

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

AN COSANTÓIR



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



MAY/JUNE 2024



UNIFIL | 99TH CADET CLASS | SDR

[STRENGTHEN THE NATION]



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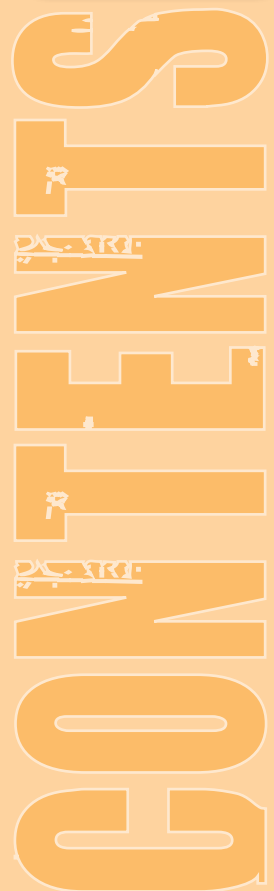
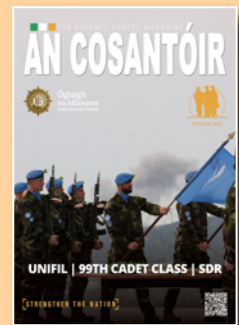
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Front Cover

Taken by Cpl Eric Ryan
Picture of St Patrick's day medal parade, airstrike explosions can be seen in the background.

Back Cover

BQMS Casey McQuillan
Recruit night shoot in the JTIC

Editorial

Hello, and welcome to our third issue of 2024, our 84th volume of the An Cosantóir magazine.

We have another great issue lined up for our third magazine of the year, showcasing various aspects of the Defence Forces as well as informing our members of developments, such as the **Infrastructure Development Plan 2022-2027** and also details about the new **SDR Radio**, replacing the SINCGARS which has been in use for over 20 years. This interview was conducted from the end user perspective, and we are grateful to the CIS Corps for facilitating the process and to Sgt Sheehan for conducting the interview. We are excited to announce that we have expanded the annual **An Cosantóir 10k race** which will take place on 09 Oct 2024 in the Phoenix Park. This should open up the race to more categories, with more prizes to be won, and hopefully more participation by serving and retired members of the DF, as well as invited guests.

The **"People of the DF" campaign**, launched by the An Cosantóir Office in March of this year continues to go well with great interest from serving and retired members. This campaign features on our Instagram page and on the Connect App – if anyone is interested in featuring, or would like us to visit your barracks, please contact us at connect@military.ie

In our **On Parade** section, we showcase pictures from across the Defence Forces offering a snapshot of some of the great things that serving and former serving members have done in recent times. We also feature some pictures from the recent return of the final mission to UNDOF & more recent return of 123 Bn UNIFIL.

Our first feature is an article by RSM David O'Connor who gives us an insight into the recent **Tactical Combat Casualty Care** training which was delivered to Ukrainian soldiers at the 3rd Medical Regiment Barracks Donrstadt. The MTT training team consisted of 6 personnel from CMU who helped deliver lifesaving skills to frontline soldiers.



The **99th Cadet Class** were commissioned recently and we have a 2 page spread of their highlights over their cadetship, written by Lt Conall Gallagher.

Moving on to the main focus of this edition, OC 123 Inf Bn UNIFIL provides us with an update from the ground of what they have been doing over the last 6 months. He gives us an insight into **A Tour Less Ordinary** where serving soldiers have faced a more challenging mission but have displayed huge professionalism throughout.

Our centrefold piece is the **An Cosantóir race poster** which shows some of the changes to the race for 2024, this includes a new section to the race, check it out for details.

In our 2024 editions we want to showcase and value our people both serving and those that have retired. In this edition, in our **People of the DF Interview**, Cpl Martin Bennett interviews Capt Ciarán Oman who speaks to us about his rewarding career to date including his time on the CIS Trainee Technician Scheme, and making the transition from NCO to Officer.

As we are continuing to feature the new Leadership doctrine and information on leadership, we continue with a piece from Sgt Maj David O'Reilly in this edition. He brings an interesting piece on volunteerism, stewarding, ceremony & ethic and how **the Strength of the DF is our soldiers.**

In our veteran's section we feature a piece about the **Association for Retired Commissioned Officers, ARCO**, who continue to advocate for and serving the needs of former officers of the DF. Their numbers currently stand at about 900, demonstrating how many officers have retired in recent years.

Comdt Tom O'Neill, Comdt (RDF Retd) concludes his series about the **Irish Volunteers At War, with Part III – The Civil War**, a very interesting read. A huge thanks to Tom for all his contributions over the last few editions.

We have our regulars as always with our **Sports & Clubs section, Book Review and From the Archives.**

We are also looking to expand our team internally with permanent positions or also on a detachment, if you have an interest in photography or journalism this could be the team for you. For more Information e-mail webmaster@military.ie

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires."

— William Arthur Ward

Sgt John Rossiter
Editor

ON PARADE

NS personnel on a recent parade



A recent AC Crewman's course pictured training in Custume Barracks Athlone



AC pilots on a recent flight in the UK



Eqt Sch staff L-R Cpl Robbie Duffy, Pte Sean Davison, Pte Lionel Shakespeare



Dr Cathal Berry TD (Comdt Retd) seen here with Capt Paul Murphy after the recent Easter Parade



Tri-service Soldiers marching past the GPO



RSM Minnie Browne retirement stand down parade seen here celebrating the day with his wife Geraldine and children Eoin, Emma and Lorna.



ON PARADE



Air Corps PILATUS PC-9M fly past over the GPO at the recent Easter Parade event



DF members at the National Famine Commemoration event which took place in Longford



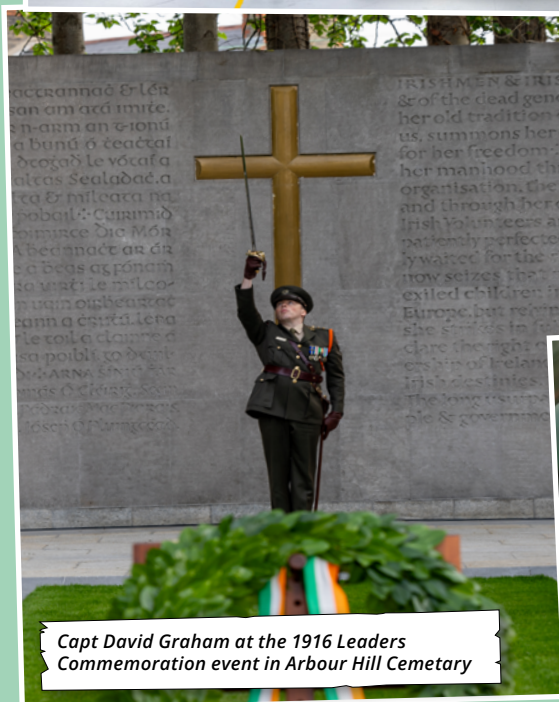
Sgt Joe Meade at the Easter Parade



29th Young Officers Course graduation ceremony held in Baldonnel



Air Corps members enjoying some Battle PT



Capt David Graham at the 1916 Leaders Commemoration event in Arbour Hill Cemetery



Newly commissioned officers 2/Lt Fiona McDonnell, 2/Lt Fintan Perris, Lt Conor Walsh members of the 99th Cadet Class seen here receiving their swords



On the 4th of March 2024 No 3 Ops Wg welcomed Tony Tsantles, Dir of Ops for Aviation Specialists Unlimited. Tony is a highly experienced US Army Black Hawk pilot and travelled to Ireland in order to conduct joint training and assessments with AC helicopter crews operating at night using ANVIS 9 Night Vision Goggles.

UNDOF UNDOF UNDOF



Happy faces waiting for some of our soldiers returning from the final mission to UNDOF



Kids chilled out and waiting patiently



Flying the flag, DF families always there to support and make things possible

Welcome home daddy, Comdt Paul Conlon delighted to be back with his family



Sgt Maj Jinks happy to be home



Family members waiting on DF members



A great welcome home poster for Sean

UNIFIL UNIFIL UNIFIL



Pte Áine Doyle greeted by her mother after her first overseas tour



Tears of joy at the return of 123 Inf Bn in Dublin Airport



A special moment leaving arrivals to greet family & friends



Family members greeting their loved one with a huge hug on the day



Welcome home daddy, tears of joy on the day



DF INFRASTRUCTURE

ARTICLE BY COL DAMIEN MCEVOY
PHOTOS BY COL DAMIEN MCEVOY

The Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) is the Joint Dept. of Defence / Defence Forces planning process used to propose, design, procure and deliver strategic infrastructure projects for the Defence Forces. It is a rolling five-year capital investment plan approved by the Minister comprising major projects with construction starts within the duration of the plan. The IDP provides the certainty and time necessary to develop capital projects for the Defence Forces while being flexible and robust enough to respond to unforeseen challenges i.e. project delays, cancellations, or adding new projects arising from evolving strategic decisions.

Capital construction works projects by their nature, and applicable public sector procurement guidelines, require considerable time to plan, design, procure and construct. The IDP five-year framework and procedures provide an effective process and means to deliver major infrastructure projects while maintaining the necessary governance oversight to ensure compliance with public procurement requirements (i.e. Infrastructure Guidelines and Capital Works Management Framework). The concept of a rolling 5-year plan is a major improvement over the constraints of the former annual estimate budgeting requirements and provides greater certainty to delivery of Defence Forces infrastructure projects.

History

The IDP was developed by a Joint Project Team under the Government Defence White Paper Implementation Plan as a process to streamline the delivery of Capital infrastructure projects for the Defence Forces. The aim was to develop a co-ordinated 5 year infrastructure development plan that reflects, on a priority needs basis, an approach for all infrastructure development requirements for the life time of the White Paper. The flexible and robust nature of the planning process and the regular annual reviews built into the processes allows for plan adjustments to take account of unforeseen developments, delays, or the need to introduce new infrastructure projects arising from strategic organisation decisions.

The IDP was first approved by the Minister for Defence in January 2020 and listed 36 capital infrastructure projects for the period 2020 to 2025. The current iteration 2022-2027 was launched in December 2022 and the Minister for Defence indicated his desire to scale up the level of output. **The value of capital projects for delivery by end of 2027 in the current IDP is approx. €355M.**

Significant progress has been made on the delivery of infrastructure on the current IDP with 13 projects completed, 6 projects on site and a further 5 projects at contract stage.



Haulbowline Block 8 – accommodation for NS personnel

A joint DoD/DF review of the IDP is ongoing at present with masterplans being developed for DF installations.

The spend on the Built Infrastructure Subhead in 2023 was €50m, up from €29m in 2022. The spend is expected to be €56M in 2024 which reflects the level of ambition and pipeline of projects that are coming to site at the moment.

Some of the major projects delivered over the last 12 months are as follows:

Haulbowline Block 8 is a four storey stone faced building dating from circa 1822 enjoying 'listed' status on Cork County Council Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and located prominently opposite Cobh. The project involved the refurbishment of the structure, renewal of all mechanical and electrical services and alterations required to make it suitable to accommodate 70 living-in Naval Service personnel in compliance with Defence Forces' accommodation standards and in a manner complying with heritage considerations following consultations with the Local Authority.

McKee Bks

McKee Barracks is undergoing a major refurbishment and upgrading as part of the infrastructure programme. A suite of investments to the value of almost €30m over the last 24 months has resulted in iconic buildings being restored to their former glory. The barracks is designated an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) which aims to identify an area of special character and architectural interest and to preserve that special character. This places an added burden on any building works in the barracks and limits the degree of flexibility in terms of design. Despite having to fulfil this objective significant works are underway or have been completed:

- McKee Bks Coy Offices
- Block H
- East Terrace Buildings
- Block F
- New Printing Press
- New Offices for DMB/MAP
- New Locker Block
- Octagon refurbishment



Construction works in McKee Bks

Block H received a commendation from the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland in the 'Best Buildings' awards 2023. The former Married Quarters building now provides accommodation for living-in personnel.

The East Terrace building is a two-storey building, which was used in the past for a locker room, offices and storerooms. The building consists of large open plan rooms, which were used for personnel storage lockers. The project has upgraded and refurbished to a high standard with reconfigure room layout to facilitate a barber, tailor, offices and storage room with male/female toilet and showers. The upgrade has also improved the thermal efficiency of the buildings and fire protection.



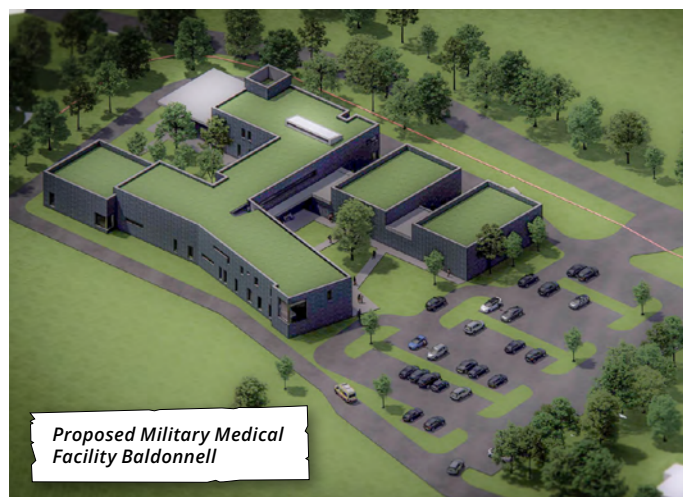
East Terrace Building, McKee Bks, a multi use facility following its refurbishment

Medical Corps Facility Upgrades

The planned closure of St Brinns Hospital (SBH) in 2026 and the subsequent transfer of land to the Land Development Agency (LDA) under Housing for All has resulted in a number of projects to accommodate the services currently provided in SBH.

Proposed Military Medical Facility Baldonnell

The proposed site for the new MMF is located to the North West of the Aerodrome on a greenfield site. Construction of a new Medical Facility is planned to start on site in Q3 2024.



Proposed Military Medical Facility Baldonnell

Directorate of Medical Branch and Medical Aid Post

The refurbishment of the derelict property adjacent to the Equitation School will provide the Directorate of Medical Branch with new offices and also be the location for the new Medical Aid Post (MAP) in McKee Bks. The building has been sympathetically renovated to blend into the surroundings and has achieved a B1 energy rating with air-to-water heat pump and underfloor heating.

