



THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

AN COSANTÓIR

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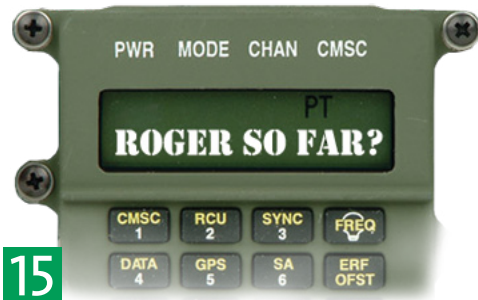
**Applications welcome from
ALL PDF personnel irrespective of Corps and Branches**

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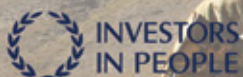


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Front Cover

Two-Stars from 1 Mech using a flint to start a fire. Photo: Cpl Neville Coughlan.

Correction:

In the April issue on page 16, the picture of the large canon was wrongly captioned. The caption should have read: a 9.2in coast artillery gun, one of two mounted at Fort Templebreedy on the south side of the approaches to Cork Harbour.

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

Hindsight is 20/20 vision, but I believe that when we look back on the Defence Forces over the past few years, we'll see some monumental shifts in direction that will only be seen in their true light by historians. Advances in equipment, training, organisation and taskings have taken place across the entire Defence Forces. Serving members now live and work through this advancement. It's easy to lose sight of the bigger picture, not to see the forest for the trees, just to focus on that course or exercise in front of you and forget everything else.

That's where An Cosantóir comes in. Today, it is the most complete and well rounded picture of what's going on in the Defence Forces. Before you think that what's happening in some far removed Corps is irrelevant to you, read the magazine, see the importance being placed on interoperability, on the Single Force Concept and on the promotion of the Strategic Corporal. This will impact you at some stage of your career, though you'll probably only notice it with the above mentioned hindsight.

To be one step ahead of the rest, start with this issue. Our largest article is 'Live Firing Zone' by Sgt Karl Byrne (pages 11-13). Detailing the painstaking lengths Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT) Instructors have to go through to pass this course, it is also shows LFTT as a discipline that will not only stay in the Defence Forces, but will shape our future training. Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald follows this up with a look at the Regimental Signals Course. Although the course title has remained the same, the technology and importance placed on unit signalers have increased over the years and this is reflected on page 15. Countering the 21st Century over-reliance on technology is survival training. It's a back to basics block of instruction that breeds a more confident and able soldier. Read about it on pages 18 and 19 and start preparing for your next few days on the ground.

The thinking behind training Cadets is presented on pages 20 and 21. You could take any part of their course and see the principles discussed here applied in an exacting and professional fashion. The almost forgotten Kildare Barracks is examined in our history slot, pages 26 and 27. I have to admit that I drove past it on countless occasions, never realising the significance it played for the Defence Forces. Now I have an enormous respect for the gunners who completed some legendary marches that belong in some epic novel.

Our first ever all-female Guard of Honour to commemorate the founding of Cumann na mBan is covered on our In Focus pages. Have a look and think about how we got from Cumann na mBan to the present day. This trend of advancement will continue in An Cosantóir with articles planned on the future of the Mowag and how it's deployed, as well as some detailed looks at some of our equipment and people that define us as the 21st Century Defence Forces. So arm yourself with An Cosantóir and keep yourself in the loop; we're covering your future!

Paul Millar

Cpl Paul Millar - Editor

ARW SOF Qualification Course X-Ray One

Date of applications for the Preparation Course has been changed to Friday, 2nd May, 14:00 and not the date advertised on the inside front cover. Course Notification and Joining Instructions for the Preparation Course have been issued to formations and units.

If you have a story or topic you feel we should cover, please don't hesitate to get in touch and let us know. Here are some helpful hints: As a general rule we look for a 2 page article with 1,200 words (600 for 1 page). Larger articles are considered but may be spread over two issues or submitted to the Defence Forces Review. Pictures are as important, please send them in at around 2mb. All material should have a military related theme, or be of interest to our readers. Email or call: magazine@military.ie or 045 44 5307.



◀ Naval Service Reserve personnel from Waterford and Dublin with Irish Senator Mark Daly at a 9/11 wreath laying ceremony in New York on 15th March. *Photo: Amy Dreher.*



▲ Pictures of Fr James Gilmore Br ONET, in St Patrick's Parade, Swords March 2014. *Photo: Sean Shinnors.*



The 29th Recruit Platoon, 6 Inf Bn, Custume Bks had their passing out ceremony on 28th February. On the left is Pte Christopher Woods receiving his award for best kit; centre is Pte Kevin Donohoe with his award for best shot and to the right is Pte Kevin Burke being presented with his award for best soldier by GOC 2Bde, Brig Gen Beary. *Photo: Lt James Swan.*



◀ Two recipients of the GOC Air Corps Award stand alongside Brigadier General Paul Fry. Cpl Joe O'Donnell (left) received his award for his contribution to pipe band music in the Air Corps and the Defence Forces. To the right is Sgt Tommy Sheahan with his award in recognition of his contribution to the sporting life of the Air Corps, the Defence Forces and his involvement with St. Michaels Boxing Club, Athy.



◀ The 36 members of 1 Platoon, 2 AR, on their passing out on 27th March at Custume Bks, Athlone.
Photo: RSM Noel O'Callaghan



◀ Minister of State at the Department of Defence Mr Paul Kehoe, TD, inspects a Guard of Honour from 42nd Infantry Group UNIFIL escorted by Lt Donal Mitchell on St. Patrick's Day. Photo: Comdt Denis Hanley



▶ Presentation of Best Student Award Level 6, by DJ7, Col Burns to Cpl Oman. This award is accredited through the Potential NCO Cse by IT Carlow. Cpl Oman was deployed overseas during the conferring ceremony of DF personnel, at IT Carlow in Oct 2013. He received his award in McKee Bks on his return from overseas service. Photo: Armn Fox



◀ Cpl Vinny Murray piper with 27 Inf Bn at the Ceremony of The Laying of the Foundation Stone for Cross of Sacrifice at Glasnevin Cemetery on 31st March.



▶ Caroline Björke rode successfully as an international Three Day Event competitor until suffering a serious back injury. Having fully recovered from her accident, she recently walked from Clifden to Dublin (approx 330 Kms) to focus attention on spinal research and to raise much needed funds for Beaumont hospital. She is pictured here approaching the final leg of her marathon walk accompanied by Capt Brian Curran-Cournane riding Deerpairc & Lt David Power riding Donadea.

▶ A member of the International Contingent serving with EUTM Mali tries his hand at Poc Fada, organised by members of IRCON on ST Patrick's Day.



SUPPORTING OUR LEINSTER VETERANS

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD



On Tuesday April 1st, An Cosantóir met with one of the newest branches of the Organisation of National Ex-Servicemen and Women (ONE), the Royal Meath, situated in the north Leinster area.

The Royal Meath branch was set up just over a year ago (January 2013) so that ONE members from the area wouldn't have to travel to Dublin or Drogheda/Slane for ONE meetings and events.

The branch chairman, Conor Swords, who has served with ONE for 25 years, told us that he and other members of the Fr James Gilmore Branch (Artane) established the new branch and formed a committee. They canvassed the areas of Kells, Navan, Trim, Oldcastle and Virginia looking for new members, and now have 34 active members in the branch. Members of the new branch have sponsored three flags (national, UN and branch) as well as the chairman's chain of office.

Despite being in existence for just over a year, the Royal Meath Branch has taken part in many events, and not just ONE events; others have included the French Foreign Legion Day, Anzac Day, and the Royal British Legion. The Branch has also built up a great relationship with the Thurles Memorial Trust, with Royal Meath members being made honorary members of the Trust.

The Branch has planned a church collection on August 3rd and they hope to hold their first annual Mass and Lá na bhFiann in September.

Branch PRO, Bridget Quinn, who is possibly the first female PRO in ONE, told us that

branch members have a long history of travelling on the International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes, with Bridget completing 14 trips and Conor with in excess of 20.

Always on the lookout for new members, the Branch meets on the first Tuesday of every month in the Martry Restaurant (formally the Silver Tankard), Kells Road (R417), Navan, Co Meath. Prospective members can also contact Peter Rogers, the branch secretary, on 086-4040049 or Bridget Quinn on 087-8332762. ■

A Perspective from the Ranks

BY PTE LEONA GILLIGAN



On 02 April, 32 females drawn from 6 Inf Bn, the Air Corps, and the Naval Service, came together to form the first all-female presidential guard of honour.

Boarding our buses at the break of dawn with freshly pressed shirts and polished boots, official dress at the ready, and hair carefully wrapped in hairnets, we set off for Glasnevin Cemetery to participate in a ceremony to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of Cumann na mBan. There, among the gravestones of Michael Collins, Éamon de Valera and Charles Stewart Parnell, 32 women stood waiting to be called in to place so that they could make their own mark on history.

After the officer in command of the guard of honour drew her sword and gave us the order to march into place, we stood proudly shoulder to shoulder on Glasnevin Cemetery's cobblestones, our arms at the salute as the national flag was raised in honour of the women of Cumann na mBan. A wreath was then laid by President Michael D Higgins.

As the ceremony in memory of these heroic Irish women drew to a close we marched smartly off the parade ground to a round of applause from the crowd who witnessed this historic and very memorable event. ■



Defence Forces Exhibition Opens in Poznań

BY JUSTNYA MAZUREK-SCHRAMM

For the second time the Irish Culture Foundation in Poland has organised an exhibition dedicated to the Irish Defence Forces. Last year's exhibition, in Museum Ziemi Kaliskiej in Kalisz, was a great success, drawing many visitors.

This year's exhibition opened on 14th March in Wielkopolskie Military Museum, Poznań, the oldest military museum in Poland, which opened in October 1919. The museum was virtually destroyed during World War II, losing many valuable historical Polish artefacts, and was reopened in Stary Rynek (Old Market Square) in 1963. Since then the museum has played an important role in preserving the memory of Poland's military history.

