

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

AN COSANTÓIR

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ULSTER 1915
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FOR THE UN

ENGINEER CORPS

EXERCISE 'REFORGER'

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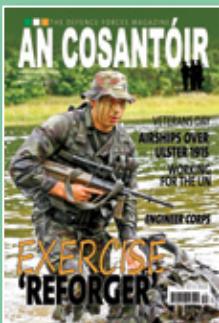
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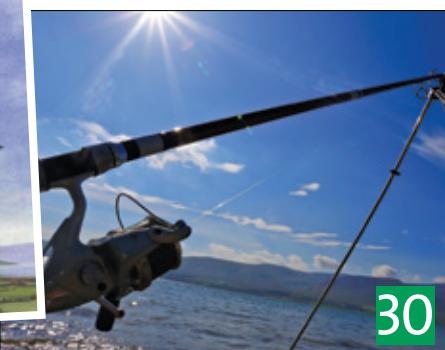
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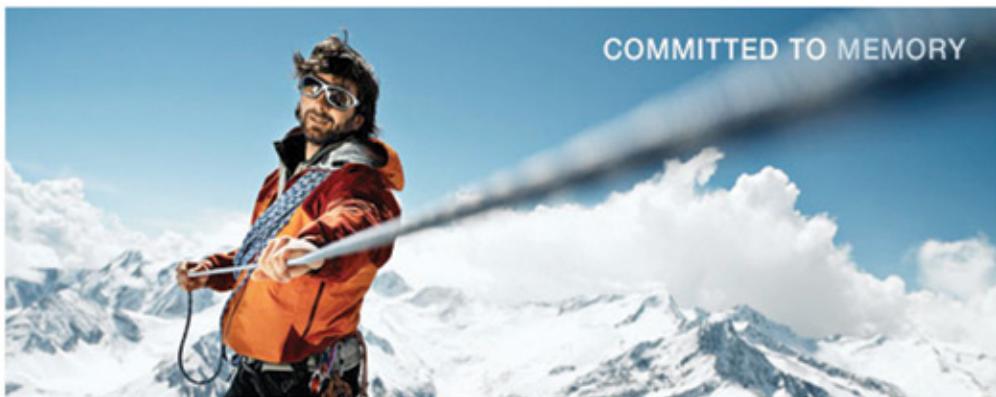
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25TH – 31ST OCTOBER

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Front Cover

Cadet Joseph Paul Zammit from Malta, a member of the 90th Cadet Class during a river crossing exercise. Photo by Cpl Neville Coughlan.

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

October's issue is upon us and it's your last chance to enter our DF Photographic Competition, where the winner will win a Go Pro Camera worth €350 and we have two €50 vouchers for 2nd and 3rd place all sponsored by Barker's Photography in Cork. The best shots will be published by the end of the year.

There are plenty of photographs from around the Defence Forces *On Parade* this month. *In Focus* has some heartwarming snippets from around the DF as well as a piece on the unveiling of Mountmellick's newest WWI memorial and the 27 Inf Bn annual charity event that took place recently. Our first feature this month is *Clearing the Way* by Cpl Paul Millar on this year's Engineer Corps Exercise. Next up is a report on Ireland's newest Military themed museum based in Co Meath, and is accompanied by a piece on the recent Veteran's Day Parade held in the Curragh Camp. *In Life after the Defence Forces - Working for the UN*, Berty Egerton explains how to utilise the skills learnt during your DF career and possibly expanding them by applying for a position with the UN. Retired Canadian soldier Frank Reid tells us about his experiences of a Cold War Exercise on the German/Russian border in *Exercise Reforger*. Our *Strategic Review* feature by author and historian Paul O'Brien is based on the current situation in the Ukraine. Sgt Eamon McLoughlin gives us an insight into the first RDF Recruit Training Camp using the latest training syllabus. Guy Warner once again visits our *History* pages, this time he has a great WWI story in Air Ships over Ulster. In Sport, we have a colourful feature on the recent DF Sea Boat & Shore Angling Competition held in and around the beaches of Tralee. Plus we have all our regular features – *Military Media Round-Up*, *Tac-Aide*, *Gear Review*, *Noticeboard*, *Reviews* and *What I Do*.

Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald - Editor

The winners of the An Cosantóir Dry Flo T-Shirts Next Top Model

Competition are: Danielle Murphy, Roscommon; Danny Mulcahy, Dublin; Robert Sheehan, Cork; Tony Cronin, Cork & Ken Sheridan, Kildare. It's on again this month...

AN COSANTÓIR THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

Defence Forces Photographic Competition

The Competition is open to all readers of the An Cosantóir, both civilian and military. All entries must contain some relevance to Military Life. *Terms and Conditions apply.*

Competition will run from: **February to October (incl).** Prizes for 1st, 2nd & 3rd Overall

Entry Form and T&C available on www.dfmagazine.ie

First Prize - GoPro Camera
Second Prize - €50 Voucher
Third Prize - €50 Voucher

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6 | ON PARADE



1 BRIGADE CAVALRY SQUADRON ▲

Pictured are members of the Royal Meath Branch of ONE at Veteran's Day, from (l/r): Charlie Ash, Robby O'Bryan and Conor Swords. *Photo: Bridget Quinn PRO, Royal Meath Br, ONE*



UNMAS ▲

The Medal Ceremony for IRCON 2, DF CMD Training Team, UNMAS, South Sudan, took place at UNMAS Camp Tomping, Juba, South Sudan recently. The DF Training Team are: Comdt Emmet Keeley (Engrs), Capt Enda Moynihan (Ord), Sgt James Hickey (Med) & Sgt Brian Hayes (Ord). Sgt Brian Hayes is pictured receiving his medal and cert from UNMISS Deputy Force Commander Gen Ramesh (Nepal). *Photo: Comdt Emmet Keeley*



MULLINGAR REMEMBERS ▲

The Mullingar branch of Óglaigh Náisiúnta Na hÉireann Teoranta (ONE) held its 29th Annual Service of Remembrance or Lá na bhFiann (Warriors Day) on Sunday 31st August 2014. The day began with a wreath laying ceremony carried out by ONE National President, Gus Hennessy, at the Cross of Remembrance positioned at the main gate of Columb Bks, Mullingar. This year the old Branch Flag was retired and marched off parade by Frank Stenson, and the new Branch Flag marched on by Jason Mc Kevitt. The branch was honoured that DF Chief of Staff and Mullingar native, Lt Gen Conor O'Boyle attended and led the dignitaries at the cathedral. By Jason P Mc Kevitt, PRO, Mullingar Branch ONE



NAVAL RESERVE ▲

Pictured are members of the Cork Unit, Naval Service Reserve at their GHQ Inspection by Commodore Hugh Tully, Flag Officer Commanding Naval Service (FOCNS) at Haulbowline Naval Base. *Photo: A/S David Jones (NS Press Office)*



NS PROMOTION ▲

Pictured at Haulbowline Naval Base is L/S Gerry O'Shea being presented with his L/S stripes by Commodore Hugh Tully (FOCNS), after 38-years-service. *Photo: A/S David Jones (NS Press Office)*



VETERANS MUSTER IN LIMERICK ▲

Pictured are members of the Southern Area Council (SAC) of the Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel (ONE) which represents all branches in Munster, hosted by the Patrick Sarsfield Branch meeting in the South Court Hotel, Limerick City on Saturday 16th August 2014. The following branches were represented; Clonmel, Cobh, Cdr George Crosbie, Cork City, Ballincollig, Nenagh Lower Ormonde, Limerick, Templemore, Tipperary Town, and Thomas Ashe Kerry. *Photo: Domhnall Mac Cárthaigh (PRO SAC ONE)*



CAVALRY DAY ▲

Pictured are members of IUNVA with relatives of Cavalry personnel who died in service at Cavalry Day, held on 6th September 2014 at the Cavalry Memorial in Plunkett Bks, Curragh Camp. Photo: Sgt JJ Ryan (HQ DFTC)



BELFAST TRIP ▲

On 11th and 12th September 2014, six members of the Lower Ormonde Branch Nenagh, ONE took a trip to Belfast. They visited City Hall, Titanic exhibition, and Parliament Buildings in Stormont where they were given a private tour. To mark the occasion they presented a framed inscribed mirror with an image of Nenagh Castle, to Frances Lenaghan, the Private Secretary to the Speaker of the House. The trip was the trojan work of Br Sec Tony Canning. Pictured: Tony Canning (Sec) and Chairman Seamus Lawlor presenting the mirror to Frances, and Br members Seamus Corrigan, Johnny Starr, Joseph Kelly and PJ Bourke. Photo: Seamus Lawlor



ON THE MARCH ▲

Pictured on 5th September 2014 are some of the 178 Officers, NCOs and Gunners of 2 Arty Regt, under the command of Lt Col John McCrann who completed a readiness route march over 15km in full battle vest, backpack and rifle around Athlone. Photo: Gnr Jamie Martin (2 Arty Regt)

RELAY FOR LIFE ▶

Pictured are members of the MP Group, DFTC, along with other team members and survivors taking part in the Relay For Life, which took place on the 6th and 7th September at the Curragh Race Course. The Relay involved 32 teams walking non-stop over 24hrs to raise funds for the fight against cancer. A central figure in the event was Sgt Thomas O'Toole, who was the first person in the world to receive the Gordy Award since the passing of the event founder, Gordon 'Gordy' Klatt MD, from heart failure after battling stomach cancer. Photo: Cpl Paul Millar (PR Branch)



‘LÁ NA BHFIANN’ ▲

There was a large attendance of Veterans' Organisations and dignitaries at the ONE Cork City Branch 'Lá na bhFiann' (Warriors' Day) held at Collins Bks, Cork on Sunday 30th June 2014. This is the day when ONE remembers and honours their deceased comrades. In addition to ONE Munster Branches the following Veterans' Organisations were represented: IUNVA Post 5, the Irish Legion and the Royal British Legion. Photo: Domhnall Mac Cárthaigh (PRO SAC ONE)



NEW NAVAL SERVICE OFFICERS ▲

On 4th September 2014, Minister for Defence Simon Coveney TD accompanied by the Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces Lt Gen Conor O'Boyle attended the Commissioning Ceremony of 10 new officers at Haulbowline Naval Base, Cork. The 52nd Naval Service Cadet Class were awarded their Presidential Commissions after successfully completing 2-years intensive military and nautical training. The Cadets are from counties: Wicklow, Wexford, Cork, Clare, Dublin, Carlow and Monaghan. In a departure from

tradition, two of the newly commissioned cadets did not receive their first salute as an officer from the Master at Arms but from their fathers who are serving NCOs in the Defence Forces. Pictured above are the 52nd NS Cadet Class presenting a cheque for €7,355 to the Donal Walsh #Livelife Foundation accepted by Fionnbar and Elma Walsh, parents of Donal Walsh. Pictured below (l/r) are: BQMS John Nolan (3 Inf Bn), his son Ensign James Nolan, COS Lt Gen Conor O'Boyle, Ensign Philip Molloy and his father CPO Thomas Molloy. Photos: A/S David Jones (NS Press Office)

27 INF BN ANNUAL CHARITY EVENT

BY JIM MC ENEANEY, CHAIRMAN MICHAEL MC NEELA BRANCH ONE
PHOTOS BY SGT DOC DOHERTY, 27 INF BN

On 3rd September 2014, the 27 Inf Bn once again put their best foot forward for local charities in Dundalk, by running a 46km relay marathon over the Cooley Mountains in aid of the Réalt na Mara National School and Centre for Autism and the Organisation of National Ex-Servicemen and Women (ONE). They started off from Aiken Bks at 0930hrs heading up the Cooley Mountains to the RTE Mast on Claremont Cairn, where they were met by a group of children and teachers from the Réalt na Mara School. A school pennant was handed over to the runners and the children released balloons to mark the occasion. From there they returned to Dundalk via Edentobber, Old Newry Rd to the Tain Bridge in Dundalk where they formed up as a block for the final leg up to the Railt na Mara School, with all the pupils and teachers clapping them in to finish.

