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Contents

VOLUME 76
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CONTENTS

FEATURES



Interview with a Ranger
By Capt ARW



30th Naval Service Diving Course
By Lt Cdr Tony O'Regan



Ride the Revolution 1916
By Cpl Lee Coyle

**Remembering
Fallen UN
Soldiers**
By Sgt Wayne
Fitzgerald



'Left of the Boom!'
By Cpl Lee Coyle



1916 Battlefield Tour
By Niamh Kelly

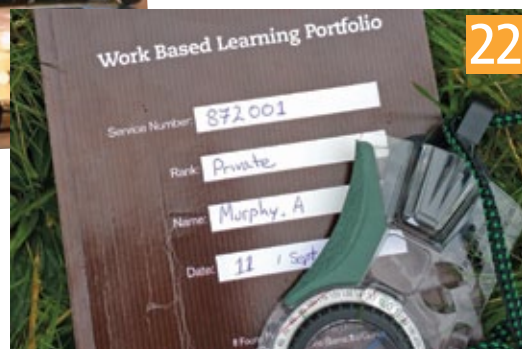
REGULARS

- 6** On Parade
- 8** In Focus
- 10** Veterans News
- 25** Tac Aide
- 26** History
- 28** Sport
- 31** Gear Up
- 32** Notice-Board
- 33** Reviews
- 34** What I do



Fuelling the Fire
By Paul O'Brien

LMDS Programme
By Capt Eoin McGeeney &
Sgt Gary Condren



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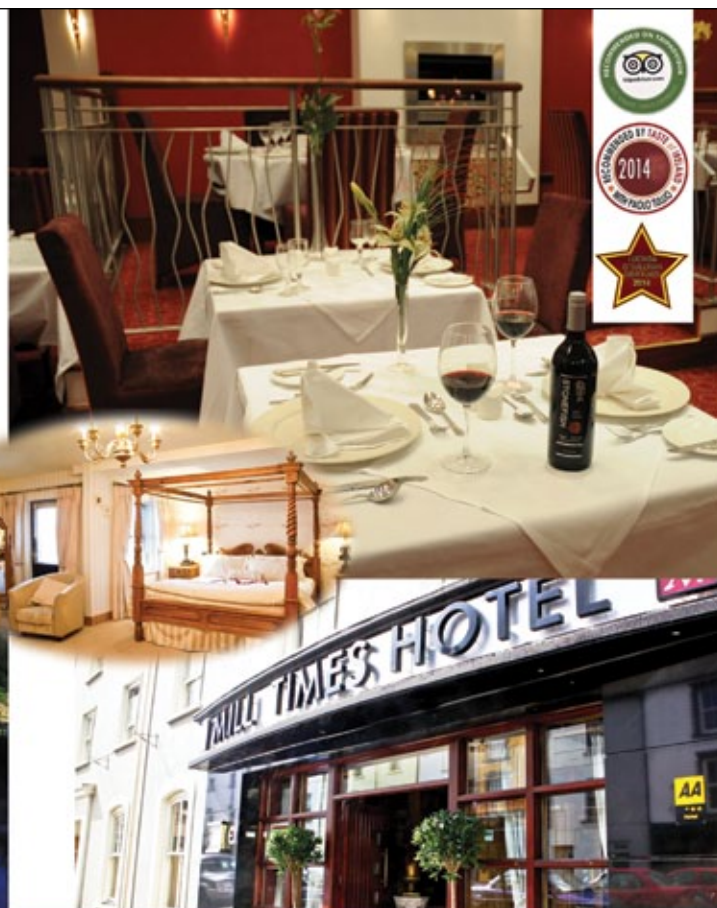
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Front Cover

Members of the Army Ranger Wing, Ireland's elite special operations force. Photo by Sgt Karl Byrne

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Editorial

Hello and welcome to our April 2016 issue. We were blown away by all the feedback and compliments on our March 1916-2016 Commemorative Issue & Connect – thank you. I would like to take this opportunity to wish our manager Captain Declan Barrett all the best on his impending overseas UN mission to the Congo – from all the team, safe trip and it has been a pleasure to serve with you.

Your pictures are ever-present *On Parade*. In *Focus* this month features Cpl Martin Malone (Retd), now a fulltime novelist on his writing career to date and the restoration of a 1950s Defence Forces Willys Jeep. In our front cover article we have a 4-page interview with members of the Special Operations Force (SOF) – the Army Ranger Wing. Next in 'Left of the Boom!' Cpl Lee Coyle reports on an Open Day held in the Ordnance School, DFTC on bomb disposal and retrieval. Lt Cdr Tony O'Regan, OIC Naval Service Diving Section informs us about the current 30th Naval Service Diving Course and their arduous journey to qualify from one of the hardest courses run in the DF. In *Rally to the Cause - 1916 Battlefield Tour*, Niamh Kelly looks at a history tour of Dublin to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Easter Rising by author and historian Armn Michael Whelan, of the Air Corps. On the same theme Cpl Lee Coyle's *Onboard the 1916 Bus!* covers the 'Rise of the Rebels Bus Tour', a new sightseeing tour that commemorates the 1916 Rising.

For *Strategic Review*, Paul O'Brien's piece *Fuelling the Fire* looks at how Islamic State funds its continuous campaign of terror across the Middle East. Next the staff of the Office of the Defence Forces Registrar, J7 Training & Education Branch has put together a comprehensive guide to navigating the Leadership Management and Defence Studies (LMDS) Programme. In *History* military author and historian Paul O'Brien looks at the beginnings of the SAS and their Special Forces warfare in WWII. Our Sports pages this month feature the colourful *DF Indoor Track & Field Championships*, by Comdt Noel Conway, Chairman of DF Athletics Committee. We also have our other regular features *Gear Up*, *Tac Aide*, *Reviews* and *What I Do*. Check out our competitions and results on pages 31 and 32.

Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald - Editor

TRANSPORT VETERANS GATHERING

On Friday 27th May 2016 (1030hrs to 1400hrs), the inaugural meeting of 'The Transport Veterans Gathering' will be held in Defence Forces Vehicle Based Workshops, Plunkett Bks, DFTC, Curragh Camp. The main purpose of this inaugural gathering is to foster camaraderie and mutual support between serving and veteran members of all ranks and retired civilian employees.

International Women's Day

Pictured on Tuesday 8th March 2016 in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham are the 32 members of the Defence Forces Tri-Service Female Guard of Honour. 2 Arty Regt Costume Bks Athlone were honoured with the organisation and training of the GoH for International Women's Day commemorating the role of women in the events of the 1916 Rising. Lt Col Dermot Hannifin OC 2 Arty Regt, Captain Danielle Murphy OIC GoH, RSM Noel O'Callaghan, Sgt Loraine Poynton NCO IC GoH, are pictured with NCOs, privates, sailors and airwomen of 6 Inf Bn, Naval Service and the Air Corps. Photo: RSM Noel O'Callaghan, 2 AR





SAAC/OPERATIONAL READINESS ▲

Pictured are some of the 140 Gunners of all ranks from 2 Arty Regt who held a very successful SAAC/Operational Readiness camp in TIS Kilworth Camp from 8th – 12th February last. The very comprehensive programme covered a diversity of military skills such as APWT on the rifle range, pistol, GPMG, grenade, CBRN, the IT test and concluding with LFTT. The programme also included after hour briefs on safety, social media and contractual obligations of regimental personal.

Photo: RSM Noel O'Callaghan, 2 Arty Regt



LT COL ADRIAN JACOBS ▲

Lt Col Adrian Jacobs is pictured with Brig Gen Joe Mulligan, GOC DFTC who congratulated him at his retirement function in Ceannt Officers Mess recently. *Photo: Capt Patrick T. Sheehan Retd*



THE NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL GARDENS ▲

The National War Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge were visited by members of the DFTC on 23rd February as part of an educational and informative excursion to Dublin's battlefield locations in a run up to the Centenary Celebrations. *Photo: Cpl Derek O'Bryan, Ord Grp, DFTC*



COS VISITS AIKEN BKS ▲

DF COS Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM visited Aiken Bks recently, and called in to the Michael McNeela branch of ONE Drop-in Centre to meet and to chat to some of the ONE members. He also signed the visitors book. *Photo: Jim Mc Eaney, Chairman Michael McNeela branch*



NS RECRUIT CLASS 'SWEENEY' ▲

On Thursday 25th February 2016, Recruit Class 'Sweeney' had their passing out parade to mark the culmination of their training and successful entry into the Naval Service at the rank of Ordinary Seaman. The 39 recruits are drawn from 14 different counties, 2 of whom are originally from the UK. They range in age from 18 to 27 and have completed numerous modules during their 5 months extensive training, including weapons training, foot drill, arms drill, navigational training, medical training and of course seamanship. There were special awards given for Best Shot, Best Kit and Best Recruit.

The class is named 'Sweeney' after Ted Sweeney, the Irish Coast Guardsman and Blacksod lighthouse keeper who on 3rd June 1944 delivered a weather forecast by telephone from Co Mayo's most westerly point. The report convinced General Dwight D Eisenhower to delay the D-Day invasion for 24 hours, potentially averting a military disaster and changing the course of WW2. *Photo: Sgt Damian Faulkner, 105 Sqn, AC*



AUSTRIAN THERESIAN MILITARY ACADEMY ▲

Recognising that diversity in decision making leads to more comprehensive planning, the Inf Sch, Mil Col and the Austrian Theresian Military Academy conduct an annual exchange of instructors to share ideas, and experience each other's decision making processes. Pictured is an Austrian Junior Staff Officers' Course student receiving instruction on the Irish DF Military Decision Making Process (MDMP). The Austrian Cpts and Majs used the Irish MDMP to devise their plan and deliver an OPORD. *Photo: Capt Gavin Egerton, Instr, Offr Trg Wing, Mil Col, DFTC*



◀ TROOPER FENNEL REMEMBERED

Pictured at the unveiling of the commemoration plaque for the late Trooper Fennell, in Donnellycarney Community Centre, are IUNVA members Michael Thompson NWO, Stephen O'Shea, Post 1 carrying the flag, John Twomey, Deputy Chairman Post 1. Photo: Fernanda Burgos, IUNVA HQ



PROMOTION IN THE FIELD ▲

Tpr Joe Doran of the Cavalry School was presented with his Cpl stripes for meritorious service. Cpl Doran has 42 years of service, all of which was spent in the Cavalry Corps since joining the Defence Forces in October 1973. During his service, Cpl Doran completed 18 tours of duty overseas: 16 to Lebanon, 1 to Liberia and 1 to Eritrea and Ethiopia. He is pictured here with his son Cpl Chris Doran. Photo: Cpl Alan Carr, Ord Gp



NEW MP CORPORALS ▲

Brig Gen Joe Mulligan, GOC DFTC is pictured presenting Pte Jason Molloy, 7 Inf Bn with his award for Best Student on the 65 Military Police Probationers Course. The new MPs passed out on parade on Thursday 10th March 2016. Photo: Sgt JJ Ryan, HQ DFTC



COUNTY DONEGAL IN 1916 ▲

Lt Col Howard (OC 28 Inf Bn), Cub Scout Leader Sharon Ormond, Cub Scouts Jade Ormond and Emma Carr (5th Donegal and 1st Letterkenny Scout Group) and Comdt Anderson (28 Inf Bn) are pictured attending the opening of 'County Donegal in 1916: Our Story' exhibition in Donegal County Museum, Letterkenny. Their newly published 'County Donegal in 1916: From The Edge' education pack which accompanies the exhibition can be downloaded free in English and Irish: <http://bit.ly/CoDonegal1916>. Photo: Caroline Carr, Donegal County Museum



◀ FLAGS FOR SCHOOLS

On 15th March the students and staff of Gaelscoil Mhic Aodha, Kildare Town, held a ceremony to raise the national flag along with many others around the country on Proclamation Day. Students Daniel and Eloise raised the flag on the morning and then the entire school sang the national anthem in gaeilge. Photo: Sgt Karl Byrne, PR Branch



▲ 1 BDE CISM

Members of 1 Bde took to the road as part of the Annual CISM Road Race, undertaken by military forces around the world on the same day. Pictured are members of Collins Bks, Cork, where Cpl Forde (CIS Coy) with a time of 18min 30secs was named the winner out of the 67 participants. Races also took place in other bks/post throughout the DF. Photo: Capt Emma Griffiths, 1BDE BPEO

ONE OF THE ARMY'S GIFTS...

with Martin Malone



Martin Malone

It's been 14 years since Martin Malone left the Defence Forces before changing career path. He had been a long term contributor to *An Cosantóir* and already had two novels published. One of which won the John B Keane/Sunday Independent Literary Award and was shortlisted for the Irish Fiction Award, alongside the likes of Anne Enright (*Man Booker Prize*) and Joseph O'Connor (*Star of the Sea*). In addition, he had landed a deal with a major international publisher... so the roses were in full

bloom. Although everything appeared to be flourishing, within six months of leaving the DF the wheels fell off the literary wagon.

