

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

# ÁN COSANTÓIR



Óglaigh  
na hÉireann  
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



MAR/APR 2024



**SABER JUNCTION 2023 | SOARING  
HEIGHTS | VETERAN INTERVIEW**

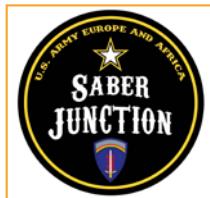
[STRENGTHEN THE NATION]



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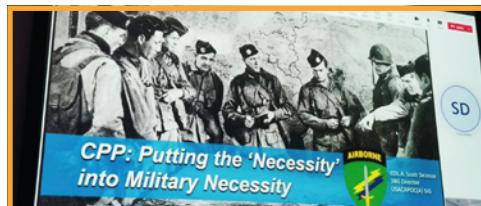
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**Front Cover**

CS Shane McEneaney  
*Capt Paul Farrell (J7) presents a token of appreciation to Capt Evan Pardue, U.S. Army*

# Editorial

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

We hope that you enjoyed reading our second edition of the year and will continue to enjoy reading throughout the coming year. We are always aiming to bring you a wide variety of articles from sports to veterans, history to tactical and many more. We aspire to feature articles from each of these areas in each edition, and many more, so if you feel you have something that could feature in the magazine why not reach out to us at [connect@military.ie](mailto:connect@military.ie)

**On Parade** section, as usual in this 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.

Our first feature is an article by Capt Jordan Corrigan who gives us an insight into the **2023 SABER JUNCTION** exercise hosted by the U.S. Army, this exercise places a huge emphasis on Large Scale Combat. Capt Corrigan and the DF team got the chance to be observers in this large exercise.

Moving on to the main focus of this edition, once again Sgt Rena Kennedy provides us with an excellent **Interview with Defence Forces Head of Strategic HR Mr Declan Carville** who discusses the Detailed Implementation Plan. Declan also discusses some of the initiatives underway to achieve higher induction numbers for the DF.

**A Day in the Life of a Cadet** is a great snapshot of one day captured by Armn Sam Gibney (DF Photographer) into the day of the life of Cadet Smith, a member of the 99th Cadet Class, whilst in training.

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 Flt Sgt Tom Devereux who speaks with huge pride of his family's connection and service to the DF over many years.

As we are continue to feature the new Leadership doctrine and information on leadership, we continue with a piece from Capt Austin Doyle in this edition. This article covers the recent **Leadership Seminar** held in Custume Bks Athlone and gives an overall picture of what was discussed on that day.

In our veteran's section we feature an **interview with Sgt (Retd) Grattan O'Rourke** who gives an honest insight into his career and the reality of leaving the DF after 21 years service.

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

As always if you would like something featured in the magazine or have any ideas on further redesigning have your say by emailing [connect@military.ie](mailto:connect@military.ie). 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](mailto:webmaster@military.ie)

*"In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety."*

— Abraham Maslow

- **TACTICAL**
- **OVERSEAS**
- **SOCIAL**
- **SPORTS**

You will receive a water bottle upon completing an article or a coffee mug when you submit two articles.

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**Sgt John Rossiter**  
*Editor*



# ON PARADE

CQMS Roche being presented her UNDOF medal by D COS (Sp) Maj Gen Adrian Ó Murchú



DFAM members at a recent Dublin Fire Brigade rope rescue concentration for interagency interoperability



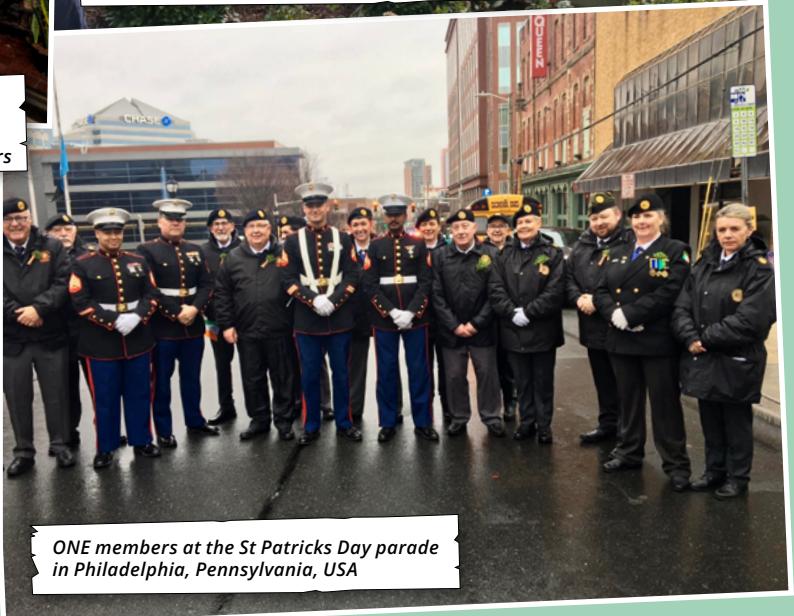
Assistant Chief of Staff Brig Gen Rossa Mulcahy recently represented the Defence Forces at the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (GBV) at the Department of Foreign Affairs



DFTC Fire Station staff on a recent visit to Kildare Town Community School and Acorn Centre



27 Inf Bn recruits on a recent trg ex, learning the drills involved for a Section in Attack



ONE members at the St Patricks Day parade in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

# ON PARADE



# ON PARADE

Members from the 12 Inf Bn Reserve Coy conducted a hill walk as part of a team building weekend in Killorglin recently. A/CS Michael Duggan and Pte Andrea Hanley organised a charitable collection and €1,000 was raised for the children's ambulance service BUMBLEance.