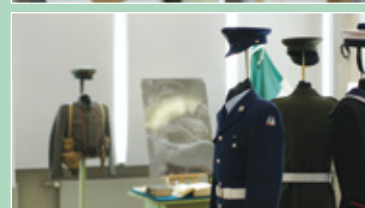
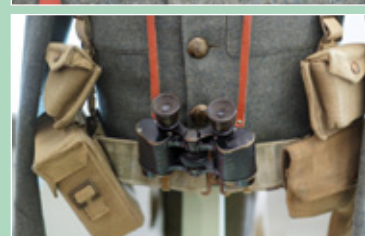
The exhibition, 'Irish Defence Forces – Army of the Emerald Island', which portrays the history and present activities of the Defence Forces, will run until 29th June. Most of the artefacts – uniforms, pictures and books – belong to the Irish Culture Foundation but many thanks are also due to Comdt Padraic Kennedy from Military Archives who helped to facilitate the inclusion of modern uniforms, photographs and old recruiting posters.

Visitors are able to trace the history of the Irish Defence Forces – Army, Air Corps and Naval Service – through a series of educational panels. Part of the exhibition is dedicated to Ireland's and Poland's participation in EU missions, with Polish and Irish uniforms displayed together.

Some of the oldest exhibits are dedicated to Michael Collins. These include copies of Collins's book *Arguments from the Treaty* from 1921 and Piaras Beaslai's *Michael Collins and the Making of the New Ireland* from 1926. The oldest uniform on display is a battle dress-style cavalry uniform from 1944.

The exhibition's launch was attended by the Irish Ambassador to Poland, HE Eugene Hutchinson; the Honorary Consul of Ireland in Poznań, Mr Mateusz Morawiecki; and the Director of the National Museum, Prof Wojciech Suchocki.

The Irish Culture Foundation is organising additional events around the exhibition, including presentations on the Irish Defence Forces for adults and children and a concert of Irish music. ■



MILITARY MEDIA Round Up



"Abbreviation of military phrases is to become a thing of the past, it has been revealed. 'We are finding such phrases are causing significant confusion among those joining us from the civilian world. Over the next 18 months we will be working to halt acronym use across all Army formations, with the clear exception of unit titles.' Spot checks will then take place alongside military annual training tests to ensure abbreviations are no longer used, with a full ban coming into force in 2016."

Soldier, April, 2014.

"2013 AUSA Show Report: The Sikorsky Raider is configured to the same X2 technology design that will be used by the Defiant. The rigid co-axial rotor design allows the Raider to achieve flight speeds of up to 250kts – roughly twice that of other helicopters – while still maintaining high manoeuvrability. It has one-third the turn radius of a conventional helicopter and is able to execute 3G turns at high speeds."

Military Technology, Issue 3, 2014.

Photo: www.army-technology.com



"Maximum Lethality in Urban Operations: ST Kinetics unveiled two new combat rifles that are designed for compactness, minimum weight and full ambidextrous operations in a highly configurable multirole package. The STK BMCR (Bullpup Multirole Combat Rifle) and STK CMCR (Con-

tional Multirole Combat Rifle) possess multirole flexibility for assault, marksman/sharp shooter and suppressive roles. The STK BMCR (pictured) is designed to be the shortest bullpup design in the world."

Military Technology, Issue 3, 2014. Photo: www.flickr.com/photos/cks2k2/

"Twisting Thunder 2014 barreled onto Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany, April 1, leaving 28 simulated fatalities, two collapsed structures, trapped victims, a host of injuries and displaced families."

"The two-day exercise tested the procedures, plans and policies in place in the event of a tornado on the installation as well as the coordination between partnering agencies," Marvin Thomas, chemical biological radiological nuclear explosives protection officer, Mission Assurance Branch, MCLB Albany, said the goal was to return MCLB Albany to pre-incident operating conditions."

www.marines.mil, April 2014



"2013 AUSA Show Report: The Colt booth was centred around two technology demonstrators, titled Sniper Weapon & Observer Reconnaissance Devices (SWORD)... The addition of data connectivity to a load carriage vest through a unique single point sling. Network connectivity includes the Android smartphone attached to the rifle, as well as a tablet for the spotter. A camera attached to the riflescope allows the shooter to upload photos of potential targets in real time to other users on the network."



Military Technology, Issue 3, 2014. Photo: www.defensereview.com

"Reserve soldiers from the London Regiment will become the first to deploy as a whole platoon fully integrated with a regular unit. Around 50 members of the formation have embarked on a six-month tour in Cyprus alongside 1st Battalion, The Irish Guards."

Soldier, April, 2014.

"A highlight of the search for missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 has been the level of international co-operation which has brought together the navies of Australia, China, United Kingdom and Malaysia in a common cause."

The co-operation between navies presented an opportunity for People's Liberation Army-Navy (PLA-N) Liaison Officer, Commander Lin Wan, to embark in the Royal Australian Navy's HMAS Success from the destroyer Haikou (DDG-171) early on the morning of 9 April 2014. Commander Wan is the first PLA-N officer to operate at the tactical level with the Royal Australian Navy by embarking in a Fleet unit during an operation."

www.news.navy.gov.au/en/Apr2014

"The government is becoming increasingly concerned that human rights laws are hindering military operations, the Defence Secretary has hinted.... (he) said new legislation could be introduced to protect soldiers from civil litigation. 'We are clear that once we commit our military to combat, they must be able to carry out missions without constant fear of review in the civil courts.' The MoD faced 5,827 claims in 2012/13, with lawsuits costing the department some £36 million a year."

Soldier, April, 2014

LIVE FIRING ZONE

BY SGT KARL BYRNE

There are a number of questions that could be asked about exercising with live ammunition: what if soldiers' safety was not an issue or live-fire exercises were run by anybody or ammunition was used recklessly? Such questions are not an issue in the Defence Forces, however, thanks to initiatives like the LFTT (live-fire tactical training) course conducted by the Infantry Weapons Wing (IWW) in the DFTC. I met up with the instructors on the current course to find out more...

A GPMG SF is fired as flanking fire for a section strong assault.

The LFTT course, of which this is the seventh, is conducted every two years and is of seven weeks duration. To qualify for the course as an NCO candidates must be a sergeant (substantive) or higher. For officers the minimum qualification is first lieutenant with two years in the rank. The highest award on the course is an 'A' qualification ('A Qual'), which gives the NCO or officer the authority to prepare, plan and run an LFTT exercise. A 'B' qualification limits the holder to a supervisory role as an assistant to an 'A Qual', and a 'C' qualification only allows the holder to run a gallery range.

One of the many tests the students face is cutting out a 7.62mm safety template, which marks out the dimensions of the danger area for a 7.62mm weapon based on a 1:25,000 map. While a 5.56mm template could be cut it would only cover the Steyr, whereas the larger 7.62mm template covers the GPMG and allows for section-level exercises; the largest that the students will have to plan and execute on the course. The templates are used in conjunction with traces (overlays of the training area on the

selected map) to decide exact areas to be marked out on the ground to ensure safe use of the weapons.

Students must pass the template cutting test before using it to pass at least six out of ten test traces, with each trace getting progressively harder.

After passing these tests, students must then write up an exercise action safety plan (EASP) for a live-fire exercise. (Only blank ammunition is actually used on this initial exercise instead of live rounds.) In addition, a range action safety plan (RASP) is written up for a live-fire, buddy-pair, shoot, and then a RASP for a section-level live-fire shoot. (These can be for either a day- or night-shoot.)

EASPs and RASPs contain vital information on the safety aspects and limitations of the exercise and include a wide range of things such as care-of-hearing regulations, the manuals used to write them up, risk assessments, medical precautions, 'actions on...'; and the list goes on. They include a lot of essential information for all personnel involved in the shoot.

Exercise soldier firing his Steyr at the enemy.



Firing zone sign; only permitted people are allowed beyond this point while live firing is being conducted.



Troops being briefed from a RASP for a two man team shoot.



Sgt Greene briefs the troops for an ambush exercise.



The final assault of an attack.



A 203 grenade being slotted into its ammo pouch, making it easily accessible for use.

Each shoot designed by the students must be original in its design, incorporate realistic scenarios, and utilise different exercise areas. The buddy-pair shoot is classed as the minor test, while the major test takes the students up to section-level attacks, and involve the use of a flanking-fire weapon (normally a GPMG in the sustained-fire role) and the SRAAW (short-range anti-armour weapon) or high-explosive grenade.

When constructing a section-level shoot it is extremely important that originality is shown by the student to prove that they can plan a shoot on their own. Both the minor and the major tests are scrutinised down to the last detail in order to maintain the professional standard that the IWW set for each course they run.

While the challenges of the LFTT course are mainly mental they are nevertheless physically draining and it is not a course to be taken lightly. The fail rate on the course, while it has dropped down to approximately 25% over the years, is an indication of the difficulty faced by students, who often find themselves working after hours prepping for the next day's challenge to pass a trace, RASP, or template.

With LFTT seeming like a natural replacement for stages 4 and 5 of the annual range practice, these students are essential to Defence Forces' progression in the LFTT world. ■



A 203 grenade is launched on the enemy.



Equipment used to make a trace.

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ROGER SO FAR!

Vox Pops

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD

During March *An Cosantóir* visited the instructors and students of the regimental signal course being conducted by 2 Bde CIS in Cathal Brugha Bks, Dublin.

The course is conducted through classroom lessons and outdoor exercises such as Exercise 'Bald Eagle', which involves setting up a re-broadcast operation and remote commcen in the Kilbride training area, Co Wicklow.

Subjects covered on the course include voice procedure, comms security, computer training, commcen procedure, battery charging, radio equipments, CIS tactics and line equipments.