Lt Col Mark Hearn (OC 27 Inf Bn) was on hand to meet the runners and to accept a plaque to commemorate the annual charity event on behalf of the battalion from School Principal Phil Mc Caul and Jim Mc Eneaney of ONE. Lt Col Hearn then presented a cheque for €3,000 to Principal Phil Mc Caul and ONE CEO Ollie O'Connor, to be divided between both charities. ■



World War 1 Commemoration

BY BSC DUFFY MONUMENT PHOTO BY SGT KARL BYRNE (PR BRANCH)

On 31st August 2014 an interdenominational memorial service was organised by the '1914-18 War Mountmellick Research Group' and Post 27, of the Irish United Nations Veterans Association (IUNVA) and held in St Joseph's Church Mountmellick, Co Laois. During the service the names of fallen WWI soldiers from the Greater Mountmellick Area were read out, with honours rendered by the dipping of the standards and playing of the 'Last Post'.

The '1914-18 War Mountmellick Research Group' was set up to research and commemorate the significant involvement of Mountmellick's men in the First World War. Their major aim was that those who served in this terrible war would now be, "*written into the heritage of the town*" - a heritage largely ignored or culturally suppressed, as in so many other parts of young Ireland.

There were many Veteran Associations' present, along with members of the Reserve Defence Force, most notable were: the Royal British Legion (RBL) Republic of Ireland District, represented by their President, Maj Gen David O'Morchoe (retd) CB CBE with their district standard borne by Noel Cullen. The Limerick Branch RBL was represented by Vice-President, Brian Duffy and their standard borne by Kevin Milligan. IUNVA was represented by Vice President, William Gilbert and the reconstituted Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association was represented by Niall Leinster and their standard paraded by Capt Séamus Greene.



The heritage group are also curating a wonderful exhibition of WWI memorabilia, much of which has local connections, and they thank all for their contributions, large or small. ■



JUST ANOTHER DAY IN THE SERVICE

FEEL GOOD FRIDAY WISH

By Naval Service Press Office

On 1st September 2014 Oran's wish came true, when he was piped aboard the LÉ Aoife as Commander Oran. Oran age 10, living with Burkitt's Syndrome had wished to be a Naval Officer for a day. When he realised that he was going to command the high-tech ship around the harbour - he was absolutely thrilled. Throughout the day he issued orders, visited the different areas of the ship, received a VIP lunch and tour of Haulbowline Naval Base and lots more top-secret activities.

Oran's family gave a massive thank you to the Irish Naval Service who on the day became true wish granters, dedicating themselves to ensure Oran had the most magical time! Oran is pictured here on deck with O/Sea Sam Gibney and Lt Aisling O'Flynn.



SUPERHEROES

By Sgt Gavin Coventry, Mil Col, DFTC
Photos: Anthony Lynch

On 19th July 2014, members of Over the Edge Ireland, a rock climbing and abseiling

events group who are all members of the Defence Forces became heroes for a day in aid of Aoibheann's Pink Tie. Aoibheann's Pink Tie founded by Jimmy Norman in 2010 after he lost his young daughter Aoibheann to a rare form of cancer, have helped many Defence Forces families suffering with this life threatening disease. A heroes and princesses party was held at Dunboyne Castle for the children and families of St John's Ward (Oncology/Haematology) of Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin.

The day consisted of: nail bars, henna tattoos, Irish dancers, singers, cinema, games, sweet stalls, face painting, art stand, disco, airsoft, Civil Defence tracked vehicles, Garda regional support and mounted units, pony rides, Dublin Fire Brigade, play bus and characters from Star Wars. This was the second year the summer party had been put on by Aoibheann's Pink Tie and it was a magical paradise created for the children to enjoy.



VIP VISIT

By Air Corps Press Office

On 7th August 2014, the Air Corps had a special visit from a 5-year-old VIP Hannah from Donegal, who visited Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel to say thank you to some of her heroes.

On 26th November 2009 Hannah first met with Capt Finbar McArdle, Capt Michael Noonan and Armn Dave Tiernan when they were tasked with bringing her on a neonatal air ambulance from Letterkenny to Dublin. Hannah needed to get to Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin urgently, and thanks to the speedy transfer from her helicopter crew and the support from the Air Corps ground staff, she got the treatment she required and has since made a full recovery. Meeting Hanna and seeing her full of life is a great reminder to our crews of the difference they can make and why we do our best to provide this service

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year round. The Air Corps complete over 100 air ambulances every year, with the crews rarely hearing how their special passengers get on.



JACK AND JILL FOUNDATION

By 2/Lt Bunney, 2 Cav Sqn

On 5th July 2014 members of the 2 Cav Sqn, Cathal Brugha Bks provided a vehicle and weapons display for the annual Jack and Jill Foundation day of fun in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin. The display involved one LTAV, two ceremonial motorbikes, that are used for the presidential escort of honour and a weapons and equipment display that included sniper weapons and gillie suits.

The display team were both courteous and polite to the families and showed an in depth knowledge of all the vehicles, weapons and the equipment. The display team were: 2/Lt Bunney, Cpl Dalton, Troopers Curran, Cummins, O'Conner, Lanigan and O'Reilly.



MILITARY MEDIA Round Up

MILITARY MEDIA Round Up

MILITARY MEDIA Round Up

"Learning another language is set to become obligatory for senior ranks under plans to make the Army more culturally aware. From 2018 officers will not be able to gain promotion above the rank of captain unless they can speak in a foreign tongue. The new policy applies to both serving personnel and recruits and the relevant training will be provided via the Defence Centre for Languages and Culture at Shrivenham."

UK Soldier Magazine, September 2014 Vol 70/9



"The Russian Army will soon start the mass purchases of the next generation soldier gear RATNIK, which comprises more than 40 components, including firearms, body armour, and optical, communication and navigation devices, as well as life support and power supply systems, and knee and elbow pads. The gear will make the Russian troops the fully-fledged soldiers of the future, capable of carrying out the personally given orders, according to the Russian MoD."



Military Technology Vol 38 issue 9

"The Sudanese military has selected the Chinese QBZ-97 bullpup for their Future Soldier System. The Sudanese military has been using Chinese weaponry for some time now including: Type 96MBT, HJ-8 anti tank missile, Type 56 and Type 82 Rifles, CQ rifle (copy of the M16A1), QJZ-(50-cal) heavy machine gun, M99 50-cal sniper rifle and the QLZ-87 automatic grenade launcher."*



Military Technology Vol 38 issue 9



"The Czech Ministry of Defence (MoD) is seeking funding to dramatically enlarge the active reserve forces of the Army of the Czech Republic (ACR). The MoD submitted to parliament in September an amendment to the law regulating ACR active reserve force's size from the current 1,300 to 5,000 personnel."

IHS Jane's Defence Weekly Vol 54 issue 34



"Bolivian President Evo Morales announced on August 8th that the government is to create a fund to finance the development of the country's military. The fund, expected to be launched in 2015, is to be financed by proceeds from the country's Impuesto Directo a los Hidrocarburos (Direct Tax on Hydrocarbons, IDH). The IDH was established in 2005 to fund the country's social development, targeting areas such as education, health, infrastructure, and unemployment."

IHS Jane's Defence Weekly Vol 51 issue 34



BCB International Ltd has launched an all-weather solid flammable biofuel for military rations cookers, which can double as a waterless hand sanitiser. Many military forces currently use hexamine fuel for cooking in the field and are looking for a replacement fuel due to the dangers that hexamine presents to the health of soldiers. Hexamine is a potentially dangerous and outdated substance; burning it gives off cyanide. BCB International Ltd believe that their alcohol-based alternative fuel 'FireDragon' will prove popular with soldiers on patrol who need to heat up their rations quickly without producing toxic fumes.

BCB's MD Andrew Howell said, "It will enable soldiers to cook their meals and make their brews with a safer and cleaner fuel than traditional

military rations fuel blocks like hexamine. The FireDragon fuel can be packed with rations and doubles as a waterless hand sanitiser, which will help Militaries, reduce their logistics and medical costs. One tablet of FireDragon



fuel (27gm) can boil 500ml of water in 5-6 minutes; that's at least two minutes faster than competitors' products. It can even be ignited whilst wet."

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CLEARING THE WAY

REPORT & PHOTOS BY CPL PAUL MILLAR

They build, bridge, clear or explode their way to their destination, and no-one else is as capable of balancing destruction and construction in a single mission. Welcome to the world of the Corps of Engineers (COE), who showcased their unique skills during their annual exercise in the Glen of Imaal in June.

Such concentrations benchmark engineering capabilities, training and equipment through realistic scenarios. They also serve to ensure that personnel are prepared for overseas deployment.

This year's exercise involved a composite Field Engineer Company comprising a company HQ, three Field Engineer Platoons (one of which was RDF), a Field Support Platoon, and an Engineer Recce Section.

As well as being combat engineers, most COE personnel are also tradesmen, such as plumbers, fitters, electricians and plant operators, whose fundamental skill sets are required to support an infantry unit at home or overseas. The broader range of engineer support takes the form of mobility, counter-mobility, survivability and general engineering.

While the extensive range of possible jobs would take months to evaluate, this year's exercise focused on a conventional 'green field' scenario. In practice this meant the combat engineers had to provide mobility corridors through the Glen of Imaal for an

infantry brigade to counter-attack an invading force.

The range of options available to cross a multitude of ground types and sustain the troops that use these routes is impressive. The engineers have bridges and DROPS-deployable, roll-out trackway systems that can be used by soldiers and 70-tonne armoured vehicles to cross rivers and Mowag-eating bogs.

Skills demonstrated during the exercise included water purification, CBRN, Combat Engineer Recce, Assault Demolitions, Real-Life Support (RLS) and Engineer Specialist Search And Clearance (ESSC).

