was hard to grasp. Nevertheless, the Irish and Swedish battalions did their utmost under the direst of circumstances, and they were always there for each other: whenever the Irish were in a hard situation, the KP-cars were not far away and, likewise, the Ford Mk IVs of the Irish were always there when the Swedes asked for assistance. This has formed unbreakable bonds between our two armed forces as well as between individual soldiers from the two nations.

The immortal words of William Shakespeare from Henry V echo once again: *"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers, for he today that sheds his blood with me, shall be my brother."*

And so, it came to be that the Irish and the Swedish soldiers fought, bled, and sometimes died, together on the red soils of Africa, thereby became brothers forever, bröder för evigt; brothers in blue berets. ■

About the author:

Henrik Jansson is a 48-year old freelance writer in the field of military history. His brief military career as a conscript was as an observer for artillery and mortar fire. In recent years, Henrik has worked as an instructor for the voluntary military organisation in Sweden, training, both home guard, regular army and volunteers. His recent work is published in the magazine 'Slagfjädern' and coming articles are being published in the English magazine 'The Armourer' and the Swedish magazine 'Militär Historia'. You can reach Henrik on: hjhistart@gmail.com



Swedish airmen with their Tunnan fighters. UN Photo.

HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY

The Big Fella's LAST JOURNEY

BY JOSEPH EA CONNELL JNR



General Michael Collins's convoy left Portobello Barracks on Sunday 20th August 1922, and made its first stop at Maryborough Jail (now Portlaoise Prison), where Collins discussed transferring some of the prisoners there to Gormanstown camp to relieve the overcrowded conditions. He also spoke with some of the prisoners, including Tom Malone, about ending the Civil War. He asked if Malone would attend a meeting to "try to put an end to this damned thing". As he left, he slapped one fist into his hand and said "That fixes it – the three Toms [Malone, Tom Barry and Tom Hales] will fix it". At Limerick Barracks the OC of the Southern Command, Gen Eoin O'Duffy, met Collins and discussed his belief that the war would soon be over and understood that Collins wanted to avoid any rancour. The convoy then headed through Mallow, and spent that night in the Imperial Hotel in Cork City.



The next day, Collins and Dalton visited some local banks in an effort to trace Republican funds lodged during their occupation of the city. (During July the IRA collected £120,000 in customs revenue and had hidden this money in the accounts of sympathisers.) At each bank, Collins told the manager to close the doors, and had the bank directors identify the suspicious accounts. He concluded that "three first-class men will be necessary to conduct a forensic investigation of the banks and the Customs and Excise in Cork".

He and Dalton also travelled the 30 miles to Macroom where Collins met Florence O'Donoghue, who was in the IRA but was neutral in the Civil War. The first phase of the civil war was ended, O'Donoghue wrote. He and many others recognised at this point that the IRA/Republicans could not win the war, and that Collins came south searching for peace. Collins was desperately trying to bring the war to a close, as well as trying to give some face-saving agreement to the leaders on the other side. It is thought that he asked O'Donoghue how to stop the war and to mediate for him.

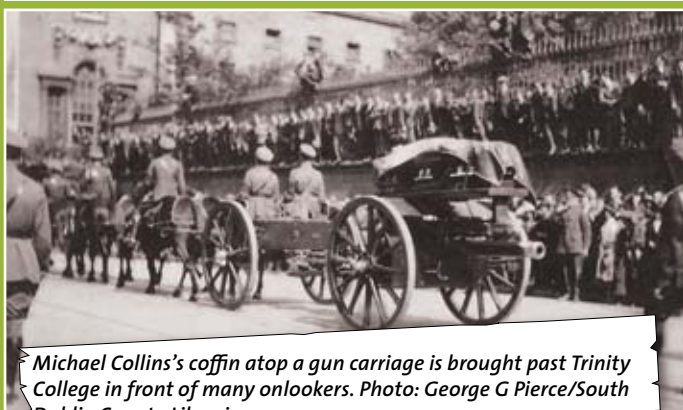
Collins's party left the Imperial Hotel on Tuesday, 22nd August. The convoy went through Macroom towards Béal na mBláth about 8am where it stopped to get directions, then through to Bandon.