Printing Press

The Printing Press is currently in the process of moving to their new facility in McKee Bks which has undergone a complete overhaul in the last 12 months. The new facility provides a state of the art printing facility incorporating offices, canteen, machine room and welfare facilities.



Directorate of Medical Branch and Medical Aid Post, McKee Bks

Engineer Branch continues to lead the DF engagement with Property Management Branch (PMB), Dept of Defence in the IDP.

The impact of the recommendations from the Commission on Defence for Defence Forces infrastructure has yet to be fully determined but it is anticipated that there will be a series of proposals to re-purpose existing or construct new facilities. These will be incorporated into the masterplans once the strategic decisions on the future Defence Forces are reached.



New Offices for the Defence Forces Printing Press, McKee Bks

Climate Action Energy Targets 2030 & 2050

Action to achieve Climate Change target of 51% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 on our 2016-18 baseline will impact on the Subhead A13 budget in the context of increased costs for inclusion of energy efficiency measures in building projects and the need to prioritise new projects specifically aimed at achieving energy targets.

The Defence Forces built infrastructure largely consists of buildings constructed of brick masonry, built in the late 19th or early 20th century. These buildings are often of significant historical or cultural worth, with retrofitting works being of a complex nature when carried out. DF barracks are mixed use, (office, residential, education, fitness, training, medical etc.) and with the exception of some small outposts are manned 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. DF personnel are often required to be accommodated on site, during training and on redeployment to a new post. As a result DF buildings and installations have a more complex usage profile compared to other public bodies' workplaces.

All infrastructure projects have sustainability and energy efficiency as a core principle.

Deep retrofits of building fabric, high energy efficient electrical fittings, heat pumps and mechanical ventilation heat recovery systems are the standard design in our new/refurbished buildings. These practices have contributed greatly to us achieving over 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from our building stock on the 2016-18 baseline figures. We will continue to incorporate high energy performance designs into our infrastructure and we will strive to provide Nearly Zero Emission Buildings (NZEB) or passive buildings going forward.

SOFTWARE DEFINED RADIO

INTERVIEW BY SGT BARRY SHEEHAN
PHOTOS BY ARMN SAM GIBNEY

*Sgt Sheehan gets hands
on with the equipment*

In 2018, the CIS Corps established a Working Group to identify a suitable replacement for the SINCGARS radio. They are now in the final stages of this Software Defined Radio (SDR) project having selected Thales as the equipment provider. The first radios are in now final user trial. In a first for the An Cosantóir, we engaged an end user of the radio system to conduct the interview with a representative from CIS, in order to ask the questions that the users want to know. Sgt Barry Sheehan, 12 Inf Bn, interviewed Comdt Paul Shorte, SO Comms, DJ6 about the upgrade, the capabilities of the radio, and what it means for the individual soldier.

What is the scale of issue of the SQUADNET (inter-section and inter platoon communication) radio and the SYNAPS (backbone) radio?

The initial procurement is 6000 radios approx., which takes into account SQUADNET radios for all combat and combat support elements and SYNAPS for every level of command from Section 2 i/c up.

The radio has the functionality of implementing talk groups, which will allow connection to more groups using one radio. So instead of having multiple radios to be able to contact multiple people, you will have one radio that can connect multiple people simultaneously.

Are the radios user friendly for the average soldier?

As we will only have a handheld radio and a vehicle borne radio, the load for the soldier is reduced and is easier for the soldier to operate the system.

Usability was a key part of the selection process. For example, with SQUADNET, it's quite simple. There are just four arrows and an enter button in order to select settings.

The radio will be configured by the CIS detachment for the operation that's required. Multiple configurations can be stored in the radio and it will just be a case of scrolling to select the appropriate settings for the relevant mission profile.

The SQUADNET radio fits in the palm of the hand. Its battery life is about 24 hours, which can be charged over USB type C /type A connection from a vehicle or other source. Every radio will come with three batteries as standard, to maintain the radio operational for up to 72 hours. Batteries are also standard across the whole system so the days of carrying multiple batteries and manpacks are gone.

The SYNAPS radio is marginally bigger, but is still a handheld radio. SYNAPS looks very similar to a mobile phone with keyboard buttons to access the menu structure. It's about selecting the correct channel and that's it.

Will the radio use a headset?

The headset is tied into the new active communications hearing system that we're looking at currently. The headset that comes with the radio is similar to the older system we had, where your hearing protection sits over the system itself.

The next generation headset will be completely integrated with hearing protection, allowing the user to be fully aware of their surroundings whilst also hearing the communications in the headset.

The 2 radios can be connected together to work off the same headset. They are connected through a Y connector cable with one connector going into the headset and from the split end one cable connects to the SQUADNET radio, the other to the SYNAPS radio.

For tri-service operations will a soldier be able to speak directly to the crew for example of an Air Corps helicopter or a Naval Service ship using the one system?

The same radio system that works in the land environment will work in the naval and air environment. We have purchased a specific radio for the airborne platforms to allow ground forces to communicate sea/ground to air and air to sea/ground using specific waveforms.

Has the SDR been future proofed to integrate with the new personal equipment that's coming online over the next couple of years such as the Integrated Modular Body Armour System (IMBAS), the General service helmet or the future pack systems?

We have worked with the other Corps Directorates in order to achieve in terms of the radio form, factor and fit. So on the SQUADNET radio, the pattern (CAMO) that's on the pouch itself is very similar to the Irish



*Sgt Barry Sheehan &
Comdt Paul Shorte*

Comdt Shorte explains the use of the new CIS equipment to Sgt Sheehan



Transitional Multicam Pattern (ITMP) that's coming onstream.

The robustness of the actual design of the pouch itself and the way it's actually mounted to the system is a standardised mounting system (MOLLE/PALS). The radio has been tested with a number of body armour systems available on the market and we've reviewed other nations configurations who have purchased a similar radio to confirm that it is designed to fit on our current and future body armour systems.

The radio drops down in the front pouch of the body armour and then it's just a clip to tie it back in thus the radio will not be flopping around in the soldier's kit.

We are working with Ordnance and DOD colleagues in specifying the requirements for the hearing protection element for a new General Service helmet. We are procuring an integrated communications headset system to roll out with the new SQUADNET radio for the current EU Battle Group.

In terms of the pack systems, the radio is quite small, so it can be positioned anywhere on the body. It's down to the soldier to identify where it best suits them to wear the equipment, bearing in mind that the antenna always needs to be pointing somewhere in a northerly fashion.

Has the system been trialled to integrate with our current and future CBRN IPE? Is high temperature steam and high temperature water in a DECON line going to affect the radio if it needs to be decontaminated?

All of the radios comply with MIL-STD 810G which includes tests for high temperature environments, water ingress etc thus wont be affected.

We have two sets of ear protection being assessed for CBRN IPE. One is a headband with boom mic, the other is an in-ear system that uses a bone conduction type system. In addition there is also a Bluetooth option for the radio itself which may provide an option.

Can the system communicate with all DF armour and softskin vehicles and is the system backwards compatible in order to communicate with admin radios such as the Motorola?

Yes, the SDR will work with our legacy radios.

We have also purchased a solution, connected over IP gateways that allow us to physically connect the new radio, SINCGARS, Motorola and HF existing systems and to crossband them all. This solution is currently



Comdt Shorte explains how the equipment will be put to use by the individual soldier

being rolled out.

Is there significant work to retrofit and install these radios into existing vehicles and integrate them with the existing systems?

No, because the new radio has a smaller footprint than the current full size or half size SINCGARS footprint. Each of the vehicle fits purchased are dual fit with two channels built into one radio with two 50 Watt amplifiers in addition.

So for the same profile of one full size SINCGARS base station, we will have two radios, both amplified, that can work for VHF and UHF ranges, and can provide voice and data simultaneously across the net and also with a MESH capability. MESH means if you don't have direct communications with another callsign, the system will hop through the nearest radio that can provide you with the necessary access.

How does the SDR integrate with systems such as SITAWARE and will such a system be rolled out to combat and combat support units in the future?

We are looking at the digitisation of the force in terms of providing end user devices down to the different command levels. We are looking at providing the Section Commander and Section 2 i/c with an end user device along the lines of an Android tactical device.

This would give greater enhanced situational awareness down to the Section Commander as well as up through the chain of command.

The plan is to digitise 1 ACS and 1 MIC initially, and then to roll it out to the other Army units, Air Corps and Naval Service. From a combat effectiveness point of view we will have a shared situational awareness across the three services completely interoperable working seamlessly together.

We're working also to integrate all the current sensor platforms in service such as the B2FO into Frontline.

If I'm a private soldier carrying ECM in a patrol, can I transmit to my section commander if there is active ECM?

We always work on the PACE model (Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency means of communications). At least two of these means will always work in an ECM Environment.

How secure is the system? How easy is it for an adversary to direction find (DF), if I start transmitting with this radio?

This goes back to first principles of always working on the lowest power possible. So instead of transmitting on high power from the vehicle, the operator decides on the maximum power required to transmit information from A to B. Being a MESH network, the user without using high power could hop through different radios to get to the callsign required.

Who can I talk to using the SDR? Is it interoperable with other nations?

Interoperability with both our NATO partners and our EU partners was a key component of the SDR selection process.

The European Secure Software Defined Radio (ESSOR) program seeks to enhance the interoperability of mission-critical radio connectivity assets across domains through the development of Software Defined Radios (SDR) terminals and Waveforms (WFs), both built on a common architecture and methodology.

We'll be one of the first nations that will actually deploy the ESSOR waveform as a working operating radio. This will give us interoperability with any ESSOR consortium country, which is mostly European nations that are funding the program.

If the various leadership positions in the platoon all have a radio system that can communicate with company level and higher, will that result in the traditional platoon signaller being done away with?

The platoon signaller is responsible for recording all the information in and out of the network making sure that it's accurate and that it's passed in a timely fashion. They are trained to construct, transcribe, and take down information in an accurate format. The commander at each level has responsibilities other than transmitting radio data thus the platoon signaller role will remain.

123 Inf Bn Medal Parade with explosions ongoing in the background

A TOUR LESS ORDINARY

THE 123 INF BN IN UNFIL

ARTICLE BY LT COL STEPHEN MACEOIN
PHOTOS BY CAPT EAMON HENNESSY

UNIFIL has been described as the last great United Nations Peacekeeping Mission and it is the mission with which the Defence Forces has had its longest association. Starting with the UNOGIL observer mission in 1958 and later with the deployment of an Irish battalion to UNIFIL from 1978, South Lebanon has been the focus for the vast majority of operations for the Army and for other components of the Defence Forces for some 45 years. Taking our inspiration from the men and women who have served as peacekeepers before us, we continued this tradition as the 123rd Infantry Battalion. The sequence of that numbering is indeed interesting in itself. Starting off from the 31 battalions Ireland had during the Second World War era, the 32nd battalion – our very first overseas unit – deployed to the Congo in 1960. Our unit designation therefore places us directly as successors of those soldiers, some 91 battalions later. That tradition is also traced back in our families and in our home units through service in Cyprus, Lebanon, Somalia, Kosovo, East Timor, Liberia, Chad, Syria and many other places.

UNIFIL's only Multinational Battalion

The Irish Battalion in Lebanon comprises some 330 soldiers (including nine personnel from the Armed Forces of Malta) and together with over 220 Polish and Hungarian soldiers, it makes up the Irish-Polish Battalion. Centred on the local municipal capital of Bint Jubayl – known locally as 'the Capital of the Resistance' – the Area of Operations (AO) is approximately 150 square kilometres. The AO is several kilometres farther south than the AO familiar to those who may have served in the 'old Leb' (or UNIFIL I), with the town of Tebnine (Tibnin) now falling just outside the northern boundary of our AO.



DF members building vital relationships with the local community as part of CIMIC



Recent media visit to troops in UNIFIL mission

As a multinational battalion, the unit is unique in UNIFIL, in that it features four troop contributing nations (TCNs), all of whom are also EU members. Interestingly, although two of the TCNs are NATO members and two are not, interoperability, cohesion and the adoption of a standard set of tactics, technique and procedures was achieved early on through collective training, sporting competitions and a deliberate policy of mixing the staffs in various cells at Battalion HQ. As the lead nation, Ireland has responsibility for heading up most of the battalion staff, for the provision of real life support (water, medical, power, workshops etc) and for the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) – a battalion mobile reserve in Mowag APCs on ten minutes' notice to move, 24/7.

Into the breach

The UNIFIL mission was fundamentally changed last October as a consequence of the Israel-Hamas conflict. Many of us will remember exactly where we were when the Hamas attacks were carried out against Israel on 7th October 2023. These attacks, the abduction of Israeli hostages and the subsequent Israeli invasion of the Palestinian territory in Gaza have resulted in a tragic toll of human suffering, which continues at time of writing. This regional situation, exacerbated by increased tensions between Israel and Iran, has in turn been directly reflected in the conflict across the Blue Line in South Lebanon, creating a new paradigm for UNIFIL and for the Irish-Polish Battalion in Lebanon. The conflict here has seen daily exchanges of fire between the Israeli Defence Forces and Non State Actors, most often the Iranian-backed militant group Hizbullah, with widespread use of artillery; tank rounds; mortars; rockets; machinegun fire and targeted airstrikes from fast air jets and drones.

When we conducted our form-up in the Glen of Imaal, where the majority of us assembled together for pre-deployment training in the rain and the fog, few of us could have predicted just how busy and operationally focussed the tour would be. The 123 Infantry Battalion would undergo



Wreath laying ceremony to remember soldiers who have died in service in Lebanon

over 200 groundhogs between arrival in November 2023 and departure at the end of May 2024, as well as multiple danger-close events and thousands of hours of framework operations conducted in armour and in body armour and helmets. All of our soldiers experienced what were fundamentally challenging and stressful events, from rocket attacks overhead, to airstrikes in close proximity, while those on the Blue Line witnessed small arms fire impacting against and sometimes within UNP 6-52. Irish personnel on patrol at all hours of the night and day have witnessed the worst destruction in south Lebanon since the 2006 war, with many witnessing danger close events, while others have dealt with live casualties (from other UN contingents), or provided the security blanket of an unbroken 24-7 armoured response, providing vital escorts and security reassurance to all of our personnel.