Employing their skills and resources in the furtherance of the brigade plan is a challenge for the field engineer company. Moreover, the physical task of moving and supporting often logically-heavy engineer assets within a broad battle-space requires excellent communications and demands exceptional co-ordination from the HQ staff.

During the exercise the Corps' three vehicular bridging systems were deployed to establish tactical river crossings with a view to enabling the brigade commander's mobility plan and scheme of manoeuvre for his armour assets.

The Mabey Logistic Support Bridge (LSB) was constructed first. It's a bigger, newer version of the Bailey bridge of WWII fame, capable of carrying up to 70-tonnes over a 60-metre unsupported span. It uses modular, interchangeable components, a variable slope ramp system and a deck covering that enables tracked vehicles to cross without causing damage. The bridge transformed an impassable river site into a crossing point that can be used by most modern vehicles.

While the turnaround, from site recce to planning, to completion, took only 48 hours, it was 48 hours of continuous activity by the engineer platoon and the multi-tasking plant crews. Even after construction their work wasn't finished as marshals are needed to make sure that the bridges aren't overloaded and stressed to breaking point.

A Bailey bridge was also constructed. While smaller and with



less load capacity than the LSB, the Bailey bridge is lighter, at times more versatile, and, notably, does not need a crane for its construction. This frees up equipment that can be used elsewhere, as well as making for a faster construction time.

The medium girder bridge (MGB) – a rapidly constructed assault bridge – was also deployed.

Based on the brigade commander's plan the brigade engineer will choose which bridging system to use depending on numerous factors, including the military load classification required, the volume of traffic expected, and the speed of construction needed, as well as site-specific considerations such as access and span.

In the exercise the three bridge systems were augmented by the DROPS-deployable trackway system, and were successfully crossed by Mowag APCs.

A number of real route-enhancement tasks were inserted into the scenario, including remedial works on tracks, and the design and construction of a reinforced concrete bridge. This latter task drew on the considerable civil engineering experience of an RDF officer attached to Coy HQ. The bridge, which was completed during the 92hr exercise, replaces an old, wooden bridge, thereby enhancing mobility for APCs in the future.

To secure flanks, spearhead assaults and conduct counter-attacks, the combat engineers generally use the IAB (Infantry Assault Bridge). This system (covered in detail in a previous issue of *An Cosantóir*), is light, air transportable, can be assembled in minutes. Its speed of assembly means it can be concealed up to the last possible minute before it is required, which is a welcome form of security. Once in place a platoon can pour across the IAB in a few minutes, ready to advance to their objectives.

For this operation the complete system was airlifted in by an Air Corps AW139 helicopter, which dropped the unit around 150m from the obstacle. Engineers lying in wait swarmed over the IAB as soon as it touched down, breaking the transport pallet open and man-handling the 55kg panels into position. Total construction time: 10 minutes.

For military engineers, however, the ability to destroy is equally important as the ability to build. During the exercise the engineers used their demolition skills to create obstacles to prevent attacks and to deny the use of ground to enemy forces. The art in these types of demolition tasks lies in knowing how much explosive to use to achieve the desired effect, whether it's felling trees or cratering roads.

Knowing how to detect and deal with battlefield explosives is a characteristic that immediately separates combat engineers from their civilian counterparts, and as part of its ESSC role the COE maintains a de-mining capability. The Corps has a number of tools in its de-mining toolbox, ranging from manual prodding, to a variety of metal detection systems (including deep-buried and underwater ferrous probes), ground-penetrating radar, and three sizes of mine flail vehicles.

Each tool is tailored to the task at hand, whether it's deploying the larger Aardvark mine flail to systematically clear a large contaminated area, or the smaller, camera-mounted Doking MV4 remotely operated vehicle (ROV) to clear an ESSC team's approach to a suspected explosive device.

For this exercise the Mine Wolf MW240 medium-flail ROV was deployed for a real task; clearing suspected hazardous areas in the vicinity of the anti-armour range.

On other occasions there is no substitute for boots on the

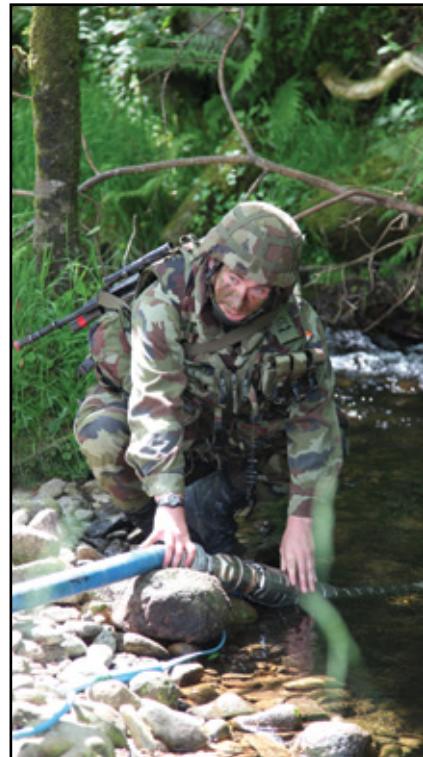
ground and this is where the ESSC teams come in. Depending on the threat assessment, a range of protective suits may be worn by ESSC team members, ranging from the lightweight demining suit to the more protected EOD suit.

Armed with detection equipment and a great deal of concentration, ESSC personnel follow up the flails, checking for command wires or anything else that might have been missed, as well as searching areas that the demining vehicles can't reach. While they have top-of-the-range detection equipment, the best tool ESSC team members have is their training, something that is validated twice annually on the Corps' spring and autumn ESSC exercises.

Water purification is a core function of the COE, particularly overseas where it ensures our troops have clean drinking water. The Karcher water purification system used on the exercise is operated by a team of four and can supply nearly 4,000 litres of drinking water per hour (enough to keep a brigade supplied).

One nasty little exercise scenario involved the destruction of a chemical factory in the area of operations, which resulted in a lingering toxic cloud that contaminated all those in the vicinity. This tested the exercise troops in CBRN decontamination. An extensive system of checks, hot and cold decontamination showers, and very strict control ensured every individual and every piece of equipment and transport was free from any chemical agent when they left. This was not an easy job given that everyone was kitted out in full CBRN clothing and respirator on what was the hottest day of the year so far.

Both the exercise and this article can only give a flavour of the massive range of jobs that today's combat engineer must be capable of. What is clear, however, even from such a cursory look, is that there is a single identity and unity of purpose about the Corps' personnel, which was very evident in how they managed, in 96 hours, to turn the bogs, ditches and rivers of the Glen of Imaal into a staging area that could be used by a full infantry brigade. ■



BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE

REPORT & PHOTOS BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD



On Sunday 17th August 2014, An Cosantóir visited Ireland's newest museum, the Irish Military War Museum (IMWM), situated in Starinagh, approximately 7km off the M1 on the Co Meath side of the town of Collon, Co Louth. The 5,000ft² museum is owned and run by William Sullivan, who as a young man of 14 inherited the 22-acre family farm.

As far as William remembers, both his late grandfathers served in World War II, which he says is the reason he became a keen collector of WWI & II military items since the age of nine, amassing a huge collection over the years.

Roughly 10 years ago William decided to build a museum to make his collection available to others. In his own words he also "wanted to do it right or not at all" and "to make it hands-on so people could touch and feel the items too". The museum currently has five staff but plans are being made to expand this to 50, many of whom will be volunteers.



On first entering the museum we were warmly greeted by Ian Callan who proceeded to present us with a variety of small arms to hold and feel. My 10-year-old son Aaron, who was with me, was greatly impressed by this and with holding a real AK47.

I asked William how things were going and if they were happy with the footfall. "We are only open nine weeks, but look," he said, "the car park's full." He was right, and indeed it was so full that some cars were double parked.

William then invited us to take the guided tour of the museum (which can be arranged in advance and takes about one-and-a-half hours). As soon as we turned the first corner we were greeted by a WWI trench system. Close by there is a video room where we watched a short film (about six-and-a-half minutes) on the Great War. William also explained the differences between British and German barbed wire systems. Even though there are over 120 weapons and 25 uniforms from both world wars on display, William explained that this was only a small part of his collection, and that he could fit out the same area with Vietnam War or Gulf War material, or even an Irish revolution-to-independence display.

William has a tale to tell about nearly every item. Some have come from famous movies, including the Willys jeep that stands outside the museum, which is the one Sean Connery drove in *A Bridge Too Far* in 1977. He also has a Russian Mosin Nagant 91/30 sniper rifle

from the 2001 film about the siege of Stalingrad, *Enemy at the Gates*. Other items come from well known programmes and films including *Band of Brothers*, *Foyle's War* and *Saving Private Ryan*.

Among the weapons on display are an impressive, tripod-mounted MG08 from 1918 (a personal favourite of William's), a Russian Pak37 that was captured by the Finns in 1940 and a Russian 120mm mortar from 1940. There is also a Canadian 20mm Polsten anti-aircraft gun that was never used. William told us: "It was built to defend against the V1 rocket, but most V1 launch sites were overrun before its deployment."

Among the 15 vehicles on show is a British 1942 M8 Greyhound light armoured car.

Hopefully, the description of the items on display will whet the appetite for more as this is a place that is well worth the visit. In addition, once a month, author and military historian Neil Richardson, who is also an RDF lieutenant, gives historical talks on topics such as the Battle of Mons and Irishmen who fought in the Great War.

Future plans for the museum and grounds are designed to help it to appeal to the whole family and include the development of a full scale WWI trench area and obstacle course, a petting zoo, playground, picnic area, coffee/souvenir shop, duck pond, airsoft shooting gallery, and occasionally military re-enactments.

Admission costs are: Adults €8; children €5; family ticket (2 adults & 2 children) €25. For more info visit www.imwm.ie or contact the museum on 041 981 9501. ■



VETERANS DAY CURRAGH CAMP 2014

BY SGT WAYNE FITZGERALD PHOTOS BY CPL NEVILLE COUGHLAN

On 2nd September 2014 the first Defence Forces Veterans' Day Parade was held on McDermott Square, DFTC, Curragh Camp. Many veterans from around the country joined under their respective flags. In attendance were the Irish United Nations Veterans Association (IUNVA), the Organisation of Ex-Servicemen and Women (ONE), along with the Association of Retired Commissioned Officers (ARCO). The Minister for Defence, Mr Simon Coveney TD, officially attended and was accompanied by the Chief of Staff, Lt Gen Conor O'Boyle and Brig Gen Seamus Ó Giolláin, GOC DFTC.