It would be similar to going outside to find each of your tyres, including the spare, punctured. One moment you have Salman Rushdie's editor praising your work to high heaven and beyond, a novel that was given a star rating by *The Bookseller*, eclipsing that year's Booker prize-winner, interviewed in front of a live audience by RTE news reporter Bryan Dobson – and the next you're wondering what else could go wrong. A lot as it turned out; a TV deal fell through, a new novel declined, and a mixture of things went awry in his personal life. Aside from those, there were the first year blues – that disconnect, when you leave behind a career that had been a huge part of your life for 21 years.

There is a wrench – no matter how well prepared you think you are to push on. This transitional period needs to be endured until the corner is turned, and turn it does. But a year can be a dreadfully slow turning.

Martin never regretted leaving the Defence Forces, had he gone without having a pension, it would have been a different story. It was there to fall back on when the creative juices stopped flowing and money dried up from the literary well.

Not writing, writers block, under pressure in all sorts of ways... Martin took on any sort of work going: security, warehouse, car parking until he picked up the pen again, writing two short stories that yielded prize money of about €6,000.

The two main questions he gets asked are, How much does it cost to publish a book? – “To date, I don't know I haven't had to pay to see my work in print.” How much do you make from writing? – “My first three books earned about €28,000 (4 years work), roughly three times more than the last seven books put together. Of course, radio work, articles, stage, bring in money, but none of it is regular. Bursaries from the Irish Arts Council also put ink in the well, so then in relation to the whole writing game: you write because it's in you. But you do hope money will arrive, at least enough of it for you to justify the hours and weeks and months and years that you devote to the craft; because writing is a sponge that soaks up time.”

Martin went to Trinity College as a mature student, to earn a degree in the Philosophy of Creative Writing. Without a primary degree, his writing CV booked his ticket. Whatever future job market he had in mind his plans to do a Masters, flew through the window when the economy crashed. The degree, however, allowed him to engage full-time with a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) course. This qualification, recognised by the Dept of Education, allows him to teach English as a second language, which he does part-time for about five months of the year.

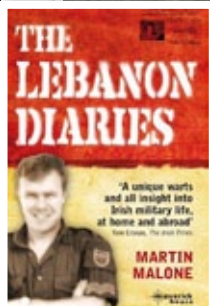
Martin has travelled a lot since leaving the DF, India a couple of times, invited guest on three occasions to Verona. America too beckoned, and a job offer in Japan had to be declined because of a health issue. A common question he is asked, “Did your military life help discipline wise, when it came to having and sustaining a daily schedule?” His answer is always in the positive, “I think being in the DF taught me the importance of resilience. I think that's one of the gifts it imparted.”

The above is just a brief overview of a former soldier's life; Martin is the author of *Black Rose Days* - just published by New Island Books, priced €13.95, 256 pages,

ISBN: 978-1-84840-517-2, March 2016 (<http://newisland.ie/>). ■



Martin completed five tours of duty in Lebanon, and one in Iraq.



Willys Jeep

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

On the 21st January 2016 *An Cosantóir* visited Sean Curtis, MD of PROT-AC and chairman of the Association of Military Enthusiasts (AIME), which is “devoted to the preservation and promotion of our military heritage”. AIME hold a military show, ‘SALUTE’, in the National Show Centre, Swords in August every year. www.aime.ie/facebook

Last year Sean was lucky to purchase an old Willys Jeep from the 1950s, ‘ZL1240’, which was one of 40 or so Willys Jeeps in service with the Defence Forces from 1950 to 1966. From what we know the DF sold ZL1240 in the late 1960s. Karl Martin’s book ‘Irish Army Vehicles, Transport & Armour Since 1922’ (2002) lists the Willys entry into service. The two models purchased were the CJ3A and CJ3B; these were civilian versions based on the famous and most recognisable vehicle of World War II - Willys Jeep. (Some say the vehicle was nicknamed

the ‘Jeep’ after a character in the popular Popeye cartoon of that period.) Roughly 640,000 Jeeps were built during WWII by Ford and Willys, and used on every front of WWII. They subsequently saw service in Korea and Vietnam. The Jeeps not only proved themselves as reconnaissance vehicles, but also as fire engines, field ambulances, artillery tractors and even locomotives. Even after the war the jeep continued its success story in both army and civilian use.

Willys CJ3A had an L-head 2.2-litre, four-cylinder ‘Go Devil’ side-valve, petrol, 63bhp engine; the CJ3B had an improved F-head 2.2-litre ‘Hurricane’ 73bhp engine. Both were 4x4 drive, three-speed gearbox with a two-speed transfer box. The Ford models were built to Willys specifications from an initial design by the Bantam Car Company who’s prototype ‘Blitz Buggy’ was built in a mere 49 days – but that story is for another day.

Sean purchased the Jeep on the grounds that it would be fully restored and not sold on for profit. This particular Jeep served in 1 Cav Sqn, Cork. Because of the vehicles’ short service there is little known about them and parts are near impossible to source in Ireland, as most ‘off-the-shelf’ parts don’t fit. Sean ordered most of the parts from France and America. Sean’s good friend, ‘Don’, an engineer by trade, and a military vehicle hobbyist who lives in the US took a list of parts and set about collecting them over the last few months. He came to visit Sean in January for ten days; this was their only window to use Don’s expertise on rebuilding the Willys Jeep. Sean had the jeep stripped and cleaned, keeping 90% of the original paint on the outer shell by not sandblasting, and having it ready to be put together with the new parts. Ten days! The task was on...

Sean and Don met over 20 years ago at the War & Peace Revival Vintage & Military History Festival, a five-day military and vintage festival held annually at Folkestone Racecourse, RAF Westenhanger, Hythe, UK. <https://warandpeacerevival.com>

Don said, “Sean and I have been friends for many years and when I visited last year he asked for my help with the Willys Jeep – I had already restored mine. I brought over about 150lbs of parts, tools and equipment to do the job. I have one of each of the Willys Jeep types myself, but my passion is Ford’s GTB 1½ ton truck, that saw service in Burma with the US Army.”

We visited Sean and Don again on 28th January after nine days to check their progress. The jeep was completely rewired, using an old style loom, new engine seals fitted, and a complete engine strip and paint had been carried out. There were no indicators on the

original version, but by law these now needed to be fitted. However they looked very original on.

Don continued: “This jeep has a history, so it has provenience and will be great to restore and display.” Sean added: “It’s quite possible there’s a number of these vehicles lying in sheds somewhere in Ireland.”

By the time the ten days were up, we saw the Jeep running smoothly and in a great display condition; still retaining its authentic look. The Jeep was road-tested with two very happy enthusiasts on board. Sean hopes to have it out for this year’s 100th centenary parades, as it would have been originally on O’Connell Street in 1966 on the parade to mark the 50th Anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising.

Well done to Sean and Don, on their successful ten-day rebuilding venture. ■



A US Willys Jeep in WWII



DF Willys CJ3B ZL1246 on parade on O’Connell Street in 1958. Photo: Howard Woods Collection



Don and Sean, hard at work on ZL1240



The finished Willys jeep

Remembering Fallen UN Soldiers

REPORT & PHOTOS BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

The Organisation of National Ex-Servicemen & Women (ONE), St Conleth's Branch, Newbridge, held a cedar tree planting and wreath-laying ceremony on 16th January 2016 in memory of the 87 members of the Defence Forces, many from the Curragh Camp, who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of peace. The project was undertaken with the assistance of Kildare County Council and the Newbridge Tidy Towns committee.

St Conleth's Branch chairman Philip 'Busty' Coy said: "The project took over a year to complete. I would like to thank Cllr Fiona O'Loughlin, who was the mayor of Kildare when we started this project, and Comdt Ger Ahern (retd), from the Newbridge Tidy Towns committee, who both helped us a lot. Kildare County Council provided the location and the Tidy Towns committee provided the tree. The plaque was made locally too."

Many veterans and locals braved the cold weather to gather on the bank of the River Liffey, which flowed past serenely, in tune with the ceremony.

On behalf of St Conleth's Branch, the ceremony MC, Peter Origan, welcomed everyone for attending, before thanking the other ONE branches and the various associations who paraded in their different blazers, including IUNVA, and the 3 Inf Bn, 5 Inf Bn, and Military Police associations.

The St Conleth's Branch pipe band provided excellent music for the ceremony at which wreaths were laid by Brig Gen Joe Mulligan, GOC DFTC, (on behalf of members of the Defence Forces); ONE President Mick Carroll (who is also a member of St Conleth's Branch); Cllr O'Loughlin; representatives of the military associations; and finally by family members of deceased servicemen and women.

Brig Gen Mulligan then addressed those in attendance, reminding everyone of the sacrifices members of the Defence Forces have made to peace-keeping throughout the world. He also thanked St Conleth's Branch for making the memorial possible.

Among those commemorated on the day were four young members of 3 Inf Bn, based in the Curragh, who tragically lost their lives on 14th February 2000 in a traffic accident while on peacekeeping duties with UNIFIL in Lebanon. These were Ptes Declan Deere, John Murphy, Matthew Lawlor and Brendan Fitzpatrick.

At the ceremony, Tom Hetherington, secretary of 3 Inf Bn Association, said: "The loss of the four young lads in that tragic accident in 2000 was very hard to bear for 3 Inf Bn and the Defence Forces. This is an excellent project, and well overdue. It's great to see people in the locality getting involved, and we would like to

say a big 'thank you' to St Conleth's Branch for a job well done!" ■



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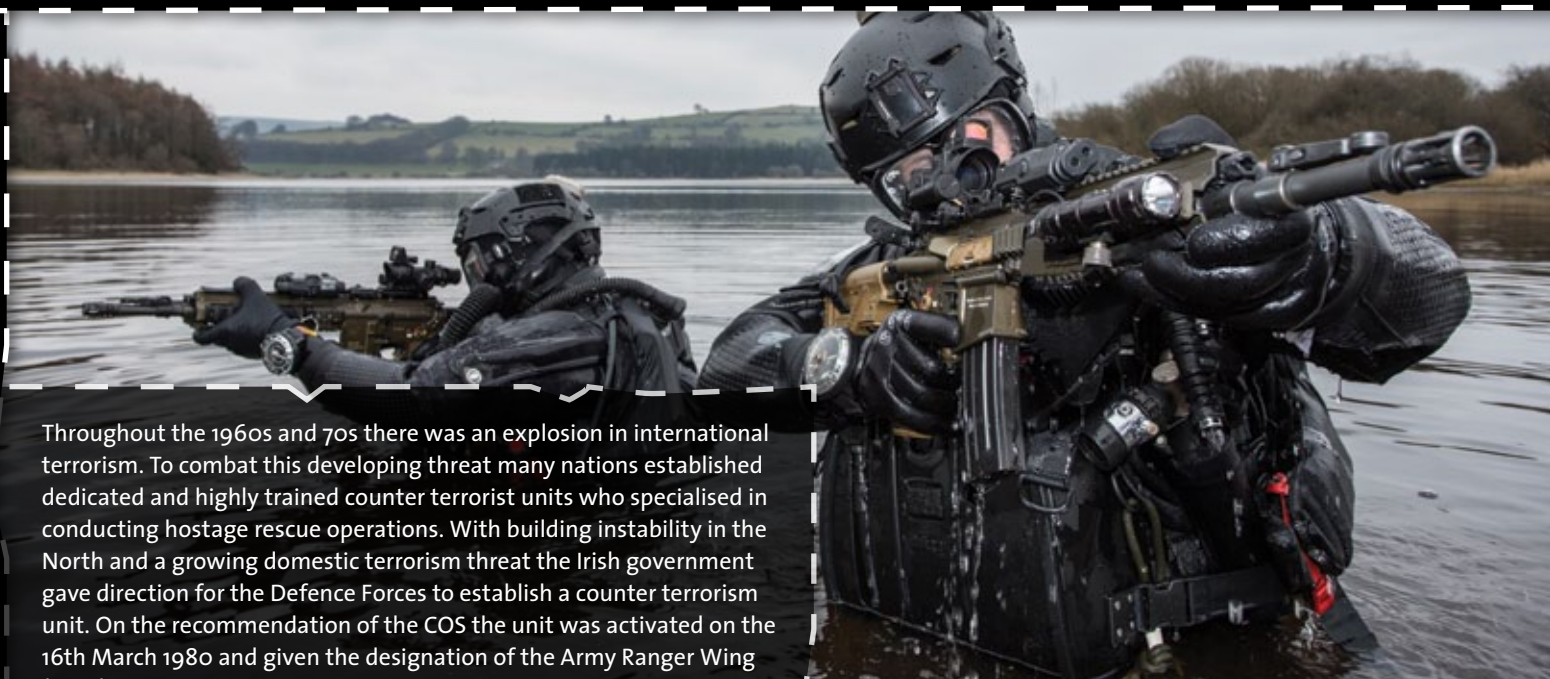
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INTERVIEW WITH A RANGER • •