A point worth stating is that Irish personnel performed exceptionally well across all of these challenges, vindicating our training and our Professional Military Education, even despite the constrained resources



DF members performing CASEVAC training always preparing for the worst

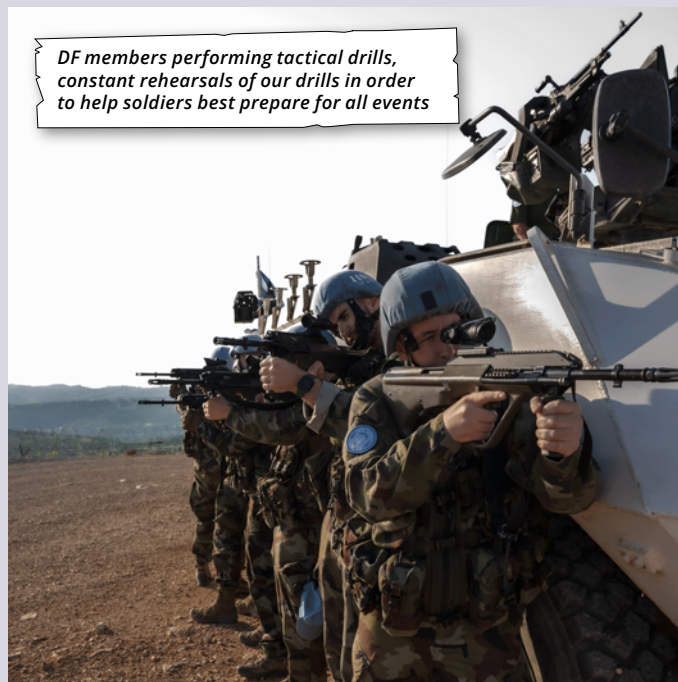
in many units at present. Perhaps the best example of this from our tour was the Irish-led response to the injury of four military OGL observers not far from the camp in March 2024. The observers casualties were evacuated to Camp Shamrock and there received state-of-the-art attention to stabilise them for onward MEDEVAC to Beirut and to Tyre. Similar scenarios had been exercised many times in the Battalion situation room and this incident showcased both the professional ability of our command and control assets but also the world-class military medical personnel at all ranks, who transferred patients to the heli-pad within 23 minutes. In the final analysis, a priority one casualty was airlifted to Beirut and three lower priority casualties were moved by armoured ambulance to Tyre, under escort from the Battalion QRF. Overall, the opportunity for soldiers of the 123 Infantry Battalion to practice their craft and to have meaningful work to do against a potentially dangerous environment was a real driver for standards and performance.

Hard and Soft operations

In broad terms, the line of operations within the battalion were broken down into 'hard' and 'soft' activities, often with one driving the other. The 'hard' operations consisted of regular framework patrols, temporary observation posts and support to our strategic partners and the primary government agency in South Lebanon – the Lebanese Armed Forces. The patrols were conducted by day and by night, often in Mowag APCs but most usually in Armoured Toyota Land-cruisers. Our 'soft' operations consisted of key leader engagements (where the Commanding Officer met local Mayors and other leaders) and also in Civil-Military Cooperation

(CIMIC) activities. CIMIC consisted of very detailed planning and systematic integration of the local population's concerns, priorities and requests for assistance into the Commander's plans, leveraging a small discretionary budget from the Defence Forces but also garnering support for larger projects funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs through the Irish Embassy at Cairo. Such CIMIC activities were absolutely vital to the Irish battalion's operations, especially in the changed environment after the hostiles across the Blue Line began. This is because the people of South Lebanon, in the context of a chapter 6 peacekeeping mandate and the strong presence of non-state military actors among the population of the south, were in fact the centre of gravity of the entire mission, especially with regard to the freedom of movement and the safety of our personnel. Far from lying outside the main effort of framework operations, CIMIC has in fact been the driving force in many cases for the delivery of operations in response to local requests. This resulted in initiatives such as an increasing of patrols and high visibility operations in certain villages to deter inter-community tensions; or the

DF members performing tactical drills, constant rehearsals of our drills in order to help soldiers best prepare for all events



provision of an escort to support the LAF in transporting agricultural feed in favour of local farmers struggling to maintain their livelihoods amidst Lebanon's worsening economic crisis. In all of these activities, the role of the CIMIC cell, which was fully integrated among Irish and Polish personnel, was critical. It stands to reason then that the Defence Forces should strongly consider how best to establish dedicated CIMIC cells at G9 and J9 level, in order to build on the hard-won experience of Irish CIMIC personnel in UNIFIL, but also to prepare for future deployments. The Polish Armed Forces' CIMIC Centre of Excellence at its Military Training Centre for Foreign Operations would be a useful starting point, especially given that Ireland and Poland share a battalion on operations in UNIFIL.

Why UNIFIL?

The people of South Lebanon continue to benefit from the presence of the Irish-Polish Battalion, who are the eyes and ears of the international community on this part of the Blue Line, where we observe, monitor and call out violence and violations on all sides.

Our very presence in daily operations on the roads and in the wadis has provided a constant reassurance that UNIFIL is here and that the hope of stability and of a normal life is still a possibility – someday – for the ordinary women, children and men who call this place home.



OC 123 Inf Bn Lt Col Stephen MacEoin (Picture taken from IrishTimes)



THE STRENGTH OF AN ARMY IS IN ITS SOLDIERS

ARTICLE BY BSM DAVID O'REILLY, IN A CONTINUATION OF OUR LEADERSHIP SERIES
PHOTOS BY BSM DAVID O'REILLY

The Army is the land power of the Defence Forces charged with defending the constitution and carrying out the will of a democratically elected Government within a legal framework. Guardianship of an Army, a traditional profession built on customs and traditions presents many challenges in modern Ireland, when analysed through the kaleidoscope of the profession itself and the professional it aims to produce. The Army has a unique place in Irish society, and a current theme of relevance may challenge the Army, however current changes in the international geopolitical environment has again refocused the mind-set of many, especially the political leaders of Europe. The Irish Army is not just for fighting wars, it is the guarantor of the constitution. It is the spine of national resilience, tasked with supporting the Government and the people of Ireland. This essay will examine three areas of importance to our Army:

1) Volunteerism, 2) Stewarding of the Army, 3) Ceremony and Ethic.

Volunteerism

While many Political leaders in Europe actively consider conscription as a tool to enlarge their armies, Ireland has never engaged in conscription. Volunteerism has always and will remain a key corner stone of the Irish Army from its inception in 1922 as the National Army to what endures today. The Army has always been a reflection of Irish society. Its rich history is an intertwined piece of Irish fabric and a bedrock of the constitution since the foundation of the state. In the words of General Richard Mulcahy who wrote in 1922, 'Óglaigh na hÉireann has been the people, is the people and will be the people. Our green uniform does not make us less the people. It is a cloak of our service, a curtailer of our weaknesses, and an amplifier of our strengths.' Changes in Irish society, generational desires and personal worldviews influences the way an Army recruits and the profession therefore manifests. The Irish Army recruits Soldiers from Irish society and at the end of their service, they will return to Irish society. Our tradition of volunteerism has been on display throughout the fine history of the Irish Army, both at home and while deployed overseas on missions.

Stewarding of the Army

Professional military education and a commitment to learning gives our soldiers strength, who not alone must be capable of using force but also be diplomats and scholars. Another competitive advantage comes from having diverse backgrounds, it gives us the important neurodiversity required for the many cognitive challenges the Army currently faces and will potentially meet into the future, and this also further enhances our reflection of society. Our past, present and future must continue to be a roadmap of evolution. The ethos and values, of the Army are nothing new; they have served us well in the past and will continue to provide a useful handrail going forward. Ireland as a nation also exports its core values, both in times of conflict and peace, through the deployment of the Army around the world.

It is our ability to learn from actions both at home and overseas on operations, that provides a gateway to improve how we educate, train, and adjust our culture to reflect a modern society within the context

of legal, moral and the ethical boundaries of both our Army and that of people of Ireland. The Army has a unique culture, reinforced by the shared values of respect, loyalty, selflessness, physical courage, moral courage and integrity. These organisational values are the canons from which the Army develops a united, professionally trained, competent and capable Army serving the interests of Ireland. In homing in on The DF values, they also serve as cardinal points to align our personal moral compass with the moral compass of the Defence Forces, and those of you involved in navigation will know we have to continually I.C.E our compass. So in essence, these values are a useful way of aligning yourself with the Army and its cultural ethos. The reinforcement of a values based system lends to both Organisational Identification; a 'What we stand for' to Organizational Citizen Behaviour; 'How we behave.' The heart of stewardship lies in everyone buying into the set standards, enforcing them, and nurturing the next generation of soldiers to add to the Army tradition.

It is the leaders at all echelons of the Irish Army, who are accountable for stewarding the military values based system and profession. Our profession also requires a system of self-policing that qualifies whom we access, retain and promote. We are trusted with the protection of our Nation and we are rightly held accountable for that trust. As a professional Army, it is the high quality training and education of all personnel that ensures the Army as a profession is competent in its core function, ensuring every Soldier is very proud to wear our uniform. The Army as a profession rests on continuously recruiting, developing and mentoring soldiers to become leaders, capable of instilling an Army ethic and values into the next generation of Army professionals. Our professionalism must allow us to maintain the trust of the Irish people while developing and training the future soldiers and leaders, who in turn build healthy climates and do not tolerate harmful behaviour. The Army must continue to produce disciplined capable intelligent servant.



RSM Handover, UNDOF, to RSM Joe Skelly



Ceremony and Ethic

Ceremony and military ethic are the visible manifestations of military culture. They are important in building culture, climate and organisational identity. They also bring life to the Army and make it unique in Irish society. Ceremony and military ethic manifests in many ways, it is how we address each other, the paying of service customs, such as saluting and addressing ranks. It is how we celebrate a unit's achievement with parades such as a stand down parade, or when a unit deactivates from a deployment overseas. It is the artefacts we use and respect, such as Unit identification badges, Unit pennants, and the National flag. It is this organizational identity that is the high-level shared perspective of purpose, values and culture that guides the identity and behaviour of the Army. Culture is also a living piece and a constantly evolving piece, no organisation has the same culture of 100 or even 20 years ago. The modern era of media drives and short news cycles presents all militaries with a challenge of protecting their identity, history and traditions while developing new traditions.

The Army has provided steadfast service to the Irish people and the sovereignty of the State through some of its darkest hours. It provided stability during sustained periods of Irish history, such as when the security of the State was challenged, by violence or through the pandemic. This adaptability by all leaders enhances the strategic utility to government. The role of an Army in a democratic society has changed little over time, ensuring the safety and sovereignty of the land, protecting the constitution, being apolitical with transparency and accountability. As a standard's driven organization, the Army must continue to evolve in order to recruit and train the next generation of the Army. The best recruiters of soldiers are soldiers. Disciplined, professional and excellent ambassadors of the Army. They in turn become walking billboards for the Army. We all as leaders must be proactive, reactive and most of all interactive in our roles as stewards of the Army. We must remember excellence is not a single act and people are our centre of gravity. As we prepare to enter a period of transformation, education and engagement will be key to successful change.

Medal Parade for UNDOF mission



Sgt Maj David O'Reilly enlisted in 1994 as an Infantryman and currently serves in the Army Forces Design Office. He has served at home as a Battalion and Brigade Sgt Maj and deployed both as a Inf Bn and Inf Gp Sgt Maj overseas. He has 30 years' service and served on 9 overseas missions. Sgt Maj O'Reilly holds a M.A. in Strategic Studies from UCC, a B.A in Defence Studies and Leadership from Carlow I.T. (now SETU) and a Diploma in Change Management.

Dublin Guards Beggars Bush Handover



THE 99TH CADET CLASS

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY COMDT GARY RYAN



99th Cadet Class pennant

The 99th Cadet Class commenced training on the 04 Nov 2022 under the command of Comdt Gary Ryan, with 31 Army, 10 AC, and 1 Maltese Cadet. Highlights of the Cadetship included the annual pilgrimage to Lourdes, the SERE, MOUT, and ISTAR exercises, Adventure Week, and various sporting achievements, including block winners of the 2023 An Cosantóir 10k, and others, some of which will feature here. The class was commissioned on the 17th April 2024 into various units across the Defence Forces and the Armed Forces of Malta.



Cadet Adventure week is always important for team bonding

Adventure Week – Lt Conall Gallagher (commissioned to 1 ACS, DFTC)

Throughout my time in the Cadet School we had many enjoyable experiences but the highlight for me was the week spent in Dún Uí Mhaoilíosa, Renmore, Galway, fondly known as Adventure Week. Over the course of a sunny week in June, the Cadets were split up across three different activities; scuba diving, rock climbing, and kayaking, learning new skills and pushing themselves out of their comfort zone. Cadets had to overcome their fear of water and heights by day, some better than others, and enjoyed a few well-earned refreshments in Galway City by night. It was a week that had it all and is one that will live long in the memory of all Cadets.

MOUT – Lt Conor O'Brien (commissioned to Ord Gp, DFTC)

The most enjoyable part of the Cadetship for myself would have to be the Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) block that was conducted at the end of Phase 3, December 2023. The first week began with a couple of days of classroom instruction in the Cadet School



MOUT training exercise



Members of 99th Cadet Class march forward to take oath and receive sword

and then more practical instruction in the Military Training Facility (MTF), here in the Curragh Camp. We were instructed on all the relevant parts of MOUT such as Close Quarters Battle (CQB) and defending the positions once taken (DIBUA). The newly obtained skills were then applied during the second week which took place in Marino Point, Cork and Fort Davis.

ISTAR – Lt Eran Farrell (commissioned to CIS Gp, DFTC)

The ISTAR Exercise, high in the Wicklow Mountains, was a definite highlight of my cadetship. From the meticulous planning and the physically robust insertion, to the intelligence gathering and immersive tactical situations we found ourselves in, this exercise had it all. An elusive enemy party with a penchant for laying ambushes kept us on our toes the entire week. The narrative compiled by our numerous RECCes and OPs allowed our Platoon Commanders to devise an Assault that will live in my memory forever. The Enemy encampment, conveniently exposed to our FSG from the East, was swiftly overrun and the 99th Cadet Inf COY boarded ROPS with victory in hand.