Sgt Jack Doyle, a highly experienced instructor with years of experience training signal operators in the Defence Forces, gave the definition of Communications Security (COMSEC) as: "the protection that results from all measures designed to deny to unauthorised persons, or potential or actual enemies, information of value that might be obtained from a study of communications." He also says students need to be aware that there are two types of COMSEC: physical and documentary.

Sgt Doyle also says that it helps awareness of comsec if you view

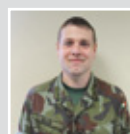
every communication, whether a phone call, SMS, or email, for example, as potentially having three participants: the sender and receiver, but also a possible interceptor. "That's why we have a Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) unit in the DF to enhance cyber security and operate countermeasures," he told us.

Students on the course are trained in the use of the SINCGARS AN/PRC 119E and its smaller 119C version; the Racal Cougar, Motorola GP 340, and Marconi personal radio systems; base-station setup; and the vehicle amplifier adaptor (VAA).

During one visit to the course we watched the students assemble a Clark 50ft mast, a very useful piece of equipment that can be deployed by a CIS detachment (1 NCO & 5 signallers) nearly anywhere that has adequate space for it.

All of the training the students receive on the regimental signallers course will be of use to them in their everyday work, whether it is on guard duty, aid-to-the-civil-power (ATCP) operations, mobile patrols, or overseas on peace-keeping duty. ■

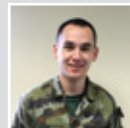
HERE'S WHAT SOME OF THE STUDENTS HAD TO SAY:



Pte Thomas Mullen, 7 Inf Bn, 10-years-service.

I came on this course to learn about radio systems and I want to gain points for the next Potential NCOs course in July this year. I found the

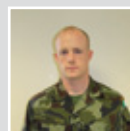
instruction very good, and I really enjoyed the course.



Tpr Stephen Butler, 2 Cav Sqn, 3-years-service.

I volunteered for the course to get a proper understanding of communications. I've

completed my MT Dvrs course and will be going on a motorcycle course in May later this year. It was an exciting course; the instructors were very helpful throughout.



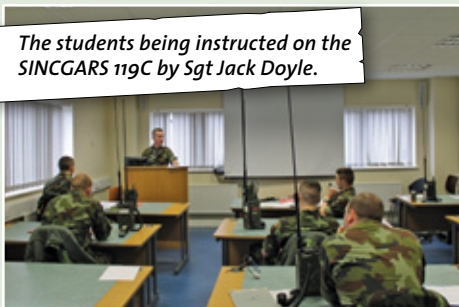
Pte Aaron O'Neill, 27 Inf Bn, 6-years-service.

I have a keen interest in CIS, I would like to go and do a communications operator's course (commop) and possible an IT Technicians course in IT Carlow.

I will try and apply for the Potential NCOs course this year too. I enjoyed the course; it was really interesting and enjoyable.

The students hoisting the Clark 50ft mast into position. Once in position, it can be elevated to it's maximum height.

The students being instructed on the SINCGARS 119C by Sgt Jack Doyle.



The instruction staff; L-R, Lt McNally, Cpl O'Sullivan, Sgt Doyle, Cpl Cahill.



Sgt Doyle showing the class the finer points of the Clark mast.



NORTH

SOUTH

EAST

WEST

DUBLIN'S

BY WESLEY BOURKE**PHOTOS BY** CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN AND
A/B DAVEY JONES

This month we
we visit our
most easterly

post in Dún Laoghaire to
meet with the sailors of
the Dublin Naval Service
Reserve (NSR).

The NSR is an integral
part of the Naval Service
and its members have a
very impressive skill set.
Like their army counter-
parts our naval reservists
display great dedication,
commitment, and profes-
sionalism and the Dublin
unit are typical of this
positive ethos.

Naval Service Reserve



As reservists, members of the unit have to take time off from their day jobs to put in their time at sea, on exercise, in training, or on ceremonial duties: it is a huge commitment. Like their army counterparts they come from all walks of life. In the Dublin unit there are IT experts, plumbers, office workers, a theatre technician, and care workers, to name a few.

Over the time we spent preparing this article the unit carried out a number of exercises with their Army Reserve colleagues; several joint NS/NSR guards of honour around the country; pilot survival training with the Air Corps; exercises with Customs; training with the RNLI and Coast Guard; round-the-clock security and water rescue at the Tall Ships; and provided liaison for visiting naval vessels; all in addition to continuing their own training and providing personnel to augment NS crews.

The important role played by the NSR is acknowledged at the highest levels. DCOS Support, Rear Admiral Mark Mellett DSM, told us: "The NSR facilitate our engagement with civil society in a unique manner while making an important contribution to our operational and ceremonial outputs."





"We are a very active unit," Dublin NSR's OC, Lt Cdr Steven Murphy, told us. "Our job is to support the Naval Service, to support DF operations on the East Coast, and to have a good working knowledge of the local area."

The NSR's primary task is maintaining levels of properly trained personnel who can perform all the duties assigned to it, including augmenting the crews of Naval Service vessels at sea. The NSR is divided into two groups of two units: NSR Eastern Group (Dublin and Waterford), and NSR Southern Group (Cork and Limerick). Each unit is equipped with a motor training launch (MTL), and twin 40hp rigid-hull inflatable boats (RHIBs). Training, administrative, and logistical support is provided by Naval Service cadre staff.

"Personnel who join our unit have to be disciplined, dedicated, and flexible, in order to do the job," Lt Cdr Murphy told us. "One week you may be doing a guard of honour, the following you may be at sea."

NSR personnel have to do maritime training in addition to their basic military training. "Personnel have to go through a progressive system of training both here and in the National Maritime College," explained Lt Conor Smyth. "In the college they do sea survival, fire-fighting, and damage control courses: this is compulsory for everyone going to sea. On the MTL they undergo helmsman's and deck operator's courses, and can then progress to navigation, day skipper, and coxswain courses. On the RHIBs they do bowman's and coxswain's courses."

Forgive the pun but there is certainly a lot to take onboard. When you break it down for a reservist it is even more demanding since all their time has to fit around their civilian commitments.

Each unit is only allocated so many days a year and some of the courses take several weeks, which takes up a lot of man hours. The Global Maritime Distress Safety System course, for example, is seven days long. However, courses like this are vital for the NSR. "It is because we are so highly trained that we are in big demand both with the Naval Service and at a local level," Lt Cdr Murphy said.

All of this training prepares NSR personnel to serve on NS vessels. "Our training launch may be small but the principles are the same as on a bigger naval vessel," said Lt Cdr Murphy.

There is a great camaraderie between the NSR and their permanent colleagues and once at sea the reservists are treated no different to their full-time counterparts. The courses and training that both go through are also exactly the same.

"Because our guys wouldn't have consistent experience on the bigger vessels or in bigger waters they may not necessarily be coxswains of the RHIBs when they go out with a naval vessel, but they would supplement the bowmen or boat crews on a fishery patrol boarding," Lt Cdr Murphy explained. "Onboard they would carry out duties such as look-out, helmsman, and general operative, all of which we would have taught them here."

"As an officer when I go to sea I would generally be an understudy to the navigation officer, or the boarding officer, for example," Lt Smyth told us. "We carry out fishery boardings with the regular crews and observe the logs and the hold being checked. We bring back any knowledge that we gain and pass it on to our personnel here in the unit."

All of the personnel we met love their unit and their job. A/Sea Reynolds typifies the enthusiasm displayed.

"I didn't know what to expect coming to the NSR," he told us, "and now they can't get rid of me! The training and the unit are great. I did a RHIB coxswain course in the Naval Base with reservists and regulars: that's great because then when you go to sea you may already know some of the guys and you're confident because you know you have undergone the same level of training."

Local knowledge is one of the key reasons the NSR is so important. We met L/Sea Brennan at the Tall Ships festival at which the unit had a major input. With MTL Niamh, two RHIBs, and several personnel from other NSR units, under his command, he was co-ordinating with other agencies including Dublin Port, Dublin Fire Brigade and Civil Defence. "Our knowledge of the Bay and the harbour put us in a good position to help out in many ways," he told us. "We know the area extremely well; the currents, the tides, and how the harbour works. We are also used to working with Dublin Port and the other state agencies, which means that when it comes to an event like this we can slot in very quickly. The authorities also know the high standard of training we receive, which gives them great confidence in us."

While the majority of the time reservists spend at sea with the NS is on routine patrols, a few reservists have taken part in foreign visits. A/Sea O'Sullivan, for example, travelled to France. "I've been to sea five times," he told us, "and the best was with LÉ Aoife to Brest."

If you are interested in a life at sea check out a unit near you on www.military.ie.

Leaving Dublin Bay behind we next head west to Clifden, Co Galway, to meet members of C Coy, 1 Cn Cois, to find out how the most westerly post in the Defence Forces is adapting to the single-force concept.

The

SURVIVAL

BY CPL PAUL MILLAR PHOTOS BY CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN



Making a Hut a Home

Pictures 1 to 5 and the centre image show the Privates from the 103rd Platoon putting their firesteel lessons to the test. They scraped a knife blade along the flint to produce the sparks to light the tinder, which in this case was wool and birch bark. They then added kindling (pics 4 & 5), gradually building up size until they had enough heat to burn their fuel, which would keep them warm until the morning.

The centre image shows a teepee one of the teams built with a fire inside; a very efficient way to keep warm, once properly controlled. The image on the left shows the average amount of firewood the teams needed for their fires, again depending on how well constructed the fires and shelters were.

GAME



Pte O'Brien collecting beams for his team's shelter.



Constructing a fire wall for a shelter is nearly as important as the roof because it retains a massive proportion of heat that would otherwise be lost, reducing the amount of fuel needed and the amount of energy expended in collecting firewood.