In Lee's Hotel in Bandon Collins briefly met with Maj Gen Seán Hales, OC of the Free State forces in West Cork. It is thought that Hales was informed of a meeting Collins had intended with Civil War neutrals in Cork that evening, and that he had met with O'Donoghue and others the day before, and they discussed how an end to the war could be achieved.

In the early morning, the ambush party met in Long's Pub. The men who assembled at Béal na mBláth were not a column, but officers who gathered to hold a pre-arranged staff meeting. When Florence O'Donoghue met with surviving members of the IRA/Republican ambush party in 1964, they said they were unaware that Collins was in the area until that morning. The plan to ambush the party was decided on as part of the general policy of attacking all Free State convoys, not as a specific plan to ambush this convoy. They saw the opportunity to overpower an enemy convoy on its return journey and they decided to take up the challenge and ambush it. In the late afternoon a message was received that Collins's party was in Bandon, but as it was thought unlikely that the convoy would come through Béal na mBláth a second time the ambush party began to disassemble the mine and evacuate the position.

Originally, the ambush party numbered between 25 and 30 according to varying sources.

Collins's convoy left the Eldon Hotel in Skibbereen at 5pm and headed back to Cork. The convoy detoured around Clonakilty on the way back because of a road-block. (It has never been fully explained why the convoy returned the same way they came out in the morning. However, when the anti-Treaty forces left Cork city they blew up most of the bridges and cut most of the roads, so there were few passable ways to travel in the area.) In Bandon, Collins again met Gen Hales, who was the brother of Tom Hales, by coincidence a member of the ambush party. "Keep up the good work! 'Twill soon be over" was Collins's parting salute to Hales. On the road out of Bandon, Collins said to Dalton: "If



Michael Collins's coffin atop a gun carriage is brought past Trinity College in front of many onlookers. Photo: George G Pierce/South Dublin County Libraries

we run into an ambush along the way, we'll stand and fight them." Dalton said nothing.

The ambush took place at Béal na mBáláth just before sunset, at 7.30pm. When the first shots were fired, Dalton ordered "Drive like hell!" but Collins countermanded the order as he had predicted and yelled "Stop, we'll fight them!"

Collins and Dalton first fired from behind the armoured car, and then Collins shouted "There they are, running up the road." The Lewis machinegun in the armoured car jammed several times, and when it did the IRA/Republicans took advantage of the lull in firing to move their positions. Collins ran about 15 yards up the road, dropped into a prone firing position, and continued shooting at the IRA men on the hill. Dalton said then he heard the faint cry: "Emmet, I'm hit!" Dalton and Comdt Seán O'Connell ran over to where Collins was lying face-down on the road.

Among the questions surrounding the ambush, many remain, including was Collins hit by a ricochet bullet? There is agreement that the wound to Collins's head was 'large and gaping' but there was disagreement whether there was an entry wound and an exit wound. This has led

evidence indicates the latter as immediately after the ambush Sonny O'Neill said: "I dropped one man."

The convoy headed back to the Imperial Hotel, where Dalton, O'Connell, Sgt Cooney and Lt Gough went into the hotel to inform Maj Gen Dr Leo Ahern and asked him to take charge of the body.

Dr Ahern first examined Collins's body when it was brought to the hotel, and then at Shanakiel Hospital. His examination found a large, gaping wound 'to the right of the poll. There was no other wound. There was definitely no wound in the forehead'.

Collins's death was never officially registered, there was no inquest, and there was no formal, independent autopsy. When the Fianna Fáil government was to take over in 1932, it was said that many papers relating to Collins's killing were taken from Portobello Barracks and burned by order of the Minister for Defence, Desmond FitzGerald.