Cadets performing physically demanding ISTAR training

Lourdes – 2/Lt Sive Byrne (commissioned to Arty Sch, DFTC)

On the 11th of May 2023, the 99th Cadet Class travelled to Lourdes for the 63rd International Military Pilgrimage. The trip started with an opening ceremony where the cadets were introduced to militaries from all over the world, as well as various groups attending Lourdes for the well-known International Military Pilgrimage. Lourdes was a very rewarding experience as the cadets spent time with members of the Curragh Group, organising events and outings that added immensely

to the experience and were enjoyed thoroughly by all involved. With the guidance from Fr. PJ Somers throughout the pilgrimage, this gave the cadets time to reflect, wind down and to enjoy the valuable moments that usually cadets wouldn't get the chance to do. After four days of socialising and interacting with people from all over the world, seeing variations of marches from other armies and attending prayer services and gatherings, the cadets were invited to join in the closing ceremony where members of the 99th Cadet Class represented the class to the highest standard. Without a doubt Lourdes was one of the most memorable and enjoyable trips of the Cadetship.

99th Cadet Class depart Cadets Mess for commissioning ceremony



All-Army Boxing – 2/Lt Fintan Perris (commissioned to 1 MIC)

In early March 2023 members of the 99th Cadet Class undertook a brief training camp in preparation for the All-Army Boxing Championships 2023. Under the watchful eye of Sgt Molloy and CS Pollard, the class honed their skills before being put to the test in the ring. The class won a historic victory for both the Mil Col and DFTC, by being the first unit from the Curragh to win an All-Army Boxing title. Wins from Cdt Smith with one fight in the senior category, Cdt Perris with two wins in the advanced novice and three wins by Cdt Gallagher in the novice, along with a win for Cdt McMenamin to bring home the trophy to the Cadets' Mess. It was a proud day for all involved and a piece of history for the 99th Cadet Class.

Cadet receives commissioning scroll from Minister for Defence, Micheál Martin, TD



Celebrations following conclusion of commissioning ceremony



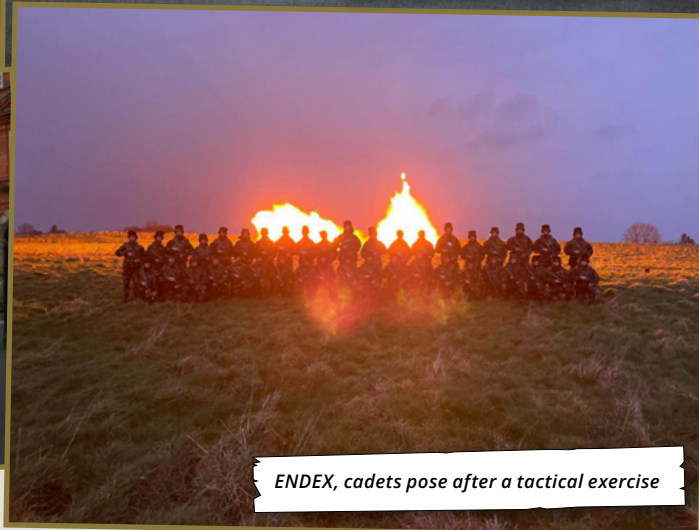
99th Cadet Class under command of Comdt Gary Ryan, OIC 99th Cadet Class



99th Cadet class winning the An Cosantóir 10km block race event



ENDEX, cadets pose after a tactical exercise



AN COSANTÓIR 10K

09 OCTOBER 2024, PHOENIX PARK, DUBLIN

By Comdt Helen Hosback, DF Info Officer

Race Prize Categories	
Men's Race	
Senior Male Overall	1,2,3
Male O/35	1,2,3
Male O/40	1,2,3
Male O/45	1,2
Male O/50	1,2
Male O/55	1
Women's Race	
Senior Female Overall	1,2,3
Female O/35	1,2
Female O/40	1,2
Team Competition	
Teams	1,2,3
Unit Block Competition	
Unit Blocks	1,2
Loaded March Competiton	
Teams	1,2
Veteran (Individual) Category	
Male O/40	1
Senior Male	1,2
Male O/50	1
Female	1,2
Guest Individual Category	
Guest Male	1,2
Guest Female	1,2

The An Cosantóir Office is excited to announce that some changes have been made to the structure of the 45th annual An Cosantóir 10k Road Race and 5k Walk scheduled to take place in McKee Barracks, and Phoenix Park, Dublin on 09th October 2024.

The main race categories for the Individual Races remain (see table below), however some additional categories and rule changes apply.

Team Race: Prior to 2023 teams had 5 members, following on from the rule change for the 2023 race, the teams will continue to have 4 members. Times will be calculated based on chip timings.

Block Race: Firstly, we examined the Block Race which previously required 25 members of the block, with 20 of those to cross the line for the time to count. In recent years, due to operational commitments and personnel shortages it has been difficult to achieve this. As a result, the Block Race now requires 20 members, with 15 to cross the finish line. We hope that this will encourage units to increase their participation in this category, for the prestigious title of Block Winners, most recently won by the 99th Cadet Class in 2023.

Loaded March: This is a new race category for the 2024 Race. It is a 10k 'loaded march' race in same dress as Part III of the Annual Fitness test (14kg weight with 2L of water); with similar controls as for the fitness test to enforce dress and weight rulings. Green/olive bag to be used. This will consist of teams of 3 personnel, with all 3 to have crossed the line for the timings to count. Prizes will be awarded to the 1st and 2nd fastest teams.

5k Walk: The 5k walk will take place on the same route as previous years, with spot prizes for individuals finishing the race.

Training Plans: We will publish a series of training plans, for Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced Runners, compiled by Comdt James Ledingham, MSc Sports Performance. They will be designed to aid runners in their preparation for the race, and will be published on Connect and in poster format 12-14 weeks prior to the race.

We hope that we continue to get as much participation from DF personnel, serving and retired, as well as invited guests as we have in previous years. Anyone who attends will agree that it is a great day out for all concerned.

See you on 09 Oct 2024 in the Phoenix Park!

Team Competition | 19



Prizes will be awarded as follows: Team 1,2,3

Teams must consist of not less than 4 runners drawn from members of the same DF unit or staff

All 4 runners must cross the finish line in order for the team to score.

Team positions will be calculated based on the finishing (chip) time of each runner. The winning team will be the team with the lowest combined time.

Unit Block

Prizes will be awarded as follows: Block 1, 2

Blocks must consist of not more than 20 runners and not less than 15 runners.

In order for a Block to be scored, 15 of the original starters from that block must cross the finish line



Loaded March

Teams must consist of 3 personnel.

All 3 members of the team must cross the line in order for the time to count.

Each team member must carry 14kg weight, and 2L of water. The 14kg weight will be confirmed at both the start and finish line.

Teams may be comprised of all males or all females or a combination of males and females.

ARTICLE BY BQMS DAVE WILLIAMS
PHOTOS BY BQMS DAVE WILLIAMS

Individual training sessions

THE DEFENCE FORCES ROWING CLUB

History

In Sept 2020, myself, BQMS Dave Williams, CQMS Martyn Underhill and Pte Rob Diffley who row with Fermoy, Lee Valley and Shandon Rowing Clubs respectively decided to re-ignite rowing within the Defence Forces and launched a new Defence Forces Rowing Club. In a time post COVID where most workplaces were trying to get back to some much-needed normality, myself, Martyn and Rob were planning some Introduction to Rowing Camps in a bid to kick start rowing within the organisation. The history of rowing in the DF goes back as far as the 80's and 90's where two championships were won by the then named Defence Forces Rowing Association. However, during the early 2000s there was little rowing activity apart from races against the Gardai which were a regular event in Islandbridge and this is where Rowing within the organisation more or less stopped and fell into decline.

Developing the Defence Forces Rowing Club

Anyone involved in Rowing will tell you that as a sport, Rowing is inherently expensive; not just in terms of clothing or memberships, but boats, oars, speed coaches, trailers, tool kits and tressills and all this was at the forefront of planning by myself, Martyn and Rob, with obvious questions on where would the funding come from, how do we start, where do we start, all playing an part in early obstacles. We decided that the first step was conducting analysis on what kit was available, where was it, who had ownership of it, and what would be needed going forward in order to kick start the club. This involved networking with our known civilian clubs and friends around the country as to where all the previous

rowing club kit and equipment went to. It also involved us borrowing boat trailers from UCC and Lee Valley Rowing Club and driving to Tribesman in Galway, Commercial in Dublin and to Baldonnel to gather up what remaining kit and equipment was left, from here we had a starting point. By doing this we managed to track down three boats, two single sculls and one double scull and as such a foundation was laid, from here we could now at least put people in a boat and teach them to row.

Later on that summer, in August 2020, the club held its first Introduction to Rowing Camp which was run from Fermoy Rowing. Due to the shortage of DF owned kit and equipment, the rationale was to lease boats and equipment from Fermoy as a taster to gauge Rowing appetite within the DF. This course offered 16 places for students across all Corps and Services from which a total of 9 members joined myself, Martyn and Rob. The initial phase for the club thereafter involved setting about more training days for those 9 new club members, focusing on getting as much water time as possible and improving their individual technique on the rowing machine to ensure we were off to a good solid start. It was not long before the positive word began to spread and through the use of social media and IKON we attracted more members over the coming months with our total strength now going from 12 to 23 members. This was a really positive start and we were delighted with the initial progress we had made as a club.

The club's strategy entering 2021 was to expose our new members to as many recreational regattas as possible in order to build their confidence in boat handling and to provide more exposure to some race day events and regattas. This would mean having our rowers take charge of their boat, be responsible for it on the day of the race, but preceding the race, sticking to and completing daily and weekly training sessions on the ERG, Bike, and gym. Finally our athletes were ready and, in the spring of 2021, we selected members to travel to Graiguenamanagh in Kilkenny in April, Cappoquin in May, Ocean to City in Cork City in June and Fermoy Sprint Regatta in July to represent the Defence Forces. We had some excellent results in these events with the club picking up winners medals and top three places in all events. With this success in mind another Learn to Row Camp was run for another 16 individuals where we gained another 7 new rowers to our club from this camp bringing our total strength to now 30 members.

Affiliation with Rowing Ireland

The next logical step with these 30 members was to register with Rowing Ireland as an affiliated club, and this process takes some time. We were



Winners of Senior 4 at Graiguenamanagh Rowing Regatta L-R PO Kara Foley (Cox), Sgt Shane Hennessy, Pte Danny Scanlon, Pte Tomas Barry, BQ Dave Williams



BQ Dave Williams in Castleconnell

conscious that we were entering into the public domain as a public body and we now found ourselves pitted against the country's top clubs and rowers. Rowing Ireland guided us through the process, upholding strict compliance; the initial phase involved setting up of a committee, which included President, OIC, Club Captain, Treasurer, Club Secretary, Senior Coaches, as well as everything from Bank Accounts, Boats, Kit and Equipment. Members were just the start! The process was also extremely challenging in terms of administration, such as a club safety statement, club constitution, and risk assessments, setting up and briefing everyone of the Rowing Ireland Tracker system for drug testing purposes for our athletes while all the time in the background, myself, Martyn and Rob would organise and run weekly and daily water sessions at the National Rowing Centre. The process also required us to send coaches on introduction to Coaching followed by the full Level 1 Coaching Course, and

for our club secretary Petty Officer Kara Foley of the NS, it involved Kara undertaking a Child Protection Safety Officers Course. Of course we don't have any children within the club but it was another course we needed to have someone qualified in before Rowing Ireland would allow us into the list of affiliated rowing clubs within Ireland. However, in December 2023 having completed all the necessary courses and attained the laid down qualifications as demanded by Rowing Ireland, we were notified that we had been accepted as an official Rowing Ireland Club which was fantastic news for everyone connected with the club and really gave everyone within the club a sense of achievement. Rowing Ireland Head of Coaching and Education and Club Support Officers Gerry Farrell and Pat Kiely were really supportive and helpful of us during the period and the early days of setting up. Although an administration led journey, we could now finally look at the Rowing Ireland calendar and pick events and crews for regatta.

Benefits of Affiliation

Joining Rowing Ireland had many purposes; firstly in a bid to further to develop the sport, we needed to have our current athletes challenged and to be on par with civilian athletes in terms of racing, training, national and international competitions. This would mean our athletes would have a clear pathway and opportunities to complete this objective. It allowed us to push on in terms of a rationale for funding support from J7 where Comdt Brian Connolly, Lt Claire Murphy, CQMS Jacinta McEnery and Cpl John Agnew have been fantastic in helping us achieve this; but it was also the next logical step for us to prevent a plateau – we had members who joined and who wanted to represent the Defence Forces in Rowing, we just needed a roadmap and by joining Rowing Ireland this provided that opportunity. The next step forward for the club and its currently 32 members, some of which have represented Ireland at under age levels, and others have competed more recently at the



Early morning rowing sessions

world offshore rowing championships in Portugal competing against Olympians from other nations, is to push on further by rowing in weekly Rowing Ireland Regattas. This will allow us to further develop our rowing skill and technique – most of our rowers will actually tell that you having tried it, they didn't understand or appreciate how technical the sport actually is, sitting in a 27 foot carbon fiber tube that is 12 inches approx. in width and trying not to fall in and row with speed can be challenging on a calm summer evening, let alone a gusty choppy day. This is why we put so much focus in training on technique as opposed to strength. Of course, contrary to belief, rowing is all about pushing and not pulling, and as a gauge approx. 80-85% is legs, pushing the boat past the oar once you're connected with the water, so a lot of our training focuses on building and developing strong legs for the drive phase. These are some of the points we teach on our "Learn to Row Camp" and then moving forwards we develop the technique farther, where we really focus in with our athletes on what actually makes a boat move.

New Equipment

In December 2023, we took delivery of our new coxed Heavyweight Filipi Quad, this 4 person racing boat is on par with some of the country's top clubs. We are also expecting delivery of a new Filipi double (2 person Boat) in late July, again in an attempt to develop and push the club as far as we can within our constraints such as overseas, career courses and general day to day life for our members. These two boats will give our athletes every possible chance of competing and representing the Defence Forces Rowing club to the best of their ability,

The Future of the DF Rowing Club

Moving forward to current times, our club holds a strength of 32 members which has exceeded our initial hopes, these members are now currently in the midst of training where on average we have members rowing on the rowing machine doing over 100km weekly as well as bike sessions and weight specific exercises. Our event calendar for 2024 will see the club compete in 9 Rowing Ireland Regattas, run two training camps at the National Rowing Centre, and compete in the 1 and 2 km National Rowing Champs in June and July. We will also have our next Learn to Row Camp in the latter period of August, again run from Fermoy Rowing Club

Want to join the DF Rowing Club?