The Minister in welcoming past servicemen and women confirmed the Defence Forces were committed to our veterans, *"There are many honours and responsibilities associated with service in the Defence Forces. Today I am happy to acknowledge the important service that former servicemen and women have contributed to Irish society in domestic operations and in hostile regions around the world. Today we are recognising the service of all former members of the Defence Forces across all three services, the Army, the Naval Service and the Air Corps, at home and abroad".*

The Minister complimented the Defence Forces on our 54-years of international peacekeeping, "The 27th July 1960 was a watershed moment when Ireland sent its first peacekeepers with the 32nd Inf Bn to the Congo, the first complete Irish unit sent overseas as part of a UN mandate. For a further fifty four years the Irish Defence Forces contributed to the cause of peace in places like Lebanon, Chad, Liberia, East Timor and Syria (to name but a few) and continue to do so today".

The Minister reviewed a parade of the representative associations, and also serving members from the Army, Naval Service and the Air Corps. Following a short multi denominational religious service by Rev Fr John Marsden and Rev Fr PJ



Somers CF, and a lament was played by piper CQMS David Usher (Ord Sch), and then the Minister laid a wreath along with the three representative associations to honour our deceased servicemen and women.

The Minister finished by paying tribute to the 86 members of the Defence Forces who died on operations at home and abroad in the service of their country, "They paid the ultimate price in the cause of peace".

The day was finished off with light refreshments and displays of current weapons and vehicles and also a display of historical vehicles and weapons brought in by the Irish Military Vehicle Group (IMVG). ■



LIFE AFTER THE DEFENCE FORCES

Working for the UN

BY BERTY EGERTON PHOTOS AS CREDITED

Almost every soldier when approaching retirement asks himself or herself what they are going to do when they leave the Defence Forces. Working with the UN is one possibility that I have often been asked about by Irish soldiers I have met in different missions when I worked as a field service officer with the UN. However, there is no simple answer, as everyone's qualifications differ, depending on rank, corps, experience and training, in addition to any qualifications attained before joining the Defence Forces. Nonetheless, using my own experience I can give some advice on how to try to get work with the UN.

Because of my own background this article is aimed primarily at other ranks.

Firstly, I would strongly recommend that you complete your time in the Defence Forces and qualify for your pension before you apply to work for the UN, mainly as it gives you a financial cushion should your new career not suit you or your new contract turns out to be a short one.

So, first to address the question most asked of me: "How do I get a job like yours with the UN?"

Begin by listing all your training, courses and qualifications including any civvy ones. During my army career, from 1975 to 1994, I completed many military courses that, to be honest, at the time I didn't see as being of any benefit to me when I eventually left. This, however, was to prove

wrong as it was my army training that started me off on a new career with the UN!

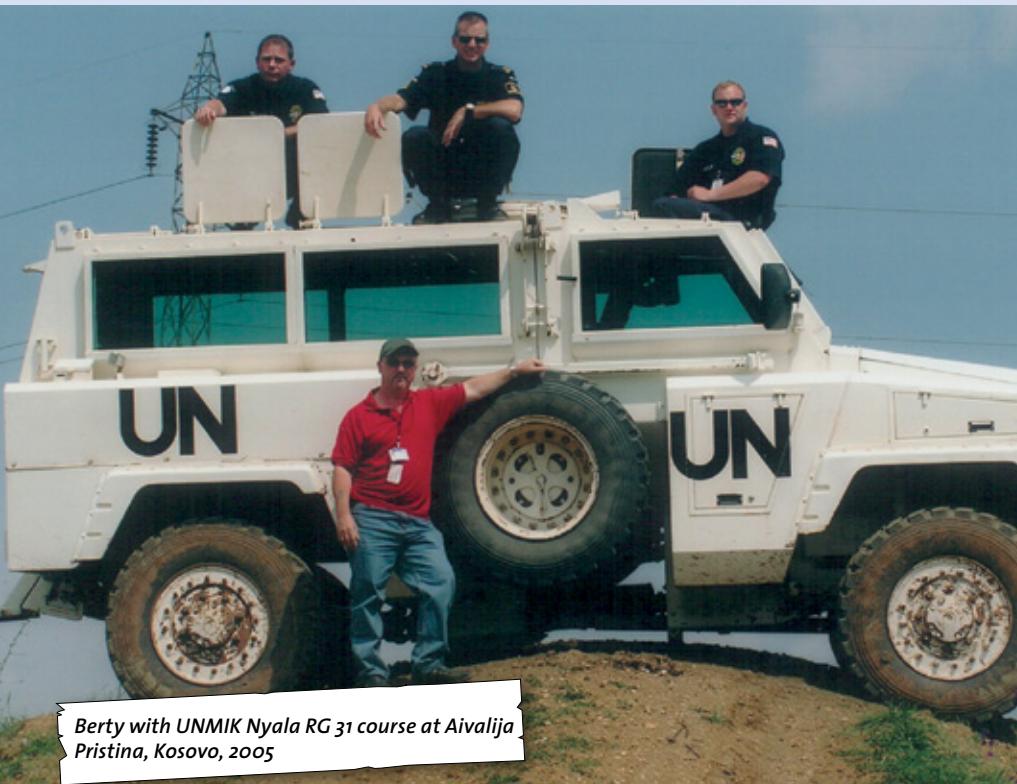
Okay, so being an 84mm anti-tank gunner is going to impress the lads at your local but it doesn't do much for your CV. So, only list the courses that are relevant to the position you are applying for.

Before you leave the Defence Forces, check out what courses are available to you and apply for as many as possible. Don't ignore civvy courses you can take either.

Anyone wishing to apply for positions in supply, Movcon, or logistics should look for training in the transportation of dangerous goods: ADR certification deals with road transport, IATA for air transportation and IMDG for maritime transportation. Training on mechanical handling equipment such as forklifts will also be of benefit.

For those looking for an admin position, keep yourself up to date on office machines, procedures, prioritising and delegation. All UN admin staff members are issued with a desktop computer from the moment they check in at their new duty station and you will need to know Microsoft Excel, Word and PowerPoint.

For truck drivers, I highly recommend that you get an ADR



Berty at the UNMIK Kosovo crossing point after the rioters destroyed the police & customs post, February 2010



UNHCR staff at Sallum, Egypt providing aid for stranded people. Photo: UNHCR / P. Moore



A UN relief worker gives food aid to residents of the besieged Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus, Syria. Photo: SANA/Associated Press



Berty with UNPROFOR on the Ribnica by-pass near Sarajevo, Bosnia, January 1995

history profile (PHP). You can update your PHP as required, such as if you complete more courses.

Here is a short list of generic job fields in the UN and who they might suit.

Transport: tech stores staff; mechanics; fitters; driving instructors, especially armour and off-road; truck/bus drivers; POL & detail office staff.

Human resources/personnel: orderly room clerks; recruiting office or training depot staff.

Logistics/supply: QM, rations and tech stores staff; truck drivers; POL & detail office staff.

Communications: radio room operators or techs; telephone techs; LAN and WAN techs; microwave and satellite techs; video conferencing techs; riggers and linesmen.

Movcon: anyone with experience in logistics, convoy planning, large troop movements, etc.)

Finance: orderly room/payroll staff.

Air Ops: Air Corps personnel.

Engineering: tradesmen; draftsmen; plant operators/mechanics; disaster stores.

Security: almost all military personnel are eligible for this field (armoured VIP drivers need a Class C licence).

For any of the driving positions a relevant valid civilian driving licence is required. For info on annual leave, pay and allowances, etc, see links at the end.

Apply for several vacancies, the more you apply for the better your chances. If you are successful you will receive an email informing you that you have been short-listed for a vacancy announcement and that a telephone interview is scheduled for a particular time and date. Once you know which vacancy you're being interviewed for, go back to the original announcement on the UN website and thoroughly read the job description and duties. Check similar jobs on the internet and get as much info as you can about any regulations and equipment that are relevant to the position being interviewed for.

For the interview, print out a list of all courses and experience that you mentioned in the job application. Highlight any important parts and stick the pages to the sides of your monitor where you can easily read when relevant questions are asked. At the end of the interview you will have a chance to ask questions but keep it short as they will have

certification and CPC course (including tachograph training).

Even if you have to pay to do these courses in your own time, they are a good investment. The more qualifications you have the better chance of getting a job.

Go to the UN careers website (see the links below) and set up an account. Once you have your account you can begin listing all your qualifications and experience in a personal

other candidates to interview on the same day.

If successful, you will be notified by email and given instructions about what to do next and when you should arrive at your duty station. You will also receive a contract to sign and return along with a medical certificate to attest that you are in good overall health.

Bear in mind that UN contracts are often short and will include phrases to the effect that there is no obligation on the part of the UN to offer further employment when this contract expires. I worked for 9-years with UNMIK in Kosovo, on one-year contracts that were renewed without question. My UN career only ended when I left voluntarily after successfully applying for a position with EULEX (European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo).

When you arrive at your duty station, you may find yourself wearing many hats and having to do several jobs. This usually happens in the start-up phase of a new mission when waiting for new staff to arrive, or when a mission is winding down and staff are let go before the disposal of mission assets have been completed.

Things to know:

1. The UN is an equal opportunities employer. Male and female applicants will be considered equally for all jobs.
2. The UN does not charge any fee to applicants for any job offer or vacancy. Any websites offering UN jobs for a fee are bogus.
3. You can apply for as many positions as you are qualified for but you must have all the relevant paperwork – original certificates, diplomas, etc – and you must provide these when asked to do so by Human Resources.
4. Before being deployed to any UN mission, you must pass a medical examination. You will have to pay up front but you will be reimbursed.
5. All UN staff members must be in possession of a valid driving licence suitable to the type of job applied for. Persons applying for admin jobs only need a valid Class B licence.
6. All new staff, regardless of rank or title, must undergo a driving test on arrival at their duty station.
7. In some cases you may have to get a visa or several visas to get to your duty station. You must pay for these up front but you will be reimbursed.
8. Once you have been offered a position with the UN, check with the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland, for any vaccinations required for the country where you will be located or any you will pass through en route. Any vaccinations required must be paid for by you but will be reimbursed.
9. When you arrive at your duty station you must submit your boarding passes, tickets and any hotel receipts for overnight stays between flights.
10. You have up to 30 days to claim 'terminal expenses'. This is a fixed sum of approximately US\$250 that covers meals at airports, taxis, buses, etc. No receipts are required. ■

Useful links:

For an up to date list of vacancies go to <https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=SJ&vacancy=All>
For information on pay and allowances go to www.un.org. Click 'Welcome' on the home page and then, on the right side under 'Resources and Services, click on 'Employment'.

Exercise 'Reforger'

REMINISCENCES OF A CANADIAN COLD WARRIOR

BY FRANK REID PHOTOS AS CREDITED



"When I first arrived in Germany I was told by a grizzled old sergeant that we were all just cannon fodder and if the Soviets attacked, none of us would survive. He was right, of course."

Every year in Germany during the Cold War, NATO would play at war during Exercise 'Reforger' (named for 'return of forces to Germany'). The US, supported by Great Britain, Canada, and other allies, would muster large numbers of soldiers and equipment and move towards the border with the Eastern Bloc in a show of force, trying to intimidate the mighty Russian Bear and its allies.