At Collins's funeral in Glasnevin on Monday, 28th August, Gen Richard Mulcahy, who would take Collins's place as commander in chief of the army, delivered the oration:

"Our country is today bent under a sorrow such as it has not been bent for many

a year. Our minds are cold, empty, wordless, and without sound. But it is only our weaknesses that are bent under this great sorrow that we meet with today. All that is good in us, all that is strong in us, is strengthened by the memory of that great hero and that great legend who is now laid to rest.

...Unless the grain of corn that falls to the ground dies, there is nothing but itself in it, but if it dies it gives forth great fruit. Michael Collins' passing will give us forth great fruit, and Michael Collins' dying will give us forth great fruit.

... Our Army had been the people, is the people, and will be the people. Our green uniform does not make us less the people. It is a cloak of service, a curtailer of our weakness, and an amplifier of our strength.

... When Michael Collins met difficulties, met people who obstructed him, and worked against him, he did not turn aside to blame them, but facing steadily ahead, he worked bravely forward to the goal he intended.

...Men and women of Ireland, we are all mariners on the deep, bound for a port still seen only through storm and spray, sailing still on a sea full 'of dangers and hardships, and bitter toil'. But the Great Sleeper lies smiling in the stern of the boat, and we shall be filled with that spirit which will walk bravely upon the waters." ■

About the Author:

Joseph E.A. Connell Jnr is a USA native and the author of a number of books on Dublin and its revolutionary history. His recent books are *Dublin Rising 1916* and *Who's Who In The Dublin Rising 1916*, and his latest is *Michael Collins: Dublin 1916-22* published in April 2017 by <http://wordwellbooks.com>



A New Leap into Competition

BY CPL LEE COYLE PHOTOS
BY ARMN ADAM MURPHY



On Saturday 27th May the Army Equitation School in McKee Bks, Dublin officially opened their newly refurbished outdoor jumping arena. It was also a momentous occasion as the arena was officially named the 'W.T. Cosgrave Arena' after former TD, William Thomas Cosgrave, who was a driving force behind the establishment of the Equitation School.

An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, Minister with Responsibility for Defence, Paul Kehoe TD, former Taoiseach

Mr. Liam Cosgrave, accompanied by the Defence Forces Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM, presided over the naming ceremony.

W.T. Cosgrave, who served as the first President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State from 1922 to 1932, was instrumental in the establishment of the Army Equitation School whose purpose is 'to promote the Irish Horse'.

It all began when in 1925 Colonel Zeigler of the Swiss Army first suggested holding an international jump-

ing event at the Dublin Horse Show. The Aga Khan of the time heard of this proposal and offered a challenge trophy to the winner of the competition and in 1926 International Jumping Competitions was introduced to the show and it was the first time the Nations' Cup for the Aga Khan Challenge trophy was held.

This provided the need for an Equitation School within the Free State Army, as it would promote the Irish horse and in the long run would rebound to the benefit of breeders around the country.

So in 1926 the formation of the Army Equitation School came very quickly: this came about following representations by Judge William Wylie of the Royal Dublin Society (RDS) and Col Hogan (Quartermaster General) to Mr W. T. Cosgrave the then President of the Executive Council. Through a miracle of far-sighted initiative, the funding was found to have Ireland field teams for international show jumping competitions.

Following Mr W.T. Cosgrave and his government's decision, with only three months to train, the Army Equitation School competed in the inaugural Aga Khan Nations Cup competition held in the RDS in August 1926.

At the opening ceremony a brass plaque was unveiled officially naming the arena and after this was unveiled a horse jumping display was conducted in the arena for all guests to enjoy. Mr. Liam Cosgrave watched on with great interest as did all guests. This display also gave the distinguished guests a chance to meet some of the riders who have represented the Irish Defence Forces and Ireland, including some new and upcoming stars in the show jumping arena.

ment of the All-weather arena is a massive plus for the school. To have an arena with the latest surface installed will allow our horses to compete longer due to less wear and tear on their joints whilst also saving valuable man-hours for our riders and staff by not having to travel to use similar surfaces for training. The challenge for my staff and I now will be to maintain it to its optimum level so as to get the maximum benefit from it."