If you are interested in joining the Irish Defence Forces Rowing Club, please feel free to contact BQ Dave Williams ext 4335 or Rob Diffley on Ext 4234 or Dave.williams@defenceforces.ie or Robert.diffley@defenceforces.ie



Top: Winners Ocean to City L-R BQ Dave Williams, Pte Richard Hethrington, Pte Tomas Barry, CQMS Martin Underhill, Cpl John Tobin

THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS AT WAR, 1916 – 1923

ARTICLE BY TOM O'NEILL, COMDT RDF (RETD)
PHOTOS BY TOM O'NEILL, COMDT RDF (RETD)

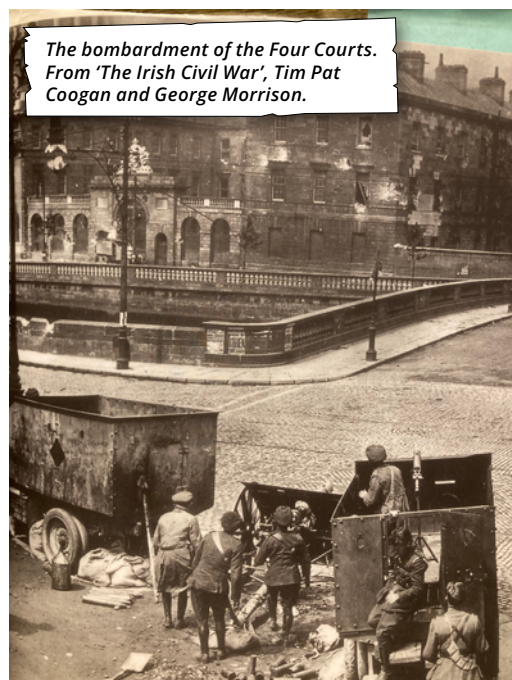
PART 3: THE CIVIL WAR

The terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty led to a split in the IRA. This resulted in a pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty divide. During the early months of 1922, the scene was set for a disastrous, destructive and tragic Civil War.

From the beginning of 1922, a pro-Treaty, Provisional Government, was in power in Ireland. Meanwhile the British military were withdrawing their forces from Ireland and in the process of handing over their barracks and camps to Irish forces. The barracks or camps were handed over to pro or anti-Treaty forces, depending on which side was strongest in the area. Luckily for the government, the pro-Treaty forces were stronger

in Dublin. This resulted in the majority of the barracks and state buildings in the capital being saved for the government. The extensive military complex in the Curragh was also handed over to government forces.

One exception in Dublin was the Four Courts on Inns Quay. The anti-Treaty forces set up their Dublin headquarters in the Four Courts on the 14th of April 1922 and had a substantial and



The bombardment of the Four Courts. From 'The Irish Civil War', Tim Pat Coogan and George Morrison.

well-armed garrison inside. They set up extensive defensive positions within the Four Courts. Considering their limited war fighting capability, the anti-Treaty forces had quickly forgotten one of the principal lessons from the 1916 Rising, not to garrison large buildings.

On 29th March 1922, members of the anti-Treaty, First Cork Brigade IRA, conducted an extraordinarily successful maritime operation off the coast of Cork, when they hijacked the British vessel 'Uponor'. The vessel had departed the Royal Naval base on Haulbowline Island in Cork Harbour early that morning and was bound for Devonport on the south coast of England. The ship's hold contained at least 381 service rifles, 727 service revolvers, 33 Lewis light machine-guns, 6 Maxim medium machine-guns, hundreds of thousands of rounds of service ammunition, hand grenades and a quantity of explosives. IRA officers hijacked the 'Uponor' while off the Cork coast and diverted it into Ballycotton Bay. The IRA had organised a successful unloading plan and had commandeered sufficient lorries to remove the weapons and equipment to prepared arms dumps. Prior to this successful operation, the men of the anti-Treaty, First Cork Brigade, did not have sufficient arms and ammunition with which to fight the impending Civil War.



National Army support weapons, an 18-pounder field gun and a Lancia armoured car, in action at the junction of Henry Street and O'Connell Street, Dublin. From 'The Irish Civil War', Tim Pat Coogan and George Morrison

During the early months of 1922, there were a number of unsuccessful attempts to reunite the pro and anti-Treaty forces. One was on the 18th of June when a proposal by Cork anti-Treaty IRA officer Tom Barry, that war should be declared on the withdrawing British forces. The proposal did not reunite the two sides, but it resulted in a split in the anti-Treaty forces. As a result, General Liam Lynch resigned as commander of the anti-Treaty forces and he was replaced by General Joe McKelvey from Belfast. For a few weeks, there was a second anti-Treaty force under Gen Lynch, with his headquarters in Barry's Hotel, Dublin.

The pro-Treaty forces, referred to as the 'Free State Army' or the 'National Army,' were at a greater advantage than the anti-Treaty forces, also referred to as 'The Irregulars.' The National Army was very well funded by the government and was supplied with weapons and ammunition from British Army stocks in Ireland. This extended to the British Army supplying heavier weapons such as artillery and armoured cars.

The National Army had begun the transition from being guerilla fighters to professional and conventional soldiers, thanks in no small measure to the British Army for their support weapons. The anti-Treaty forces were never able to make that transition.

Several Irish men that had seen war service as senior officers in the British Army, joined the National Army. Their war time experience was of immense benefit and enabled senior command appointments to be filled in time for the conventional warfare of the Civil War.

While the Provisional Government had sufficient funds with which to run the country and pay the salaries of the military and civil servants, the anti-Treaty forces were compelled to use bank robberies and other illegal activities for generating funds to keep their organisation funded.

The bank robberies, shootings and kidnappings carried out by the anti-Treaty forces were undermining government authority. The British government was putting pressure on the Provisional Government to stop these acts of lawlessness. When two members of the London IRA, Reginald Dunne and John O'Sullivan, assassinated Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson in London on the 22nd June 1922, the Provisional Government had to take steps to clear the anti-Treaty forces out of the Four Courts. Field Marshal Wilson was the Chief Security Advisor to the Northern Ireland government. When the anti-Treaty IRA kidnapped Lt Gen JJ 'Ginger' O'Connell, Deputy Chief of Staff of the National Army, the Provisional

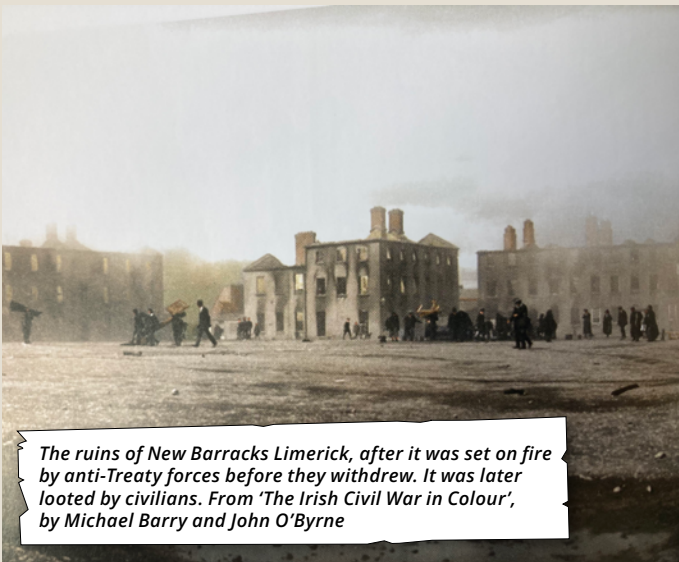
Sean Collins, viewing the body of his brother Gen Michael Collins, at the lying in state in Dublin's City Hall. Sean was interned on Spike Island during 1921. Photo from 'Ireland The Revolutionary Years'.



Government decided to order the National Army to attack the Four Courts garrison.

The first move for the army was to cordon off the Four Courts and any adjoining building that were occupied by anti-Treaty forces. The army next requested and received 18 Pounder field artillery guns with high explosive ammunition from the British Army which was still stationed in Dublin. The artillery guns, manned by National Army soldiers began bombarding the Four Courts in the early hours of Wednesday, 28th June 1922. The Civil War had begun. The army was extremely fortunate in having an abundance of all ranks that had trained and operated these guns while serving in the British Army during the First World War. The besieged Four Courts garrison held out for just over forty-eight hours and was forced to surrender on Friday 30th of June. General Joe McKelvey was among the several hundred anti-Treaty IRA men captured, and he was imprisoned in Mountjoy Jail. As a result, Gen Liam Lynch was once again the commander of the anti-Treaty forces.

Gen Michael Collins was Commander-in-Chief of the National Army



The ruins of New Barracks Limerick, after it was set on fire by anti-Treaty forces before they withdrew. It was later looted by civilians. From 'The Irish Civil War in Colour', by Michael Barry and John O'Byrne

during the early phase of the Civil War. Because Gen Collins wanted to stop the disastrous Civil War, his influence led to a restraint of National Army operations against the anti-Treaty forces. When Gen Collins was killed in the ambush at Beal-na-Bláth on the 22nd of August Gen Richard Mulcahy replaced him. The time of restraint was over. It was full scale warfare from then on.

The following month, Gen Mulcahy asked the government for 'Special Emergency Powers for the Army.' Military trials were introduced for anti-Treaty men who were liable to be executed if captured while in possession of arms or explosives. The anti-Treaty IRA referred to the new law as 'The Murder Bill' and decreed, "that any TD or Senator who voted for the Bill should be shot on sight." Posters were circulated listing the TDs and Senators that had voted for the Bill. The Military Courts began

sitting on 15th October. The first executions took place in Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin on 15th November when four were shot. Senior IRA officer Erskine Childers was executed in Beggars Bush Barracks, Dublin, on 24th November. Four of the most senior IRA officers in Mountjoy were executed in Mountjoy on 8th December 1922, as a reprisal for the IRA's assassination of Cork TD Sean Hales the day before. During the ten-months of Civil War, the government executed seventy-seven (77) anti-Treaty members by firing squads. During the War of Independence, the British authorities had executed fourteen (14) IRA men by firing squads in the Martial Law area and hanged ten (10) outside the Martial Law areas.

During the War of Independence, the IRA forces were the experts in guerrilla warfare only, and only against British forces who were strangers in Ireland. During the Civil War they were not permitted to fight a guerrilla war, because their enemies were their former friends and colleagues and sometimes their relatives. The ghost army cloak was gone, now they had nowhere to hide and their identities were known. The anti-Treaty forces did not have the same level of public support as they had during the War of Independence, because the people were war weary and had enjoyed almost ten months of relative peace following the Truce. Also, the anti-Treaty policy of destruction of road, rail and river bridges, railways, rolling stock and infrastructure in general during the withdrawing of their forces, further alienated them from the civilian population, which was left suffering because of their needless destruction.

While the pro-Treaty forces had adequate logistics to fight a conventional war, the anti-Treaty forces were at a major disadvantage. Very soon the anti-Treaty forces had to retreat from the greater part of the country and the losses of their fighting forces both in men and material were irreplaceable.

The confidence and overwhelming might of the National Army was further illustrated in their ability to mount seaborne landings on the south and southwest coast, resulting in outflanking manoeuvres against the anti-Treaty defensive positions.

In mid-1922, the National Army further enhanced their conventional force capability by forming the 'Army Air Service'. This was successfully accomplished in record time because of the availability of fully qualified and experienced former British Royal Air Force personnel of all ranks who joined the National Army. This was simplified by purchasing World



The destruction of the rail network by anti-Treaty forces was a regular occurrence during the Civil War, as shown here near the Killurin Tunnel, Co. Wexford. From 'The Irish Civil War in Colour', by Michael Barry and John O'Byrne

War One surplus military aircraft from Britain, the very same types that these Army Air Service officers and enlisted ranks had flown and serviced during their previous service. During the Civil War, these aircraft were successfully used on reconnaissance and army co-operation missions.

The National Army had evolved from the mistakes and lessons learned from the 1916 Rising, through the experiences of the War of Independence, to the conventional battles of the Civil War.

The seeds sown by the Irish Citizen Army and the Irish Volunteers in 1916 had matured through the cauldron of warfare into a permanent and professional National Army, Óglaigh na hÉireann, that the country was and still is proud of.

ARCO

THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

ARTICLE BY BRIG GEN PAUL PAKENHAM (RETD)

Introduction

ARCO, the Association of Retired Commissioned Officers, celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. The foresight and endeavours of our founding members, who came together in 1994, still guide our efforts today. We operate on a voluntary basis, serving the needs of a growing membership of more than 900, who are not just officers who retire on pension, but also includes those retiring early with little or no pension benefits who embark on new careers in the private and public sectors.

Within the Defence Community ARCO is regarded as a vibrant, evolving, and flourishing Representative Association, formally recognised by the Department of Defence, and the Defence Forces, as a Veterans' Association.

Posture

ARCO's aim is: Representing retired commissioned officers of the Permanent Defence Force, ARCO encourages and fosters the unique fellowship and comradeship established during military service and promotes and protects the interests and needs of members, and eligible spouses or civil partners, within its competencies.



Lt Gen Seán Clancy Chief of Staff with ARCO's President Brig Gen Seamus Ó Giolláin

Our aim and objectives are the basis for our governance, transparency, accountability, diversity, and relevance. We encourage and foster the unique fellowship and comradeship, gained by our members through their extensive military service in Óglaigh na hÉireann, at home and overseas.

We provide a strong, collective, and authoritative voice, actively representing and supporting Army, Naval Service and Air Corps officers, who retire on age grounds, or who retire early and transition to civilian employment, as well as spouses and civil partners of deceased members. This encompasses not just officers on a military pension, but also those with little or no such pension benefits.

The needs of our members in 2024, is somewhat different from that in 1994, when the Association was founded. Today there is a significant change in the lifetime careers of officers, with a movement towards early retirement from the Defence Forces, and, in some cases, retirement without military pensions. ARCO has, and is, adapting to these changes and remains representative and relevant to the evolving profile of its membership.

We are actively involved with kindred organisations and agencies, and we engage in public advocacy and lobbying on issues associated with our aim and objectives. Our Association provides a valuable forum for analysis and debate, which enables us to address a range of issues that impact on the interests and quality of life of our members.