Thursday 13th March started out as a normal training day for the 103rd Two-Star Platoon. The 1 Mech troops and training NCOs began the day with a battle run before breakfast. The troops thought the run was the platoon's way of saying goodbye to some of the instructors who were deploying overseas: they were wrong. Instead, it was part of a deception plan designed to rip the soldiers from their normal routine and slam them into a survival scenario, where working as a team meant the difference between success and failure.

Foraging for items discarded by people is stressed by SERE instructors as it helps to find useful materials while maximising conservation of energy.



The change in routine happened directly after the run when instead of being marched straight to the cookhouse, they were marched straight onto the back of a truck. Travelling blind in the back with the canopies closed, the troops didn't know where they were heading until they eventually dismounted in Glenmalure. The penny finally dropped when they marched onto Cavannagh's Gap, overlooking the ominous Glen of Imaal, where they met the resident SERE (survival, escape, reaction to interrogation and extraction) instructors of 1 Mech.

Previously the students had received their SERE instruction from Sgt Gary O'Brien in a specially constructed outdoor classroom in the DFTC. There they received lessons in shelter building, lighting fires, conduct under capture, navigation, and attracting the all important attention to get extracted.

In an age of reliance on technology and the internet, survival training has become an increasingly important training tool to develop professional soldiers.

Despite their recent SERE lessons, the members of 103 Platoon didn't expect their knowledge to be put to the test so soon. An alternate training programme had been circulated to lull them into a false sense of security and to amplify the shock of the impending exercise.

Sgt O'Brien explained: "Their routine hadn't changed throughout recruit training: they always knew what to expect. They needed that shock." The air of emergency and uncertainty created by these changes certainly added to the realism of the exercise.

Some personal kit was allowed, mainly for safety and every patrol pack had a helmet, goggles, gloves, pocket knife, firesteel, warm top and four litres of water. However, the main asset they had was the other team members.

Broken into five isolated teams of six and with time pressing on after the march, delegation and communication were key to a comfortable night. With a specific task to keep a fire going until the morning or face 'relocation', the teams rostered sentries to maintain a watch on their fires and other team members.

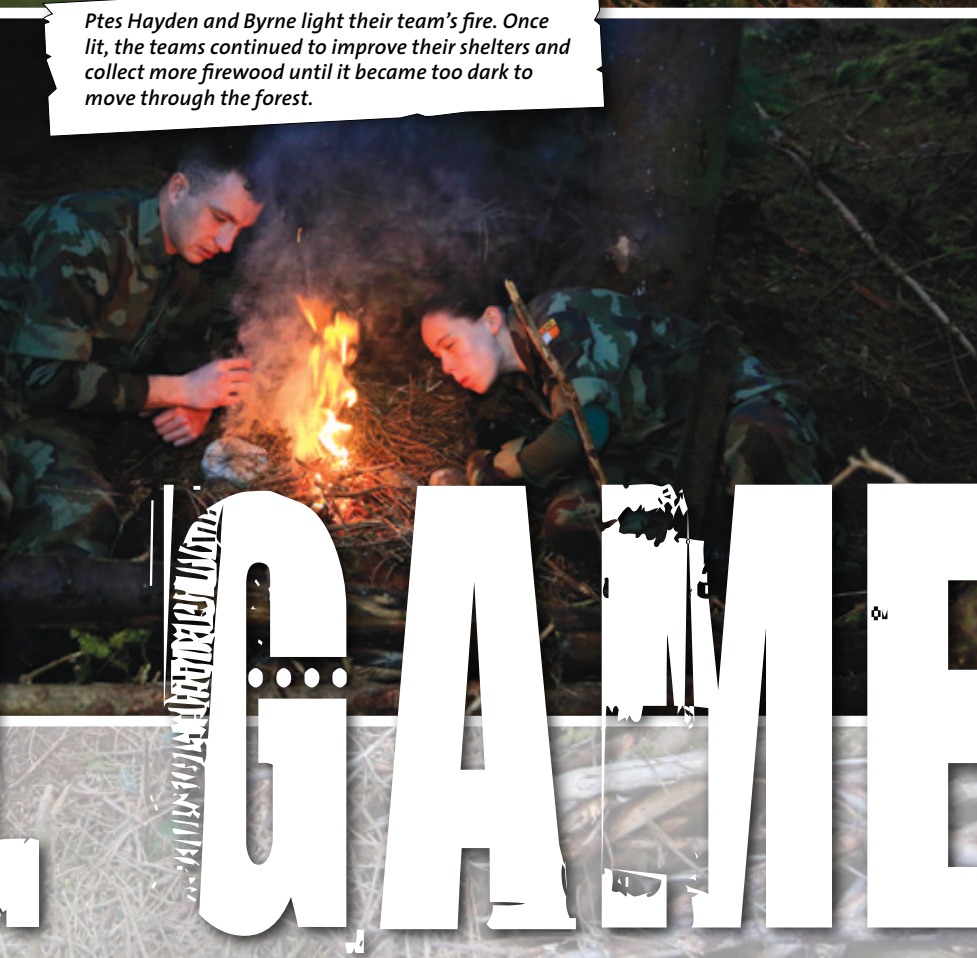
With the breaking of dawn and the breaking of camp, the instruction continued following a forced march to Cemetery Hill. After a demonstration of game preparation and field cooking methods, the lessons turned to the practical end of the extrac-

SURVIVAL

Sgt O'Brien advising Ptes Sinnott and Devoy. (The plastic sheeting used as roofing again shows the benefits of foraging.)




Ptes Hayden and Byrne light their team's fire. Once lit, the teams continued to improve their shelters and collect more firewood until it became too dark to move through the forest.




tion process. The teams marked a helicopter landing site and built signal fires to attract and guide the helicopters in. Expecting the constructing of the fires to be as far as it went, the teams were surprised when two AW-139s landed to extract them to an unknown location.

Told to set their compass to south and to continue to march on debussing, the troops were mentally preparing themselves for another night on the ground. However, once again they were taken by surprise when they found themselves close to Blessington, with the Curragh Plains rolled out below them. They were heading home. Cpl Louise Woods said: "They were never happier to see the water tower in the DFTC!" ■

THE GAME



Cdt Zammit (Armed Forces Malta) begins an initial survey of his target area for a range card.

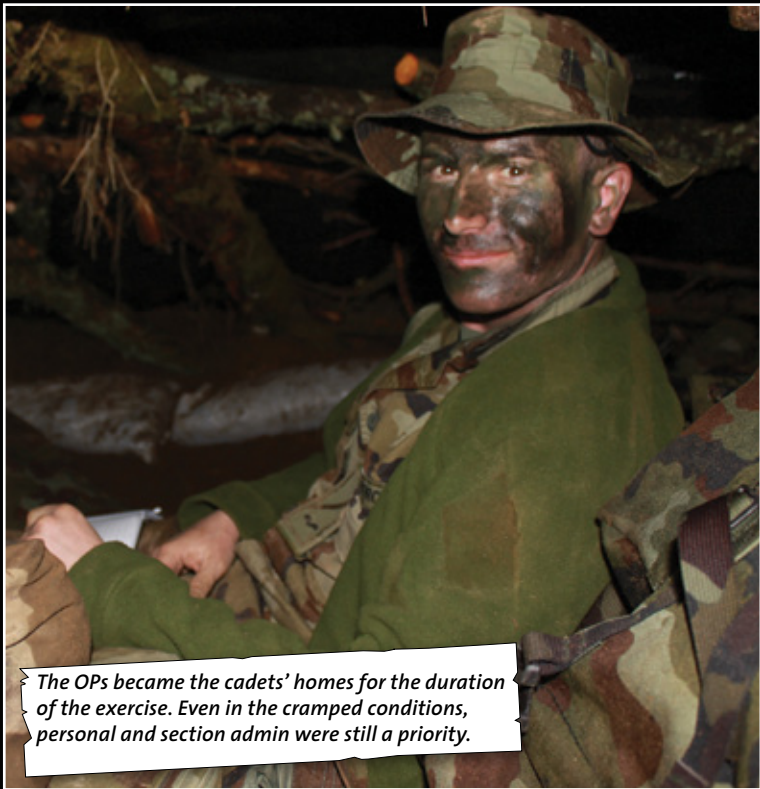


Instructors were always present to offer guidance and constantly question the cadets on their choices.

Learning to LEAD

BY CPL PAUL MILLAR

The process of transforming a civilian into a soldier is one that is constantly evolving in the Defence Forces. At the forefront of developing and implementing this process is the Cadet School, whose trained and experienced NCOs and officers incorporate lessons learned from previous cadet classes into future ones. An example of how they achieve this can be seen through 90 Cadet Class's first patrolling and ISTAR exercise, held in the Glen of Imaal last month.



The OPs became the cadets' homes for the duration of the exercise. Even in the cramped conditions, personal and section admin were still a priority.

Sentry duty in such confined areas is uncomfortable but necessary.



While it may seem that an 18-month syllabus of training, full of modules and extensive phases and sub-phases would be complicated, the way the Cadet School approaches it is surprisingly uncomplicated. The syllabus is broken into three

distinct phases; induction, foundation and core. Induction covers the basics of drill and weapons handling and leads straight into the foundation phase, of which the patrol and ISTAR exercise covered here is a part. This leads seamlessly on to the core phase, during which the lessons and skills of the previous phases are ingrained and perfected.

The teaching in the School mirrors the clarity of the overall approach as each lesson is clearly aimed at building up the students' knowledge and experience in concise, logical steps; metaphorically first teaching them to crawl, then walk and then run.

The atmosphere in the Glen throughout the exercise was one of instruction and learning through corrected mistakes, rather than by degradation; although the weather and claustrophobic confines of the OPs added their own form of pressure.

After a helicopter insertion and patrolling exercise, the students were given an area in which to construct their OPs and a target area that had to be covered. Breaking into detachments of four, by last light there were eight OPs covering a key junction and surrounding area. At all times an instructor was at hand to answer questions, treading the thin line be-

tween allowing peer learning to take place within group and intervening when mistakes needed to be corrected.