After the stunning performance by the riders, the guests were led to the stable yard where five of the newest acquired horses were brought out and put on display, as their details and lineage was read out.

Due to some inclement weather on the day, the addresses by the distinguished guests was moved to the Officers' Mess where Minister Kehoe opened the address by saying, *"I am delighted to be here today in the presence of Mr Liam Cosgrave and his family to mark the contribution of the Cosgrave family to the Army Equitation School over more than 90 years. W.T. Cosgrave was instrumental in the founding of the School. There is also no doubt that the support Liam*

of the Equitation School"

Liam Cosgrave spoke with fondness of the Equitation School by saying, *"I'm glad to be here today and would like to give a special congratulations to the equitation schools success throughout the years"* he ended with saying *"it's an honour that my father is being remembered in this way."*

It was a fitting tribute to name the arena after W.T. Cosgrave (the founder of the Equitation School) and an honour to have his son Liam Cosgrave present at the ceremony.

The Army Equitation School continues today with the same mission as when it was first established in 1926 'to promote the Irish Horse'. Army horses and riders continue to promote Ireland and the Irish horse through participation in international competitions at the highest level. Just two weeks ago Capt Geoff Curran and Ringwood Glen were part of Ireland's Nations Cup winning team in Norway and are currently in Europe where they are again representing Ireland in another Nations Cup competition. ■



The OIC Lt Col Tom Freyne told us about the work that was carried out, *"The arena is a replacement for the previous surface, which had lost its integrity over time. The refurbishment involved the complete removal of the old surface and all the under-layers (tarmac and stone) and replacing it all with new drainage stone, porous carpet and a combination of silica sand and fibre. This surface is similar in composition to that used at the London Olympics."*

We also spoke to CQMS Casey Mc Quillan about the advantages of this new arena, he told us, *"The refurbish-*

Cosgrave gave to the School when he was Taoiseach has contributed to the strong standing it currently enjoys. It is truly fitting that we are naming this new horse training facility the W.T. Cosgrave Arena".

An Taoiseach, Mr Enda Kenny TD complimented the Equitation School by saying *"They have fulfilled its mission to promote the Irish Horse and when the riders put on their brown boots they represent Ireland"*, he added about the naming of the arena, *"It's important that this arena is named after W.T. Cosgrave, who was the founder*

THE FIVE NEWEST HORSES ARE:

RHN BLACKWATER

2008 brown Mare 9-year-old
Sire: Upgrade (KWPN)
Dam: Baloutbet Du Rouet (Holst)
Breeder: Norman Hammond, Tyrone

AVONBEG

2011 chestnut Gelding 6-year-old
Sire: Flexabill (ISH)
Dam: Temple Clover (ISH)

MHS LONE STAR

2011 grey Gelding 6-year-old
Sire: Cardento (Holst)
Dam: Diamant De Semilly (SF)
Breeder: Michael Brennan, Gowran, Kilkenny

HHS LISBON

2011 bay Gelding 6-year-old
Sire: Obos Quality 004 (OLD)
Dam: Cavalier Royale (Holst)
Breeder: Michael Brennan, Gowran, Kilkenny

BALOUBET DU ROYALE

2009 bay Gelding 8-year-old
Sire: Baloubet Du Rouet (SF)
Dam: Cavalier Royale (Holst)
Breeder: John Greene, Offaly

GEAR UP



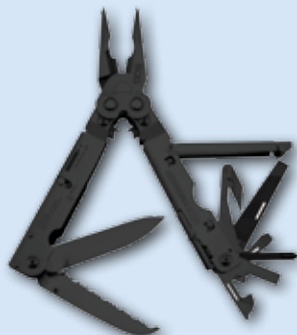
SOG POWERASSIST-BLACK €75

The manufacturer says...