Throughout the 1960s and 70s there was an explosion in international terrorism. To combat this developing threat many nations established dedicated and highly trained counter terrorist units who specialised in conducting hostage rescue operations. With building instability in the North and a growing domestic terrorism threat the Irish government gave direction for the Defence Forces to establish a counter terrorism unit. On the recommendation of the COS the unit was activated on the 16th March 1980 and given the designation of the Army Ranger Wing (ARW). Initial focus centred on establishing a suitable recruitment and selection process along with procuring appropriate weapons and equipment. Eager to develop its specialist capabilities the unit dispatched personnel to a number of foreign Special Forces and intervention units. Over the following number of years the ARW developed its 'GREEN' conventional and 'BLACK' counter terrorism capabilities. Both skill sets mutually supported each other with regard to skill set and capability. The significant investment provided by the Defence Forces has resulted in the ARW developing its Land, Sea and Air capabilities which are on par with their international counterparts. Methods of insertion such as Military Free Fall and Combat Diving coupled with sophisticated sniping, medical and communications capability all combine to provide a unit that can fulfil its broad range of operational taskings. With the improving domestic security situation unit focus shifted to the international arena with regard to operational deployments. The first deployment to Somalia in 1994 created an impetus to develop the overseas deployment capability. Since then the unit has successfully deployed to East Timor, Liberia and tChad. Other niche deployments such as close

protection and support missions have also been conducted and this pattern is likely to continue into the future. The recent rise in global terrorism has again shifted the focus to our on island capability and the ARW prepare to meet any potential domestic threats. Today, An Cosantóir conducted an in depth and personal interview with a Sgt Team Leader in Special Operations Maritime Task Unit (SOMTU) on his experiences in this elite military unit.

Identities of all ARW members are withheld for security reasons.

Interviewee: Sgt Special Operations Maritime Task Unit (SOMTU)

Where were you based before joining the ARW?

I did my two- and three-star training at the age of 17 in 2001 in Collins Bks, Cork, after which I was posted to B Coy, 4 Inf Bn.

What inspired you to join the Ranger Wing?

During my time in Cork an ARW road show came to the barracks. It really excited me and opened my eyes to new possibilities as I had found the day-to-day routine in barracks difficult to get used to after the high tempo of my three-star training. I'd enjoyed the physical side of training and the tactics and I needed to be challenged; to do something above the norm.

After only a few months in Cork I went overseas to Eritrea with UNMEE and while there a couple of my platoon NCOs and my platoon commander told me about the Selection Course scheduled for shortly after our return home. They were very supportive, giving me advice and time to train, which made all the difference. I'll be forever grateful to them as they really encouraged me and were good role models for a young private like myself.



INTERVIEW WITH A RANGER



What challenges did you encounter in your preparation for the Selection Course?

Apart from the obvious physical challenges, which I enjoyed, there were unexpected challenges, such as other soldiers making little of my training or of me for attempting Selection. Although, thankfully, they were in a minority, sometimes, depending on the individual, it could affect confidence, but it was something I had to deal with. In general the majority of people who served with me were very helpful and gave me good advice. My advice to a young private training for Selection would be to keep your distance from negative individuals and stay focused on your goal. You have to believe in yourself and have the will to succeed, even if others knock your efforts. Don't be afraid of failure; accept that it's a possibility and face that fear. We can all fail at times but it's the ability to pick yourself up again and go forward that makes the difference in life.

What were your expectations prior to Selection and how did those expectations compare to reality?

Honestly, I didn't know what to expect. There was hardly any information on the course back then other than through joining instructions or from people who had attempted the course before. I knew nobody serving in the unit so I suppose you could say I went into it blind. My initial focus was on surviving the first night.

The reality is that I had trained well for most of what I faced and the majority of the crazy horror stories I had heard proved to be untrue.

Without a doubt it was the hardest thing I had ever done, physically and mentally, but it taught me that my body could endure a lot more than I realised.

It is a lot different now and all the information is easily accessible. There is also now an SOFQ prep course that gives candidates vital information to better prepare themselves for Module One. I can't recommend this highly enough. There is such a large quantity of information about Module One of SOFQ that no one should arrive unprepared.

Can you tell us about your Skills Course after Selection?

During Skills Course, now Modules 2-5, the main challenge was the mental pressure of feeling I was constantly being assessed, which I was. Broadly speaking, the course covers unit tactics, weapons and equipment in both the Green (conventional) and Black (counter terrorist) roles. It's a real challenge because you have to take on lots of information quickly and perform at the same time. Mistakes happen, we're all human, but it's the ability to move on and not make the same mistakes again that separates those who fail from those who succeed. It is a massive learning curve but it's achievable once you remain focused.

Our course sergeant told us one thing at the start of the Skills Course that has always stuck in mind: "The fancy equipment and weapons don't make you Special Forces. What makes a person Special Forces is doing the small things right. What makes the ARW the unit it is, is the people in it and to be in one of the teams you have to do the small things right."

While you don't join the ARW for financial gain, going from private to acting corporal on commencement of Skills and also receiving ARW allowance represents a significant pay increase. You work very long hours, there is huge physical and mental effort involved, and you really are putting your body and reputation on the line: it's good to be rewarded for this.

What about your post-Skills Course development?

After Skills I was slotted into the Maritime Task Unit. I did lots of courses including driving up to and including the Special Reconnaissance Vehicle, which taught me long-range patrolling using vehicles, the use of GPMG and HMG, off-road driving, recovery and vehicle contact drills. As a junior member of the unit it was great to learn loads of new skills that I got put into practice overseas. I also completed the Long Range Recce Patrol Commander Course, which taught me the in-depth planning and preparation of SOF operation phase by phase. It was heavy going as a junior corporal but it was an education in the level of planning involved in SOF OPS.

I completed my seven-week Combat Divers Course in 2005 in the Naval Base, on which we were instructed to a high standard in scuba and rebreather diving by Naval Service and ARW instructors.

My current appointment is Sgt Team Leader in the Special Operations Maritime Task Unit. I am also a dive team leader and a dive supervisor. Maritime operations can be extremely challenging due to the nature of the environment, either on the surface or sub-surface. It's not for everyone; it takes a specific individual to be able to dive in zero visibility at night, miles off the coast, onto a gas platform or onto a vessel to secure a target. It is the challenge of diving; the calibre of the operators that dive and the achievement of doing one of the hardest courses in the Defence Forces that drew me to Maritime Task Unit. We also get to work closely with the Naval Service, who are extremely professional. The naval divers are specialists in their own right and we have a great relationship with them. In 2010 I passed my EMT Exams with PHECC (Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council) and became a unit medic. This opened

INTERVIEW WITH A RANGER • •



up a number of advanced medical courses to me in Germany, Belgium, and the UK. My secondary appointment is as a unit medic. Outside of the ARW I completed the All-Arms Standard Course and the Infantry Standard Course. This gave me a more rounded view of my role and I was very impressed by the calibre of instructors and the variety of skills of the students on these courses.

Can you tell us about some of the operations you've been involved in?

I was involved in operations for the visits of President Bush, President Obama and Queen Elizabeth. I've assisted the navy divers in searches and acted as close protection to VIPs and members of the General Staff on overseas visits. Also, as an EMT I get the chance to do placement on ambulances with the HSE. This is beneficial as it involves dealing with real situations, which builds your confidence and experience and can't be replicated in a training environment.

I travelled overseas in 2008, when the ARW provided the Special Operations Task Unit with EUFOR tChad. We were also the Initial Entry Force for the battalion that followed, patrolling large areas of Chad, gathering information for EUFOR, tracking routes, conducting meetings with locals and building up a detailed picture of the AO that the battalion was coming out to. This was a challenging trip, due to the nature of the climate, the limitations of resupply and the isolation from friendly forces. We had a massive amount of freedom of movement and patrols were carried out in small teams, which was great. I worked in a six-man team with two vehicles on patrols of up to ten days. We recce'd routes and villages destroyed by rebels along the border with Sudan, met with Chadian Forces, and had encounters with rebel forces. I learned a lot during the trip about planning and preparing for patrols. Navigation was a big learning point, using latitude and longitude and the use of GPS track-back and imagery. We also worked with foreign SOF units, including French, Belgian, Swedish and Austrian. Overall it was an arduous mission but very satisfying and it has been the highlight of my time in the ARW, so far.

Service in the ARW requires enormous commitment and can be very physically and mentally demanding, not to mention the risk of injury. Why do you still do it?

Yeah, it can be a tough at times and it's not all roses but I work with some of the best individuals in the Defence Forces and there is a genuine bond between us. Even when members retire they still keep a very close link to the unit. Rank is respected but the working relationship between all, including officers, is very close. It has to be that way because you depend on each other so much. You speak your mind and question things and people are honest with each other, but when the decision has been made everyone tows the line.

We have such a variety of skills and insertion methods, such as close-quarter battle (CQB), hostage rescue, sniping, combat diving, and high-altitude low-

opening (HALO) and high-altitude high-opening (HAHO) air insertion, to list a few.

We train with some of the world's most tested and highly regarded Special Forces units on an ongoing basis, confirming that we are on par with our international counterparts. Our capabilities are continually evolving and changing, based on our experiences on overseas deployments and international courses.

These changes are primarily instigated and driven by members of the task units. This is exciting because I feel my input is valued and that I can make a real difference here. The chance that we could be deployed not only on-island but also overseas at short notice is also a real possibility. This means my skills need to be sharp; it keeps me focused and motivated. Every member of the ARW is a volunteer, wants to be here, and has fought hard to get here, so you are surrounded by people who constantly push and challenge you. I love my job and it's a thrill to come to work every day; every day is different. I can't imagine myself leaving that type of work environment any time soon.

INTERVIEW WITH A RANGER



Interviewee: Member of the winning team at the International Sniper Competition, Fort Benning, 2015

Tell us about your experience in winning the International Sniper Competition.

I have competed in a number of sniper competitions at home and abroad, including the 2012 International Sniper competition in Fort Benning where we placed second overall from 33 teams, many of which were SF teams, so it was a big achievement. In 2015, we went back to the same competition, but this time we won, becoming the first non-US team to ever win it. It was a phenomenal achievement that was based on hard work and good performances from the entire team. It reinforced my belief that we had trained well and

learned from our mistakes from the last time. However, my highlight wasn't winning the competition but the reception we received when we returned home to the Compound (SJC) where the entire unit was present to welcome us home and congratulate us. It was a phenomenal experience to see the unit ethos and camaraderie in full effect. It filled me with so much pride for my unit and that I could add to the unit's distinction. For me, that was my career highlight, being able to return home having added to the unit's prestige and enjoy it with friends.