Pension Related Issues

Pensions, and pension related issues, remain a major focus of ARCO's endeavours. Our Pensions Strategy focuses on: the retention of pension parity; maintaining the value of military pensions into the future; the establishment of a statutory, independent third-party mechanism for the

negotiation of public service pensions; the adverse implications of the Single Pensions Act 2012; and, repealing pension abatement anomalies.

ARCO has made comprehensive submissions to the Public Service Pay Commission, the Department of Defence, and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform covering Accreditation, Value and Determination of Pensions, Parity Based Framework, and the Single Scheme Pensions Act 2012.

An example of our successes in the area of pensions is ARCO's case to the Department of Defence and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on the application of a specific increase in Military Service Allowance (MSA) to military pensions of July 2019. This case was inclusive in nature, championing all Defence Forces Veterans, including enlisted personnel, and the spouses and civil partners of deceased personnel. Following five ARCO submissions, we were advised that the benefit of the specific MSA increase would be reflected in all military pensions, that included an MSA component and backdated to 04 July 2019.

We welcome confirmation from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform that the Pay Measures outlined in the Public Service Agreement 2024 to 2026 will apply to military pensions. This ensures that the current pensions increase policy, of maintaining parity between the pay of serving personnel and the pensions of Defence Forces Veterans and eligible spouses and civil partners, will be maintained for the duration of this Agreement.

ARCO is a founding member of the Alliance of Retired Public Servants and is represented on its Council. Having thirty affiliated associations, this Alliance is recognised by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Defence Community

Engagements with the Minister for Defence include formal meetings on an annual basis, and consultative meetings addressing issues such as the Independent Review Group – Defence Forces, and the terms of reference for the Tribunal of Inquiry. In addition to formal meetings with the Chief of Staff, ARCO has benefitted from a mutually supportive interface with all members of the General Staff, GOCs and FOCNS.

Along with the two other recognised Veterans' Associations, ONE and IUNVA, we participate in quarterly meetings with officials from the Department of Defence and with officers from Defence Forces Headquarters. We remain fully engaged with ONE, IUNVA, RACO and PDFORRA in advancing the interests of Defence Forces Veterans. Of significant relevance to serving and retired officers, we are represented on the Executive Committee of the Defence Forces Benevolent Fund, and on CAOGA's Board of Management. In areas of mutual interest, we also interface with the Irish Defence Forces Officers Club (IDFOC).

Veterans' Affairs

ARCO has actively promoted the urgent need to put in place an inclusive and comprehensive Government Veterans' Policy, and the establishment of a Joint Office for Veterans' Affairs, consisting of personnel drawn



ARCO Delegation with Minister for Defence - 2024

Lieutenant Ben Breen, 98 Cadet Class and 27 Infantry Battalion, recipient of An Claidheamh Gascocht with his parents Seán and Bernadette Breen.



from both the Department of Defence and Defence Forces, led by a Government appointed Veterans' Commissioner.

We salute the valuable material and social support provided by ONE, IUNVA, the Defence

Forces Benevolent Fund, and our own membership, to vulnerable Veterans, and to the families of those serving personnel who find themselves in need.

Submissions to Government Departments

Our members' collective service in demanding operational environments at home and overseas, and through dynamic internal reorganisations and reforms, represents a considerable repository of knowledge, experience, and expertise within the realm of Defence. Consequently, ARCO is very well positioned to constructively contribute to discussions on Defence related issues and concerns.

In recent times ARCO has made numerous written and verbal submissions on a wide range of issues including: Commission on the Defence Forces; Review of the Department of Defence (Civil Service Renewal Plan); Consultative Forum on International Security Policy; Independent Review Group – Defence Forces; External Oversight Body; the Tribunal of Inquiry; and the Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023 (Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence).



Guests 2023 Annual General Meeting

Fostering Professional Excellence

Arising from its objectives, ARCO fosters professional excellence within the Defence Forces through the sponsorship of an award for the Best Student on Army, Naval Service and Air Corps Cadet Courses, and through the Defence Forces Mentoring Programme. Harnessing our diverse skills, and vast range of expertise and experience, derived from our service in the Defence Forces, we continue to support these Mentoring Programmes, which involve the current generation of officers who are the future generation of ARCO's membership. Reinforcing ARCO's motto Camaraderie Through Service and its outreach programme with serving officers, our mentoring concept reciprocates the investment and experience gained from service in the Defence Forces.

Networking

Networking is a new direction for ARCO, providing communications and opportunities, for both our members and the wider Defence Community. The



ARCO sword being presented to best cadet 98th Cadet Class

associated events enhance the valuable links among both serving and retired officers, providing opportunities to share talents and interests for their common benefit. During 2022 and

2023, as part of our outreach programme, ARCO hosted successful Panel Discussions, moderated by Capt Philip Quinlan (Retd), on Ireland's Defence and Defence Forces – Emerging Challenges and Opportunities (Hotel Keadeen, Newbridge), and on Military Career Transition to the Civil Service (Cedar and Cypress Rooms, UCD, Belfield).

Communications

ARCO's Website, Social Media Platforms, Text-a-Message Service and Newsletter are core elements of our Information Strategy. Newsletters are readily available on our Website, Newsletter 44 outlined ARCO's observations and actions arising from the Independent Review Group – Defence Forces. ARCO's LinkedIn, X and Facebook Platforms facilitate cost effective and efficient communications support for our membership. They also provide a marketing tool for the Association, allow us to connect with potential members, and with our extensive Target Audience, including "followers".



ARCO sword awarded to Lt Kevin Kilbane as the overall best Cadet of the 99th Cadet Class

Future

ARCO's focus for the short to medium term, is to protect our legacy, ethos, and values, to implement our aim and objectives, and to advance the Association's relevance to its evolving membership cohort.

For further information, please visit ARCO's Website: About Us, Membership, Rules, Information (Circulars, Submissions, Family Support Booklet), Communications (Newsletters, Texting Service), Links, and Webmail, and follow us on LinkedIn, X and Facebook.

Website: <https://arcoireland.com/>

ARCO Executive Committee 2023 / 2024

Officers

President: Brig Gen Séamus Ó Giolláin
Vice President: Capt (NS) David Barry
Secretary: Col Brendan McAndrew
Treasurer: Col Brian Monahan
Membership Secretary: Col Des Bergin

Regional Representatives

Eastern Region: Capt Philip Quinlan
Eastern Region: Comdt Ciarán Motherway
Southern Region: Capt Tony Doonan
Southern Region: Capt Oonagh Maher
Western Region: Brig Gen Peter O'Halloran
Western Region: Col Eamon Caulfield
DFTC Region: Lt Col Seamus Rouine
DFTC Region: Comdt Eoin McDaid
NS Region: Cmdr Gerard O'Flynn (NS)
NS Region: Capt (NS) David Barry
AC Region: Lt Col John Kirke
AC Region: Comdt Paul Deevy

Co-Opted Members

Website Manager: Comdt William Campbell
Newsletter Editor: Col Declan Carbery
Social Media Manager: Comdt Ken Sheehan
Representative on CAOGA Board: Lt Col Sean Scanlon
Representative on DFBF Committee: Brig Gen Paul Pakenham
Representative on Council Alliance of Retired Public Servants: Lt Col Joe Ahern

Auditor and Trustees

Auditor: Comdt Pat Casey
Trustee: Col Billy Nott
Trustee: Lt Col Pat Godfrey
Trustee: Capt Ray Murphy

PEOPLE OF THE DF

NAME

CIARÁN OMAN

CURRENT UNIT

DFHQ CIS COY

AGE

43

UNITS SERVED

2ND INF BN, DFHQ CIS COY

RANK

CAPT

MISSIONS OVERSEAS

91ST INF BN UNMIL, 108TH INF BN UNIFIL,
119TH INF BN UNIFIL

YEAR JOINED

2002

**INTERVIEW BY CPL MARTIN BENNETT
PHOTOS BY CAPT CIARÁN OMAN**

Can you give me a brief description of your career so far?

Before joining the DF I worked in a sports store, it was O'Neill's sports factory. It was great coming up to All Ireland finals getting all the free gear. I joined the army in 2002 in the 2 Inf Bn, when I was 21. I spent three years there and travelled overseas with the unit to Liberia (UNMIL), it was a great trip. I came back from overseas and applied for the first CIS Trainee Technician scheme in 2005 through Carlow IT, to become a CIS Technician (CIST). I completed the Level 7 B Eng in Military Communications Systems in 2008 and I was sent straight to CIS in DFHQ and that's where I've been since. I was Sgt i/c Networks when I applied for the PO's Course in 2018, and I was commissioned back to the Comms Building where I am now A/OC of the Networking Section, responsible for keeping the network secure including managing all of our VDI machines, network structure etc.

What made you decide to join the Defence Forces?

I had worked in an office in Dublin city and I didn't enjoy it. I didn't enjoy the 9 to 5 and I felt like I needed a job that wouldn't keep me at a desk all day and had a bit of variety and a job that had a physical element to it. I come from a sporting background where I played GAA and XXX (any other sports?). I was always into keeping fit, I also always loved being part of a group or part of a team. The fact that I worked in a few jobs that I didn't like made me really appreciate the Army once I got in.

You completed the Potential Officers Cse in 2019, did you always want to do the Potential Officers course?

No, I actually didn't, I was on duty on the gate here in McKee Barracks and an Officer I had previously worked with rang me and suggested I put in for it. I hadn't considered it initially as I was happy with the job I had. He suggested to just put in for it and see what happens so I ended up applying for it and I got it. It was an opportunity that came up like has happened many times in my career. I was very happy with



Capt Oman served with the 91st Inf Bn UNMIL Liberia in 2004

the career and job that I already had so it was a bonus to be commissioned back to the same unit where I could continue doing technical work, now in a management capacity where I can influence policy.

What was your proudest day so far in the Defence Forces?

I think any day when you're promoted with any of the big parades, to share those days with your family who support you through the courses are proud days. Obviously getting commissioned was super but also my NCO promotion parade was a massive one too. Each one as you go along is the biggest one at that time. Also, the achievements and opportunities I got through the Army were massive moments for me.

What was the most challenging moment in your career so far?

I would say the most physically challenging moment was my Standard Course; it was really tough coming from CIS – the tactical stuff was a bit raw for me like anything when you're not at it full-time it can be hard to remember, but in fairness most CIS lads just get stuck in and get on with it anyway.

**Medal Parade Day for the
108 Inf Bn UNIFIL 2013**



**Promotion to Cpl while
serving in UNIFIL in 2013**



**Ciarán was part of the 10th Potential Officers
Course before being Commissioned as a Lt.**

Have you a favourite quote?

It's actually an Irish one.

"Nascann Dúshlán Daoine"

"A challenge unites people" it's my club motto.

Initially I played with Thomas Davis GAA Club in Tallaght but I'm now involved with Na Gaeil Óga CLG, an Irish speaking club based in Lucan.

Have you a favourite movie?

I do, I only watched it recently it's The Green Mile with Tom Hanks. It was on the other day and I watched it even though I had seen it before many times.

Have you a favourite book?

I love a good autobiography or sports books.

One that really stood out to me was a book called 'My Brother Jason' it's a true crime story about Jason Corbett.

Have you any plans or goals for the future?

Not really I'm committed to the job that I'm in at the moment and I really enjoy it. I've been in the Defence Forces a long time and I actually care for the direction it's going. I want to be a part of it. It's giving me so much in my life and my career and I appreciate everything I've gotten out of the Defence Forces but for now I'm happy in the job that I'm doing right now; I still find it challenging and rewarding and as an organisation we're moving along with technology that would equal any civilian organisation out there. I like the fact that we're at the cutting edge of technology.

What advice would you give to your 18-year-old self?

I would say go for it, try everything, take every opportunity that's given to you and seek out as many as you can as well because not everything comes knocking on your door but push yourself out of your comfort zone.

How do you find a job has changed since you've been commissioned?

To be honest there's not much change. I was worried about it initially, being commissioned from the ranks but nothing bad has ever happened. Everyone has taken it very much as a positive. I'm back working in the same office I was before I did the course and there's no drama, it's working really well. The fact that I'm in a Corps I think people really just appreciate you for your technical ability more than your rank.

What drew you to the technical side of things?

When you're in the Battalion you get to see a lot about other Corps, the Medical Corps was one I was interested in previously. The opportunity for the CIS Technician Scheme came up so I put myself out there. I had no massive technical ability before but I just wanted a new challenge, the Technicians Scheme is such a brilliant opportunity for anyone in the Defence Forces. Three years of education fully paid for by Defence Forces.

What is the most valuable thing or lesson the DF has taught you?

Resilience. Definitely resilience. To be able to get up and get on with things. It doesn't always go your way, but we know how to just get on with things.

What advice would you give to someone considering joining the Defence Forces?

I would say jump at it. Join it, as a recruit or cadet and have a look around and see what appeals to you because there's multiple opportunities in multiple Corps.

If you're into fitness there's opportunities in fitness, if you're into technical things there's opportunities in the technical side of things. It's great diversity. It saves you from the monotony of 9 to 5. There are constantly new opportunities and as a young person you wouldn't get those opportunities anywhere else.



**Capt Oman on the CIS Centenary
Parade which took place in 2023**

TACTICAL CASUALTY COMBAT CARE

EUMAM-UA & IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

ARTICLE BY RSM DAVID O'CONNOR
PHOTOS BY RSM DAVID O'CONNOR

The EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM-UA) was set up on 17 October 2022. Its objective is to strengthen the capacity of the Ukrainian Armed Forces to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and to deter and respond to possible future military offensives by Russia and other potential aggressors. 24 EU Member States have offered training modules and personnel. The training is supported by the provision of equipment for military purposes to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. This equipment is provided by Member States and funded by the European Peace Facility. Since then, individual collective and specialist training has taken place in various locations around Europe. On 21 February, the Government approved the participation of up to 30 Defence Forces personnel at any given time in the EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine. Since then, the Defence Forces have engaged extensively with the EU's Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) in Brussels, which is the Operations Headquarters and where we have one (1) DF person deployed, with a view to identifying suitable opportunities for training to the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF), based on the training needs identified by the UAF. In June 2023 CMU personnel were tasked with providing medical training for UAF Personnel under EUMAM-UA. EUMAM works closely together with its EU partners providing military training support to the UAF. The Defence Forces has deployed a number of specialised Mobile Training Teams (MTT) such as Tactical Casualty Combat Care, Demining and Clearance, and Drill Instructor to locations in Germany, Poland & Cyprus.

the "golden hour". As the time frame of care delivery increases, the latest weaponry is utilised, and evacuation timelines deteriorate, TCCC training is ideal for this type of conflict once all levels can function with appropriate trained personnel. When compared to the Defence Forces Military First Responder Course (MFR), TCCC is treating Military Casualties in a military environment, while the MFR Course is focused on a civilian feeling unwell.