Chief of Staff Lt Gen Séan Clancy making a presentation to Chairman of the NATO Military Committee Admiral Robert Bauer



**HME (High Mobility Engineer Excavator)**  
- Fully armoured it provides state-of-the-art protected mobility for DF engineers. They recently cleared roads in local villages following airstrikes, keeping vital routes open in UNIFIL.

A/BQMS Paul Thompson seen here in the NCOs Mess, Finner Camp. He retires after 39 years loyal service to the Defence Forces. Paul served overseas no fewer than 10 times, he is pictured here with OC 28 Inf Bn, Lt Col Shane Rockett.



The raising of the Tri Colour in Strasbourg by Capt Brian Dunne



7 Inf Bn Guard of Honour for the Ambassadors of Czech Republic, Kenya & Sweden at Áras an Uachtaráin

# ON PARADE



ONE members at the St Patricks Day parade in New York



Recent passing out in Gormanston of the 66th & 67th Platoons

AC members on a recent visit to RAF Northolt



St Patricks Day parade in UNIFIL



DF Sgt Maj Keith Caffrey briefing troops on a recent visit to UNDOF

# SABER JUNCTION 23

ARTICLE BY CAPT JORDAN CORRIGAN  
PHOTOS BY CAPT CORRIGAN & CS MCNEANEY

SABER JUNCTION is an annual exercise conducted by the U.S. Army's 7th Army Training Command (7th ATC) designed to prepare and test a U.S. Army Brigade Combat Team, with an emphasis on Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCOs). For SABER JUNCTION 23, held between the 28th August and 23rd September 2023, the U.S. Army's 2nd Cavalry Regiment (2CR) was the lead element of the Blue Forces (BLUFOR) undergoing training. Over 5,000 troops from more than a dozen NATO and Partnership for Peace states took part in the main ground phase of the exercise between the 6th and 16th of September. Following engagement with their U.S. Army Europe and Africa counterparts, J7 Training and Education Branch received an invitation to send a small Defence Forces team to observe SABER JUNCTION 23. The team spent a week observing the exercise and interacting with 2CR, the Opposition Forces (OPFOR), and 7th ATC training and exercise control personnel.

Despite its title, 2CR is in fact a mechanised combined-arms brigade-strength formation of seven squadrons, primarily equipped with the Stryker family of vehicles. In addition, 2CR was reinforced by elements of the French 92e Régiment d'Infanterie (a unit of Irish descent equipped with the latest French VBCI infantry fighting vehicles), a squadron from the British 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards (equipped with Jackal and Coyote vehicles), and U.S. Army aviation assets (including AH-64E Apaches, CH-47 Chinooks, and UH-60 Blackhawks), engineering, and special forces elements. Smaller contingents from Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Lithuania, and North Macedonia also took part. Aside from the troops under exercise in Germany, the higher levels of command were also exercised remotely, with elements of 2CR operating from their home barracks in Vilseck, Germany, and the Polish 11th Armoured Cavalry Division headquarters serving as 2CR's higher command from its base in Zagan, Poland.

SABER JUNCTION is typically divided into three main "engagement" phases, with the BLUFOR conducting a defence, followed by a consolidation, and then a BLUFOR offensive over the course of approximately ten days in the field. However, planning and movement to and from the training area are also conducted as part of the overall exercise, ensuring that Combat Support and Combat Service Support elements are exercised in addition to the Combat elements. The emphasis on CS and CSS throughout SABER JUNCTION were noteworthy – 2CR operated as they would be expected to in the field, and had to be totally self-sufficient for the duration of

the exercise, relying on its organic logistics to sustain it.

While the main phases and events of SABER JUNCTION are scripted and supervised by the exercise control, the vast majority of the exercise is a free play scenario where actions have consequences. The pace of the exercise was intense, and at times punishing for 2CR's personnel and equipment. Nevertheless, 2CR and its partners successfully achieved their objectives in all phases of SABER JUNCTION 23, and was deemed to have performed well by exercise control.

SABER JUNCTION takes place at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC), a U.S. Army training facility located within the 163km<sup>2</sup> of the Hohenfels Training Area in Bavaria, southern Germany – for comparison, the Glen of Imaal is approximately 27km<sup>2</sup> and the Curragh Plains are less than 20km<sup>2</sup>. Hohenfels (known as "the Box") features a wide variety of terrain, over a thousand training buildings, 319km of roads and trails, and a small airfield – with two more temporary airfields constructed during the course of the exercise! The entire Box is enabled for simulated combat through instrumentation throughout the training area and on troops and vehicles – primarily the Engagement System (MILES).

Multiple Integrated Laser Effects (ranging from simulated rifle fire, up to massed artillery and even CBRN strikes – an option only available to the OPFOR) allows for realistic

effects (ranging from simulated rifle fire, up to massed artillery and even CBRN strikes – an option only available to the OPFOR) to impact on troops, equipment and the environment; when "killed"

troops have to wait to be "recycled" and reintroduced to the scenario as reinforcements. The wide use of instrumentation and simulation also allows for detailed tracking and visualisation of the battlespace by exercise control. The Box also features seven habitable villages. These villages are fully functioning, and during exercises are actually lived in by a combination of professional training staff (including veterans) and paid actors to enable realistic training scenarios to take place. The use of these "civilians" to give character to locations is a simple but very effective idea, and ensures the training area is dynamic and not an entirely empty space.