Information on Special Operations Forces Qualification (SOFQ) is contained on the ARW IKON page, which can be found in Operations Division under the DFHQ heading.

Module 1 of SOFQ Zulu 1 will commence 11th September 2016 and will be of four weeks duration. The course will be advertised on unit notice boards in July.

The prelims for Module 1 of SOFQ Zulu 1 will be from 30th May to 3rd June 2016. Course notification and joining instructions will be out shortly. Although it is not compulsory, it is highly recommended that serious candidates do prelims. For additional information or queries regarding SOFQ Zulu 1 contact: arwsofq@defenceforces.ie ■



'Left of the Boom!'

REPORT & PHOTOS BY CPL LEE COYLE



Since the end of WWII army bomb disposal personnel have been responsible for the identification, disarmament, removal and controlled destruction of all explosives found in Ireland.

On Tuesday 19th January 2016, the Ordnance School, DFTC held an open day for members of the media, in order to demonstrate the equipment and expertise used by the bomb disposal technicians.

In attendance were many TV, radio and print/online journalists including *TV3*, *UTV Ireland*, *the Irish Sun* and *Joe.ie*, to name but a few.

The demonstration concluded with a controlled explosion showing the dangers and destructive power of such blasts.

The Ordnance Corps has logistical and operational roles within the

Defence Forces. Logistics roles include the supply of all ordnance equipment, weapons and the technical support required. Their operational role with the DF is mainly in the areas of EOD/C-IED, as well as providing an EOD service to the State in support of An Garda Síochána.

Defence Forces EOD/C-IED personnel are viewed as amongst the best and most highly trained in the world, with much of their expertise having been developed during 'the Troubles' of the 1970s and '80s.

In response to the increase in gangland violence over recent years and the ready availability of pipe-bomb material, EOD technicians have reverse engineered a unit whose main priority is preventing the manufacture of such devices by defeating the IED system. They

achieve this by attacking the network and individuals involved in such activities. This focus on prevention has led to the saying of being

'left of the boom!' In 2015 EOD teams have carried out 141 total call outs with 40 of them proving to be viable devices.

With its skilled personnel and experience, the Ordnance School is at the forefront of dealing with the threat of IEDs and has instructed personnel from over 33 countries.

The School conducts a number of ordnance courses for Defence Forces personnel, including: Young Officers (YOs) Ordnance, Ordnance Tech Engineers and Basic EOD.

Some of the students on the current YOs Ordnance course may progress to the Basic EOD course and become the newest members of EOD/C-IED teams, with the skills required to deal with the latest threats at home or abroad.

During the open day, members of the media were shown how easy it is to hide an IED; how to spot hidden, homemade devices; and some of the devices invented by the IRA and dissident Republican groups.

Defence Forces EOD/C-IED personnel have travelled to conflict zones, to assist UN and EU personnel with CIED, mine clearance, and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) disposal. ■



30th Naval Service Diving Course

BY LT CDR TONY O'REGAN, MCDO,
OIC NAVAL SERVICE DIVING SECTION

Recently students on the 30th Naval Service Diving Course completed week eight and nine of their 11-week course. This phase, deep work-up, was conducted in Bere Island from 21st February to 4th March - 12 gruelling days. This training prepares the divers for extensive operations and arduous hours in extreme conditions, often with little sleep.

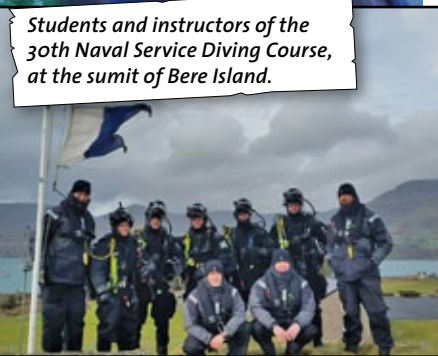
The course starts with a week of work-ups to qualifying depths on Scuba to 35 metres. The typical day begins at 0600 hrs with a 5km run, with a minimum of six dives to take place before the day ends at 2300 hrs. Students are instructed in specialised search techniques, night-time insertions, parachute and enclosed lifting bags, diver-through-water and hard wire communications - whilst working under stressful conditions where teamwork is a must. The first week ends with a Diving Section tradition of 'running the cross', a 13km run to the highest point of Bere Island.

This is followed by a week working with a naval ship equipped with a recompression chamber (RCC) to carry out essential drills such as in-water decompression, omitted decompression, surface decompression, recovery of an unconscious diver, and chamber attendant drills.

The rest of the course is built on this strong foundation.

Commodore Frank Lynch (retd), once said, *"Undoubtedly the fact that the early divers were established as an elite group from the very beginning with a huge failure rate on aptitude and training courses, favoured the sound development of the diving capability... Dedication to diving was the norm and extraordinary efforts over and above the call of duty were common."*

The Naval Service Diving Section recently celebrated 50 years of service. In the early days of the unit personnel went to the UK for training before the Naval Service ran its first domestic training course for divers in 1982. Since then a total of 30 courses have been run, with 132 personnel qualifying as Naval Service divers. ■



Students and instructors of the 30th Naval Service Diving Course, at the summit of Bere Island.



Rally to the Cause 1916 Battlefield Tour

BY NIAMH KELLY, WORK EXPERIENCE STUDENT, DÚN LAOGHAIRE FURTHER EDUCATION INSTITUTE

On the 23rd February 2016, whilst working in *An Cosantóir* I was given the opportunity to go on a 1916 Battlefield Tour to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Easter Rising. Author and historian Armn Michael Whelan, the Air Corps Museum's curator led the tour around Dublin City.

On a cold dry morning, accompanied by a number of serving DF personnel, we left the Curragh Camp and drove to Dublin. Our first stop was the Irish War Memorial, in Islandbridge, which commemorates the First and Second World Wars with a cross statue and altar, which very movingly had a poppy wreath laid upon the inscription: *"Their name liveth for evermore"*.

After that we visited the Church of the Sacred Heart in Arbour Hill, the church of the Defence Forces. Armn Whelan told us that the headstones lying against the walls of the cemetery *"belong to the British soldiers who died in Ireland while garrisoned here."*

He also told us that the Irish Proclamation engraved on the main wall, in both Irish and English, looks upon the small plot of grass where 14 of the 16 men executed for their part in the 1916 Rising were buried after their executions.

We then travelled a short distance to Blackhorse Avenue to visit Grangegorman Military Cemetery, opened in the 1870s, where approximately 1,100 British soldiers and family members, who died prior to and during the Rising and the First World War, are laid to rest. Armn Whelan told us about Company Sergeant Major Martin Doyle, one of the men buried here, who had fought for the British in the First World War before joining the IRA during the War of Independence and the National Army in the Civil War; but when he died he was buried in his British uniform. Amongst the graves there are three New Zealand and some

Grangegorman Cemetery



Irish War Memorial



DFTC/Air Corps tour group



Armn Michael Whelan



Plaque in Rotunda Rink/
Parnell Sq.



Australian soldiers, who are remembered every April on Anzac Day.

We then travelled to the heart of Dublin City, to visit the sites where the battles took place during Easter 1916, such as: Mount Street, the GPO and Sackville Street (now O'Connell St), Parnell Square, and Moore Street, where the battles came to life as our guide, with enthusiasm and flair, described the events that took place.

In 2016 alone, Armn Whelan has conducted over 110 hours of day-long, educational and historical tours of 1916 Dublin for the Defence Forces, doing, on average, two a week at the moment, with approximately 15-20 people each day. Requests for tours can be made to GOC AC through OC No 4 Sp Wing.

Having a keen interest in history (it's one of my chosen subjects) there's nothing more dramatic than a personal trip down memory lane with an enthusiastic historian like Michael to make you want to pull out those history books again. I would encourage everyone to make it on to at least one tour this year as we all remember the start of the road to our Republic. ■

Onboard the 1916 Bus!

BY CPL LEE COYLE

An Cosantóir Magazine was invited to be among the first to take the 'Rise of the Rebels Bus Tour', a new sightseeing tour that commemorates the 1916 Rising.

The tour began at College Green where we hopped onboard a double-decker bus that has been rigged-out to resemble an under-siege building from that fateful Easter week. Complete with fake fireplace, ceiling beams and furniture, and fitted with speakers through which came the sounds of guns firing and bullets whizzing past and hitting near by. The combination of the smells of furniture polish and wood and the sounds of fighting tickled the senses and placed us right in the heart of the Rising.

Actors Colm Lennon and Amy Flood from the Trinity Drama Program were on hand to guide us through the landmark locations of 1916, dressed in period clothes and using archive testimonies and witness statements of the battle survivors to bring the tour to life.

We travelled over O'Connell Bridge while listening to details of the history of Ireland's struggle for freedom that eventually led to the Rising. At Liberty Hall details of important meetings and events that occurred were reenacted, giving voice to the people of the time.

Our next stop was City Hall, where we quickly debussed to watch the actors recreate what happened inside that building during the first few moments of the Rising, displaying the thoughts and fears of those present that were recorded later in their witness statements.

When we returned to the bus simulated radio broadcasts from 1916 were being played over the speakers giving an account of what was happening throughout Dublin.

Our next stop was the GPO where we debussed again and were given details of the fighting around O'Connell Street. We were brought down Henry Street to follow the route taken by some of the rebels when fleeing the burning GPO; a route that took them towards Moore Street and the British barricades.

We were picked up by the bus on Parnell Street and traveled back across the city, past Kilmainham Gaol and on to what remained of Richmond Barracks. Here we again debussed and listened to the testimony of the prisoners that were held there after the surrendered.

It was then back onboard the bus to return to College Green where our excellent tour ended.

As well as the cleverly kitted-out bus, the great knowledge of the era and the enthusiasm displayed by the two actors really brought the tour to life, making it informative, fun and interesting. I for one would highly recommend this tour, regardless of how much or how little you know about the Easter Rising. ■



Rise of the Rebels Bus Tour: The bus departs at 11am, 2pm, and every evening at 7.30pm from outside Extreme Ireland on College Green. Book online at www.ridetherevolution.com or just turn up for any tour. Tickets: €25. Tel: 085-1023646/086-178 0049.

FUELLING the fire

BY PAUL O'BRIEN

Fighters of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have, in recent months, swept through northern Syria and parts of Iraq, ousting the Syrian army from a number of key positions. An aerial bombing campaign has stopped their onslaught but the group is still fighting and holding the ground that it has taken and fierce fighting is continuing on a daily basis in towns and cities. Even making use of captured transports and weapons, wars cost money, and financing its relentless war against its adversaries is costing the insurgent group billions of dollars.



Iraqi Shiite militia fighters hold the Islamic State flag as they celebrate after breaking the siege of Amerli, 1st September 2014.
Photo: Reuters/Youssef Boudlal

Kit, weapons, transport and fuel are the basic necessities for an armed force in the field and depending on size of the army, its area of operations, and the kit required, the cost sheet will vary. Western governments budget for their armed forces and have to go to their respective assemblies or parliaments to request additional funding for anything outside of their normal budgetary requirements. The monies granted are collected through taxation and the allotted military funding is distributed throughout the various units.

So, where is ISIS's funding coming from? Natural resources can be sold to raise money and oil is the black gold of the Jihadis, with lines of fuel tankers stretching for miles waiting in line at IS-held oilfields such as that on the outskirts of al-Omar. This is just one part of

a network of oil fields that are producing this valuable commodity for ISIS. According to the *Irish Times*: 'Estimates by local traders and engineers put crude production in ISIS held territory at about 34,000-40,000 barrels per day. The oil is sold at the wellhead for between \$20 and \$45 a barrel, earning the militants an average of \$1.5m a day.'

Independent journalist, Ahmad Mhidi, working in the region, has discovered an elaborate set-up that even though it is in a war zone is functioning efficiently and returning profits.