The constant presence of an instructor was not seen as excusing the students from displaying initiative. Every response was aimed at improving the students' own decision-making process, allowing them to come up with the solutions and implement them, and providing them with the tools necessary for the more advanced stages of their training.

As darkness descended, depending on the roster, cadets nestled into their OPs, updating their range cards and observation logs while others rested or provided security.

The scenario for the exercise was for the cadets to report on the activities of a hostile force involved in poppy cultivation and transportation. The 'enemy' (provided by troops from 28 Inf Bn) were carrying out activities including the use of forced labour, patrolling, planting IEDs and conducting checkpoints. All these activities were planned to test the observational and reporting skills of the cadets, who were using night-vision equipment, personal-role radios and observation logs. The quality of the observation logs would be used, in conjunction with the best OP, as the basis for a reward that the winning cadets would reap at a later stage.

The key point of this training to an outside observer is that, at this stage, it was all purposely directed towards learning and was in effect the 'walk through' part of the learning curve that would gradually bring the students up to the required level in a sustainable manner, while providing them with lessons they will be able to utilise for the rest of their careers.

In a future issue, we will follow the same class to see how the method of instruction will change as they move from induction and foundation to the all-important core phase. ■



This picture of an OP along a ditch line shows the great lengths the cadets went to in order to properly camouflage their positions.



Alertness and vigilance were at all times needed by the students, even after a tough patrolling exercise.

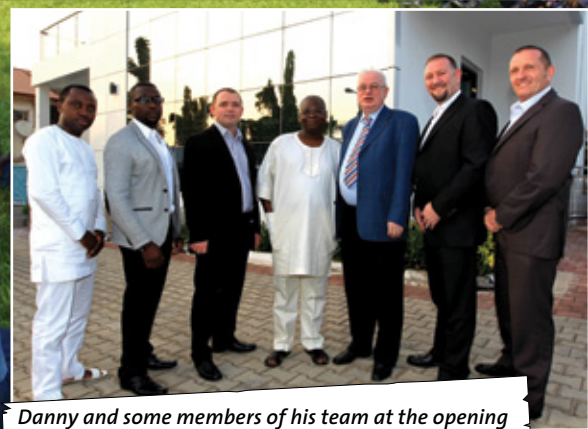
PASTURES NEW

Life after the Defence Forces

BY CPL PAUL MILLAR



Danny in action in Nigeria.



Danny and some members of his team at the opening of a new company office in Nigeria.

All members of the Defence Forces are faced with leaving at some point and most will view their departure with mixed feelings; excited by the thought of new opportunities but apprehensive about having to adapt to a less predictable, civilian way of life. An *Cosantóir* recently caught up with someone who made the transition successfully and found out how our skill sets can be transferred to the competitive civilian jobs market.

A soldier with 22 years' experience in the ARW, Danny Cluskey is now CEO of Global Risk Solutions, a security company that provides training, risk-management and security experts in Ireland and on the international stage. The company has been ISO 9001 certified (an international quality management standard) and has recently opened offices in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, and Saudi Arabia, one of the main players in the Gulf. He must be doing something right, so we asked him what lessons he took with him from the DF to help him in his new life.

One of the first myths he dispelled was that our military way of thinking is obsolete when we leave. "A lot of businesses use military terminology," Danny told us, "like 'plan of attack' and so on." Another advantage is that he says

when he introduces himself as a former soldier people take notice "because they associate it with good discipline, good time keeping and reliability". He points out that having served with the Irish Defence Forces carries even more weight; "even though we tend to undersell ourselves by adopting an inferiority complex that is completely unfounded, as we're among the best in the world: and this extends across all ranks, as we all know how to follow instructions, how to present ourselves well, and we all know about hierarchy and manners."

When Danny left he had a number of qualifications and contacts that helped him land his first job and he stresses how important it is to be proactive before you leave. "Pick a job that suits you," he says, "have your civilian qualifications ready and line up a job before you leave if you can, because, as the saying goes, 'people with jobs will get jobs'." Danny says that the process of leaving is also important. "Leave on good terms," he advises, "the DF is great for networks and social contacts."

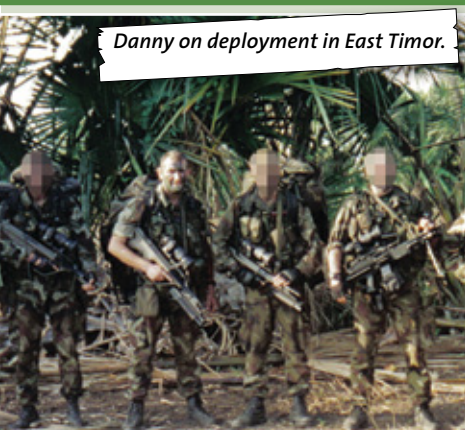
As regards what type of job to look for, he recommends focussing on your relevant skills initially. "After that," he says, "once you're educated in your chosen business, you

can apply those skills to any other job. While you shouldn't underestimate your value to prospective employers, honesty is essential in declaring your competencies: you can either do the job or you can't. Everything is based on ability, so even if you step in at the bottom rung, people will see your skills and your reputation will grow...there is no ceiling as a civilian." Regarding prospective employers Danny cautions that IT skills are one thing that will be looked for in most types of job.

One of the biggest riddles facing soldiers transferring to civilian life is how to turn a lifetime of military experience into a CV that can be understood by civilians. Danny's best tip for this is "to civilianise the skill set": don't focus on the course you did, but on the skills and core competencies that you got from it. Explain the extensive training you received: while companies may not know what an NCO course is, they will understand if you explain that it involved over

He said that many of these civilian experts are ex-soldiers who focused their energy on educating themselves in these specialist areas and are now gainfully employed. However he also admitted that nobody can be an expert in all these wide-ranging fields, which begged the question; "How do we identify our weaknesses in the civilian workplace?" It would have been all-too easy for others in a management position to claim they know it all and make the subsequent mistakes which would have cost their own employment or contracts. Danny's answer was simple; "The DF gives a rounded education but, there's a saying which can be summed up as 'always surround yourself with people who are smarter than you'..., so I always ask who can do that better than me."

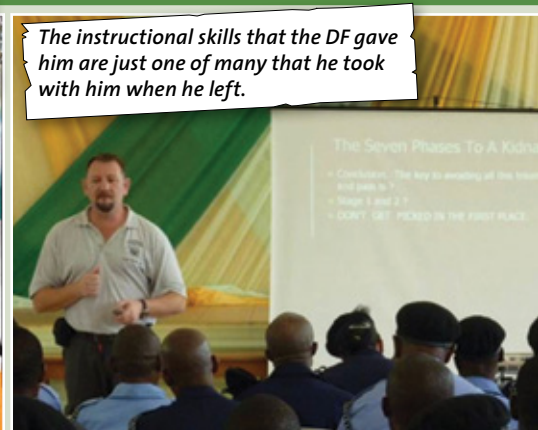
Danny's successful transition to the civilian jobs market has lessons in it that every member of the DF can apply to the next stage of their professional life. One overarching



Danny on deployment in East Timor.



The company has grown from strength to strength. Here are members of his team with the Taoiseach Enda Kenny in the Middle East.



The instructional skills that the DF gave him are just one of many that he took with him when he left.

20 weeks of leadership training that focused on problem-solving, delegation, teamwork and instruction in a high pressure environment. Likewise, a heavy machine gunner has shown himself or herself to be mechanically proficient. At the end of the day, we're all trained to be motivated and have a high level of initiative. Almost all NCOs are top-class instructors that can outperform the majority of their civilian counterparts because they are capable of delivering lessons on anything in a structured and focused manner, maximising the transfer of knowledge to the student.

Finally, he suggested keeping the CV short, no more than a couple of pages and always make the effort to hand-deliver it, even if you're still required to complete one of the online or digital versions. Treat the delivery of your CV like a mini-interview; present yourself well and make a good impression. One course that is on offer to help with this and will be covered in a later issue, is the Pre-Retirement Course. It's a couple of days long and covers CV preparation, pension and tax entitlements as well as how to maintain the all important social contacts through veteran organisations. Run by the PSS, it brings in civilian experts to help with the transition process.

Danny explained the intricate and multi-layered approach his company takes to providing security, how what constitutes a threat has evolved over the years to require specialists in subjects that range from the physical to the digital.

fact that emerged from speaking to Danny is that regardless of his business experiences, he still has an attitude that is unique to the military. His extensive DF experience has created a core set of values that he uses and recognises on a daily basis to improve his life and business; "When ever I'm asked, I still introduce myself as a former soldier - I'm proud of it."

If you have any tips or suggestions for serving personnel who are about to enter the civilian jobs market, from CV tips to tax entitlements, email them to: magazine@military.ie. We'll compile them on a monthly basis for the rest of the year and publish them on www.dfmagazine.ie as an extension to this article.

Remember that there is a community of former DF members out there and many of them are more than willing to give advice, including Danny, whose door is always open. ■



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FIRST-AID MYTHS

This tac-aide is the first in a series about first-aid, aimed at soldiers on the ground. Before we get into dealing with battlefield injuries, there are a few common myths we need to dispel first. Remember that every day when you take care of a symptom, tend to a small wound, or administer emergency care, you are practicing first-aid. But this tac-aide only contains simple instructions, in cases requiring life-saving health-care techniques please get professional medical advice.