The PowerAssist takes multi-tools to a new level by being the first to house two assisted opening blades that are also accessible without opening the tool. When not in use, these blades lock closed using a patent pending side release mechanism. The multi-tool opens easily and smoothly to make use of the compound leverage pliers and other tools in the handle opposite of the blades.

Key Selling Features:

- Exclusive SOG Assisted Technology blades (straight and serrated) and compound leverage generates twice the gripping power.
- Black oxide stainless steel handles and plier head.
- Total tools: 22.
- Open: 7.0-inches, Closed: 4.6-inches, Weight: 9.6-ounces, Lifetime Warranty.
- Includes nylon carry pouch.



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Streamlight Bandit Headlamp - €27.50



Eickhorn Soligen Rescue Tool IV - €77



ASP Swivel Key - €18.50



Edge Tactical Blade Runner Glasses- €64



Salomon XA Pro 3D GTX Forces - €130



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COMPETITION

For a chance to win a SOG Mac V Tool, sponsored by Team-Alpha.ie answer the following question:

How much is the SOG EVAC Sling 18/Grey 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 18th August 2017. Winner will be the first correct entry drawn. **Last month's winner was:** Shane Kenny, Co. Roscommon.



NOTICEBOARD

NEW BATTLE OF MESSINES AND PASSCHENDAELE EXHIBITION

This year the Soldiers & Chiefs exhibition at the National Museum of Ireland, Decorative Arts & History in Collins Barracks will open the Battle of Messines exhibition, which surveys what happened to the Irish soldier in 1917 on the Western Front. *A selection of artifacts will be on display for the first time at the National Museum of Ireland for the Battle of Messines exhibition.*

These include Dublin born Fr William Doyle's uniform and medals. Fr Doyle volunteered in November 1915 and was very popular with the Irish soldiers. Letters and medals belonging to Dublin born Lt Col John Patrick Hunt, CMG, DSO DCM. Hunt who fought as a young man in the South African War (1899-1901)

and retired in 1913, and reenlisted at outbreak of war in 1914 and quickly became an officer in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

These stories and more can be seen in the National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts & History, Collins Barracks, Dublin from Thursday 1st June 2017.

Over 1,000 objects from all over the world cover 1,700 square metres of Collins Barracks as the Soldiers & Chiefs exhibition traces Ireland's military history from 1550 into the 21st Century.

Admission to the National Museum of Ireland is Free and it is open Tuesday – Saturday, 10.00am – 5.00pm. Sunday 2.00pm – 5.00pm and closed Mondays. Visit www.museum.ie or call 01 677 7444.

WORD SEARCH

FORST for Operation Pontus

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

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

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

DEPLOYABILITY
FLEET
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OPERATIONAL
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SUPPORT
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COMPETITION €50 VOUCHER

Q. HOW MUCH IS THE SNUGPAK SLEEKA ELITE – REVERSIBLE ON WWW.PROTAC.IE?

Post your answer along with your name, address and contact number to us or email subs@military.ie for a chance to win a PROTAC €50 Voucher to use in store or online.

Last month's winner of the PROTAC €50 Voucher was Michael Kiely, Dublin 5. Closing date is 18th August 2017.

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www.facebook.com/protacmilitary



FORGOTTEN HERO OF BUNKER VALENTIN: THE HARRY CALLAN STORY

Author: Michéle Callan

Publisher: Collins Press (March 2017)
www.collinspress.ie

ISBN: 978-1-848893016

Pages: 320

Price: €14.99

Every once in a while, a book is written which tells a story that really should be turned into a film. *Forgotten Hero of Bunker Valentin: The Harry Callan Story* is one such book.