The villages feature real amenities, such as cafés and shops, residential and community areas and buildings, fuel stations and garages, and religious sites – even graveyards. The Box as a whole also features a digital world complete with social media networks with real time information and impacts on the ground during the course of the exercise. The villages are suitable for the full range of Military Operations in Urban Terrain –





OPFOR Engineers prepare an anti-tank ditch and berm

from high intensity combat to simple CMIC engagements with the local "civilian" populations, depending on how relations with the "locals" are of course. As in the real world,

interaction with these local communities is important during exercise scenarios – particularly as not all villages are necessarily of the same political persuasion. Successful interactions with these communities can result in co-operation and valuable intelligence for the forces under exercise (BLUFOR); the same is true in reverse, and poor interactions can lead to hostile acts and even the development of insurgencies in co-operation with the OPFOR.

It is the combination of the dynamic training environment and the OPFOR that truly makes the JMRC stand out as a training location. The U.S. Army's 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment (1-4 IN) is permanently garrisoned in Hohenfels and provides the OPFOR for those forces training there. The 1-4 IN is a reinforced infantry battalion with a Headquarters and Headquarters Company, three primarily mechanised infantry companies, and a reinforced tank company. During exercise scenarios, 1-4 IN acts as a Sovietesque-brigade level formation. For SABER JUNCTION 23, the OPFOR was reinforced with a Polish tank company, an Italian tank platoon, Belgian reconnaissance elements, Bulgarian mechanised infantry, and Romanian and U.S. engineers, and U.S. special forces and aviation assets. It is important to note here that while not the "main effort" of SABER JUNCTION 23, each of these elements also had opportunities to realistically train individually as units, and together in combined-arms formations over a period of several days. As an example, the U.S. Army's 500th Engineer Support Company built a UAV airfield one day, and bulldozed a 900m long anti-tank ditch and berm defence over the course of 30 hours of continuous operation the next.

As a dedicated OPFOR, 1-4 IN is specifically equipped and trained in non-standard Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) to differentiate itself from standard U.S. Army doctrine. For exercise purposes – and until recently for working dress – the 1-4 IN wore a distinctive black uniform, and was equipped with Visually Modified (VISMOD) vehicles, with M113s representing T-72s and BMPs, Stryker's representing BTRs, and a variety of non-standard vehicles.

As the "home team" with plenty of experience as OPFOR and very good local knowledge of Hohenfels, combined with a very high level of esprit-de-corps, the 1-4 IN had a strong desire to "win" SABER JUNCTION 23. However, it is the BLUFOR's training objectives that are being assessed and important in terms of assessing the ability of the 2CR. Reigning in 1-4 IN's enthusiasm is the job of the JMRC's Observer Coach Trainer Teams (OCTs). The OCTs are permanent training staff of Officers and NCOs, most of whom have recently completed similar command appointments to those they are observing and assessing. As their title suggests, the OCTs observe, coach and train elements from individual crews and sections through to brigades during the planning, preparation and execution phases of exercises at the JMRC. They also collect and analyse data, and provide feedback to those units under exercise through comprehensive After Action Reviews and Take Home Packages. They can also instruct personnel and units directly in the field if necessary. In addition, the OCTs serve as the Exercise Control, ensuring that conditions are as realistic as possible – and ensuring that 1-4 IN didn't have too much of an unfair advantage. The tracking instrumentation used throughout the Box and



A 'disabled' Stryker blocking a junction following an OPFOR ambush



Saber Junction logo

a closed radio net ensures that OCTs have an up-to-date picture of what is actually happening throughout the battlespace – as opposed to what the troops under exercise think is happening. This critical difference is often only revealed to commanders during the detailed AARs, and can come as a surprise when presented with the hard of evidence of what they did as opposed to what they thought they were doing. The OCTs work ultimately feeds into the Centre for Army

Lessons Learned (CALL), which is a dedicated lessons learned process and a library of resources made available to U.S. and friendly forces so that lessons are not forgotten.

Throughout SABER JUNCTION, the Defence Forces team had the opportunity to closely observe and interact with elements of both the 2CR and 1-4 IN while traveling around with the OCTs in their "invisible" (for exercise purposes) Humvees. This was also an excellent opportunity to observe the OCT process in person, with OCTs testing and questioning individuals about their roles and tasks in the various exercise scenarios, and also offering advice here and there. At the conclusion of the exercise, the team toured one of the control centres for the exercise, where every move within the Box is tracked, recorded, analysed, and subsequently used for instructional purposes – likely in the next iteration of SABER JUNCTION, preliminary planning for which has already commenced.

With the 2CR, the team got to observe very familiar Section, Platoon and Company-level activities taking place – ranging from FRAGOs, re-supplies, mounted and dismounted OPs, to tactical moves such as a mounted advance to contact and an obstacle breaching scenario by a reinforced mechanised infantry battalion. Aside

from the obvious scale difference, all of the above and most of the TTPs would be familiar to Defence Forces personnel. As would the drama, excitement, exhaustion – and yes, at times, boredom – of any exercise. Patrol harbours and vehicle leaguers scattered throughout the forested Hohenfels terrain were equally familiar. At the higher levels, the team was able to observe battalion-level Command Posts including both the Squadron Commander's Advance HQ of a few vehicles and key personnel, and the main HQ hidden in the forest under camouflage nets (of both the visual and electromagnetic kind). As a trial of command and control, communications, and dispersion for SABER JUNCTION 23, other elements of 2CR's Regimental and Squadron HQs operated away from the exercise area at their home base, 60+km away.

With the 1-4 IN, the Defence Forces team observed disparate elements of the OPFOR, ranging from U.S. Army Special Forces operating in the villages, through to a combat engineer company emplacing obstacles, and even a last-ditch stand by a lone "T-72" (VISMOD M113) defending against a wet gap crossing by 2CR. While deliberately different from NATO-standard TTPs (and at times a mix of free-play and fun), it was good to see that the essentials were readily familiar to the Defence Forces team. The smooth integration and interoperability of the many non-U.S. forces into the exercise was very interesting, and shows the benefit of standard operating procedures utilised by many militaries, including the Defence Forces. Perhaps a future iteration of SABER JUNCTION will see participation by an Irish Defence Forces contingent.