The supply and sale of oil is a very lucrative business and those purchasing it from ISIS can make considerably more profit than they could if they bought it legitimately from registered oil refineries.

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French military patrol near the Eiffel Tower the day after a series of deadly attacks in Paris 14th November 2015. Photo: Reuters/Yves Herman

Early on, insurgent commanders identified the oil industry as a way of funding their proposed caliphate and made plans accordingly. Having created a foothold in the east of Syria, they pushed on, seizing control of Mosul in northern Iraq, which gave it access to the oil fields of Ajil and Allas. Engineers were put to work immediately and ISIS oil was on the market. Reports from the regions say that a well organised unit began securing the sites, extracting and barrelling the oil and shipping it to its various destinations. The logistical plan was well orchestrated, as can be seen in satellite footage of hundreds of oil trucks arriving and departing the various fields. ISIS has set up a complex, sprawling operation and distribution network that has expanded in the last eighteen months, despite international forces targeting their installations in a series of air strikes.

Many insurgent organisations throughout the world, such as al-Qaeda, have depended on funding from wealthy benefactors. However, ISIS has tapped into the global oil market and many in the region are willing to purchase their oil at knock-down prices, without asking where it originated from or how many died during ISIS's gaining of control of the resource.

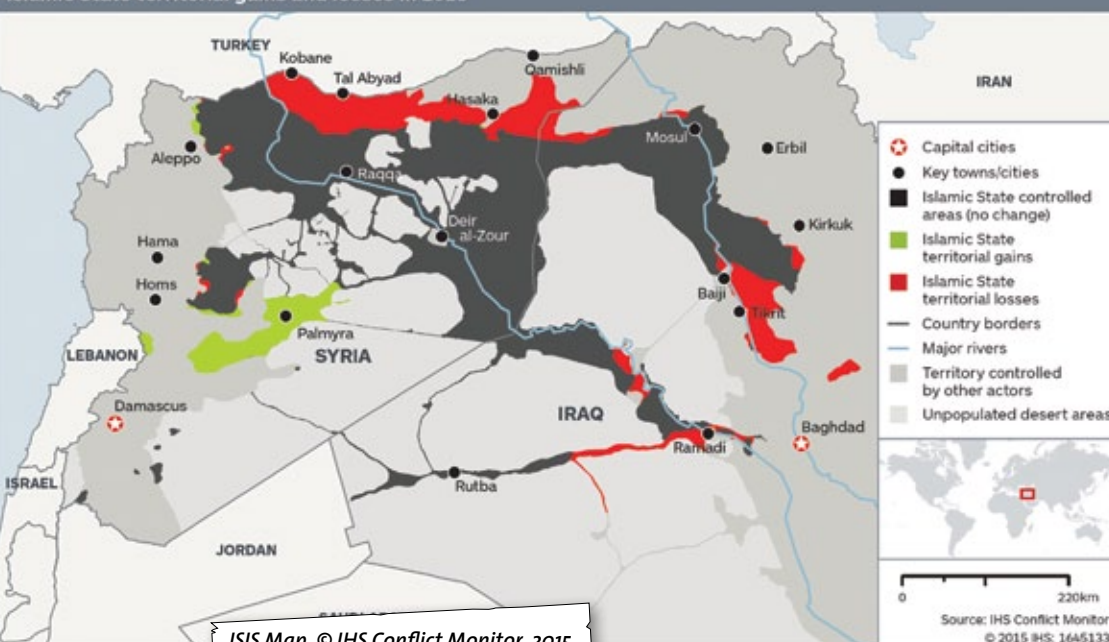
A US Special Forces raid in May 2015 killed Abu Sayyaf, a leading figure in the organisation's oil production strategy, and retrieved documentation detailing account information and refining targets and other materials relating to the group's activities were captured. These gave the US a clear and detailed picture of how ISIS is funding its campaign. They also revealed that while many districts are controlled via local administrators or regional governors, the oil production is controlled by a central command that monitors the production facilities and closely accounts for its output. This is similar to their control over their sophisticated media networks, with highly trained operatives utilising the internet and social media for their cause.

Although the jihadi group's destruction of a number of world heritage sites in the region has made the headlines, with explosive devices destroying thousands of years of history in seconds, the insurgents have also utilised the black-market trade in antiquities to sell items of historical interest to a number of sources. This despicable act is depleting the region's rich and vibrant history that

dates back millennia. As the money raised by selling these items is used for acquiring weapons and equipment, the buyers of these artefacts are just as guilty of trading in death as those who purchased the 'blood diamonds' of central Africa.

International opponents of ISIS have adopted a two-pronged approach to the situation, with bombing raids on ISIS-held oil fields and installations while intelligence agencies are targeting those that profit from dealing with the terror group. Those fighting ISIS hope that these tactics will increase pressure on the group and curtail the fuelling of its war. ■

Islamic State territorial gains and losses in 2015



ISIS Map. © IHS Conflict Monitor, 2015

HAVE YOU THE LMDS PROGRAMME IN YOUR SIGHTS?

BY CAPT EOIN MCGEENEY & SGT GARY CONDREN, OFFICE OF THE DEFENCE FORCES REGISTRAR, J7 TRAINING & EDUCATION BRANCH, DFHQ

The Leadership Management and Defence Studies (LMDS) Programme began in September 2012. Since then almost 600 members of the PDF have achieved an accredited award within the programme, and there continues to be impressive uptake by personnel. While for many it is challenging to transition from military to academic learning, it is possible, as conferees can testify.

To ease your transition, this short guide is intended to assist your entry and navigation of your learning journey within the programme. Beginning with *Orders* below you can identify your programme entry and engagement requirements to achieve your mission.



ORDERS

Situation:

The LMDS programme went live in September 2012. IT Carlow entered into collaboration with the DF for the purpose of validating Army and Air Corps courses for enlisted ranks. To date almost 600 personnel have attained one of the three levels of awards available.

Mission:

To enter the LMDS programme, engage effectively with each of the requisite modules and create a pathway to an award.

Execution:

The programme may be accessed in two different ways, dependent on whether the learner joined the DF post or prior to September 2012.

Concept of Ops:

Learners who have undertaken 3* training post-September 2012 voluntarily join the programme on the completion of 3* training. It is mandatory to submit a WBLP (Work Based Learning Portfolio, see below) when reporting for Potential NCO, MP Probationer or ARW courses. Failure to do so excludes students from completing the LMDS programme. This means that for NCO/MP learners, completion of the WBLP (to include the four mandatory elements) + 20 credits from electives + pass the career course will lead to a Level 6 certificate LMDS. (Note: Completion of Level 6 bridges access to Level 7 using the RPL.)

Pre-September 2012 personnel require voluntary completion of the RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning, see below) document submitted to the training institute on commencement of your relevant career course; Potential NCO, MP Probationers, ARW, AASC, LOGs MOD2, or Senior NCO course.

Those entering via PNCO/MP/ARW courses must also attain 20 ECTS of the elective modules prior to conferral. Completing an RPL + 20 credits from electives + pass the career course will lead to a Level 6 certificate LMDS.

AASC learners who complete an RPL + pass a corps standard course + complete an AASC course will receive a Level 7 Minor Award LMDS.

Senior NCO course learner who complete an RPL + pass the Senior NCO course + complete a dissertation will receive a Level 7 Bachelor of Arts LMDS.

Logs Accountancy course learners who complete an RPL + complete Logs Accountancy course Modules 1 & 2 + complete a dissertation/research project will be awarded a Level 7 Bachelor of Arts LMDS (logistics).

Service Support:

Unit focal points: Key personnel in all DF units who have been briefed on the LMDS.

Unit Training Officer: Validation of task completion.

DF training institutes: Co-ordination and assessment of RPLs and WBLPs.

DF Registrars office, J7-DFHQ: Provides support, expertise and guidance throughout the LMDS process.

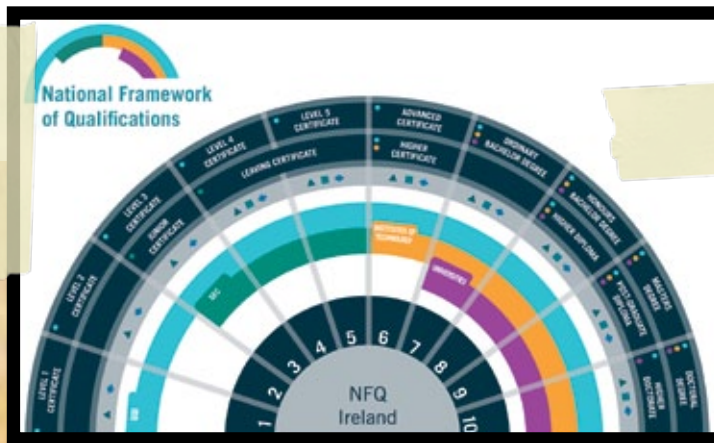
Conferred students: Peer support and guidance.

Command & Signals:

DF training institutes conduct and administrate the accredited courses.

IT Carlow accredits learning and issues respective awards.

The DF Registrars office provides a quality assurance (QA) and programme management function.



LMDS programme entry points

Pre Sept 2012: Enter program via RPL at next available career course

2 - 3*
(Basic
Training)
(10 ECTS)

Corps
Cses
(20 ECTS)

WBLP
(40 ECTS)

Potential NCO
Course
(50 ECTS)

NFQ-Level 6
Certificate

**Post Sept 2012: Enter program via WBLP
on selection for NCO/MP/ARW course**

All-Arms
STD NCO
(20 ECTS)

Corps STD
(10 ECTS)

NFQ - Level
7 Minor
Award

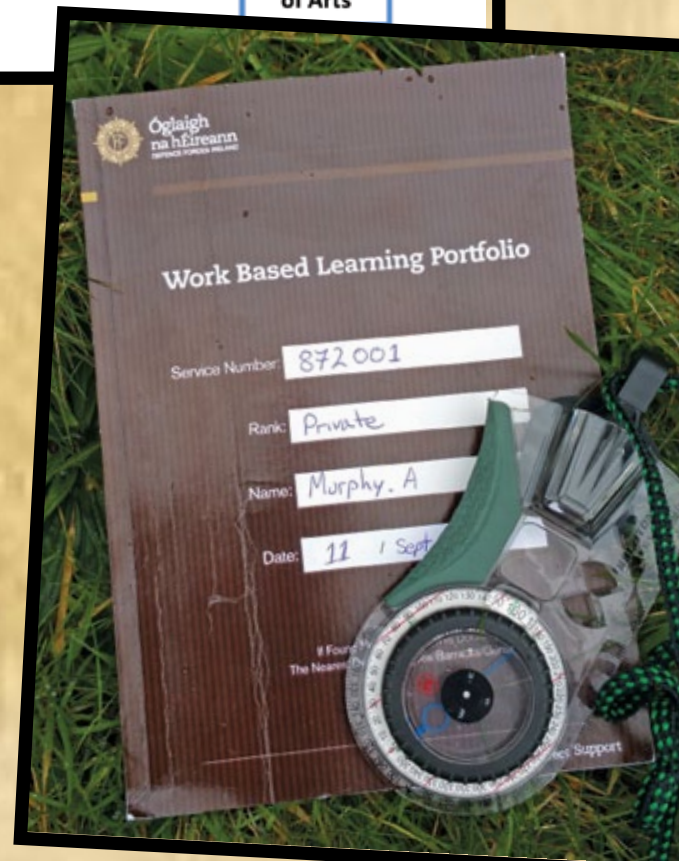
Senior NCO
or
Logistics
Accountancy
(20 ECTS)

Dissertation
(10 ECTS)

NFQ -
Level 7
Bachelor
of Arts

NAVIGATING THE WORK BASED LEARNING PORTFOLIO (WBLP)

The Work Based Learning Portfolio is a reflective journal that narrates your career experiences with your learning points. Reflection is the process of considering actions, events and processes in order to positively engage with the learning attained through participation. The WBLP provides access to the LMDS programme and is applicable to all members of the DF who joined after 01 September 2012. All personnel who joined the DF prior to this date access the programme via the completion of a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) document, which covers the same learning outcomes (LOs). Both documents can be considered as the confirmation of work experience in the DF as part of the LMDS programme. The WBLP is comparable to an engineering student in college who must complete an essay or project as part of their work experience with an engineering firm. Through the written reflections contained within the WBLP, the learner provides proof that they have professionally developed and meet the LOs. The WBLP/RPL are mandatory elements of the LMDS programme and their mark will contribute to your LMDS programme grade and offer you the opportunity to be conferred with an award through the programme's collaborative partners IT Carlow.