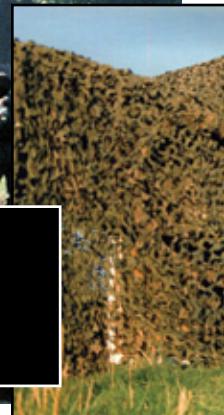
This was insanity at its best considering there was always someone in the West and his counterpart in the East with their fingers on the red button. (In my opinion red was a poor choice of colour, either literally or figuratively, as to most people 'red button' would equate to 'panic button', and you definitely didn't want anyone panicking near a button that could launch enough 'nukes' to obliterate the human race in a matter of seconds.)

The premise for Reforger was a simple one: keep us in readiness for a possible attack from the Soviet Union. Our purpose was to stop the Soviets at all costs for 48 hours. If we could pull that off, it was theorised, we could reinforce Germany and save Europe from Communism: otherwise, all was lost!

At the peak of the Cold War the US, Britain and Canada between them had 385,000+ troops stationed in Germany, Turkey and Britain, ready to react quickly should war break out. During Reforger, in addition to the troops already stationed in Germany, soldiers were flown in on an air bridge from a number of countries. Planes would fly 24 hours-a-day and, in some cases, civilian planes were used to augment the military fleet. This type of exercise gave military pilots, air crews, air traffic controllers and loadmasters the chance to work the bugs out of the process without lives being lost.

In a real war, the troops flown in on the air bridge would be sent to pre-designated depots where they would draw weapons, ammunition, tanks and other vehicles and be thrown into the battle exactly where the Soviets were attacking.

This mode of operation would deny crucial information to the enemy such as what units would be brought into which area and how rapidly they could be deployed. It also allowed the Allies to





American M60 MBT.
Photo: T/Sgt Boyd Belcher



An M60A3 MBT during Reforger, 1985.



APCs under camouflage nets. Photo: Brian Watters



APCs being transported by train.

move troops to the weakest area of the battle rapidly and in large numbers. The fact that huge amounts of military resources could be thrown in at a given point would have weighed heavily on the Soviet planners' minds. That, anyway, was the presumed way things would work in real life.

For exercise purposes the armies broke into red and blue teams and battled it out all over Germany with the help of referees. Since we didn't use live ammunition during Reforger, the weapons would be test-fired on the ranges once the exercise was completed, to ensure they were fully operable.

All the heavy artillery, mortars and tanks were put through a gruelling workout. As soon as the testing was done, all weapons, vehicles and equipment were returned to their respective bases. The toys of war were cleaned up and put away for another year, or until war really broke out, and the soldiers were sent back to their home bases.

Reforger generally lasted from eight to eleven days. The usual preparation consisted of smaller units working together on separate exercises, building up to the final great attack. While this required a great deal of communication between the headquarters of different armies, it also needed this cohesion to filter all the way down the chain of command as well. This became known as 'interoperability' and is what allowed a general from any Allied contingent to command American, British and Canadian troops seamlessly in battle. That was the theory, at least; whether it would have worked in reality is another question.

When I took part in Reforger I was part of the 3rd Mechanised Commando. We drove our APCs to the railhead and loaded them on waiting trains. (Loading an 11-ton vehicle onto a train whose bed is

not much larger than your vehicle is a tricky manoeuvre: one false move and the APC could fall off, possibly killing the driver and anyone nearby.)

When we reached the destination railhead, we unloaded the APCs from the train, fuelled them, got the soldiers on board and set off for the exercise area.

When we arrived at the staging area we camouflaged our vehicles and settled down for some much-needed rest.

After six days in the field our quartermaster finally set up showers for us. After waiting in line for about an hour you'd be lucky to get under the shower before the water ran out, and even if it didn't all you'd get was about five minutes of lukewarm water trickling down onto your head. It might seem pitiful now but after that many days on the ground it felt great!

Suddenly my APC's radio came to life with our captain's voice: "Start your engines!" I slipped down through the driver's hatch into the seat. The soldiers, who were standing outside, rushed to get in, the ramp was lifted, and we were on our way. This is what we had all been waiting for: 200,000 NATO soldiers clashing in the final great Reforger battle.

At the jump-off point we married up with other heavily armed Canadian and American mechanised units, including an anti-tank group with TOW missiles mounted on their APCs. Together we push forward to where we would set up a line of defence and await the foe.

This same scenario was being played out all over Germany and our group was just a very small cog in a very large wheel.

The excitement was building even though it was only an exercise, as it was on a magnitude that most soldiers never have a chance to experience.

We waited for 48 hours for the attack we knew was coming. Then at about 0400hrs on the third day we heard the distinctive sound of M60 tanks moving at speed. Experience told us we were about to face some nasty action.

All of a sudden we saw them coming towards us in arrowhead formation, their million-candle-watt searchlights cutting through the early morning mist. A magnificent sight!

Immediately, the battle began to rage. Our mortar teams sent up para flares to light the battlefield and as they slowly drifted down their bright glow cast strange shadows across the landscape. Thunderflashes (large cardboard tubes filled with explosives meant to simulate bombs) were filling the air with ear-splitting noises. From behind our position two helicopters suddenly appeared with their searchlights cutting through the darkness, spearing the enemy tanks. All around us hundreds of soldiers fired thousands of blank rounds at the approaching tanks. Dug-in on a high ridge, we were relatively safe from the mighty metal monsters as their steel treads could not climb the steep rocky incline. However, we could see the heavy guns traverse in search of a target.

Suddenly, as quickly as it began it ceased. The tanks turned and sped away and Reforger was over for another year.

Frank Reid is a veteran, author and playwright who spent 8-years in the Canadian Army with the majority of the time spent overseas. He is an expert on the military period during the Cold War. Frank conducts extensive public speaking on military living history and works with veterans groups to further the cause of veterans' issues. He is a founding member and past President of the Royal Canadian Regiment Association of Waterloo. He has recently written a novel '1972-1979 A Canadian Soldier at Peace', based on his experiences on peacekeeping operations in Cyprus in 1974-1975, as well as NATO operations in Europe during the Cold War years. When not researching his second novel or interviewing ex-military personnel for a future documentary, he spends many hours doing organic gardening and studying herbalism. ■



UKRAINE in TURMOIL

BY PAUL O'BRIEN

On 17th July 2014, Malaysian passenger airliner MH17, en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, disappeared from radar at 3.20pm GMT in Ukrainian airspace. Eyewitnesses reported that the airplane was engulfed in a ball of flame before falling from the sky. All 283 passengers and 15 crew members perished. The route the plane had taken was over an area of intense conflict in the Donetsk region.

The plane was flying at an altitude of 10,600m when it was allegedly hit by a surface-to-air missile. Both sides of the conflict on the ground, Russian separatists and the Ukrainian military, disavowed any responsibility for the attack, with each side blaming the other.

It is believed that a Buk anti-aircraft missile system or a S-300 was the weapon used to down the aircraft. The Ukrainian military have such weapons in their arsenal. While the separatists deny possessing any heavy weapons, many people believe that regular Russian forces aiding and supporting the separatists supplied them with the weapons and expertise to down the plane.

Ukraine's defence minister, Valeriy Heletey, stated on 21st August that the insurgents were using Russian-made weapons that had never been used or purchased by Ukraine's armed forces.

Russia's involvement in the crisis stems from its support of former Ukrainian president, Viktor Yanukovych, who, in November 2013, rejected greater integration with the EU and postponed the signing of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement. (Historically, a political and cultural fault-line divides Ukraine, with the west of the country generally pro-Western while the east looks more towards Russia.)

Mass protests followed in the capital, Kiev, and other cities throughout the country. The majority of protesters held liberal, pro-European opinions, and were also protesting against government corruption. Serious clashes resulted in the deaths of protesters and police officers.

The crisis escalated on 22nd February 2014 when President Yanukovych fled Kiev. The Ukrainian parliament deposed him the next day and in the following week appointed an interim president, Oleksandr Turchynov.

Following the ousting of Yanukovych and his government, a secession crisis developed in the autonomous Crimean region of Ukraine where television reports showed masked gunmen seizing control of military bases and strategically-located buildings in the region. These forces, described by Russia as 'local defence units', were later identified as Russian special forces.

Despite international condemnation, separatists pushed ahead with a referendum in Crimea on seceding from Ukraine in favour of joining the Russian Federation. (Crimea had been part of the Russian Empire since the late 18th century and was only 'gifted' to Ukraine in 1954 by Secretary General Krushchev in recognition of the 300th anniversary of Ukraine becoming part of the Russian Empire. In the most recent census, in 2001, 58% of Crimea's population was recorded as being of Russian ethnic origin, as against 24% Ukrainian.) The referendum was passed (according to the organisers, 98% of those who voted were in favour) and Russia moved quickly to integrate Crimea politically and economically. It also increased its military presence in the region; with Russian president Vladimir Putin declaring that a military task force would be established there.



An anti-government protester at Independent Square, Kiev, February 2014. Photo: Uncensored Magazine



Members of a military special unit stand guard in front of a Ukrainian parliament building in Kiev, March 2014. Photo: Reuters

In recent months pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine have taken control of key locations and have effectively created a land bridge from Russia through eastern Ukraine into Crimea.

The well-organised and well-armed units involved in these actions have been described by Ukrainian media as resembling those that occupied parts of Crimea earlier in the year. Ukrainian military intelligence states that some groups are in fact Russian military reconnaissance and sabotage units. Media pictures reveal masked soldiers carrying Russian-made AK-100 series assault rifles fitted with grenade launchers, a weapon currently issued to Russian Federation forces. Fuelling suspicions, military vehicles seen along the border were devoid of number plates.

NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General Philip Breedlove, said that fighters in the region appeared to be highly trained and not a spontaneously formed local militia. He went on to say: "What is happening in eastern Ukraine is a military operation that is well planned and organised and we assess that it is being carried out at the direction of Russia."

While this accusation has been repudiated by President Putin's government, a Russian opposition politician, Illy Ponomarev, said: "I am absolutely confident that in the eastern regions of Ukraine there are Russian troops in very small amounts. And it's not regular soldiers, but likely representatives of special forces and military intelligence."

Whatever the case, the stand-off between the West and Russia over the Ukrainian crisis has sent relations between them to lows not seen since the Cold War.

On 24th July, a week after the downing of MH17, the US government stated that it had evidence in the form of satellite imagery that the Russian military was firing on Ukrainian territory from across the border.

NATO has commenced a number of training exercises in Eastern Europe, with increased air force monitoring of the region. Russia's intervention in the crisis has been condemned internationally, and in response Europe, the US, and others have implemented sanctions.