Stryker Dragoon IFV



2nd Cavalry Regiment - Always Ready

# INTERVIEW WITH DEFENCE FORCES HEAD OF STRATEGIC HR MR DECLAN CARVILLE

BY SGT RENA KENNEDY

PHOTOS BY AIRMAN SAM GIBNEY



HOSHR Mr Declan Carville in a recent meeting with COS Seán Clancy

**How have you settled into Military life as a member of the Defence Forces Board since you took office in September 2023?**

Fairly seamlessly from my perspective, people have been incredibly welcoming and engaging.

The fact that I don't have a uniform or a badge, has not held me back in any way, shape or form. In fact, a different perspective on things has been encouraged by the Chief of Staff and the DF Board.

Whilst I thought at the very start it might be a confined environment before I joined, my lived reality is that it is very inclusive and very welcoming.

I have spent the first few months travelling and meeting as many people as I could, this will continue as I am keen to understand the organisation and what people think needs to be done. This will help form the basis of what we all need to do.

Everyone I have met have been inclusive and very engaged on improving the environment for people and continuing to build the right Culture for the future. This is a huge positive and augurs well for the future.

**Can you introduce the new members of the HR Division and the various offices that report to you now?**

We are determining what is the right structure for HR for the DF. As of now, the Strategic HR Division is made up of the following:

- Office of Strategic HR
- Joint Recruitment Office
- Office of CELO (Civilian Employee Liaison Officer)
- GENAD (Gender Advisor) / Diversity, Inclusion & Equity
- Data Management
- Elements of J1 (Human Resources).

We maintain a very close working relationship between Strategic HR and Operational HR, particularly in the areas of Recruitment and Retention and the implementation of the Cultural initiatives as identified in the Strategic Framework, IRG and DIP over the course of 2024 and 2025. This will require a joined up approach across the DF.

**Your background is HR, what was your first impression of HR structures in the DF and instinctively what did you want to fix first (recruitment/retention/promotion etc)?**

There is a huge amount of excellent People & Cultural initiatives well underway. We will need to pull all the strands of HR activity under one umbrella and this starts with the structural modifications outlined above. This will evolve over time and in the coming months we will be aligning the activity under one "People & Culture" Strategy for the DF, one which will resonate with all of us. This will be complete before the Summer. So watch this space.

Resourcing or lack thereof has been a common theme in the last 5 months as I speak to people across the DF. To me, Resourcing is made up of 3 elements, Recruitment, Retention and how work is prioritised. So Retention & Recruitment are key to this but also critically, making sure all of our people are working on the areas of highest value to the DF and clear on their expectations. I would urge all leaders, to the extent that this is possible, to focus our efforts on priority areas. Whilst it will take teamwork, we will grow the force over the coming years and provide compelling career paths for our people through modern HR strategies and our plans under the DIP.

**Before we get into specifics, what are your views on the overall Detailed Implementation Plan and does it go far enough to address HR issues?**

The DIP, which combines People & Culture elements from the CODF & IRG recommendations, & ultimately the Strategic Framework as the overall seminal document, is a comprehensive plan for the next 3 years. We will make significant progress on all the elements of the plan whilst at the same time, keep informed of wider HR practices and implement as we go.

**You joined the DF when the DIP was well under way to publication. Would you have done anything different within the HR Strategic Objective?**

The DIP was well under way to publication by the time I joined. The DIP provides a clear roadmap for People and Culture transformation. If we can make progress together on the current

plan, we will be well on our way. The totality of the People & Cultural elements are challenging for 2024 and provide a very real opportunity for change, building on significant progress already made and making the necessary improvements for all our People. We will be setting ourselves up with a combination of internal and external resources in order to be able to move these programmes at pace to ensure that the changes under each of the headlines under the DIP will be done in an enduring manner. I see 2024 as a year of Design, Development, Engagement and Communication.

### What are the quick wins you feel have had an immediate impact on improving day to day life in the Defence Forces?

The strengthening of the Office of Strategic HR, strengthening of the Joint Recruitment Office and bringing that office under the banner of Strategic HR is one change that will have a demonstrable impact on improving the day to day life in the Defence forces.

Initially the team, along with many wider DF colleagues, have been working hard on progressing the various recommendations in the IRG report including;

- IRG Working Group Established
- Review of current Complaints System has been drafted
- Pilot training of MIOs and Unit Commanders on Grievance investigation improvements
- 360 Feedback Pilot complete with DF board members
- Personality Assessment Pilot

In addition, we have worked closely with the RA's on making initial modifications to certain Promotion competitions.

With respect to inductions planned for 2024, the joint Recruitment Team, Operations, Brigades and Training have been working hard on putting in place building blocks for high levels of new inductions, direct entry competitions and broader opportunities for our people to avail of.

The induction pipeline is good with c. 200 new recruits to join in March & April. These will be trained by 28 Inf Bn in Finner Camp and the JTIC in Gormanston respectively. 2024 is a year of resourcing the organisation and will require all of us to get behind the ask.

Some of the initiatives underway to achieve higher induction numbers include;

- New TV Advertising
- Specialist Advertising to target greater diversity
- Greater use of social media
- Changes to Medical processing and Selection testing
- Streamlined the requests for school visits (direct to R&C, 10 days vs. 4 weeks)
- Engagement with schools for systematic outreach – plan to brief 300+ schools between March and May – Thank you to all involved!
- Increased presence at events
- Use of Influencers
- Broader marketing Strategy
- Higher levels of inductions at Brigade and formation level

I encourage all to get involved in any way you can. Be it reaching out to schools in your locality or talking to people in your community about the great jobs we have.