A learning outcome (LO) is defined as: a learner's knowledge, skill, and competence changes as a result of learning. Learning outcomes express the expected attainment of knowledge, skill and competence by a learner upon successful completion of a given programme or module. An LO is what a learner should be able to explain or demonstrate through the attained knowledge, skills or competencies after training, education or learning.

LOs at Level 6 include a comprehensive range of military specific skills matched with leadership and management competences. They require detailed theoretical understanding of the military environment and involve autonomous work, such as basic management and administrative responsibilities.

There are five LOs in the WBLP that are based on Level 6 learning. They are designed to access what you have learned through your military experiences since completing 3* training. Ask yourself have you developed as a capable and competent soldier since your initial training? If so, you are already some way towards reaching the following learning outcomes.

- **LO 1:** Display a range of skills, competencies and attributes that are required in the career role as a soldier/airman. This refers to the personal and military abilities that you use in your job, and could include weapons and equipment skill sets, management capabilities, leadership and communication abilities.
- **LO 2:** Apply a defined range of task skills within a specified Defence Forces setting. This refers to the DF skills you have and how have you used these during your career.
- **LO 3:** Demonstrate task management skills by following set procedures and handling a predictable and unpredictable work flow of parallel or similar tasks. Set procedures could be orders, ROEs, DF policies, DF procedures, DF regulations, etc.

- **LO 4:** Demonstrate the job role and function skills of a soldier within a specified setting such as working under regular supervision; taking decisions within defined limits; working as part of a team. Think of a particular scenario (overseas, security duties, exercises, etc) that demonstrates that you have operated within the specified settings.
- **LO 5:** Reflection. Reflect on the experience of learning in the workplace in order to enhance your professional development and lifelong learning. Think back over your career experiences to date. What have you learned? Do you approach things in the same way that you used to or have you gained and learned from your career experiences? Use examples to demonstrate that you have grown in the role of a soldier or airman and that this learning is contributing to your overall career development.

SAMPLE ANSWER

Learning Outcome: Demonstrate the knowledge needed to navigate and engage with the LMDS programme by meeting Learning Outcomes through module completion.

Describe how you have effectively displayed a range of skills, competencies and attributes required of a soldier/airman.

Introduction

I completed my 3* training inand was selected for overseas deployment with..... I had completed a number of specialised driving, equipment and weapons courses..... These courses gave me the skills required for.....

Background

These skills are important overseas as

Main body

I used all the skills associated with the role of a duringwhere I was able too.....

Conclusion

I was able to achieve my mission by.....

Picture at the signing of the current memorandum of understanding between Carlow IT and the DF is: Dr Patricia Mulcahy, President of IT Carlow and Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM, COS.



FAQs

What happens to senior NCOs who cannot access the programme?

The LMDS awards cannot be attained in retrospect. Senior NCOs can instead have their experience recognised with a Certificate of Equivalency.

Does the WBLP travel with me overseas?

Yes. It is essential that it goes overseas because overseas service is a mandatory element of the completion of the WBLP.

If I have not completed the overseas element of the WBLP what happens?

Your existing credits will be recorded until such a time as you complete overseas service. Then your progress in the programme will recommence.

What happens if I already have a 3rd level course?

You can still participate in the LMDS programme, complementing your existing qualifications

TAC AIDE



MONEY MATTERS

Helping all our families prepare for communion & confirmation by ANSAC Credit Union

2016 Communion and Confirmations season is once more upon us and it can be an expensive time for parents, adding pressure to already stretched household budgets. It is important that our members know that the credit union is here to help - whether it is to set up a savings or budget plan in advance of the big event or to assist families with a small modest loan.

Research undertaken by the Irish League of Credit Unions (ILCU) in the past years has found that the average amount of money received by a child for communion is €471, however, according to www.mummyspages.ie this can jump to a whopping €703 per child when parties, gifts and fuss are factored in.

In general, parents find that clothes are the biggest cost associated with communion, while food and drink are the biggest costs associated with a confirmation. According to ILCU research 64% of parents whose children received their communion in the past 3 years found that clothes were the biggest cost as opposed to 54% of parents of children who received their confirmation. This may be due to the fact that children may wear their uniforms for their confirmation. However, for both communion and confirmation buying clothes new is the most popular option.

In relation to funding the costs of communion and confirmation, 21% of respondents stated that they use credit cards to cover some of the costs of communion, with 15% using this method to finance confirmation costs. An even more worrying result is that almost one in 8 (12%) families finance at least part of the costs of communion via moneylenders, with the percentage using moneylenders to help to finance the costs of confirmation dropping to one in 25 (4%) families for confirmation. Most parents encouraged their children to save most of the money given to them for their communion or confirmation. Those making their confirmation were more likely to be encouraged to save than those receiving their communion.

The great thing about a personal loan at ANSAC Credit Union is that there are no hidden fees or transaction charges and credit union interest rates are fair and reasonable and are capped by law. Repayments are calculated on your reducing balance, so you pay less interest with each repayment. Your credit union loan is also insured in the event of your death – subject to terms and conditions - at no direct cost to you. Other lenders charge for this. You can pay off your loan early, make additional lump sum repayments or increase your regular repayments all without a penalty.

Rosie Casey from ANSAC Credit Union said: *"The ethos of the credit union is simple – we are here to offer friendly, accessible financial services through savings and modest loan services. We would urge anyone who is planning for the costs of communion or confirmation to contact the office on 01-8554489 and speak to us. ANSAC Credit union offers its members budgeting and savings advice as well as competitive rates on loans."*

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HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY

HIT FAST, HIT HARD!

BY PAUL O'BRIEN

Throughout military history there have always been men who took the fight to their enemies in unconventional ways. This often comprised small groups of soldiers carrying out operations behind enemy lines, striking hard before disappearing and leaving death and chaos in their wake.

The beginning of the 20th century witnessed a dramatic change in warfare as strategy and tactics changed and new weapons were unleashed on the battlefield. Specialist groups such as the Boer Commando and the Auxiliary Division of the Royal Irish Constabulary found themselves fighting in unconventional wars of insurgency and counter-insurgency.

However many historians agree that what we currently regard as Special Forces came into being during the Second World War at the behest of Winston Churchill, when specialist groups such as the Royal Marine Commandos, the Long Range Desert Group (LRDG), the Special Boat Squadron (SBS) and the Special Air Service (SAS) were developed to wreak havoc behind Axis lines. It was this type of specialist group that would gather intelligence, reconnoitre vital areas and strike without warning, and would help to give Allied forces time to build up their invasion armies.

In the SAS, Lt 'Paddy' Mayne DSO (three bars), who would later lead the SAS as a lieutenant colonel, found himself driving through enemy airfields, blasting away on twin Vickers machine guns, destroying Axis planes and supplies.

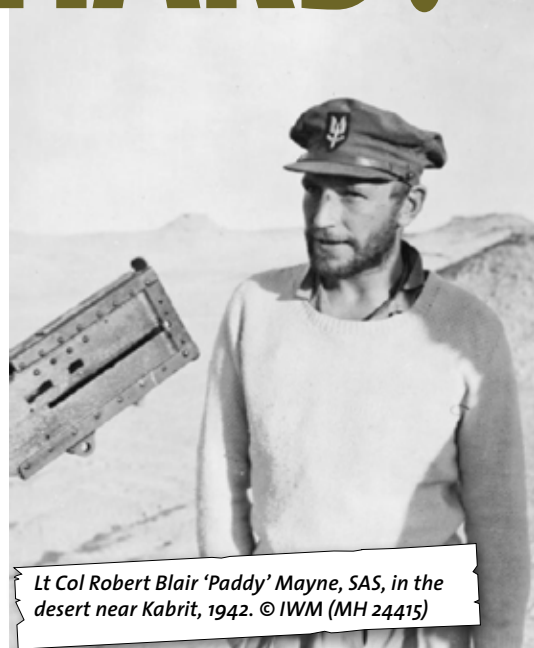
The SAS was founded by David Stirling, a lieutenant in the Scots Guards at the time, who was detailed to form commando teams to take the fight to Rommel in North Africa. The men needed for such a mission would have to be tough, able to use their initiative, and know how to fight without the regular support that an army provides. Stirling identified Mayne as one such man. However, Mayne was in the glass-house having assaulted his commanding officer and was only released on condition he did not assault Stirling!

Robert Blair 'Paddy' Mayne was born in Newtownards, County Down. At school he excelled at sports, especially rugby (later playing for Ireland and the 1938 British Lions), and was an excellent marksman in the rifle club. He studied law at Queens University, Belfast, and it was here he took up boxing, winning numerous competitions. He worked as

a solicitor before the outbreak of World War II. Mayne began his military career in March 1939, first in the Supplementary Reserve, then the Royal Artillery, and on to the Royal Ulster Rifles. On the formation of the Commandos during the war, Lt Mayne volunteered for No 11 (Scottish) Commando, where he came to Stirling's notice having conducted a successful raid behind enemy lines during the Litani River operation in Lebanon in June 1941.

After Stirling obtained Mayne's release the two men began putting together the SAS, the raiding force that was to become known throughout the world. Mayne's first operation, at Wadi Tamet in December 1941, destroyed numerous aircraft and fuel installations.

Speed was of the essence in such operations and Mayne perfected the use of jeeps in these hit-and-run raids, equipping them with Vickers and Lewis machine guns front and



Lt Col Robert Blair 'Paddy' Mayne, SAS, in the desert near Kabrit, 1942. © IWM (MH 24415)



Blair Mayne statue (11 January 1915 - 14 December 1955) in Newtownards, Co Down. © Ross/Creative Commons Licence

HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY



A heavily-armed patrol of 'L' Detachment SAS in their jeeps, wearing 'Arab-style' headdress, January 1943. © IWM (E 21337)



Lt Col David Stirling DSO, SAS, in North Africa during the Second World War. © IWM (E 21340)



Col David Stirling, with an SAS jeep patrol in North Africa, 18th January 1943. © IWM (E 21338)



Two members of 1 SAS, Capt D C Mather MC, Welsh Guards and Capt G Alston, Royal Artillery (nearest camera) in a heavily loaded jeep. © IWM (E 20084)

HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY

after, turning the vehicles into mobile fire platforms. Mayne continued to wreak havoc amongst Axis forces in North Africa before moving on to Sicily and Italy. With the capture of Stirling in Libya in January 1943, Mayne took over the Special Raiding Section of the SAS after the unit was split in two, before later being promoted to lieutenant colonel and appointed commanding officer of the reformed 1st SAS Regiment in January 1944.

After the D-Day Landings the SAS were to the fore in collecting intelligence and reporting troop movements to the advancing Allies.

Mayne's daring exploits won him three bars to his DSO, the second official citation reading:

'On 8th August 1944, he was dropped to operation Houndsworth Base, located west of Dijon, in order to co-ordinate and take charge of the available detachments of his Regiment and co-ordinate their activities with a major Airborne landing which was then envisaged near Paris. He then proceeded in a jeep in daylight to motor to the GAIN Base making the complete journey in one day. On the approach of the Allied forces, he passed through the lines in his jeep to contact American Forces and to lead back through the lines his detachment of twenty jeeps landed for Operation Wallace. During the first few weeks, he successfully penetrated the German and American lines on four occasions in order to lead parties of reinforcements. It was entirely due to Lt Col Mayne's fine leadership and example, and his utter disregard for danger, that the unit was able to achieve such striking successes.'

The SAS continued to operate under Mayne in the closing stages of the war, carrying out missions in France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Norway.