It tells the harrowing true story of a young man, Harry, who joins the British Merchant Navy in October 1939. As the Second World intensifies and Britain depends on its fleet of merchant ships to survive, Harry and his friends find themselves on the frontline of the war at sea. Enemy battleships, U Boats, E boats, mines, aircraft and raiders are just some of the daily hazards merchant crews have to face, as they run the gauntlet of the high seas.

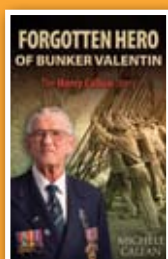
In January 1941, Harry along with the crew of his ship are captured by the Germans and imprisoned. In 1943, 32 captured Irish Merchant sailors refused a request by the Gestapo to work for Germany. This is the beginning of a nightmare that sees them transferred to a labour education camp where they were starved, beaten and forced to dig the foundations for a U boat factory, Bunker Valentin.

Thousands perished in the Bunkers construction, including five Irishmen but thanks to a number of decent Germans, Harry and the others survived their ordeal until liberated.

Though the story of those incarcerated at this camp vanished from the war's history, Harry has always remembered those who were with him during his incarceration.

Determined to give his fellow crewmen a place in history, Harry has worked tirelessly to preserve their memory and with the writing of this book, his mission has been accomplished.

This is a gripping story of survival and also of remembrance. An excellent read. **P O'B**



ABOUT FACE: FINDING PEACE WITHIN THE BATTLE

Author: Bethany Barnett

Publisher: The Joy Bee (May 2017) <http://bethanybarnett.ie>

ISBN: 978-1911013839

Pages: 148

Price: €10.00

"A fascinating series of stories. The honesty and candour shown in these men's accounts is a striking as a slap in the face. The stories are filled with hope and show how anyone can turn their life around." – Declan Power, author of *Siege at Jadotville*.

"Every life has its defining moment, an experience that changes everything. For three Irish military veterans – John Corcoran, Ger Corcoran, and Kevin Burke – that moment appears to be passed. An explosion. A vow. A chance decision. Now each must live with the fallout from his actions – forever. There is no way out, no going back. Or is there?"

In *About Face*, three extraordinary Irish veterans share their experiences and offer us something more: an invitation to take the next step, encouragement to look for the next defining moment. US author Bethany Barnett, the sister of a US soldier delves deep into the soul of these three soldiers, which started out as a quest to understand her brothers mind better, and to let veterans know there is always someone there that will listen. With an insightful foreword by Brig Gen Thomas

Solhjem, Deputy Chief of Chaplains, US Army. A very helpful book for many a veteran on the road of life. **WF**



FALLEN EAGLES: AIRMEN WHO SURVIVED THE GREAT WAR ONLY TO DIE IN PEACETIME

Author: Norman Franks

Publisher: Pen & Sword Books Ltd (March 2017) www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

ISBN: 978-1-473879966

Pages: 244

Price: €21.42

Ninety three pilots are listed in this new publication and all were decorated for bravery during the First World War. They all survived the great conflict only to die flying in the post war period. The years covered are from 1919 to 1940.

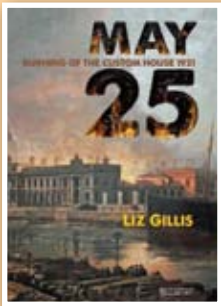
This publication is fascinating in as much as it describes the combats of all 93 pilots listed who were involved in and their subsequent fate after the war. It is an often asked question by aviation historians as to the subsequent career of service pilots. Here are some answers. This book includes one particular pilot of interest to Irish Historians. Squadron Leader Oscar A.P. Heron DFC, CdG, born in Co Armagh in 1896. He had been a member of the Inns of Court OTC prior to joining the Connaught Rangers but transferred to the Royal Flying Corps. Following flying training he was sent to France in May 1918 on posting to 70 Squadron flying Sopwith Camels. He was awarded the DFC for what was described as conspicuous skill and daring in aerial combats. He accounted for eight enemy aircraft and was also awarded the Belgian Croix de Guerre. On leaving the service he returned to Ireland to join the new Irish Air Service in 1922 in the company of a number of ex RFC/RAF pilots who had operational experience. His experience was utilised to train the new service. His Air Corps career lasted only 11 years, when in August 1933 he was killed in an accident during the first Irish Air Corps Pageant in the Phoenix Park. He was flying in Vickers Vespa no. V6 with Pte Robert Tobin, when it spun in.