This is a team effort and teams can accomplish much more than individuals. Ultimately if we can encourage more retention and attract more people into the forces, we will go a long way to improve the immediate pressure.



**In your opinion, does the DIP cater adequately for the retention of personnel which has been highlighted many times as a significant challenge?**

The DIP is a comprehensive multiyear plan and it goes a long way to improving the lived experiences and in continuing to create compelling careers for all our people.

The initiatives outlined in the DIP will go a long way to retaining talented people. Building on the positive engagement that I have experienced so far with our Departmental colleagues, there will be changes in promotion competitions, career path development, performance management, modern feedback initiatives, the grievance management model as well as continuously evolving the value proposition and remuneration.

The improvements that are being made in the infrastructure (Gyms, Dining facilities, Accommodation) and the introduction of Private Health care for all, really sets us apart from most organisations in Ireland.

### Can you sum up for our readers what the Defence Forces will look like, from the HR perspective, post DIP Implementation in 2028?

We will be an employer of choice in Ireland, where we attract and induct & value our people, enable diversity and sustainably restore our strength to deliver on our purpose and ambition – and create a work environment that encourages everyone to bring their best selves to work every day. This will require continued collaboration and inclusivity to deliver on the overall HR strategy.



*Mr Declan Carville addressing the Senior NCO Leadership Conference*



# CISM GOLF TOURNAMENT

## 2023

BY COMDT JOHN FITZGERALD  
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY COMDT JOHN FITZGERALD

The DF Golf team's journey to the 14th CISM World Championships began on the 30th September 2023, although qualification had taken place over the preceding months. At the end of September, the group of 11, including Chief of Mission, Brig Gen Brendan McGuinness, GOC DFTC along with six (6) male and three (3) female golfers and the Team Manager, gathered in Dublin Airport to begin our competitive journey. In a strange twist of fate, the celebrations began early as the youngest and oldest members of the group celebrated their birthday on the day of our departure, as it happened, they were also the most senior and junior ranked members of the group!

The DF golf team included a combination of both experienced golfers and rookies in CISM terms. Four members of the team had CISM World Championships experience prior to competing in San Diego. Our most experienced golfer was Sgt Brendan Healy competing at his 6th CISM World Golf Championships.



The team was selected based on handicaps, experience and performance during the 2023 golfing season that included the Bde/Fmn Championships and the DF Championships along with previous DF Championships winners. Our three main winners from the DF Championships were included, Senior Champion Cpl Richard Finn, Junior Champion Comdt Regina Foley and the Intermediate Champion Cpl Jennifer Kingston.

In the period between team selection and travelling to the CISM World Golf Championships, the team spent a day with Mr Kenny Fahey, Head Professional at the Golf Ireland Academy located in Carton House, Maynooth. The training concentrated on the various aspects of the game and also focused the mind of the team on the task ahead.

On Monday 2nd October the team got to see and play the Admiral Baker Golf Course for the first time, it was clear from the outset it was a demanding course that would test every aspect of a golfers game. The greens were running at high speeds and all competitors could see the

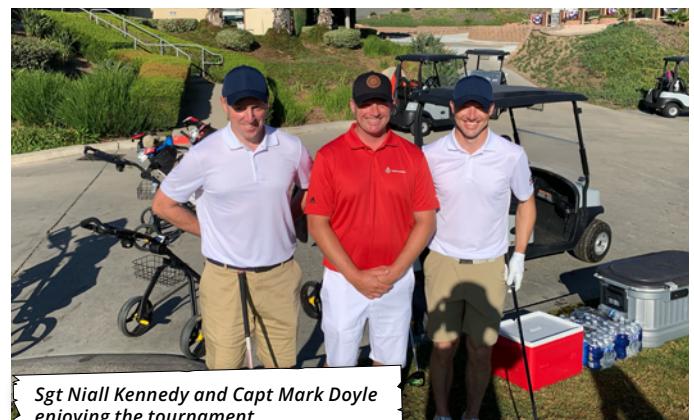


DF team at the opening ceremony

huge effort put in by the CISM Committee together with the club officials and in particular the green staff in preparation for the event. The opening ceremony followed the practice round, with a technical meeting followed by a meet and greet and an opportunity to meet some of the competitors or to catch up in some cases.

On Tuesday 3rd October, the competition commenced in earnest, with the first tee time just after 0700hrs as the sun was rising to greet everyone on their arrival at the course. The competition format included individual and team competitions for both the men and the women, based on gross scores, played over four days, a true test of golf. There were over 100 competitors from 17 different countries, 78 male and 24 females, within that number there was 12 male and 9 female teams. The best four scores from the men's six daily scores and two scores from the ladies three over the four days would determine the team placings.

To assist in the running of the event, the local organisers had over 150 local volunteers on hand. These were mostly members with strong connections to the local Naval Base, many claiming to have Irish relatives and happy to relay stories of their visits or plans to visit Ireland. These volunteers assisted as starters, scorekeepers, referees and ball watchers, with water and food stations located throughout the course to satisfy the demands of the competitors as the temperatures rose during the week.



Sgt Niall Kennedy and Capt Mark Doyle enjoying the tournament



It was a very rewarding week for the entire team on their return to CISM golf, the pinnacle of the game for any member of the DF playing golf. The DF men's team with a very determined performance over the four (4) days won a well deserved bronze medal. Three (3) players from the team finished in the top twenty (20) on a very demanding course that required their full concentration throughout. Our youngest competitor, Pte James Everard (3 Inf Bn), a member of Kilkenny Golf Club was the highest placed individual from the DF team, finishing in 8th position with a very credible +1 score after the four (4) days. The performance of Cpl Joe Hannigan (DFHQ, CIS) a member of Headford Golf Club, deserves special recognition, he finished just outside the top ten (10) individual but won a bronze medal for his incredible golf in the senior category, capped off with an incredible -4 score on day one of the competition.