During the course of the war Mayne was to become one of the most highly decorated soldiers in the British Army. However controversy was never far behind him and the Victoria Cross he was awarded for actions on the 9th April 1945, at Oldenburg in north-west Germany, was downgraded six months later to a third bar on his DSO. It is believed that Mayne's reputation as a fighter, both on and off the battlefield, may have prejudiced his award. Reputed to be a heavy drinker, some soldiers were wary of him and his violent outbursts, while others describe him as courageous and fearless, with the ability to lead men into and out of battle.

After the war, Mayne returned to his pre-war occupation as a solicitor and returned home to practise in Newtownards. On the night of 13th December 1955, Mayne, having met friends for a drink, left for the drive home. His car reportedly collided with a stationary farm vehicle and he was killed outright. At his funeral hundreds of mourners attended to pay their respects and to see him interred in the family plot at the old Movilla Abbey graveyard.

A life-size bronze statue of Blair Mayne stands in Conway Square, Newtownards, and the western bypass of the town is also named in his honour.

A campaign is ongoing to see that Mayne is posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions during the war and that the exploits of this extraordinary soldier are not forgotten.

Modern Special Forces utilise the latest weapon systems and military technologies on the battlefield in order to carry out their operations. However, still today, as throughout history, the common denominator amongst Special Forces is that the ranks of these groups consist of extraordinary men carrying out extraordinary missions; hitting the enemy hard and fast, and paving the way for others to follow. ■

HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY

DF INDOOR TRACK & FIELD Championships

BY COMDT NOEL CONWAY, CHAIRMAN
DF ATHLETICS COMMITTEE
PHOTOS BY SGT KARL BYRNE &
CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN

Over 180 competitors from units throughout the Defence Forces took part in the annual DF Indoor Track & Field Championships and Grand Prix at the state-of-the-art Indoor Stadium in Athlone Institute of Technology on Monday 15th February 2016. The day's activity included championship events in the 60m, 200m, 800m and 3,000m on the track, as well as the shot putt and long jump on the infield. In addition to the championship events, a series of grand prix events specifically for new entrants to the DF also took place, with race distances of 60m, 200m and 1500m as well as the shot putt and long jump. Cadets, apprentices from the Air Corps, and recruits in training in a number of units took part in the grand prix with great enthusiasm, many of them running on an indoor track for their first time.

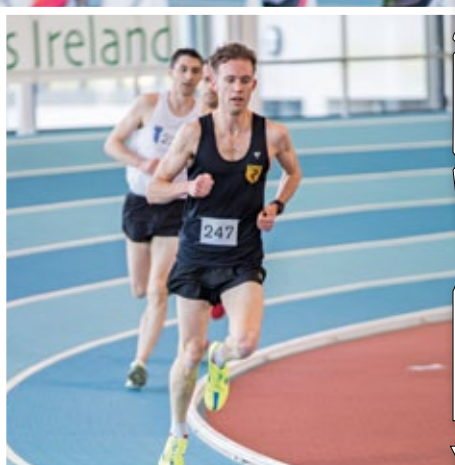
Some excellent performances were produced on the day including a 1min 56sec performance in the senior men's 800m championship by Capt James Ledingham of 3 Infantry Battalion, and, 8min 54 sec by Pte Patrick Roche DFTC CIS Group in the senior men's 3,000m. In the women's competition, Pte 2* Nelson of 105 Tp DFTC and Cadet Smyth took the honours in the 3,000m and 60m respectively with Pte Foy of 1 Cn Cois winning both the Long Jump and Shot Putt. As always, the 4 x 200m relay events were the highlight of the day. In the hotly contested new entrants relay, the Cadet School team won the day, while 1 Cn Cois took the honours in the senior men's 4 x 200m.

This year's indoor track & field event was hosted by 2 Bde with excellent organisation by 2 Bde BPEO and staff assisted by members of the DF Athletics Committee.

The next event on the DF Athletics Calendar is the annual DF Half-Marathon Championships taking place in Galway on 20th April (details to follow on DF IKON). ■

Cadet/Recruit/Apprentice Competition

Event	1st	2nd	3rd
60m	Rec Doyle, 105 Tp, DFTC. Time: 7.25	Aptc Burke, Aptc Sch, AC	Aptc Lyster, Aptc Sch, AC
1500m	Cdt Smith, Cadet Sch, DFTC. Time: 3:56	Cadet Murphy, Cadet Sch, DFTC. Time: 3:57	Pte 2*Doohan, 28 Inf Bn, 2 Bde. Time: 3:58
4 x 200m Relay	Cadet School, DFTC	1 ACS, DFCT	1 ACS, DFTC
Shot Putt	Pte 2* Doyle, 105 Tp, DFTC. Dist: 10.4m	Pte 2* Woods, 28 Inf Bn, 2 Bde. Dist:	Pte 2*Joyce, 105 Tp, DFTC. Dist: 8.82m
Long Jump	Pte 2* Doyle, 105 Tp, DFTC. Dist: 10.4m	Pte 2* Woods, 28 Inf Bn, 2 Bde. Dist: 5.6m	Pte 2* Burke, 28 Inf Bn, 2 Bde. Dist: 4.95m



Masters Competition		
Event	1st	2nd
60m	Sgt Barry, 27 Inf Bn, 2 Bde. Time: 8.03	Sgt McNamara, DFSM, 2 Bde
3000m O/40s	PO Molloy, Naval Service. Time: 9:36	Pte Devady, 2 Bde Eng Gp. Time: 10:23
O/45s	Pte Thompson, 28 Inf Bn, 2 Bde. Time: 10:35	
O/50s	Pte Bulman, 1 Bde Engr Gp. Time: 11:17	
O/55s	Sgt (Retd) T. Grogan, Formerly 1 Cn Cois. Time: 12:50	



Ladies Competition	
Event	1st
60m	Cadet Smyth, Cadet Sch, DFTC. Time: 8.10
3,000m	Pte 2*Nelson, 105 Tp, DFTC. Time: 11:36
Long Jump	Pte Foy, 1 Cn Cois, 1 Bde. Dist: 3.2m
Shot Putt	Pte Foy, 1 Cn Cois, 1 Bde. Dist: 6.82m



THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE /

AN COSANTÓIR

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our 48 page March 2016 - 1916

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Travel back in time on our custom designed "Rise of the Rebels" tour bus tour, fitted out as an under siege base of revolutionary action.

Professional actors will guide you through the landmark locations in Ireland's rise for independence in Easter week 1916.

Using the testimonies of the battle survivors we bring to life the struggles that precipitated this call to fight for Ireland's freedom.

Giving voice to those who fought in garrisons around the centre of Dublin, our actors will testify on their behalf to the battles lost and won in the week of the revolution that changed Ireland forever as you walk through some of the key battle locations. We invite you to hear the testimony of people of the time, and see the places whose involvement, until now, has been hidden within the official histories told of this crucial week in Ireland's fight for independence.

DEPARTS: EVERY NIGHT 7.30PM

Please see online for our daytime schedule

(Outside College Green Tourist Office, Lasts approximately 2 hours)

€25⁰⁰

www.ridetherevolution.com

Rally to the Cause! A Call for 1916 Papers for the DF Review 2016

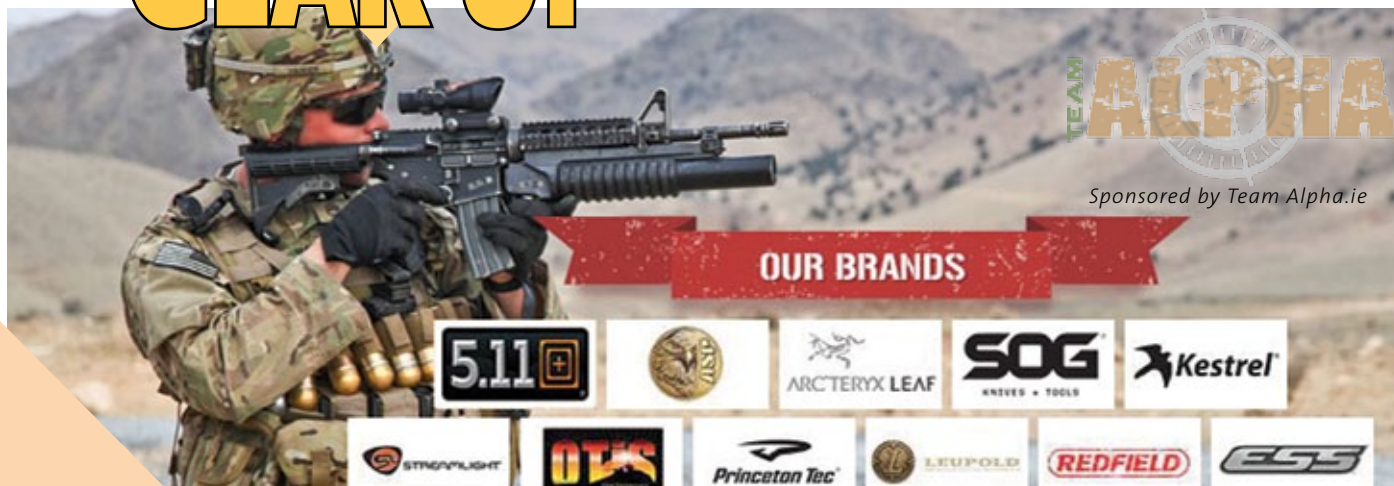
In keeping with the importance of commemorating 1916 and the role played by the Defence Forces (DF) in modern Ireland, the Chief of Staff (COS) has approved a proposal that this year's Review will seek to achieve the following:

- Develop and demonstrate the intellectual capability within the DF and encourage serving and former members of the DF to engage in critical thinking and debate.
- To provide for an accurate and deeper understanding of contemporary research both within and outside the DF on matters of national and military interest.
- To contribute to the wider discourse and reflection on the events of 1916 and the emergence of modern Ireland.

As part of this process, the DF (in conjunction with its academic partners in NUIM and TCD) will host an Academic Conference in Dublin Castle on Saturday 15th October 2016. This conference will be open to the public and will be used to present papers written for the Review in conference format. This will give the DF (and other informed contributors to the Review) an opportunity to engage in the wider discourse on the emergence of modern Ireland and the role that the DF has played.

Col D. Dignam, Commandant, The Infantry School and Director of Infantry is available at ext 5124 and david.dignam@defenceforces.ie if any member of your Formation or Service wishes to discuss the matter directly with him.





OTIS ULTRA BORE CLEANING SYSTEM - PRICE €45

THE MANUFACTURER SAYS...

This Breech-to- Muzzle gun cleaning system cleans .22 calibre to 12 gauge. Designed for use on rifles, pistols and shotguns. Components: 16" x 20" cleaning mat to protect surfaces from solvent and debris. Double end AP brushes for fast cleaning of neck, bore, receiver and chamber. Patch cleans all .22-45 calibre rifles/pistols, and .410 - 12/10 gauge shotguns. o85 Ultra Bore lubricate and protection. 12" and 36" Memory-Flex cables for effective and correct Breech-to-Muzzle cleaning. Contains brushes needed to clean .22 to .45 cal. rifles and pistols and 20 and 12/10 gauge shotguns. Brass slot-ted tips for patch cleaning any firearm. T-handle and obstruction removal tools for jammed cases and other blockages. With a lifetime guarantee.



OUR REVIEWER LT NEIL LEDWITH 28 INF BN, WITH THANKS TO SGT JOHN CLARKE (ARMOURER) AND THE 2-3* PLN, FINNER CAMP SAYS...

This multi calibre gun cleaning kit will clean a variety of small arms, however for the serving soldier, the high quality bore cleaning brushes of 9mm, 5.56 and 7.62 mm will be of primary interest. The kit comes supplied in a robust abs plastic case with a high quality foam tray to ensure that components do not become dislodged in transit. A total of 7 bore brushes are supplied, an instruction manual, cleaning mat, two pull throughs (1 x 999 and 1 x rifle), attachments for the various calibres as well as a selection of circular cleaning patches and gun oil.