At the time of writing, international efforts continue to try to solve the crisis and the situation hangs in the balance. As gun battles escalate and the death toll mounts, many people fear that skirmishes between the Ukrainian military and the separatists may spiral out of control to the point that all-out war will engulf the region. ■

Paul O'Brien is a regular contributor to An Cosantóir, and a recent winner of the European Military Press Association (EMPA) 'Best Article' (2013) award for 'At the Gates of Hell – Mali'. He has carried out extensive research in relation to Irish and British military deployments during the Easter Rising and has written a number of works focusing on the military aspects of the Rising.



Former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych with Russian president Vladimir Putin who agreed to buy \$15 billion in Ukrainian bonds and to reduce the price for vital Russian gas supplies by one-third. Photo: Sasha Mordovets/Getty Images



General Philip M. Breedlove (SACEUR)

Ukrainian-flag-coloured ribbon tied to barbed wire by protesters. Photo: Angelos Tzortzinis



1 BDE RDF

RECRUIT TRAINING CAMP

BY SGT EAMON MCLOUGHLIN, C COY, 1 CN COIS PHOTOS CPL JOHN GREENE, 1 CN COIS

The first RDF recruit course conducted with the new training syllabus (TS 16/2014) was run by 1 Bde in Lynch Camp, Kilworth, Co Cork, from 9th to 22nd August. Spearheaded by 1 Cn Cois, the two-week full-time training course for 37 eager recruits was made possible with the assistance of RDF and PDF instructors and support staff from 3 Inf Bn, 12 Inf Bn and 1 Arty Regt.

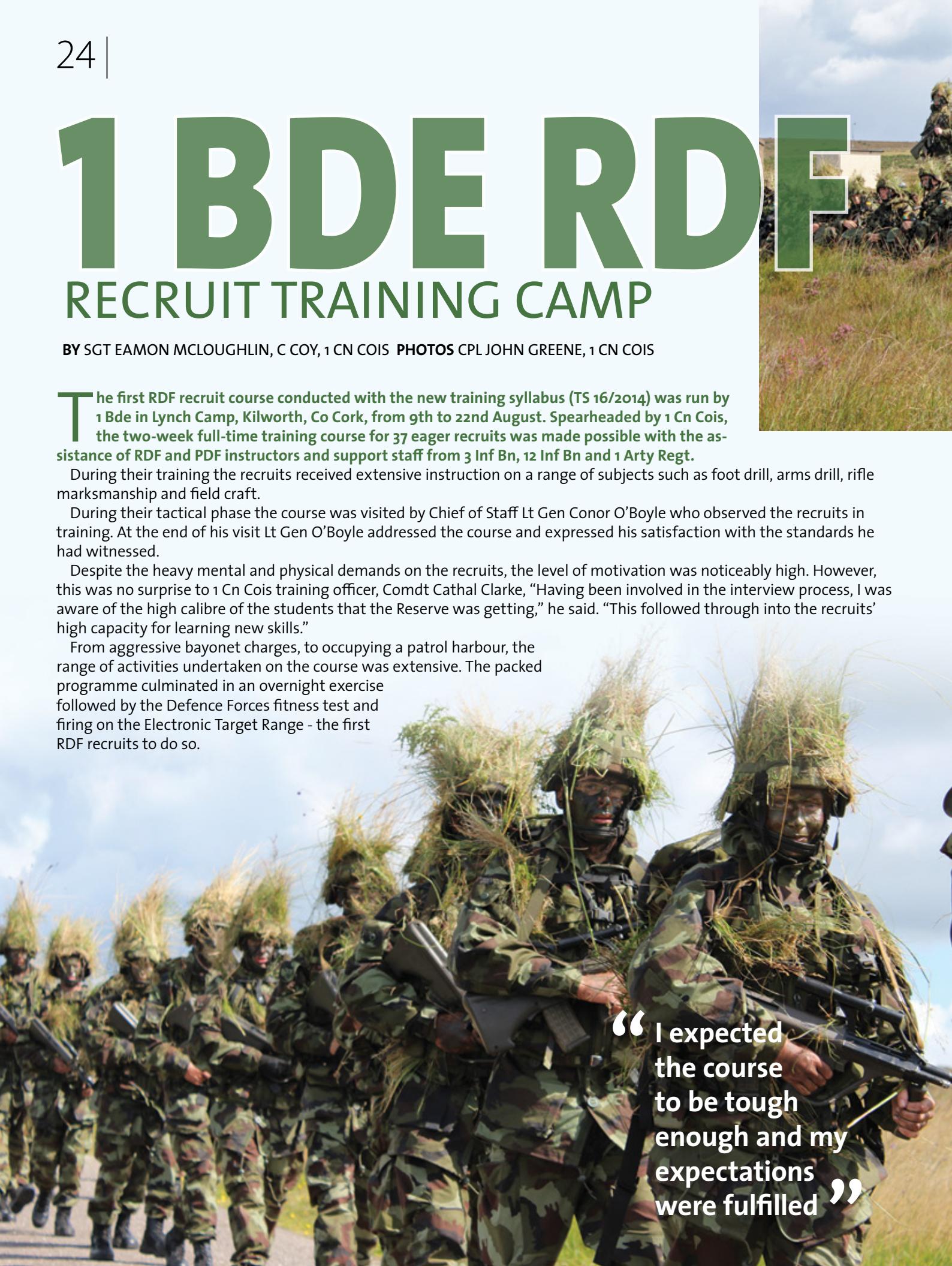
During their training the recruits received extensive instruction on a range of subjects such as foot drill, arms drill, rifle marksmanship and field craft.

During their tactical phase the course was visited by Chief of Staff Lt Gen Conor O'Boyle who observed the recruits in training. At the end of his visit Lt Gen O'Boyle addressed the course and expressed his satisfaction with the standards he had witnessed.

Despite the heavy mental and physical demands on the recruits, the level of motivation was noticeably high. However, this was no surprise to 1 Cn Cois training officer, Comdt Cathal Clarke, "Having been involved in the interview process, I was aware of the high calibre of the students that the Reserve was getting," he said. "This followed through into the recruits' high capacity for learning new skills."

From aggressive bayonet charges, to occupying a patrol harbour, the range of activities undertaken on the course was extensive. The packed programme culminated in an overnight exercise followed by the Defence Forces fitness test and firing on the Electronic Target Range - the first RDF recruits to do so.

“ I expected the course to be tough enough and my expectations were fulfilled ”





Rec Cian Morne (25), from Knocknacarra, Co Galway, said, "The two weeks were pretty intense, but I really liked it. Also, the discipline required in the military will come in handy later on as I complete my PhD."

"I really enjoyed the foot drill and arms drill," said Rec Lisa Lonergan (22), a microbiologist from Ballylooby, Co Tipperary. "The synchronised movements are like the taekwondo I teach. I expected the course to be tough enough and my expectations were fulfilled."

"The tactics were the best part," Rec Declan Fitzpatrick, from Pilltown, Co Waterford, said. "The tempo was very high but it was worth it."

Hoping to follow on with a cadetship, Rec Jack Corbett, from Bishopstown, Co Cork, said, "The RDF is a way of seeing if the military is for me."

Due to the new selection process, the level of high-achievers among the recruits was high and included university graduates, national sporting champions and a military law post-graduate. All of those who completed the course are now looking forward to commencing their 3-star training in the near future. ■



THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE
AN GOSANTOIR
10K 2014
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EURO-CHECK

SECURITY CONSULTANTS LIMITED HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT COURSE

Suitable for photojournalists, photographers, human rights and aid workers who travel to or live in hostile locations for anything from a few hours up to a few months. The amount and type of Security Awareness and Hostile Environment training required will vary from Group to Group. Our basic hostile environment course is usually the best option for many but we can tailor the course to suit a groups particular requirement.

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Our next planned Hostile Environment Course in Ireland will be held in Kildare from Monday 10th to Thursday 13th November. For further details of our training and support, check our web site at www.eurocheck.ie

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Our Mission Statement is: "To provide high quality, Security Training and Support, reasonably priced to NGOs, Charities and Human Rights Workers throughout the World."



FIELDCRAFT – PART 2

Fieldcraft is an integral part of weapon training and must not be separated from it. Unless the soldier learns marksmanship, technical handling and fieldcraft 'hand-in-hand', their progress towards becoming a proficient battle-shot suffers. Individual fieldcraft training is an excellent way to develop character. Every soldier must become an expert in fieldcraft.



PERSONAL CAMOUFLAGE AND CONCEALMENT

PERSONAL CAMOUFLAGE

- a.** Reconnoitre the training area and select positions to best illustrate the factors in Why Things Are Seen, and rehearse a number of demonstrators
- b.** When the soldiers have finished their practice in camouflage, order them to jump up and down a couple of times to ensure that any foliage used is secure; check that they can aim correctly with their camouflaged weapons.
- c.** If using a signal flag/whistle to control demonstrators during the concealment phase, rehearse the signals and actions before sending demonstrators to their positions.
- d.** Questions on the rules for concealment should be carefully prepared to avoid ambiguity.



The soldier must know how to camouflage and conceal themselves in battle or they will be an easy target for the enemy. Explain and demonstrate using one uncamouflaged and one fully camouflaged demonstrator. The tone and colour

of the hands, neck and face surface, and silhouette of the helmet and pack must not contrast with their backgrounds.

TO AVOID CONTRASTS:

- a.** Put camouflage cream, mud, burnt cork or something similar on the face, neck and hands. Put more on for night work than for day as white objects appear whiter in dim light.
- b.** Put a helmet cover on to dull its shine, use the loops to hold scrim, and foliage to disguise the helmets distinctive shape, in particular the shadow under the brim.
- c.** Tie string across equipment and use it to hold foliage, etc. to break up your outline.
- d.** Weapons can be camouflaged by binding hessian or camo tape around shiny metal or wooden parts. Ensure that the mechanism, gas ports or the sights are not obstructed.

CONCEALMENT

Explain and demonstrate that obeying the following rules will assist in good concealment:

- a.** Look around or through cover, rather than over it. If compelled to look over it, avoid breaking a straight line.
- b.** Avoid breaking a skyline.
- c.** Make use of available shadow. Remember that, when in the sun, one's own shadow is very conspicuous and that shadows move with the sun.
- d.** Choose a background to match the clothing and equipment being worn.
- e.** Avoid isolated cover as the enemy is likely to be observing it and it is easy to bring fire down on it.
- f.** Move carefully, especially when moving into, or out of, cover.

Good camouflage and concealment allow the soldier to see without being seen in order to kill without being killed.

HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY

AIRSHIPS Over Ulster

BY GUY WARNER

A significant but somewhat overlooked event took place in Co Antrim on 14th October 1915 on fields belonging to farmers Long, Semple and Service, in the townland of Bentra, which lies between Ballycarry, Whitehead and Larne. Here was established the first military aviation facility in Ireland – one of a chain of similar stations that played an important role in the First World War.

Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) airships based at Bentra patrolled the waters between Ireland and Scotland, combating the German U-boat menace. Other RNAS airship bases in Ireland included Ballyliffin, Co Donegal, Johnstown Castle, Co Wexford, and Malahide, Co Dublin.

During the war no less than 23 aircraft and airship fields were established in Ireland for the RNAS, the Royal Flying Corps (RFC), the US Naval Air Service (USNAS), and the Royal Air Force (RAF).

Bentra had an airship shed comprising of a steel, canvas covered frame, and measuring 150ft long, 45ft wide, and 50ft high. At least 11 airships operated from the station at one time or another – SS17, SS20, SS23, SS24, SS33, SS35, SS38, SSZ11, SSZ12, SSZ13 and SSZ20. Wooden huts provided accommodation for the pilots, engineers and mooring crew. Various types of aircraft also landed at the station, which became known as Whitehead Aerodrome.

Affectionately named 'battlebags' by their crews and 'blimps' by civilians, the non-rigid airships of the RNAS were a

familiar sight around the Great Britain and Ireland war years, 1914 - 1918.

The area covered by the airships ranged from Carlingford Lough to Rathlin Island and regular duties included escorting the Larne-Stranraer ferry, Princess Maud, and mounting anti-U-boat and mine-hunting patrols.

They would also guard incoming ships and convoys in the North Channel making their way between Glasgow, Belfast, Dublin and Liverpool.

When the prevailing wind permitted, the crew would scout from the air, looking for submarines on the surface or the wake of a periscope. Success depended on close co-operation between the naval airmen, the auxiliary craft operating from Larne Naval Base, and vessels from the base on Lough Swilly, using the then new science of wireless telegraphy. Marconi wireless stations at Kirkistown, Co Down, Skerries, Co Dublin and Rosscarbery, Co Cork, were also part of the overall scheme.

Two lines of anti-submarine nets were laid 20 miles apart between Rathlin Island and the Scottish mainland. Between these nets were four or five lines of net drifters, supported by patrols.

All this activity was in response to the German declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare made on 4th February 1915, which resulted in the sinking of many ships, including RMS Lusitania on 7th May 1915 off the Old Head of Kinsale lighthouse.

Following strong representations from the US government, U-boat activity was scaled down only to resume again with greater ferocity than ever on 1st February 1917, when Germany gambled that the Allies could be starved into submission before the Americans could arrive in strength. It almost succeeded.

The SS and SSZ class airships had a crew of two or three and while they could be armed with machine-guns and bombs, their chief value was acting as surveillance craft and a deterrent.



SS23 landed at Bentra



HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY



Princess Maud in Larne Harbour



SSZ 37 (op from Johnstown Castle)



SSZ 58 at Malahide



SZZ at Malahide

HISTORY

Once a U-boat's captain realised that he had been spotted from the air, he had to dive, thus reducing the speed of his submarine considerably, limiting his vision by having to rely on his periscope alone, and limiting the range of his vessel by using up valuable battery power.

No other contemporary aircraft could match the airships' endurance or slow-speed capability, so affording convoys close protection. During the entire war there was only one instance of a ship being sunk while being escorted by an airship.

In all, 147 SS and SSZ type airships were built. They were small masterpieces of contemporary technology, easy to fly, cheap to build and, despite the fact that they were filled with hydrogen, safe to operate. They were not for the fainthearted, however, as patrols of ten hours duration were common in open cockpits, exposed to the cold and at the mercy of the elements.

The original ledger, which is still held at the Northern Bank in Whitehead, shows that a bank account in the name of the RNAS was opened on the 26th October 1915 under the authorising signature of the OC, Sub-Lieutenant Archibald Creighton.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Guy Warner is a regular contributor to *An Cosantóir*. He has researched this topic extensively and has written a book on the subject, *Airships Over Ulster: Royal Naval Air Service Airships During the First World War*, which was published in 2012 (priced €10.00, ISBN: 978-1780730080). Guy has written many more aviation books over the years. His most recent are: *Military Aviation in Northern Ireland: An Illustrated History - 1913 to the Present Day* (with Ernie Cromie, in September 2012) and *Sycamores Over Ulster: Royal Air Force Support to the Security Forces During the Border Campaign, 1956-1962* (May 2013). He has also given an illustrated talk on these airships many times and would be more than willing to do so again anywhere in Ireland. ■



SSZ Johnstown Castle



U-boats surrendered in Larne Lough at the end of the war

HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY HISTORY

DF SEA BOAT & SHORE

Angling Competition 2014

BY SGT KARL BYRNE PHOTOS
BY SGT KARL BYRNE AND CPL
NEVILLE COUGHLAN

When you think of fishing in the Defence Forces you might be forgiven for thinking that it doesn't happen, but fishing or angling as it's commonly known as, is alive and kicking. On 3rd – 5th September, we met up with the competitors of the DF Sea Boat & Shore Angling Competition that was taking place in Kerry, in and around the beaches of Tralee.

Talking to CQMS Philip Barry, a very keen and experienced angler, he told us that the very first competition took place in the waters of Killybegs in 1978, and although no clubs were formed at the time they still had good interest. With the very first DF fishing club being established in 1992, there are now 4 DF clubs in operation, South/East/West and the Curragh.





There were 14 competitors this year, a small number compared to other years where you may have had up to 70 anglers pulling in fish on the shores. Over the years unfortunately the numbers have dwindled. Philip who organised and ran the event was one of the competitors and as he told us he'd like to get more people out competing in the sport as it's not only a chance to fish, but to meet other members of the DF both old and new to compete against. There were 3 sessions to compete in, with the Sea competition having been held early on in the month. The beaches fished on were Spa near Fenit, Stradbally/Gulane in CastleGregory and Banna Beaches respectfully.

The 14 competitors ranged from the ages of 23 to 58 from the PDF, with ranks of Private to Quarter Master competing, and 2 of those 14 were ex members of the PDF. Each angler had his own secrets and tricks to try and lure in the fish, using crabmeat mainly as bait but also various types of worms and small fish. The fish being caught seemed happy to partake in the free meals as the anglers pulled them in relentlessly, but as a good will policy any fish that were caught where possible were returned alive to the sea. The hungry fish that were hooked in, varied from flounder to plaice, turbot, dragonets, bass, scad and one 85cm painted ray fish, which took nearly 40 minutes to pull in. ■

AS THIS WAS A COMPETITION THERE WERE WINNERS OF COURSE AND THEY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

The Defence Forces Master Angler Shore and Boat – CQMS Philip Barry

The Sgt Michael Perpetual Shore Individual Winner – Sgt Terry O'Brien

The Comdt Ailbhe O'Sullivan Shore Team Champions – 28 Inf Bn (Sgts Joe

Duffy, Gerry McCabe, Terry O'Brien and Pte Noel Hegarty)

Master Angler Shore – Sgt Terry O'Brien

The Christy Reidy Perpetual Cup (Longest edible fish) – Cpl JJ McFadden

The Capt Brian CrohneLM Memorial Perpetual Cup (Greatest variety overall) – Sgt Gerry McCabe

The overall winner was CQMS Philip Barry, who will now be put forward to the Irish Championships to fish under the DF flag, and we here in An Cosantóir wish Philip the best of luck.



If you want to take up fishing and you're not sure where to start, don't hesitate to contact CQMS Philip Barry in 1 Bde Ord Gp, Collins Bks, Cork, or by email to philip.barry@defenceforces.ie.



ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS CROATIA



Enjoy Dalmatia is an Irish Company based in Central Dalmatia on the Croatian Coast. We have developed an extensive programme of multi-sports activities such as canyoning, kayaking, rafting, diving, snorkeling, sailing, hill walking and climbing.

Further details are available on www.enjoydalmatia.com



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Enjoy Dalmatia offers a fine selection of accommodation to rent on the coast in Central Dalmatia, apartments, villas, houses and rooms.



GEAR REVIEW



Sponsored by Team Alpha.ie

HATCH OPERATOR SHORTY TACTICAL GLOVE

PRICE: €65.50
COLOUR: COYOTE

The manufacturer says...
Leather palm is sewn with abrasion heat-resistant Nomex® thread. Nomex®/ Kevlar® blend construction provides excellent protection. Patented Cut-Ring allows optional removal of the index finger for trigger control, without unraveling the remaining edge. Elasticized wrist keeps the Operator Shorty taut.



Our reviewer Pte David Smith (Tpt Coy, 2 Bde) says...

I used the Hatch Operator Shorty Gloves Tactical Gloves on the recent Confidence Training Instructors Course (CTI). They looked like good quality gloves from the start, I found them to be lightweight with a double stitched heat and cut resistant nylon thread sewn through a water resistant goatskin leather with Kevlar construction. There is extra padding on the palm and knuckle area and they dissipate heat from abseiling rope very easily. They still felt comfortable when soaked through and dried out quickly. I gave these gloves a tough time and so far they show very little signs of wear and tear. I would have no problem recommending these gloves for tough outdoors use and the only reservation I would have with them is the lack of a double stitch on the knuckle and wrist area.

Durability 9 - Trigger Control 8 - Fit 9 - Value 7 - Protection 9

BENCHMADE SAFETY CUTTER RESCUE TOOL (7-HOOK)

PRICE: €25.00
COLOUR: BLACK

The manufacturer says...
Cut quickly and reliably in an emergency situation. All of our safety cutters are made along side our knives in the U.S.A. The larger handle of the 7 hook design works well with gloved hands and the coated handle allows for better grip.

Specifications: 440C premium stainless steel (58-60HRC), Sheath color options: black, coyote and foliage green, Blade opening: 0.50" (12.67mm), Blade Material: 440C Stainless Steel, Blade Hardness: 58-61HRC, Blade Style: Rescue Hook/ Strap Cutter, Weight: 1.50oz, Pocket Clip: Soft Sheath, Lock Mechanism: Fixed, Overall Length: 4.30", Sheath Material: MOLLE® Compatible Soft Sheath (1.6oz).



Our reviewer Sgt Alan Martin (No 3 Ops Wing) says...

The Benchmade 7 Safety Cutter is an emergency tool for cutting belts, webbing, straps, and clothing etc. quickly and safely in emergency situations. It is presented in a soft sheath with molle attachment, compatible with the standard issue battle vest or aircrew survival vest and can be fitted quickly and easily. The cutter is very easy to use and has outstanding cutting performance on belts/straps under little tension and gave a clean cut in one movement. For boot removal it took a little more work to get the cutter through the thick cuff padding at the top of the boot due to the size of the cutters opening but once down to thinner material one swipe finished it off. Despite being a capable cutter with good grip and ergonomic feel, it could be better and the lack of an attachment lanyard means one could potentially drop or lose it when you need it the most. The cost isn't too expensive considering Benchmade will provide lifetime sharpening free only charging for P&P. This service will be required because with any blade / cutter this sharpness it will inevitably dull with time and use. Very capable item for the cost but if I was going to buy a Rescue Cutter I would prefer to spend a little more money and buy one with a better handle and a glass breaker.