For military service members who are wounded on the battlefield, the most critical phase is the period from point of wounding until the arrival at a Medical Treatment Facility (MTF), providing the casualty survives long enough to reach the care of a combat trauma surgeon. Survival depends on the level of medical treatment provided by line personnel at point of wounding and medical personnel with additional skills to carry out lifesaving interventions at different phases of care which are:

- Care Under Fire
- Tactical Field Care
- Tactical Evacuation Care

Limited interventions are carried out in Care Under Fire while the casualty and unit are under effective hostile fire. Suppression of hostile fire and moving the casualty to a safe position are major considerations at this point with the only medical intervention being to control major hemorrhage with the application of a tourniquet. Major lessons have been learnt by the Ukrainian Army on the use of tourniquets that were left on for a prolonged time which had a devastating effect on casualties.

Tactical Field Care allows time to carry out an examination of the casualty using the MARCH acronym, this allows time to assess the casualty for other injuries and carry out any basic medical interventions to increase the chances of survival.

M — Massive bleeding	P — Pain
A — Airway	A — Antibiotics
R — Respirations	W — Wounds
C — Circulation	S — Splinting
H — Head/hypothermia	

Tactical Evacuation Care is the unregulated movement of the casualty from point of wounding to a medical treatment facility. Movement can be stretcher carried out or placed in a non-medical vehicle.

The level taught to Ukrainian soldiers is the Combat Lifer Saver module. Usually this is a 5-day course, but it was decided to conduct the course over 9 days due to the increased time required for translation of lectures and skills practice. Because of the nature of the student's immediate deployment on return to Ukraine, extra training for practicing skills and exercises was also allocated.

There is an adage in tactical planning; 'Don't fight



Soldiers treating a gunshot wound under DF medics supervision

The Tactical Combat Casualty Care MTT training is located in the 3rd Medical Regiment Barracks, Donrstadt, Germany. The MTT training team consists of 6 personnel from CMU - 1 x Liaison Officer, 4 x TCCC Instructors and 1 x Interpreter.

TCCC is a tiered system of care delivery, based on the different levels of training, namely:

- All Service Members (ASM) (2 days) for all line personnel
- Combat Lifesaver Course (CLS) (5 days) each section or equivalent size has one CLS person per section
- Combat Medic (CM) (14 Days) for medical providers in Medical & SOF units
- Combat Paramedic (CP) (21 days) for medical providers who perform in an advanced medical role to keep wounded soldiers alive.

TCCC was designed to ensure increasing level and quality of care within



Ukrainian soldiers working as a team to treat the casualty

DF medics passing on their expertise to students



RSM Dave O'Connor assessing the soldier's skills



DF Medics in Germany

the last war fight the next one'. The Defence Forces has gained valuable information from the student's lived experiences, particularly in the areas of injury patterns from artillery weapons, such as the importance of controlling catastrophic hemorrhage and wound packing, and casualty evacuation timelines which have become lengthened due to the dynamic nature of the conflict and the use of drones. The casualties are usually carried out by stretcher for 5-6km at night before reaching a vehicle that can transport the casualty to a Casualty Collection Point to receive medical treatment. Most movement of casualties cannot be moved by day due to enemy surveillance which leads to the rethinking of the use of tourniquets as the evacuation time can take 12-24 hrs to move 20km. We teach now to downgrade any tourniquet to Celox™ gauze & trauma dressing within two hours unless the casualty has a limb amputation or is unconscious due to major hemorrhage. Lastly, the importance was reinforced of trained and equipped personnel in the sections supported by Paramedics & Advanced Paramedics both on deployment and domestic service.

This capacity building mission has had a positive benefit for CMU personnel and will have downrange effects for how the Irish Defence Forces conducts medical training across all three service arms in the future. We are now actively looking at replacing our basic medical training which is delivered to line personnel with TCCC training. This new training pipeline will be administered by the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (USA) which is the regulatory body for all TCCC matters within NATO. Opportunities within this field will eventually, pending legislative changes, lead to field surgical interventions and fluid resuscitation.

RSM David O'Connor is the Senior Medical Instructor in Medical School CMU DFTC and has completed four (4) of the five (5) medical training deployments to Germany. RSM O'Connor is a Tactical Combat Casualty Care Instructor and also a Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Tutor.

The Probationers Cse students during their passing out ceremony

THE 1ST ARMY RESERVE PROBATIONERS COURSE

ARTICLE BY CPL (RDF) LUKASZ GANCARZ
PHOTOS BY CPL (RDF) LUKASZ GANCARZ

The 1st Army Reserve Probationers course commenced on a cold Saturday morning in January 2023 and ran over 7 months. The course contained students from 2 Brigade, including troops from Infantry, Cavalry, Transport and MP units. The six students brought a wealth of experience garnered through over 100 years of combined service in both the Army Reserve and Permanent Defence Forces.

This was the first Military Police Probationers Course since the reorganisation and single force concept was introduced, and like other Army Reserve PNCO courses it was split into two distinct phases.

Phase One was focused on introducing students to what is required to be a military instructor and giving them the skills to become instructors following the completion of the course. This phase concluded with an MIT block run over a week of full-time training with the 2 BTC in Custume Barracks Athlone. During this training the MP Probationers joined students from the 5th AR Potential NCO's course. This combined approach provided for a great training environment, ensuring the students gained key instructional skills while also giving them the opportunity to learn from students and instructors coming from varied units and backgrounds. It also allowed students to build out their military networks with troops from across the Defence Forces.

The second part of the course focused on knowledge specific to the Military Police role. The initial phase aimed to broaden students' understanding of military law and legal procedure; this was accomplished through classroom-based learning delivered during training nights and weekends spent in the Military Police School. The knowledge gained will be vital in ensuring the Probationers are properly armed with the correct know-how to successfully carry out their future roles as MPs.



Land Navigation was an important part of the training

There were also practical lessons during this phase of training, this training focused on multiple skills that will be required by the students during their careers as MPs, lessons included search of the individual and of vehicles, police holds, arrest procedure, cardiac first responder, admin and a refresher on map reading and navigation. Instruction was also given on MP garrison and ceremonial duties.

The second block of full-time training took place at the Military Police School in the DFTC. The focus of this phase was

on Provost Operations and it was during this training students put into practice the knowledge and skills they gained during training over the previous months.

Students' knowledge was tested during a 72-hour exercise which saw them deploy to a location and construct a hide. They carried out route reconnaissance from this location to a predetermined position, and following this they commenced a detailed route signing exercise, a prisoner of war scenario and also established multiple straggler points which were manned by the Probationers.

As part of this training students also manned a duty room and reacted to multiple situations that they will likely encounter in the course of their future role. The importance of procedure and the need for proper procedure became very evident during this training with students starting to realise how precise MPs must be with their notes while on duty. Finally, students received instruction on the HK USP and fired this on the range in Gormanston.

The remaining element of the course consisted of three written examinations, covering everything they learned during the police specific element of the course. Upon completion of these exams students met with the course instructors and were provided with their overall course results. All six students passed all the required elements and they passed out on hot afternoon in September alongside the 5 AR PNCO course in Cathal Brugha Barracks.

A family connection:

Cpl Ruairi de Stanlaigh joined the AR in 2015 always with the intention of following in his Grandfather's footsteps and joining the Military Police. Cpl de Stanlaigh's Grandfather was the late CS Patrick Stanley. Patrick Stanley joined An Slua Muirí in the late 1940's before transferring to 6 Fd MP Coy (FCA) upon the formation of the FCA, eventually rising to the rank of CS within the MP Company and serving in this appointment up until his retirement in 1988. Some current members of the unit had fond memories of Ruairi's grandfather to share from their time serving with him. In particular CQ Gunn, who was a member of a recruit platoon in that was instructed by CS Stanley.



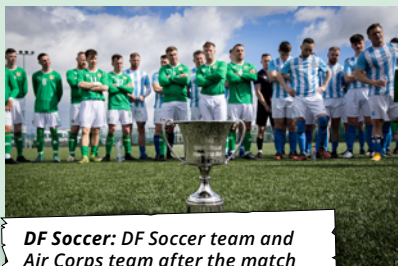
Students being presented with scrolls on parade



Putting the learned skills into practice

DF Sports & Clubs Update

FOR REGULAR UPDATES ON ANY OF THESE CLUBS, PLEASE LOG ONTO THE CONNECT APP



DF Soccer: DF Soccer team and Air Corps team after the match

Knowles were determined to mark the event in conjunction with DF Soccer. The Glenn Fullam Perpetual cup will now be an annual event. It was an exciting game, with tempo and ability for all to see, with the DF Team running out eventual 4-2 winners. It was honour to host Glenn's family at the event and the trophy was presented by Glenn's partner Kirsty with son Cruze being front and centre with both teams for the national anthem. It was also an opportunity to welcome Glenn's brother Lee to the DF family, he is currently an AC Recruit in the JITC and played a half each for both sides wearing the No8 green jersey his brother gave so much in. It is fitting that we remember the legend that Glenn was, he left a legacy with both the DF Soccer Team and the AC that will never be forgotten. When I saw the teams being piped out I felt it was a fitting tribute to Glenn - Powerful, centre stage and everyone following his lead! "



DF Soccer: Armn Glen Fullam (RIP) partner and family at the match



DF Soccer: Armn Glenn Fullam (RIP) fiancé Kirsty Forde presenting the winning cup

There will be a memorial game with Crumlin United in the coming weeks also as we continue to develop this relationship as Glenn's passing united the teams in grief.



DF Boxing: DF boxers after recent medal wins

DF Soccer

On 16 Apr 24, the first-year anniversary of Armn Glenn Fullam, the DF Soccer Team played the Air Corps Team in Peamount United FCs ground beside ACHQ. The game was driven by Flt Sgt Alan Hayles of the Air Corps who along with Sgt Peadar

Pte Luke Hensley struck gold at 57kg, he was the star performer for the team, recording 3 impressive victories at his first International Event. Pte Mark Fitzpatrick earned the "Best Fighter" award, showing his toughness over 3 bouts and was a deserving winner. Pte Ben McHugh and Pte Charlie Horgan both showed glimpses of brilliance and they will now focus on the upcoming National U22 Competition in July.

Special mention to Sgt John Molloy who was acknowledged for his considerable contribution to CISM Boxing.

Full Squad

Comdt John Moody (Team Manager)
Sgt John Molloy (Head Coach)
CS Tommy Sheahan (Coach)
Pte Ross Hickey (Coach)
Cpl Sean Montgomery (Coach)
Sgt Stephen Kelly (Referee/Judge)

Pte Luke Hensley 57kg
Pte Ben McHugh 71kg
Pte Mark Fitzpatrick 75kg
Tpr Brian Kennady 92kg
Pte Charlie Horgan 60kg
Tpr Tiffany O' Reilly 70kg



DF Boxing: DF boxing team head coaches

DF GAA

DF GAA: The jersey that was presented to each player that took part in the tournament



DF GAA: The referees taking a well-earned break



DF GAA: Fr Paul Murphy presenting the man of the match award

The Chaplains cup recently took place in Liam Mellows in Renmore, Galway on the 18th of April, the cup was won by 3rd Bn and DFHQ/DFTC won the Parsons cup. The Inter Brigade in both hurling and camogie will be taking place in a location TBC on the 2nd of Sep. Both the hurling and camogie will take place in the same location on the same day.

DF Boxing

The Defence Forces Boxing Team recently attended a four day, six nation CISM boxing event in Warendorf, Germany.

The team picked up 3 Gold Medals and 2 Bronze Medals!

Team Captain Tpr Tiffany O'Reilly was victorious at 70kg after a hard-fought victory over her German opponent. Tpr Brian Kennedy picked up gold at 92kg using his experience and superior fitness to overcome his French opponent.

PSS & OVERSEAS DEPLOYMENTS

ARTICLE BY LT COL JOHN MARTIN
PHOTOS BY VARIOUS PHOTOGRAPHERS

INTRODUCTION

In early May the Defence Forces conducted yet another rotation of personnel to UNIFIL. We are happy to welcome our military brothers and sisters of 123 IRISHBATT home from their tour of duty and we wish those of us who have just deployed with 124 IRISHBATT the very best of luck during their time in Lebanon.

Recent DF Families brief delivered by Comdt Aine McDonough of 124 Inf Bn UNIFIL



It makes this a very good time to talk a little bit about the whole experience of overseas service in the Defence Forces. As military people, we are used to working away from home. Whether it is on a naval vessel off the coast or somewhere

else in the world, or on mission in the Middle East or Africa, we accept absence from home as a routine part of military life. In many ways it is a very good thing for us. It offers us a chance to break from the routine of military life at home. It gives us a chance to test ourselves, our education and our skills, our equipment, and our ability, against some of the best military organisations in the world. It allows us to learn about ourselves, to test ourselves, to prove our leadership, our decision making, our teamwork and our resilience, in sometimes difficult and dangerous situations. In most cases, we come home better military people than we were before, more knowledgeable, more confident and with added experience.

However, we all of us understand that when we go away, it is not just ourselves as military people that experience our deployment. We leave behind our families and our friends, who need to adjust and accommodate the fact that we are going to be missing for a while from the routine life at home. Making sure that everyone close to us is properly prepared, informed and supported throughout our deployment is critical. It allows us to deploy, conduct our mission and

return home, with minimum disruption to home and family life. In the next few paragraphs I would like to discuss briefly the shape of this experience and suggest a few ways to make it easier for all concerned.

SERVING OVERSEAS

We like to think of the experience of overseas deployment as a cycle. And this cycle begins well before we set foot on a plane or report to our ship. In the first busy stage we are preparing ourselves and our loved ones for the time apart. And there is a lot to be done! The routine arrangements that have to be made, changes in childcare, transport, homework, cooking, banking etc. In addition to this, the military family member is busy completing pre-deployment training and other essential actions that have to be taken before we can safely deploy.

Then when the deployment happens, we begin the process of dealing with separation and establishing our routine. We manage the temporary absence of our loved ones by relying on each other, maintaining healthy habits and routines, and by staying in contact in whatever way suits us all the best. We usually manage the emotional difficulties associated with the deployment and get to a situation of reasonable stability. During this period, we may have to deal with the leave period, when we are temporarily reunited, only to separate again.