This is a very compact well researched publication written by a distinguished UK author, with two to three pages of each chapter devoted to the particular pilot. It is particularly well covered with photographs of the aircraft but especially by the photographs of the pilots involved in the text. Recommended. **APK**



MAY 25: THE BURNING OF THE CUSTOM HOUSE

Author: Liz Gillis
Publisher: Kilmainham Tales Teo (June 2017) www.kilmainhamtales.ie
ISBN: 978-1-908056269
Pages: 116
Price: €18 or €24 with P&P



It is interesting to note, that since the burning of the Custom House in Dublin on the 25th May 1921, little has been written on one of the most daring and audacious operations ever conducted by the Irish Republican Army during the Irish War of Independence. The odd article in a newspaper or journal has, in some way, contributed to keeping this event in the public domain. That is, until now.

Historians and authors Liz Gillis and Mícheál Ó Doibhilín have, in their latest work rectified the omission of this military operation from the annals of Irish history. Often considered by some as a military failure that destroyed the IRA's Second Battalion in the city, these two historians have, based on their extensive research, challenged this view. They argue that the operation was a success that contributed greatly to the bringing about of a truce with Britain and the subsequent Treaty negotiations that followed.

Their interest in the subject was heightened by the discovery of a photographic album held in Kilmainham Gaol. Further research of the names of those within the album resulted in the historians discovering that they were men involved in the burning of the Custom House in 1921. The operation is often perceived as a failure by a number of historians but witness statements and the recently released pension files held by Military Archives in Cathal Brugha Barracks, Rathmines, reveal a very different story. Those involved stated that the mission had been a success, with their target destroyed. Though many were arrested by crown forces, the operation had succeeded and the designated mission had been accomplished. It is perhaps, later political opinions that have overshadowed and sidelined the operation and those involved to only a brief mention in our nations rich and vibrant history.

During the decade of centenaries and the years that follow, this book will prove an invaluable source of information both on the operation and those involved. An essential and excellent read, for all those interested in this period of Irish history. **PC**

THE LOUTH VOLUNTEERS 1916

Authors: Alan Bogan, Pádraic Agnew & Marcus Howard
Published by: The Write Space
ISBN: 978-1911345381
Pages: 348
Price: €19.99



A definitive account of the journey of the Louth Volunteers, and how it corresponded with events in Dublin as told in their own words. The book also shines a light on the social history of Louth in the years leading up to the Rising and the aftermath. Members of the Louth Volunteers 1916 Facebook page, Alan Bogan, Pádraic Agnew and Marcus Howard felt it important to do justice to their

memory: *"These Volunteers were not motivated by money, but by love of their country, to take on an Empire."*

The book was completely financed by the authors. The foreword is written by Eoin MacLochlainn, a relative of Pádraic Pearse who was fascinated to find out what happened outside of Dublin. The book gives a real insight into how the Louth Volunteers did everything they could to follow directions given to them in spite of the countermanding order by Eoin MacNeill. The Louth Volunteers had tried to form an alliance with the Fingal battalion to help form a ring around the city.

The book was launched to relatives in 2016 as it was important to get it out for the 100th anniversary. *"We were blown away with the demand for the book and it sold out in just over 2 weeks. A second run with more photos and improvements is due out shortly."*

The book also tells the story of the confrontation a number of Volunteers had in 1910 when they faced down the town of Dundalk, who at that time, wished to praise the accession of King George V as King of Britain and Ireland. Many witness statements given to the Bureau of Military History are bursting with fascinating details.