As the hosts, USA were the hot favorites to complete the clean sweep in the individual and team in the male and female events. In the end the USA won gold in the men's and ladies team events, with France winning silver in both. Germany won the bronze medal in ladies team with the DF finishing in a very credible 5th place. On conclusion of the golf there was the prize giving, speeches and closing ceremony and we all watched with immense pride as the medals were presented to the winners. Cpl Joe Hannigan stepped forward to collect his senior bronze medal and the men's team collected their bronze medals. As a result of our success, we finished in third place in the medal table behind USA and France, a very successful return to CISM golf.



The President of the Admiral Baker Golf Course, Rear Admiral, United States Navy, (Retd) John Bepko made a very special presentation to each member of the Irish Team prior to our departure to round off a great week. This competition showcased the ability of the DF men's and ladies golfing community. It also demonstrated how positively a team of DF personnel from diverse Units, backgrounds and experiences can bond quickly and represent the DF and Ireland as powerful ambassadors both competitively on the golf course and socially among international peers.

Plans for DF golf in 2024 began almost immediately on our return including the appointment of Bde/ Fmn reps for 2024 and these are:

**1 Bde** – Lt Col Ian Harrington

**2 Bde** – Capt Shane O'Neill

**FTC** – Comdt Damien Keogh and Cpl Jason Thorpe

Throughout the week, the Irish DF team fostered a great relationship with the chief of volunteers and President of the club, Rear Admiral, United States Navy (Retd) John Bepko, most likely borne out of the fact that his late wife Kathleen was Irish.

**AC** – Capt Mark Doyle

**NS** – CPO Thomas Plunkett

Bde/ Fmn Championships will kick off the DF calendar in 2024, the known dates and locations are listed below to assist with planning purposes.

**1 Bde** – 2nd May, Limerick Golf Club

**2 Bde** – 9th May, Castleknock Golf Club

**DFTC** – 13th May, Royal Curragh Golf Club

**AC** – Castleknock Golf Club (Date TBC)

**NS** – 1st May, Castlemartyr Golf Club

On conclusion of the Bde/ Fmn Championships, all roads will lead to the DF Championships to be hosted by GOC AC in Castleknock Golf Club on the 27/ 28 May 2024.

In an effort to promote golf to those new to the game or indeed returning after a break for one reason or another, there may be slots available for those with or without a Golf Ireland Handicap Index to play in the Bde/ Fmn Championships, check with your rep to see what's available.

DF Matchplay Golf where teams of seven (7) from each Bde/ Fmn compete against each other to determine the winner will be played on a date to be confirmed later in the year.

On the 2nd of September, the first Monday of the month in the Royal Curragh Golf Club golfers can compete in the highlight of stableford golf in the DF, the Collins Cup. A cup presented by the family of General Michael Collins in 1926, open to serving and retired members of the DF, members of the Army Nursing Service and relatives of the Collins family.

On the representative side of golf, the DF will also compete in the Fitzgerald Kenny Cup played against our colleagues and hosts for 2024, An Garda Síochána. No date or location has been confirmed at the time of publication but this will be notified through reps on confirmation.

The Lt Gen Dermot Earley competition, named in honour of our former Chief of Staff will see the DF compete against An Garda Síochána, Oireachtas Golf Society and some well known friends of our former Chief of Staff representing the GAA.

The Bond of Friendship will also be played in 2024, hosted by the DF in Kilkenny Golf Club. A competition played annually since 2006 against An Garda Síochána, PSNI and Irish Guards representing the UK Armed Forces.

The 15th CISM World Golf Championships are scheduled for June 2024, it's hoped that the DF golf team will travel and build on the success of 2023 championships. CISM Golf is the pinnacle for DF golfers competing in the game and provides an opportunity to showcase our skills at the highest level internationally.

For anyone interested in golf and looking for more information on how to get involved, contact your Bde/ Fmn rep for more details.



# SOARING HEIGHTS

BY ARMN LORCAN FISHER  
PHOTOS BY PROVIDED BY AC PRESS OFFICE



## A GLIMPSE INTO THE LIFE OF A HELICOPTER CREWMAN

In the vast expanse of the military world, there exists a realm where adrenaline meets skill, and duty intertwines with bravery—the world of helicopter crewmen. For those who dare to take flight, the journey to becoming an integral part of the aircrew is both rigorous and deeply rewarding. Join us as we unveil the riveting narrative of one such journey within the esteemed ranks of the Irish Defense Forces.

### THE AIRCREW SELECTION PROCESS: A Trial of Tenacity

Picture this: a week-long odyssey that pushes the boundaries of physical endurance and mental fortitude. The Aircrew Selection Process is the crucible through which aspiring crewmen are forged. Nestled within the confines of Casement Aerodrome, candidates are subjected to a battery of tests designed to assess their mettle in the face of adversity.

From the crack of dawn on Monday, the stage is set for a series of trials on land and in the water. Fitness assessments including the LME test, Pull-up challenge, and the infamous bleep test lay the foundation for what lies ahead. As the sun reaches its zenith, the scene shifts to the Curragh pool, where candidates brave the depths in a display of water fitness and confidence.

Tuesday heralds a venture into the unknown as candidates converge upon Blessington Lake. Amidst the tranquil waters, the day unfolds with a symphony of physical exertion and daring leaps from the Ballyboys bridge. But there's no time for respite as candidates face the ultimate test—navigating the unpredictable currents alongside the formidable AW139 helicopter.