Towards the end of the deployment, we begin to anticipate the return of our military family member. We make our plans to welcome them home and begin to contemplate life afterwards. When we are brought together again, as well as the joy and the relief, we go through a period of adjustment and negotiation, which allows us to come back together happily and with as little friction as we can. It's always good to remember that the deployment cycle does not end when we step off the plane into Dublin, or when the ship ties up in the Naval Base. The process of adjustment can take time, whether it be days, a few weeks or even months before we return to a fully stable environment.

There are lots of things that we can do to make the experience of deployment easier on everyone. In the first place we must prepare properly. In so far as we can, we should make all the practical arrangements so that remaining family members can operate with minimum disruption. The first thing that we can do is ensure we have all the information. Whether it is from the military side, or anything on

Peer support often a vital support when deployed overseas





The process of adjusting to home life begins

the home front, the better informed that we are, the easier life will be.

We need to be considerate of each other and to try to understand each other's experience of deployment. We can achieve this by talking openly and clearly, and by listening and observing. We need to be honest with each other about our fears and our worries, as well as our hopes and our expectations.

We should try to plan the deployment. What we will do during our leave, and how we will spend the time when our loved ones return. We should mention important family occasions and milestones that will be missed during the deployment, and how we will cope with them. Planning can give us some certainty about dates and about events. This is particularly important when we are dealing with younger family members. For them, the fewer surprises during the deployment the better.

Family means different things to different people, depending on who we are, how our lives have been, and where we are at any point in time. The important thing is that we know who our family is and are determined to care for them as much when we are away, as when we are at home. If you would like to get some more information on how to manage our deployments, please contact your local PSS team.

THE PSS AND OVERSEAS DEPLOYMENTS

The Personnel Support Service, or PSS, is a critical tool in supporting our personnel and their families throughout the cycle of their deployment. PSS people are a mix of occupational social workers (OSWs), and military people trained as Barrack Personnel Support Officers (BPSSOs). We are available throughout all the formations to support our personnel and their families through each stage of the deployment cycle. Our service is friendly, professional and confidential, and aims to give military people and their families the tools they need to get the most out of life in the Defence Forces

The PSS, as an integral part of the support strategy for overseas units, undertakes a mid-tour visit and an end-of-tour visit to each unit. The end-of-tour visit normally takes place within three weeks of Chalk 1. The PSS team will embed with the unit for up to ten days. During this period, the team conducts (redeployment) Stress Debrief workshops, attended by all personnel. We make ourselves available to all personnel

for one-to-one informal meetings, for advice/support/guidance on specific issues affecting the individual. We also provide advice and guidance to the unit commander and staff, regarding issues affecting personnel.



Brief being given to troops during groundhog by Comdt Connolly, PSS



DF Chaplains often offer support to deployed soldiers

The (redeployment) Stress Debrief workshops are conducted over 45 minutes with each group, and they cover a wide area of issues including an interactive discussion, facilitated by PSS team, of positive and negative aspects of the transition back to home environment. We talk about the stressors of transitioning back into the home location/

family environment, and we emphasise physical and mental health, and mental and social well-being. We offer practical advice on dealing with stress, including Box Breathing techniques, and confirm the network of supports available to all DF personnel.



Peacekeeper poster available to serving members or families from DF Info Office PR Br

A CASE IN POINT

As part of this ongoing support a PSS team, consisting of one (1) Staff Officer and two (2) BPSSOs, deployed from 1 Brigade to Lebanon on 06 May 24. This deployment coincided with the deployment of the Advance Party for 124 Inf Bn. In addition to briefings to 123 Inf Bn personnel in UNP 2-45, the PSS team also made short visits to UNP 6-52 (platoon outpost, close to the Blue Line, where some Irish troops are always deployed), and Irish personnel based in Sector West HQ in Camp Shama and UNIFIL HQ in Naqoura. In total, the PSS team provided briefings to 330 personnel over the course of 9 days, in groups of up to 30 personnel.

The visit to 123 Inf Bn took place during a particularly busy period for the unit. The operational situation in the mission area remained difficult throughout and most days included some time spent in groundhog in the bunkers. Despite this, morale of unit personnel was remarkably high, and there was always some good conversation and craic to be had!

The PSS would like to thank all the personnel of 123 Inf Bn, for engaging positively with our team and for making the visit a very rewarding and successful experience. We would like to particularly thank the commanding officer Lt Col Stephen MacEoin, Comdt Joe Gleeson, Sgt Maj John Kelleher, Comdt Stephen Cooper and S1 staff, and Capt Colum Byrne for all that he did in scheduling the briefs and ensuring that all personnel were given the opportunity to attend.

WRAP UP

Finally, military life is interesting, demanding and rewarding. Like everything else it has its tough side. By working together, we can mitigate the difficulties and help all of us get the most out of the experience. We remember always, with respect and with honour, those of us who did not come home, or who suffered injuries during deployment overseas, and their families. If anything in this article has caused any distress or has raised any issues that you would like to discuss, please send an email to the author at john.martin@defenceforces.ie. I would like to remind everyone that the INSPIRE confidential and external counselling service remains available to all members of the Defence Forces, to their spouses and partners, and to all adult children living at home. The Freephone number is 1800 409673, and personnel serving overseas can access the service using 00-353-1-685-6816.

Details on our website www.military.ie/en/public-information/defence-forces-families



UNIFIL poster available to serving members or families from DF Info Office PR Br

The Naval Service has been the state agency responsible for enforcing maritime law since the Service was established, but it was not until the 1990s that the drugs aspect came to the fore. The Naval Service's role in this area was somewhat hampered by the fact that authority to act in any incident required the presence of a member of An Garda Síochána to be present, with Naval Service personnel acting in aid to the civil power. This was most prominent in the seizure of the yacht *Brime* in a combined NS/GS operation off County Clare in 1993.

Following the successful conclusion of that operation, the government established the Joint Task Force (JTF) to deal with the growing problem of drug smuggling. The JTF, comprised of members of the Naval Service, the Garda Síochána, and the Customs' National Drug Unit, has allowed for the more effective pooling of the resources of the three services in conducting anti-drug smuggling operations.

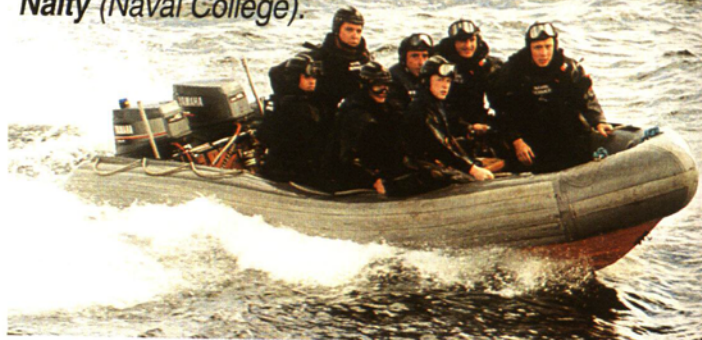
Another important element in the fight against drug traffickers is the Criminal Justice Act of 1994, which permits the Naval Service to act independently in anti-drug smuggling operations. The legislation allows any member of the Naval Service of Petty Officer rank or above to act as a boarding/inspecting officer in a drug law enforcement operation. This enables speedier reactions to situations where no previous intelligence or planning has been possible. It would be true to say, however, that most operations are based on good prior intelligence both from within the JTF and from other agencies throughout Europe, and as such are usually tri-service operations.

The introduction of this legislation in 1994 brought about a radical review of Naval Service operations. In its usual day-to-day role of maritime surveillance, the Naval Service was predominantly involved in fishery law enforcement. This work, while somewhat different to drug law enforcement, formed a knowledge base on which to build further training skills. For example

the Naval Service was among the first in Europe to uncover the use of secret storage compartments onboard fishing vessels, which were used to hide illegal fish and gear. This expertise was easily transferred into examining plans and drawings of yachts and merchant vessels to locate compartments that might hold something more interesting than fish! The culmination of this review was the introduction of new standard operational procedures (SOPs) by the Naval Service to deal with maritime drug law enforcement.

With the new legislation and SOPs further training was also needed for our boarding teams. While we would have an excellent knowledge of fishery legislation, the intricacies of criminal

When Dominic Behan wrote 'Thank God we're surrounded by water' he may have felt that our isolated position on the western edge of Europe was a blessing. However, in recent years that same water has provided an avenue for drug smugglers into Ireland and on into the UK and mainland Europe. The patrolling of these waters to prevent such activity is one of the many roles currently undertaken by the Naval Service as discussed in this article by Lt Cdr Chris Nalty (Naval College).



TRAFFIC CO

Above: The Naval Service's drug enforcement team en route for a search in a twin-engined sea-rider.

Main pic: Operation underway and getting in position.



law required the provision of expert tuition. In this respect, regular briefings and lectures have been provided by both Garda and Customs & Excise personnel. Another interesting and useful training tool has been the provision of training in courtroom scenarios, provided by a Dublin-based company that specialise in this field.

This has proven very useful for boarding party personnel who subsequently have had to give evidence in some very high-profile cases.

A further major advance has been in the procurement of more covert/special ops style equipment for boarding parties. Such equipment includes a new boarding suit, webbing, and the provision of a ballistic protection vest. The latter was designed and made in Ireland and is unique in

as the primary weapon. The decision to move away from the Steyr was made mainly due to safety considerations as it has been found to be difficult to operate safely in the confined spaces onboard ship. This change has resulted in a major increase in the requirement for pistol training among junior ratings. As part of this programme, the provision of a small arms range at the Naval Base is currently under consideration along with the planned introduction of a digital indoor range theatre at the Base in 2001 will also form part of the training developments in this area.

Training exercises are held on a regular basis by both individual ship units and on fleet-wide exercises. During the major fleet exercises members of the Gardaí and Customs & Excise

A/Sea David Jones' photos show the Drug Enforcement team during training.



Above:
Preparing to go alongside for a boarding exercise.

Above right:
Conducting a search.

Below:
A trafficker is arrested.



legal aspects of all these situations. It is planned that such training will continue in the future.

The success of the development of the drug law enforcement aspect of Naval Service operations is difficult to quantify. While there have been a number of very high-profile seizures that have made major headlines, the Naval Service is regularly involved in other drug enforcement operations which, due to their nature go unreported. There are, however, other factors outside of statistics that need to be considered. The endorsement of a more professional approach to training and equipping of personnel has improved both our ability and competence in this area. This, along with the adoption of a higher profile and a more active employment of naval resources in monitoring the types of vessels used in drug smuggling, sends out a clear message to those who would consider operating their illegal trade into Ireland. That message that our Naval Service operates as a highly professional drug law enforcement agency, can be as effective a deterrent as any high-profile major seizure. ■

CONTROL

its provision of ballistic protection and in-built flotation capability. (Such is the quality of the design that a number of agencies in Europe and America have expressed a major interest.) The process of testing and procurement of further equipment is ongoing.

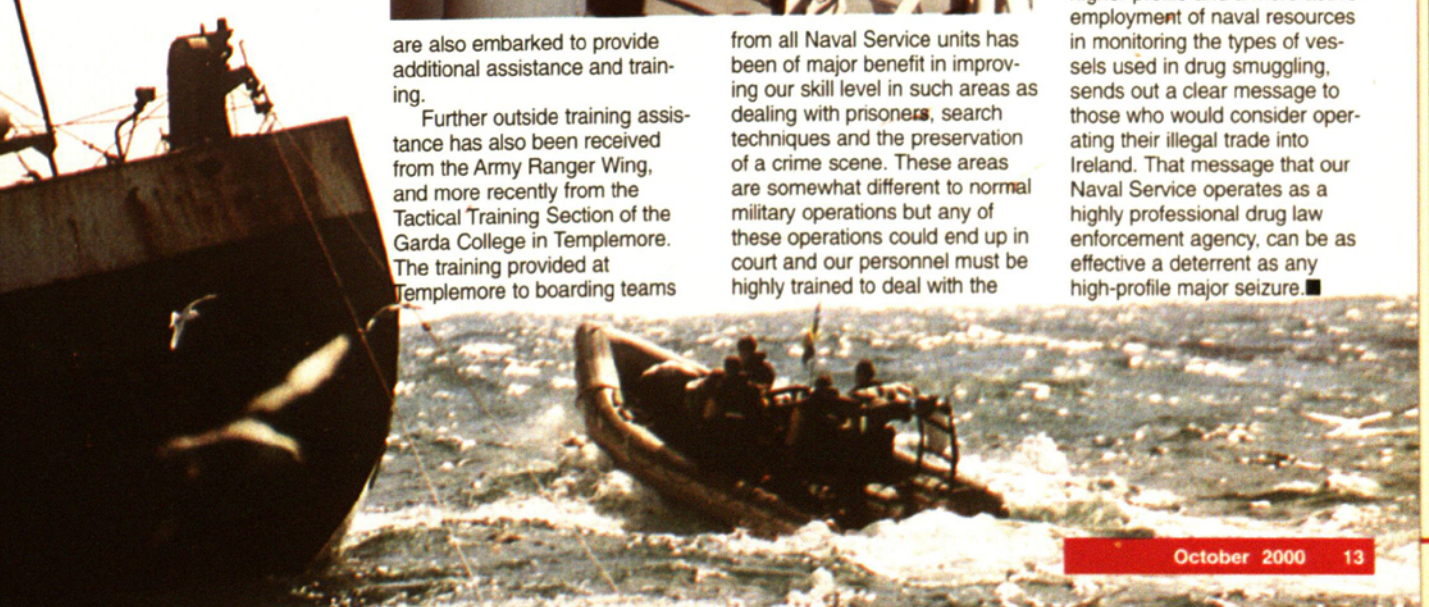
Weapon training is another area that is seeing major change. Following discussions within the Defence Forces and with other agencies it has been decided that boarding teams should be armed with the pistol



are also embarked to provide additional assistance and training.

Further outside training assistance has also been received from the Army Ranger Wing, and more recently from the Tactical Training Section of the Garda College in Templemore. The training provided at Templemore to boarding teams

from all Naval Service units has been of major benefit in improving our skill level in such areas as dealing with prisoners, search techniques and the preservation of a crime scene. These areas are somewhat different to normal military operations but any of these operations could end up in court and our personnel must be highly trained to deal with the





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