The most important first step in first aid is to do no further harm – but the list below briefly outlines some of the more common first-aid myths around:

- Don't breathe into a paper bag for hyperventilation.
- Don't drink alcohol to warm up when cold, it will only lead to hypothermia in cold weather.
- Don't drink alcohol for a toothache or any other pain.
- Don't put butter, vegetable shortening (Stork/Frytex), or any other type of grease on a burn; grease can trap heat and lead to infection and scarring.
- Don't put a raw steak on a black eye or any other injury; the bacteria on the meat may contaminate the wound or the eye.
- Never apply a tourniquet to a person with a venomous bite or try to suck out the poison. A tourniquet will cut off blood supply to the area and sucking may introduce more bacteria and spread the venom.
- Don't use hydrogen peroxide to clean wounds, it may kill the body's defensive cells that are rushing to the wound to take care of invading bacteria.
- People don't swallow their tongues during seizures, so don't try to hold the tongue or put anything in the mouth. Don't restrain the person either.
- Don't squeeze the stinger on a bee sting or try to pull it out with tweezers - this will squeeze venom into the wound; use a credit card to scrape it away.
- Don't throw your head back during a nosebleed - it will cause blood to run down your throat and you may vomit. Instead, lean forward slightly and pinch your nose for ten full minutes.
- If you have something embedded in your skin, you should not pull it out if there is a chance the object is sealing a wound and preventing bleeding. Get medical help if you are not sure.
- Don't continue to run with shin splints; running while injured will increase your injury.
- Don't put vinegar on a sunburn; instead, apply cool compresses.
- You can't stop motion sickness by staring at a point on the horizon.
- Poison ivy is not contagious, but the oil is. If the oil is on you, it can be spread to others.
- Don't use rubbing alcohol to cool down a fever - it will absorb into the skin and may cause further illness.



This tac-aide should not be used to diagnose and treat illnesses and injuries or to develop a treatment plan for any health problem without consulting your doctor or other qualified medical practitioner.

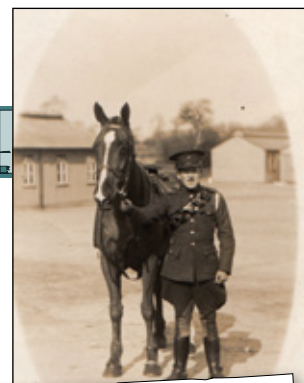
Source: 'Everything First Aid Book' by Nadine Saubers, published by Adams Media (March 1, 2008), ISBN: 978-1598695052.

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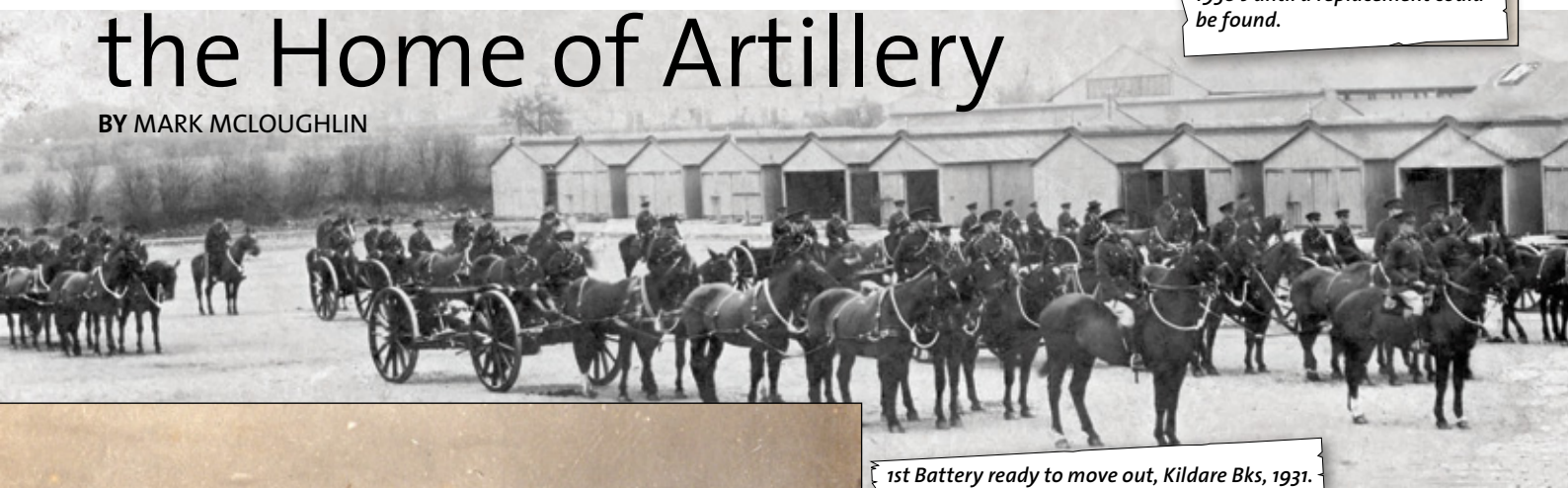
KILDARE

the Home of Artillery

BY MARK MCLOUGHLIN



Horse's were used well into the 1930's until a replacement could be found.



1st Battery ready to move out, Kildare Bks, 1931.



Kildare 1919 shoot.

Kildare Barracks, Barracks, renamed Magee Barracks in 1952, was the home of the Artillery Corps from February 1925 until its closure in September 1998 and was pivotal in the development of artillery in the Free State Army during the 1920s.

Kildare Bks originally opened as an artillery barracks in April 1902 when the newly built hutted camp was occupied by XXXI and XXXIII Brigades of the Royal Field Artillery. Its proximity to newly opened artillery ranges at the Glen of Imaal, Co Wicklow and to the Curragh made Kildare an ideal location and the barracks played a pivotal role in the expansion and development of the town in the early 1900s.

Gunners from the barracks formed part of the British Expeditionary Force that sailed for France in August 1914 and suffered some of first casualties of the war.

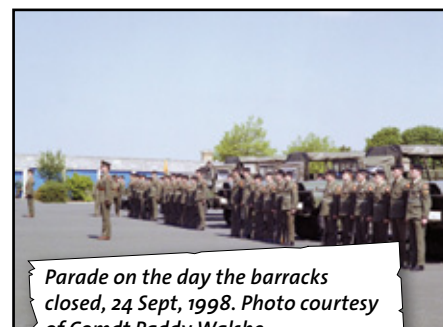
When the barracks was vacated by the British in April 1922 it became the training depot of the newly created Civic Guard and experienced a mutiny when the new regime was challenged by disaffected policemen. It subsequently acted as the Defence Forces' first military college with an Officers' School of Instruction operating at Kildare during 1923-24.

Kildare Bks returned to its roots on 25 February 1925 when Artil-

lery HQ, under the command of Maj Patrick Mulcahy assisted by Comdts Patrick Maher and Dominic Mackey, and the Corps' two batteries, transferred to Kildare by train. From the railway station the guns were brought by horse through the town, as recorded by one of the first gunners William Bonar: 'We came from the railway station with increasing speed and came around Graham's Corner (into Market Square) at full tilt with outriders on the lead horses urging them on, drivers shouting, whips cracking, horses galloping, and gun and limber wheels crashing on metalled road.'

The Artillery Corps had been formally established on 23 April 1923 with No 1 Battery established on 10 July 1923 and No 2 Battery on 2 January 1925, both with four 18-pdr field guns. Major Mulcahy immediately set about creating an efficient unit, using a mixture of former British soldiers and former IRA members.

The first training officer, Harry Frowd St George Caulfeild, was a former British soldier and member of the Auxiliary Division Royal Irish Constabulary (ADRIC) more



Parade on the day the barracks closed, 24 Sept, 1998. Photo courtesy of Comdt Paddy Walshe.



A 1930's FieldKitchen that would have accompanied the troops on the firing range.

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commonly referred to as the Auxiliaries or 'Auxies'. The next training officer, Garret Brennan, and the battery commander of No 1 Battery, James McLoughlin, were ex-Royal Garrison Artillery. Major Mulcahy himself was an ex-Royal Engineer, the only ex-British army officer to become Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces. Captain Bertie Thompson had served in the Boer War and with the Canadian artillery in the Great

to Wicklow a rumour started to circulate that the canteen in the Glen had been closed. Speaking of this incident An t-Óglach wrote: 'A joke's a joke, but cruelty is another matter'.

The Corps' shoot the following year was filmed by British Pathé News and shown under the title 'In the Wicklow Mountains: President Cosgrave and Mr. Hughes, Minister for Defence, watch Irish

Artillery Practice'. The An t-Óglach correspondent at the shoot reported that the film camera caused some excitement among the troops who made 'some rush' to get a look at it.

In those days getting the guns from Kildare to the Glen was a major exercise for both horses and men. Part of the route between Dunlavin and the Glen became known as 'Sub-section Hill' as it was on this point of the journey that the horses pulling the guns

War, while numerous other gunners and NCOs had prior military service.

The gunners played an important public relations role and were on hand for the numerous parades and displays that were a part of the Irish Free State in the 1920s, including the St Patrick's Day parade, the annual Wolfe Tone commemoration at Bodenstown in July and the Griffith-Collins commemoration in August.

The Corps' first shoot was carried out by No 1 Battery on 1 September 1925 in the Glen of Imaal, with the guns under the control of the training officer, Capt Garret Brennan, and Maj Mulcahy firing the first shot on the same gun that fired 375 rounds during the Battle of the Four Courts in June 1922. The ministers of Defence and Finance, the Chief of Staff and the four GOCs all attended the shoot.

The day after the shoot No 1 Battery, under the command of Capt McLoughlin, marched to Dublin to participate in a review of 2,500 Eastern Command troops in Phoenix Park. Following the review, the battery, having been on the move since well before dawn, returned to the Glen of Imaal. When the battery was halfway back

were changed over.

Despite tests in the 1920s to replace horses with Fordson tractors, the horse remained a central part of the gunner's life until the late 1930s, and the Corps' famous Mounted Escort, or Blue Hussars, was formed for ceremonial duty only in the 1930s.