Midweek brings forth a test of eloquence and composure as candidates take center stage for presentations on topics handpicked by Aircrew Instructors. Meanwhile, test flights serve as the litmus test for their ability to seamlessly integrate with pilots and maneuver aircraft using learned protocols.

As the week draws to a close, nerves are ablaze as candidates brace

themselves for the final verdict. Behind closed doors, interviews with Aircrew Instructors and the Aircrew Training Officer determine their fate, paving the way for the next chapter of their journey.

### GENERAL PURPOSE AIRCREW COURSE: Ascending to New Heights

With the badge of aircrew secured, the real adventure begins. Embarking on the General Purpose Aircrew Course, candidates are thrust into a whirlwind of activity. From the introductory brief with the Commanding Officer to navigating diverse flying sorties, each day presents a new challenge and a chance to hone their skills.

With the EC135P2 helicopter as their trusty steed, candidates traverse varied terrain, mastering the art of airfield maneuvering, confined landings, and everything in between. But it's not just about piloting the aircraft; it's about commanding the lecture room with confidence, delivering mass briefs, and harnessing the power of PowerPoint to impart knowledge to fellow comrades.

As the dust settles on the General Purpose Aircrew Course, graduates emerge as adept navigators of the skies, their hearts emboldened with the emblem of the aircrew wing adorning their chests and squadron patches proudly displayed on their arms. With these symbols of honor





AC Crewmans course students performing Battle PT

and distinction, they stand ready to execute precision landings in even the most daunting of environments. Yet, as they bask in the glow of accomplishment, they know that their journey is far from over. Each winged insignia and squadron patch is not just a badge of honor, but a testament to their unwavering commitment to excellence and service, this is only the beginning.

## ADVANCED AIRCREW COURSE: Pushing the Boundaries

With proficiency comes greater responsibility, and the Advanced Aircrew Course beckons with its promise of elevated challenges and heightened risks. From battling blazes as aerial firefighters to commanding daring parachute jumps from staggering heights, each task demands unwavering courage and unwavering skill.

From Fast roping exercises with the renowned Ranger Wing to life-saving missions as part of the Air Ambulance team, every second is a heartbeat suspended in time, as crewmen help to navigate the skies with precision and purpose not only highlights but underscores the diverse roles as a helicopter crewman. Whether it's hoisting onto a moving ferry amidst the tumultuous waves or executing cliff rescues with the finesse of a master artisan, their commitment to saving lives knows no bounds, every completed mission is a testament to their dedication and expertise.

Amidst the cloak of darkness, Night Vision Goggles emerge as silent sentinels, guiding the way through the darkness with unwavering clarity. Across treacherous terrain and in the depths of uncertainty, Night Vision Goggles become their guiding light, enabling them to navigate and execute complex maneuvers with unparalleled precision. From the urgent call of Emergency Aero-Medical Services to the clandestine whispers of Special Forces operations, the horizon of possibility stretches endlessly before them. With each mission, they write a new chapter in the annals of bravery, their actions speaking volumes of their unwavering dedication to service and sacrifice.

## A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE: Forging Ahead

In the hallowed halls of No3 Operations Wing, every day is an adventure waiting to unfold. As the heartbeat of helicopter operations, their commitment to excellence knows no bounds. Whether it's a routine sortie or a high-stakes mission, their unwavering dedication ensures the seamless execution of every task.

In the realm of helicopter crewmen, courage is their currency, and skill their greatest asset. For those who dare to defy gravity, the sky is not the limit—it's just the beginning of an extraordinary journey.

Amidst the echo of rotor blades and the whisper of the wind, there exists a brotherhood bound by courage and duty—the realm of helicopter crewmen. Within this illustrious domain, a sacred motto reverberates through the annals of time, a testament to their unwavering commitment to service:

**"Go Mairdis Beo" – So Others May Live**



AC Crewman play a key role in all AC Heli Ops

## AIRCREW SELECTION COURSE Q4 2024

### The Aircrew Selection Process

This is a week-long assessment that tests the candidates' ability to work under pressure in uncomfortable and volatile environments, also the ability to react and interact in hard and demanding situations on both land and in the water.

The week long assessment begins in Casement Aerodrome with fitness assessment.

**Monday:** In the morning it will be land orientated with LME test, Pull-up test and beep test. In the afternoon we will conduct water fitness and confidence tests in the Curragh pool. Ability to work and perform in and around the water and the initial confidence jump test in the plunge pool. Patter sheets will be given to the candidates to learn for test flights on Wednesday and Thursday.

**Tuesday:** Today we take the water confidence to the next level, Blessington lake is the venue for today's outing. We start off with a light PT to get warmed up and then a confidence bridge jump from the Ballyboys bridge, after successfully getting wet we then use the AW139 helicopter as a dryer and complete an open water test swim and downwash assessment. Presentation topics for all candidates will be given out today also.

**Wednesday and Thursday:** All candidates will have to give a 5 minute presentation to the class on a topic chosen by the Aircrew Instructors. This is to assess their ability to talk to large groups and give briefs to all ranks. Test flights to assess how candidates interact with pilots and manoeuvre aircraft using the learned patter will be conducted over these days.

**Friday:** On the last day an interview with the Aircrew Instructors and the Aircrew Training Officer will be conducted and the candidates' scores and placing on the panel will be delivered.

Once panelled Aircrew General Purpose Courses will be ran on a needs basis, typically 4 candidates training in a single class.