The kit was assessed to robust use over a period of time, for this the kit was handed over to the current 2-3* platoon in training with 28 Inf Bn who had been out firing blank rounds during a tactical training exercise. They found that the bore brush for the 5.56 wore well and kept its shape and consistency much better than the issued cleaning brushes for the Steyr. The plastic coated wire pull through also was of high quality and showed no signs of adverse wear and tear after cleaning a full platoon worth of rifles. The circular cleaning patches were effective and easy to use once instructions were read.

The kit is a high quality piece of equipment. If there were any criticisms to be made, it's that the kit is not easily broken down into more compact components for use in the field or a tactical environment. The cleaning mat could be improved if it had a series of pouches so that the user could take only the necessary selection of components into the field.

For an avid firearms user who has a collection of multi bore weapons, the System would represent good value at €45, however for the individual soldier who only uses service weapons it is probably a little too expensive, and they would be better off with OTIS 5.56mm and 7.62mm cleaning systems which use the same components as featured in this kit and can attach to a battle vest or belt for field use.



Team-Alpha is an online store providing members of Military and Law Enforcement in Ireland with extra equipment and uniform clothing at a competitive price. Our brands include 5.11 Tactical, Arc'Teryx, ASP, Streamlight and many more that also cater for the Hunting, Outdoor and Airsoft industries. We are committed to bringing our customers the highest quality and best value products. For more information please contact customerservice@team-alpha.ie

COMPETITION

For a chance to win a SOG Instinct Mini knife worth €27.90, kindly sponsored by www.team-alpha.ie, answer the following question:

How much is an OTIS 9mm Pistol Cleaning System on team-alpha.ie?

Send your answer along with your name, address & contact number to An Cosantóir's address or by email to subs@military.ie by the 20th April 2016. Winner will be the first correct entry drawn.

Last month's winner was: Jer Power, Co Tipperary.

NOTICEBOARD

PEACEKEEPER IRISH MILITARY PEACEKEEPING POEMS

A collection of published poems on the theme of Irish military peacekeeping by poet Armn Michael J. Whelan are to be re-published by Doire Press (Inverin, Galway) in a collection volume titled 'Peacekeeper' will be officially launched on Wednesday 13th April 2016 in the County Library, Tallaght at 6.30pm.
<http://michaeljwhelan.wordpress.com/>

"History is a narrative written by the winners. This collection is history written from the heart of an excellent poet, poems that encapsulate vivid, deeply felt personal stories. Between the pages the reader will find unexpected, non-official views of conflict, ultimately, a rosary of redemption, words that needed to be said so they could taste the air."

Maria Wallace - the Jonathan Swift Awards

"Michael Whelan is a warrior poet, a rare breed nowadays. The reasons for the rarity are made clear here: warrior values have been overwhelmed by the cruelty of mechanised warfare. Whelan served in the Middle East and the Balkans and everywhere he went he saw the monster 'sending the shaken to the underworld'. This is a voice that cries out to be heard."

Brian Lynch - The Patrick Kavanagh Poetry Awards



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WORD SEARCH

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B	V	K	U	C	K	S	L	L	A	H	S	Q	D	Y
G	V	C	V	V	L	H	N	E	A	G	H	P	S	J
O	W	A	I	E	W	E	I	D	M	K	G	W	A	S
F	P	S	A	P	I	L	L	N	A	E	Y	E	U	K
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 CURRAGH
 DUBLIN
 HOTEL
 ROYAL
 SHELBOURNE
 SURGEONS

Easter Competition Winners

The winner of the signed Paul O'Brien book collection was:
DJ Collins, Collins Bks Cork

Visit: www.paulobrienauthor.ie for more on Paul O'Brien.

The winner of the 15 book collection from Kilmainham Tales was:
Bill Grant, NMCI, Co Cork.

Visit: <http://kilmainhamtales.ie> for more info on these incredible books.



COMPETITION €50 VOUCHER

HOW MANY PIECES OF KIDS COMBAT KIT ARE 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 Christina Foley, Co Cork. Closing date is 20th April 2016.

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THE CHOCOLATE SOLDIERS

The Story of the Young Citizen Volunteers and 14th Royal Irish Rifles during the Great War

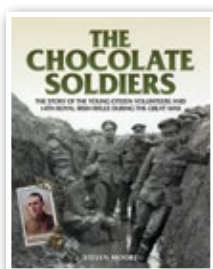
Author: Steven Moore
Publisher: Colourpoint Creative Ltd (December 2015)
www.colourpointbooks.co.uk
ISBN: 978-1-78073-059-2
Price: €20
Pages: 272

Steven Moore's book looks at The Young Citizen Volunteers (YCV), which was founded with the support of some of the most prominent and influential figures in late 1912 in Belfast; it was conceived as non-sectarian and non-political youth movement for 18-25 year olds. On the outbreak of World War the YCV merged with the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) to become part of the British Army's 14th Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles (RIR).
"From naive young men who paraded Belfast in their signature grey uniforms to the khaki-clad battle-hardened troops of the Western Front, this is the story of the YCV and 14th Royal Irish Rifles told largely through the words of the soldiers themselves."

It was on the battlefields of Europe during the Great War that the YCV who formed the nucleus of the 14th Bn RIR were unkindly dubbed 'The Chocolate Soldiers' – this was mainly due to their high standard of training and favourite status when the unit entered the war.

Stephens's book brings the stories of these young to life as they went to war like so many other Irishmen in search of adventure and in the just cause of fighting the Nazi war machine as it rolled through Europe occupying country after country. The book contains many photographs, documents and maps.

Steven Moore is also the author of 'Hanged at Crumlin Road Gaol, The Story of Capital Punishment in Belfast' published by Colourpoint Creative Ltd in December 2013, ISBN: 9781780730493 and priced €12.66. **WF**



DANCE WITH THE ENEMY

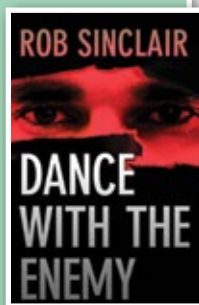
(The Enemy Series #1)

Author: Rob Sinclair
Publisher: Clink Street Publishing (February 2014)
ASIN: B00KK6FJSC
Price: €1.27 eBook / €9.80 PB
Pages: 361

Rob Sinclair's debut novel 'Dance with the Enemy', introduces us to intelligence agent Carl Logan, now a member of the British/American Joint Intelligence Agency (JIA). Logan is the best solo agent the JIA has, still on medical leave as a result of the beatings and torture he received at the hands of international terrorist Youssef Salim. He is reservedly called back in to the line of fire to find missing US Attorney General Frank Modena, who was abducted while in Paris on negotiations. When Logan finds out Salim is involved he teams up with FBI agent Angie Grainger for the same mission but with different agendas – Logan's is to hunt down the man who left him for dead.

Rob Sinclair uses his international experience as forensic fraud investigator for over a decade to create a real life character to rival Lee Child's Jack Reacher, and produces a great 'can't put down' thriller with plenty of twists and turns.

Rob's second book in the series 'Rise of the Enemy' was published in April 2015, and the third, 'Hunt for the Enemy', was published in February 2016. The Enemy series has received widespread critical acclaim with many reviewers and readers having likened Rob's work to authors at the very top of the genre, including James Patterson and Lee Child. **WF**



ON A WING AND A PRAYER

By Comdt Brendan M. Roahan Retd.

Brendan Roahan was born near Clones, Co Monaghan, schooled in Limerick and Kerry. He served for over 20 years in the Defence Forces retiring in 1992 at the rank of Comdt. He is the owner of Corcreggan Mill Accommodation and Camping in Dunfanaghy, Co Donegal.

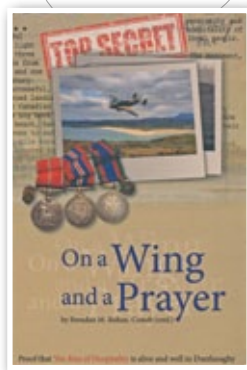
In 2015 Brendan wrote and self published a book about a commemorative project he had proposed and a monument he had built at Killyhoe beach, with amazing community support, to honour a local WW2 humanitarian event. The project took a momentous effort and, given the good fortune of the aircraft crew who landed, in emergency circumstances, he called the book 'On a Wing and a Prayer'.

Brendan wrote his first proper short story 'Soldier's Farewell' in 2004 but it was not until 2006 that he began writing several more in quick succession.

"I wrote 'Soldier's Farewell' with the possibility in mind that it might, somehow, be found suitable for inclusion on my favourite Irish Radio programme, 'Sunday Miscellany', which I have been listening to for most of my life. ... It was recorded in Letterkenny and was broadcast by RTE Radio on 16th July 2006."

Brendan also published a Dunfanaghy Walking Guide, 'Rambles and Ramblings of a Blow-in' in 2000 and a 2nd edition in 2010, it is available free to download on www.corcreggan.com.

Brendan still has some copies of 'On a Wing and a Prayer' available for sale priced €10, you can contact him on brendanr@eircom.net or Corcreggan Mill on 074 91 36409. **WF**



WHAT I DO

NAME

SUZANNE WALL

RANK

COMDT

UNIT

BN HQ, 7 INF
BN RES

BY CPL LEE COYLE

I grew up in Dundrum, Dublin, and went to school at Muckross Park College in Donnybrook. One day when I was young, a car accident occurred outside my house and I felt helpless not knowing what to do to help the injured. It was this that drove me to choose a profession in nursing after I finished school.

I started my training to be a registered general nurse in St Laurence's Hospital, better known as the Richmond Hospital, the year I left school. It was a tough three years, with long days studying and training and only one day off a week.

When I finished my training in 1987 I got a job in Beaumont Hospital as a staff nurse. While working there I was told by a personal contact about a matron's vacancy in Mary Mount Inter-

national School in Rome. This gave me a great opportunity to work abroad in a management and leadership role, which was not available in nursing at that time.

I worked in Rome for two years, and was directly responsible for the health and welfare of girls from all over the world, including children of diplomats; it was an amazing experience.

In 1990 I decided to return home but unfortunately there were no nursing jobs available. While searching, I received a phone call from the Eli Lilly pharmaceutical company to say that someone I knew from Rome had recommended me for the position of sales rep. I had an interview and secured the job.

A few years later at Mass one day I learned that the FCÁ were taking in females, when our local parish priest, Father Breslin, a former member of the Chaplaincy Service, announced: "They have found you boots girls, you can join the FCÁ!"

I was interested as my father had served with 44 Inf Bn in Cathal Brugha Bks, as had my uncle and some other local guys.

In July 1993 I enlisted in B Coy, 21 Inf Bn, in the Coastguard Station, Dun Laoghaire. (It was here that I met my future husband, who was also serving in 21 Inf Bn.)

After having attained the rank of corporal I was selected for an officer course and became one of the first females commissioned in a reserve infantry unit in November 1997.

In 2002 I resigned from my job as a pharmaceuticals rep to stay home and I set up my own clothes business.

With the re-org of the Reserve in 2005, my unit was amalgamated with 20 Inf Bn to become 62 Inf Bn. I was promoted to captain in 2008 and became Assistant Adjt, Bde HQ Res. In 2009 I returned to 62 Inf Bn as Adjutant.

I had always wanted to return to nursing, and in 2009 I took the opportunity to do so when I took up a nursing appointment working with the elderly in Simpson's Hospital, Dundrum.

The next Reserve re-org in 2013 amalgamated us with 7 Inf Bn, which has seven companies, four PDF and three RDF.

I was promoted again in October 2015, making me the first female infantry commandant in the RDF. I am currently a staff officer (SO) in 7 Inf Bn HQ, acting as the link between the three RDF companies and the battalion commander. I am also Gender Focal Point Person for 7 Inf Bn.

The PDF companies of 7 Inf Bn have embraced the RDF companies and vice-versa, which make the single-force concept work. We are now utilised and fully involved like never before in operations, exercises and ceremonial events.

I am a full-time nurse but I also consider myself a full-time reservist. I am proud to be a member of this organisation; one that doesn't give itself enough credit for its achievements and its 'can do' attitude.

I have two teenage boys, Andrew and Alexander, and my husband is also a commandant in the RDF, with 37 years' service. I enjoy walking and I'm an avid golfer. I am passionate about my nursing career and enjoy hugely the diversity offered by my role in the RDF. ■





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