Durability 9 - Safety 8 - Blade Sharpness 9 - Value 8 - Molle attachment 9 - Grip 8

This month Team-Alpha is offering a Princeton Tec 'Charge MPLS' Light (worth €89.75)
www.team-alpha.ie

COMPETITION



For a chance to win this month's prize answer the following question: How much is the Benchmade Mini Barrage Knife on the team-alpha website?

Answer along with your name & address to An Cosantóir's address or by email to subs@military.ie by the 20th October 2014. Winner will be the first correct entry drawn. Last month's winner was: Lt Aoife Shanley, Kilkenny

NOTICEBOARD

A LOVELY WAR!

An evening of Songs & Stories will be presented by Myles Dungan at the Main Auditorium, Civic Theatre, Tallaght, on Friday 17th October at 8pm, as part of the Great War Roadshow touring the country. Presented and produced by historian and broadcaster Myles Dungan, this stirring show tells the story of the music of the Great War - how and why the best-known songs came to be composed, who sang them, what the men in the trenches thought of them, and how they retaliated with music of their own. The songs will be performed by The Brook Singers, Sadhbh Fitzgerald and Jonathan Creasey. This event is brought to you by South Dublin County Council Heritage Office and The Red Line Book Festival.

Admission: €12 & €10 concession. Bookings at 01 4627477; boxoffice@civictheatre.ie or online at www.civictheatre.ie

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WORD SEARCH

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

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

V M U S E U M O V U J Z Q V N	DISPLAY
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W E W M N F Y C B T E D X P A	IRISH
Q E D F J A I S Q Y C T V C A	MEATH
S T A R I N A G H Q U Y N Z W	MILITARY
U S O P Y R A T I L I M M A Y	MUSEUM
I M R D O W C Y W S K R E D M	STARINAGH
X R X Q R N X O A E F T A V M	UNIFORMS
P O L U R D S Q B L H Q T W T	VEHICLES
C F G I X B T F W C P B H W N	VIETNAM
S I U C G T J O X I I S Q D M	WAR
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F V R B B O Y Y A P R C D Z Z	

Q&A OCTOBER

1. WHAT IS THE SQUARE FOOTAGE OF THE IRISH MILITARY WAR MUSEUM (THIS ISSUE)?

Post your answer along with your name and address to us or email subs@military.ie for a chance to win a limited edition An Cosantóir Dry Flo T-shirt and DF 'Goody Bag'

Last month's winner of the An Cosantóir T-shirt and 'Goody Bag' was Roisin Cooney, Laois. Closing date is 20th October 2014.



LANDSCAPES OF WAR AND PEACE

1914-2014 War Poetry and Peacekeeping by Airman Michael J Whelan will take place from 1st – 20th October 2014, as part of the Red Line Book Festival 2014, in the South Dublin County Library, Tallaght. During library opening hours.

An exhibition of an Irish soldier's poems and images inspired by the poets of the Great War and peacekeeping duties in modern day conflicts in the Middle-East and Balkans. Also included are historical artefacts and documents of family history over the past 100-years, poems and other paraphernalia from World War One and UN peacekeeping operations.

South Dublin Libraries' Headquarters, Unit 1, Square Industrial Complex, Tallaght, Dublin 24 – Phone: 01 4597834. www.southdublinlibraries.ie

STEPS TO HEAVEN: A SGT MAJOR CRANE NOVEL

Author: Wendy Cartmell

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (June 2012) & Endeavour Press (June 2014)

ISBN: 978-1467938815 /

ASIN: BooL3LR7RO

Price: €5.99 PB / €2.55 eBook

Pages: 326

STEPS TO HEAVEN is the first in Wendy Cartmell's Sgt Major Crane series, with the sixth due out very soon. I have to admit I was caught off guard with this one - it was even better than I had expected. Sgt Major Crane is a Special Investigation Branch (SIB) Detective in the British Army's Royal Military Police (RMP) Corps, based in the Aldershot Garrison; he's a very experienced and well travelled soldier, who takes his job very seriously.

In our first outing with Sgt Major Crane, there are a number of similar murder cases including families all ending in a suicide by the perpetrator – of whom all are serving soldiers, stationed in different barracks around the UK. Crane painstakingly travels back and forth to connect the cases and find the cause. A collection of religious pamphlets leads him to an evangelistic church – could there be a connection? Nothing has prepared him or his team for this case. **WF**

Wendy's crime series Sgt Major Crane draws on her husband's 22 years service in the British Army. www.wendycartmell.webs.com



THE PRIMAL SERIES BY JACK SILKSTONE

PRIMAL MIRZA

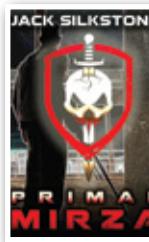
Publisher: Amazon Digital Services, Inc. (May 2014)

ASIN:

BooKIAMGDO

Price: €2.58

Pages: 149



THE PRIMAL SERIES: Origin (#1) Unleashed (#2), Vengeance (#3), Fury (#4) and now two prequel novellas PRIMAL Mirza and PRIMAL Inception to lend more character depth and back story to this great series.

Prior to becoming a PRIMAL operative Corporal Mirza Mansoor was an Indian Special Forces soldier, he was operating on the India / Pakistan border in 1999 just after the Kargil war. During a cross border para commando raid he learns about the deployment of a team of Lashkar terrorists on their way through the Kashmir Mountains. Their destination is the Indian Capital New Delhi. Mirza is then recruited to Special Group, and along with his partner Himesh Arjun travel to the capital.

In the slums of New Delhi their quarry have aligned with a criminal gang and gone underground. As the two operatives try and track down the terrorist cell they run foul of the local National Security Guards (NSG) commander – so they go it alone to find and take down the cell before it's too late. **WF**

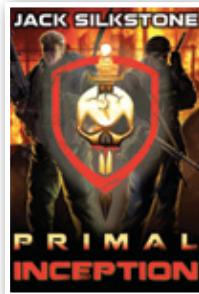
PRIMAL INCEPTION

Publisher: Amazon Digital Services, Inc. (August 2014)

ASIN: BooMQCND7W

Price: €2.58

Pages: 130



PRIMAL INCEPTION

FEATURES CIA operatives Ice and Vance prior to their recruitment to the Primal team and is set in Kosovo in 1999. It's now two years after the war that broke up old Yugoslavia, with many Albanian and Serbian war veterans still operating in and around Kosovo – as well as the now occupying NATO/PfP peacekeeping forces and international administration organisations.

Ice and Vance whilst supporting an Albanian unit during this vicious ethnic conflict witness a war crime that goes unrecorded and unpunished by the international administration.

Defying their CIA boss they decide to take on the now Albanian mafia boss and his criminal gang with the help of an SAS unit – who take the battle to the streets of Pristina.

This novella will appeal to many who have served in Kosovo during this period. **WF**

www.primalunleashed.com

GAME

CALL OF DUTY: ADVANCED WARFARE



ACTIVISION 18+



CALL OF DUTY: ADVANCED WARFARE, developed by Sledgehammer Games (co-developers of Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3), takes place in a plausible future in which technological progress and today's military practices have converged with powerful consequences.

COD Advanced Warfare envisions where both technology and tactic have evolved to usher in a new era of combat, Private Military Corporations (PMCs) have become the dominant armed forces for countless nations outsourcing their military needs, redrawing borders and rewriting the rules of war. Jonathan Irons, the founder and president of the world's largest PMC - Atlas Corporation – one of the most powerful men in the world – shaping this chilling vision of the future of war. www.callofduty.com/advancedwarfare

Genre: Action - **PEGI:** 18+ - **Platforms:** Xbox 360, One, PS3/4 & PC - **Price:** €64.99 - €74.99 ([gamestop.ie](http://www.gamestop.ie)) - **Released:** 4th November, 2014.

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NAME
PETER MCGUINNESS

RANK
PTE

UNIT
HQ COY, 27 INF BN

I had always wanted to join the Defence Forces since I was very young. My inspiration was my parents as both had served in WWII. Prior to the war my father had served for about a year in the Defence Forces based in Cathal Brugha Bks; he left to join the British Army so he could join the war, he eventually landed on Gold beach during the Normandy landings. My mother ironically was German and at the same time had been serving in the German Auxiliary, her position consisted of being a medical assistant to nurses in hospitals for wounded soldiers, another was part of an anti-aircraft battery team and she ended up as a telephone operator. I am very proud to say that both my parents served and fought in WWII. I've also got three older brothers that served in the Defence Forces, two of them served in the 27 Inf Bn and one in the 5 Inf Bn, eventually all three ended up serving in the 27 Inf Bn.

Before I joined I worked in Mosney holiday camp doing security and in the winter off seasons I worked in a restaurant/bar. Prior to joining the DF I served in the FCA as it was then known for 4-years. I always felt as a young man that it was my destiny to join the full time army and on 7th November 1985, I started my journey. I didn't even put a thought towards the question of failure during training as I felt I had a very proud tradition to uphold within my family. On 13th May 1986 I got posted to Sp Coy 27 Inf Bn, where I served for 12-years between 1986 and 1998. Within this period I completed three tours to Lebanon and won four all army and nine command 81mm mortar trophies, I also competed in the All Army Rifle competitions for 14-years. In total I've served overseas six times, three to the Lebanon with the 61st, 64th and 81st Battalions and three to Kosovo with the 3rd Tpt Coy, 33rd and 41st Infantry Groups.



While serving in HQ Coy, 27 Inf Bn I was attached to 2 LSB for 5-years in the clothing stores, where I found my passion for tailoring, something to which I always had an interest in. When I started tailoring it was as an understudy to tailor for 2-years, before retiring. I could almost say I was self taught, working at home and getting my mother in-law to teach me how to use the sewing machines. I really felt that I had found my calling and started buying books and watching videos on TV and online to hone my skills as a tailor.

In August 2013 PDFORRA had requested that all DF tailors would be trained as there were very few active tailors at that time, I was offered a place on a tailoring course, which I happily took. The course took place in Griffith College. I was lucky enough to be nominated as Class President. The course was held over a month, in

“There is no such thing as a 5 minute job”

total 10 soldiers went on the course and got qualified. Although I went into the course with a good working knowledge I still learnt an awful lot about the trade of tailoring.

Back in my home unit I am constantly being challenged by soldiers looking to get me to customise their kit and equipment. If someone comes to me with a problem I believe if I can't solve it, it can't be solved. I like to think of myself as a perfectionist and I'm a true believer that there is no such thing as a 5-minute-job, it takes as long as it takes to get the job done right. As the barracks tailor I also do a small bit of barbersing at the same time and have dedicated a desk and mirror in my workshop to facilitate the odd hair cut, but my true passion is tailoring.

In November of this year I will have served 29-years and hope to continue tailoring for the rest of my army career. ■



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