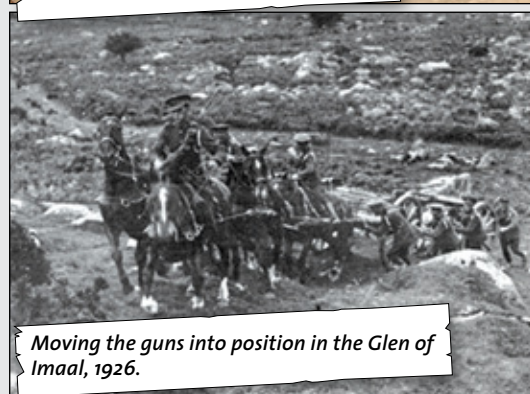
The Corps benefited from the new army's interest in developing a professional force when Capt Charles Trodden was sent with the Military Mission to America in 1926 to attend the Battery Officers' Course at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in preparation for the establishment of the Artillery School at Kildare.

By the end of the 1920s, the Corps had also established a 4.5-inch howitzer battery and was well placed for the expansion that occurred in the 1930s, with anti-aircraft, coastal artillery, and volunteer reserve batteries.

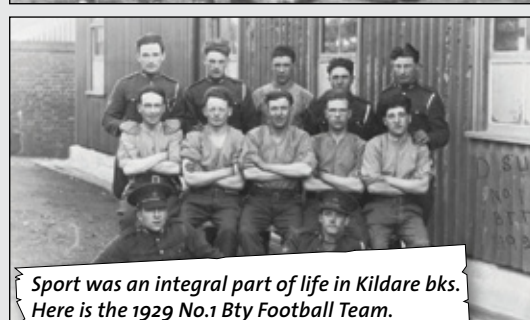
The hutted barracks at Kildare was replaced in the late 1930s by a purpose-built artillery barracks, designed to meet the requirements of a modern army and served the Corps well until the last gunners left for the Curragh in September 1998. ■



Kildare Barracks, No 1 Bty, D Sect, 1929.



Moving the guns into position in the Glen of Imaal, 1926.



Sport was an integral part of life in Kildare bks. Here is the 1929 No.1 Bty Football Team.

About the Author: Mark McLoughlin lives in Kildare and is the editor of *The Curragh: A Lifetime of Memories* (1997); *The Curragh Revisited* (2002); and *Kildare Barracks: From the Royal Field Artillery to the Irish Artillery Corps* (2014). He has also written many articles on Kildare during the Civil War.

THAT'S NOT CRICKET

Well, actually it is

BY LT ODHRÁN MURPHY, AIR CORPS



The Defence Forces Cricket Team that played against Halverstown CC.

Cricket exploded back onto the Defence Forces' sporting calendar in 2008 after Ireland's momentous triumphs in the Cricket World Cup a year earlier gave the game a much needed rejuvenation on this island. Since then the sport has gone from strength to strength in the DF, with significant investment supported by DFAA, and an ever growing pool of players.

Over the past few years, new kit, new equipment and new talent have been acquired, and an ever growing fixture list has been filled. Initially, experience was gained and skills were honed by taking part in a Taverners-style

league. The Taverners game creates an informal environment for learning the game and for practicing the basic skills. As interest steadily grew, however, it was clear that a hunger existed in the DF for testing the waters of competitive cricket. There was no looking back after that!

For the last three seasons, the DFCC has participated in a competition known as the Willie Webster Cup, with our home games being played in the Civil Service Cricket Club in Phoenix Park, Dublin.

In addition, the DFCC has continued to play games against a variety of Dublin's Taverner teams, and an annual game against the Garda Cricket Club closes each season, while providing a stiff test of the team's progress for the year.

The team is comprised of all ranks, from brigadier general to private, as well as retired officers and men and civilians who work in Defence Forces establishments.

One might ask what cricket gives to the Defence Forces. Well, a good cricketer is an intelligent individual, capable of working in an extremely well organised team. It creates an esprit de corps and develops character; it requires dedication and motivation, speed and agility, hard work and a high degree of skill. All of which are core military competencies. So the answer is simple – it gives everything we require of our military personnel!

The aim of the Defence Forces Cricket Club is to create an opportunity for all personnel of the DF to learn and enjoy the game. The DF team is growing in numbers and in standard, and it is hoped that this trend will continue. Plans are in place to develop a cadre of coaching personnel, in order to help the game to grow and spread to all corners of the DF. The vision is to eventually have an active cricket team in each brigade, with an annual inter-brigade league, and, of course, for the best players to come together to represent the Defence Forces each year.

The new season kicked off in April with a number of warm up games aimed at building some momentum prior to the commencement of the Willie Webster Cup. That will be followed up with participation in the Civil Services League. A challenge game has also been arranged against our counterparts in the 38th Irish Brigade, which will see the team play its third 'international' game in recent years. The season will conclude in September in the now customary fashion with the annual crunch match against our colleagues from An Garda Síochána.

If you have any interest in learning how to play cricket, or of course if you have played before and wish to get involved: contact Lt Odhrán Murphy (Ext7638) for further details. ■



Lt Odhran Murphy being bowled out against Merrion in 2013.



The Defence Forces Cricket Team 2013.

SPORTS AWARDS 2014

The third annual Defence Forces Sports Awards were held in McKee Bks on April 3rd. There were 23 awards covering five main categories; Special Merit, Unit Excellence, Sports Star, Special Administrative and the Hall of Fame award. The recipients of the awards were decided on by a selection committee assembled from a broad range of sports. The committee looked at not just the titles won but how the winners balanced military careers and sporting life.

The Special Merit section, with eight awards, was further broken down into individual and group subcategories. The individual recipients included Cpl Daniel Quinn (IWW), for his angling achievements, and Sgt Brian Ankers (Air Corps), who set a new national record for running 84 marathons in one year. The group awards were presented to the DF Adventure Racing Association and the DF boxing team for their efforts in re-energising and popularising their sports, as well as for their performances at national level.

The Unit Excellence award, a new addition designed to promote units that have an enduring sporting ethos and commitment to sporting excellence, went to 3 Inf Bn. With 17 DF titles to their name since 2012 alone and two Sports Stars this year, 'the Bloods' were deserving winners.

The nine Sport Star recipients were champions in sports ranging from football to shooting to kickboxing, while others were multi-disciplined athletes like Pte Sinéad Taylor who represented the Defence Forces in Gaelic football, rugby and soccer. The prominence of combat sports on the national scene was mirrored with two awards being presented to kickboxers; Cpl Vinny DiRuscio (3 Inf Bn) and Pte Brian Brosnan (1 Cn Cois).

In his opening address at the ceremony Chief of Staff, Lt Gen Conor O'Boyle, made reference to the "thankless job" performed by the numerous administrators involved behind the scenes in every DF sporting organisation. To recognise the crucial but often overlooked role played by these people, four Special Administrative awards were given to: Sgt Terry Grogan, for his contribution to athletics; Cpl Pat King, for his life-time dedicated to diving; Sgt Eric O'Brien, for resurrecting handball in the DF; and Comdt Joseph Moran, for his role with DF volleyball.

The last award winner of the night was undoubtedly also the highest profile figure, Sgt Michael Carruth (retired), Olympic gold medal winner in Barcelona in 1992, who received the Hall of Fame award. The MC, Comdt Neil Taylor, summed up the feeling of everyone at the ceremony in his introduction: "Michael Carruth brought great prestige, honour and deserved recognition to himself and, by extension, to the Defence Forces for his outstanding achievements in boxing. It is fitting and proper that he receives a Defence Forces Hall of Fame award for his boxing exploits and for the sporting standards of excellence which he consistently displayed."

After Michael's acceptance speech, which was emotional and filled with humour, his wife Paula was presented with a bouquet of flowers in recognition of her unwavering support for Michael during his time in the Defence Forces and throughout his sporting life.

As with previous years, this year's awards ceremony was another great success in highlighting the enormous talent and athletic ability that exists in the Defence Forces across a wide variety of sports. ■



Chief of Staff Lt Gen Conor O'Boyle with Michael Carruth after the awards ceremony.



Comdt Neil Taylor introducing the award recipients.



The dining complex in McKee Bks was packed full of top quality athletes for the occasion.



Award winners from 1 Cn Cois: (l-r) Sgt Eric O'Brien, Pte Brian Brosnan and Sgt Terry Grogan.



The first recipient of the night, Cpl Daniel Quinn (IWW), receives his award from Brig Gen Paul Fry, GOC AC.



Pte Brendan Murphy (1 Mech Coy) receives his Sports Star award for Gaelic football from Col William Dwyer, EO DFTC.



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GEAR REVIEW



Sponsored by Team Alpha.ie

5.11 TACTICAL RANGE QUALIFIER BAG

COLOUR: BLACK

PRICE: €79.95



The manufacturer says...

The Range Qualifier Bag is a quick and compact tote designed to transport your firearm and ammunition to and from the gun range. Locking zippers offer added security, an internal magnetic keeper ensures your accessories stay in place during travel, and padded pistol sleeves cradle your firearm to prevent scuffs or scratches. Additional features include internal and external web platforms that allow complete storage customization, an insulated hydration compartment, a drop-down front for a flat work area, and dedicated eye and ear protection sleeves to ensure that you have everything you need for a safe and efficient day at the range.

Our reviewer CQ Chris Cummins (1 Mech) says...

Well thought out for a day on the ranges with compartments for nearly everything, it also protects all your stored items and it can take a few knocks. It's small enough considering the amount of space, making it easy to use at the smaller ranges. However that small size also limits the amount of pistols you can take, making it ideal for a small team of shooters, but too small for a larger group, like a company day on the ranges. It's a great bag for individual shooters, functional and easy to use.