A number of 1916 relatives from around the country have purchased the book as well as many history enthusiasts. One person at the relatives launch bought 16 books! Orders have been received from Australia, Chicago and London.

The book is available from The Louth 1916 Volunteers Facebook page and in Carroll's bookshop and Sloanes newsagents in Dundalk, as well as many local businesses. Orders can also be placed through dundalk1916relatives@gmail.com or 087 2186127.

NAME

LUKE O'NEILL

RANK

ARMN

UNIT

AIR CORPS FIRE SERVICE

REPORT AND PHOTOS BY SGT KARL BYRNE

Luke grew up in Kilkenny. His first introduction to military life was when he joined the Naval Service in 2005, which was a long commute down to Cobh. He spent a year in the Navy and decided to leave and then reenlisted in the Army in 2006. He trained in the Curragh with the 11st Air Defence Regiment (ADR). He spent 6 years in the ADR where he learned a lot about military life and met some great people and friends. He completed many courses like the lifeguard course, swimming instructors course, a military first responders course as well as various weapons courses, but the course he found most beneficial was his MT driver course as he has used it constantly through his career to date. While serving in the ADR he served overseas in Chad in 2008/09 then straight off the plane to Kosovo in 2009. *"Doing back to back trips like that was tough but I'm glad I was afforded the opportunity to do the two of them one after the other."*

After the reorganisation in 2012 Luke was posted to the transport yard in the Defence Forces Training Centre (DFTC). During that time Luke was proactive in getting various driving courses, which brought him up to 50-seat coach level. In 2014 whilst serving in the transport yard, Luke completed an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) course with the Emergency Services Training Institute (ESTI) on his own time in the evenings. *"I thoroughly enjoyed this course and knew I could take it into my military career."*

In 2013 he joined a charity called, 'Children in Hospital Ireland'. With this charity Luke volunteers his time mainly in the oncology ward of Crumlin Children's Hospital on Wednesdays and some weekends. His time spent entertaining and playing with the kids

is never wasted doing arts and crafts, painting, and board games or even just keeping them company.

After serving 4 years in Tpt Coy DFTC he decided he needed a change and applied for the 'Aviation Fire-fighter Initial Course' in July 2016. He successfully passed the course and transferred into the Fire Crew in Baldonnel, a decision he says he will never regret making.

In May of this year Luke raised nearly €2,000 for 'Aoibheanns Pink Tie' charity by running a half marathon wearing full military kit with 40lbs of weight in the 'Searlaid Tywang' memorial half marathon event. *"As well as being very rewarding this kind of charity work can be very emotionally tough but I wouldn't do anything else."*

My day-to-day job is shift work, either on days or nights, 0800-2000hrs or vice versa on the night shift. The time is spent doing equipment checks on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) e.g. breathing apparatus, gloves, fire-suit, boots, helmet and flash-hoods. We also check the cars and trucks, specifically the water and foam pumps, fuel and general maintenance of the vehicles. As well as these tasks we are also responsible for doing inspections of the airfield, looking for birds, Foreign Object Debris (FOD) or anything that may obstruct or damage an aircraft on take-off or landing. Another task of the unit is to be vigilant of the Garda Air Support Unit (GASU) helicopter as it



takes off and lands, that can happen at anytime of the day or night.

An on going part of his job is the constant training, as a fire-fighter it's essential to keep up to date with current training and procedures. This is done by engaging in PowerPoint presentations given by the NCOs, completing practical exercises on fire-fighting drills and tactics, which includes the use of the aircraft fuselage located in the 'fire grounds'. *"Having and using that facility is great to keep our skills relevant to our job as it has both a large and small type engine on either wing."*

They also keep their skills honed by the random alarm drills, which can happen at any time: *"Hearing the alarm going off can be exciting and adrenaline pumping, be it real or an alarm drill."*

"I love my job; it's constantly changing and updating itself with new drills and techniques for fire-fighting and I hope to stay here for the rest of my career in the Defence Forces." ■



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