Function - 8/10 Durability - 8/10 Magnetic Keeper - 6/10 Molle Webbing - 9/10 Value - 7/10 Space - 8/10

5.11 TACTICAL RUSH 24 & 5.11 TACTICAL RAPID EXCURSION PACK

COLOUR: SANDSTONE (RUSH 24), GREEN (RAPID EXCURSION)

PRICE: €119.99 (RUSH 24), €29.95 (RAPID EXCURSION)

5.11 Tactical Rush 24:

5.11's most popular tactical backpack, the RUSH 24 is designed to provide superior storage capacity and organization without slowing you down. The roomy main compartment offers three interior mesh organizer pockets to keep small accessories organized, a padded hydration pocket, and a fleece-lined sunglass pocket. Dual side storage compartments offer double-zip access, a large stuff-it pocket with an integrated draw cord provides expandable storage when you need it, and contoured compression straps ensure a stable, comfortable carry. A wrap-around web platform is MOLLE/SlickStick System™ compatible.



5.11 Tactical Rapid Excursion Pack:

Designed to act as a lightweight daypack or second-stage travel carryall, the Rapid Excursion Pack attaches to larger 5.11 tactical bags such as the RUSH series backpacks or the CAMS series rolling duffel. With more than enough space to hold everything you need for the day, this 5.11 attachable daypack lets you take just enough gear with you for the task at hand while leaving the bulk of your luggage behind. Built from weather resistant nylon, the Rapid Excursion Pack features aerospace mesh shoulder straps for comfortable carry and a quick-pull cinch top that can be easily opened or closed with one hand.



Our reviewer Cpl Neville Coughlan (No1 Ops Wing, AC) says...

The Tactical Rush 24 backpack is a rugged medium sized bag, suitable for long day trips. It has plenty of space - one large storage compartment and over 20 different internal pockets to allow you to easily separate your tactical gear. The bag remained sufficiently dry through rain showers and was easily cleaned with a brush when dry. It is very comfortable to wear for long periods of time and I felt it distributed the weight evenly. This bag is excellently designed for most types of field operations.

The 5.11 Tactical Rapid Excursion Pack is very lightweight and can be easily stored away in larger bags. The bag itself is surprisingly large with decent storage inside. It is a suitable accompaniment to the larger Rush bag. While it can hold a good volume, it is not the most comfortable when carrying heavy loads because of the lack of padding. I would recommend it for a light hike or for carrying light gear.

Durability - 8/10 Molle Attachment - 9/10 Easy Access - 8/10 Value - 8/10 Space - 9/10 Comfort - 8/10

COMPETITION

This month Team Alpha is offering a €100 Voucher to be used on their website www.team-alpha.ie.

For a chance to win this month's prize answer the following question: What is 5.11's most popular tactical backpack? Answers to An Cosantóir's regular address or by email to subs@military.ie by the 21st May 2014. Winner will be the first correct entry drawn.

Last month's winner was: Paul Murphy



NOTICEBOARD

INTERNATIONAL VETERANS DAY

The Patrick Sarsfield Branch of the Organisation of National Ex-Servicemen and Women (ONeT) will host an International Veterans Day in May 2014, as part of the Limerick's 'City of Culture' event. "With over 30 International organisations invited, it will be an event of the year for all veterans."

The event will take place on Sunday the 25th May 2014, commencing at 11:00hrs in Pery Square, Limerick City. Any veterans who would like to attend please contact: Mr Joe O'Mahony, Branch Secretary.

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1. WHAT DOES RASP STAND FOR?

Answers on a postcard to our normal address or email subs@military.ie for a chance to win a Defence Forces 'Goody Bag'.

Last month's winner of the 'Goody Bag' was Denise English. Closing date is 21st May 2014.



ECUMENICAL SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION FOR WW 2 VETERANS

The Dun Laoghaire Branch of the British Legion wish to honour the 200,000 Irish men and women and all those who served during World War II by holding a Service of Commemoration in Monkstown Church.

The service will be open to all and they invite veterans from any country and/or their relatives to come and wear their medals proudly. Monkstown Church, Saturday 7th June at 14.30.



PRIMAL FURY (THE PRIMAL SERIES)



Author: Jack Silkstone
Publisher: Thomas & Mercer (March 4, 2014)
 Sold by: Amazon Digital Services, Inc.
ISBN: 978-1477818176 / **ASIN:** BooFH9BPXK
Price: PB €6.50/eBook €4.77
Pages: 471



JACK SILKSTONE'S FOURTH book in the PRIMAL series hits the mark again, this time the team encounter human traffickers, who go about the world taking young women to be auctioned off as sex slaves.

The PRIMAL Ops team is made up of former soldiers from around the world. With Aden Bishop, the ex-Australian Army intelligence officer leading, next is Saneh, the ex-Iranian female MOIS intelligence operative, and then Kurtz, (German) and Aleks, (Russian) both ex-SpecOps. Taking up the rear with the gear is Mitch the American who transports and supports the team with some great gear, equipment and vehicles. Their Ops centre, 'the Bunker', has Chau and Vance providing all the intel and orders.

PRIMAL track the human traffickers from Hungary to Japan, where an all out battle takes place between two Yakuza clans, the Yamaguchi-guma who are supported by the PRIMAL team and the Mori-kai, who are using Triads, and highly trained Koreans and their own Special Forces as foot soldiers.

A thoroughly enjoyable read, with realistic urban battles using state-of-the-art equipment.

PRIMAL Mirza, a novella prequel focusing on the character Mirza Mansoor is due out later in 2014. Jack has recently completed work on the next adventure - PRIMAL Reckoning.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jack Silkstone grew up on a steady diet of Tom Clancy, James Bond, Jason Bourne, Commando comics, and the original first-person shooters, Wolfenstein and Doom. His background includes a career in military intelligence and special operations, working alongside some of the world's most elite units. His love of action-adventure stories, his military background, and his real-world experiences combined to inspire the no-holds-barred PRIMAL series, including *PRIMAL Origin*, *PRIMAL Unleashed*, and *PRIMAL Vengeance*.

www.primalunleashed.com

VIGILANTE (VIGILANTE SERIES)

Author: Claude Bouchard
Publisher: Claude Bouchard (PB April, 2009 / eBook January, 2011)
Sold by: Amazon Digital Services, Inc.
ISBN: 978-0981279008 /
ASIN: Boo4J8HVVK
Pages: 250 pages
Price: PB €5.80 / eBook €2.50



CLAUDE BOUCHARD'S DEBUT novel was written in 1995, and along with two follow ups they were not released until 2009.

The Vigilante series now has eight other titles to add to Claude's credit. Whether you agree with the 'Vigilante' being judge, jury and executioner, this series has proved very popular, so lock the door, sit back and enjoy the read.

Canada, 1996 and the head of Montreal's Special Homicide Task Force, Lt Dave McCall is chasing his tail trying to find a serial killer, or is he? Killing after killing, leaving drug dealers, murderers, rapists and gangbangers dead, leaves the task force clueless until an untraceable email from someone claiming to be the 'Vigilante' gives them a heads-up.

Chris Barry, a young and talented security expert, who is the CEO of an International Security Company, is asked for his advice on the email's makeup. He not only helps with the task force but convinces the only witness to see the 'Vigilante' to agree to an artist impression.

Together McCall and Barry are following two suspects down two different paths, one by tailing him the other by trawling through miles of computer code in search of the 'Vigilante' – will they find him? **WF**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Claude Bouchard studied at McGill University and worked in various management capacities for a different firms for many years. Born in Montreal, Canada, he still lives there with his wife Joanne, under the watchful eye of their feline friends Krystalle and Midnight.

The seven other thrillers in the Vigilante series are: #2 The Consultant (2009), #3 Mind Games (2009), #4 The Homeless Killer (2009), #5 6 Hours 42 Minutes (2011), #6 Discreet Activities (2012), #7 Femme Fatale (2013) and #8 Thirteen to None (2013). www.claudebouchardbooks.com

NAME

SIOBHÁN FLANNERY

RANK

SIGNALWOMAN

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CIS GP DFTC



I joined the Defence Forces in 2011 where I trained with the 25th Recruit Platoon in the BTC, Athlone. During training we had a brief from 4 Fd CIS who explained to us the job they did. It was then that I knew what I wanted to do, so when we were asked for our preference for units to be posted to, I immediately stuck down CIS. Luckily I was accepted and posted straight to 4 Fd CIS where I completed the Communications Operators Course. After this, I applied for the CIS Technicians Course. To be accepted to this meant a competition and selection process where we were narrowed down to eight successful candidates.

That's where I am now, year one in Carlow IT, studying for a degree in electronic engineering as part of the CIS Tech Course. Initially the intensity and format of the course were a shock to the system; there is a lot of self-learning, studying and projects. But the army training has helped me to prioritise and approach the study in a structured way. When qualified after three years, I'll be able to fix the hardware on all DF issue communications equipment, from the handsets to the internal workings of the radios as well as specialising in IT. This means I'll also be involved with

the likes of the helpdesks that are used to fix problems with networks and computer systems in the Army. During the summer there'll be work placements for all the students, I'll find myself back in the Defence Forces, getting practical experience in our systems.

I'd love to go overseas, as it is part of the CIS Corps structure, so for me to gain Technician Grade Six, it must be done. But it will have to wait until after the course. Being apart

“the army training has helped me to prioritise and approach the study in a structured way.”

of the Defence Forces is something I always wanted to be. When I joined it was straight after the embargo; it was too good an opportunity to miss!

Since I was eight I was always involved in the GAA, both football and camogie. It's part of the community and life where I live in Offaly. I used soccer as a hobby during the winter to keep fit. Right now my training, around three times per week, is a welcome break from the study,

it helps to clear the head. Between football and camogie, my favourite has always been camogie; we were the Junior and Intermediate All-Ireland winners in 2009 and 2010. However I returned to football in 2012 and I was made captain of the Offaly Junior Football Team in 2013. It was the same year that we won the Junior All-Ireland, but it meant hard work, training up to six times per week to get there.

I also play football, camogie and soccer with the Defence Forces.

This year, with my college course, I had to make the choice between my two main sports. I chose camogie, where I play mid-field and we're aiming for the Senior All-Ireland this year! ■



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