Being an AC Crewman takes nerves of steel

## TECH FLIERS

**Sgt Darragh Callaghan**

**For Aspiring Aircrew Technicians**

**Checks A Mile High: The journey of a technical flier**

I joined No.3 Operations in 2019 as an Aircraft Technician. I knew early in my career within the Air Corps, my main goal was to become a Technical Crewman, also known locally as a Tech Flyer.

To qualify for this position, you must be of Corporal rank in No.3 Operations Wing and a qualified Aircraft Technician. I was lucky to be selected for the General Purpose Aircrew Course in early 2023. The course included numerous briefs on flight safety, aircraft procedures, patter (the language we use to position the aircraft) and hours of practice with model helicopters. We then moved onto flying and landing the aircraft in open areas and confined areas around the Wicklow mountains.

On successful completion of the course, I began flying solo and have been fortunate to have flown all over Ireland. As a Tech Flyer, we must accompany an aircraft travelling abroad. Thus, I've also had the pleasure of flying to the UK, Belgium, France and Spain (a little bit different to the Wicklow mountains).

There are also many opportunities to up skill as a Crewman and Tech Flyer. Examples include flying under Night Vision Goggles, training for Cargo Slinging, Bambi Bucket Ops/Fire Fighting and Air Ambulance Missions.

# PERFORMING TO YOUR BEST



## PRACTICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL INSIGHTS PERFORMING IN SPORTS, WORK AND LIFE

BY LT (RDF) COLM DOODY PHD, BA., TRAINEE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST QUEENS UNIVERSITY BELFAST AND SPECIAL STAFF OFFICER, OFFICE OF THE DEFENCE FORCES ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST J1

**TWITTER:** @COLMDOODY

**EMAIL:** DRDOODYPSYCHOLOGY@GMAIL.COM

If you've gotten past the title and are currently reading this, you're probably someone who's interested in getting that couple of extra percent, that extra edge: be it on the football field, in work or in life in general. My aim here is to equip you with some applied tools to help with effective goal setting, breaking the "fear cycle" and how to manage negative, self-defeating thoughts which plague us all from time to time. Before going any further I'd recommend going back to a previous article I wrote on practical resilience skills in the Jan/Feb '24 issue of An Cosantóir. Those skills will complement the ones I'll be introducing below!

### GET SMART WITH YOUR GOALS!

If you're looking to improve, it's typically a good idea to have a realistic, non-emotive, objective assessment of what your current level of ability is now. As uncomfortable as an experience as it may be, a good place to start is to ask your manager (work or sports depending on your area you'd like to improve in), or a trusted teammate for an honest assessment of your strengths and weakness. This will give you a pretty clear picture of what's going well and what needs work. You're now equipped to develop some SMART goals to hone your strengths and bullet-proof your weaknesses.

What does SMART stand for and how can we use the acronym to create effective, realistic goals? S-Specific, be as specific as possible with your goals. We want to avoid vague, undefined goals. If you're weak at shooting for points, you could set a specific goal of 5 minutes of kicking balls over the bar once per week. M- Measurable, your goal (and the progress towards it) must be measurable, for example if your goal is to run a sub-45-minute 10km in a race in May, you could measure your best 10k time

now maybe again at regular intervals until the race to chart progress. The benefit of measurable goals is that we can see progress over time or make changes if we aren't on the right track. A- Attainable and R- realistic. As a jaded junior level footballer it is neither attainable nor realistic for me to set a SMART goal of playing intercountry football but an attainable and realistic goal for me might be to focus this year on moving from the 2nds team in the club up to the senior panel. T-Time bound. We need to carefully set time constraints around our goals to make sure we give ourselves the best chance of achieving them. Referring back to the 10km PB example, if the goal is set without a defined period of time there is a greater risk that we may start to falter in our training e.g., "I don't have time, I'm too busy". Having a time limited specific goal helps us keep our goals to the fore. So, in summary, get SMART with your goals!

### Managing Fear

In sporting performance and indeed life in general, success or failure is often mediated by how well we can handle unexpected situations, keep our calm and manage our anxieties (however they manifest for us). "Facing our fears" is an idea we are all familiar with but how can we harness the "Fear/avoidance" cycle and use it to build our resilience for life challenges, be they on the pitch or in the waiting room before an important interview?

To start, I want you to visualise a time in your life where you avoided something stressful, maybe you came up with an excuse which got you out of a presentation, or you managed to "delegate" a daunting task to someone else. When we are faced with scary situations our stress level shoots up to a point where we may feel overwhelmed and to escape that

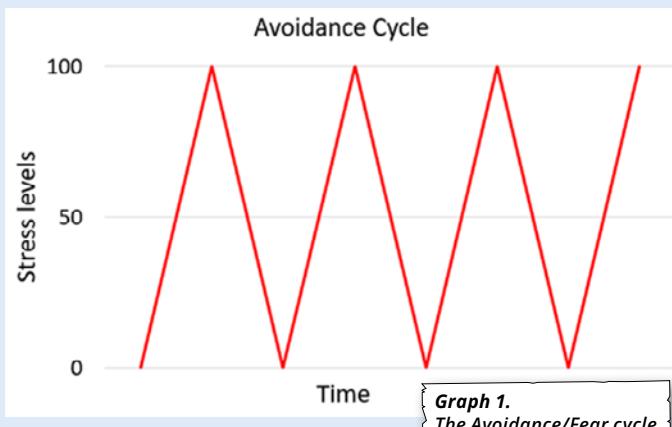
*Performance Psychology is often used in high performance team environments*





awful state of anxiety, we find (often unique and ingenious ways) of getting away from that big stressor (see graph 1). When we escape from a stressful task this results in a massive decline in our stress levels, quickly returning back to baseline. Think back to your example: you probably felt a significant wave of

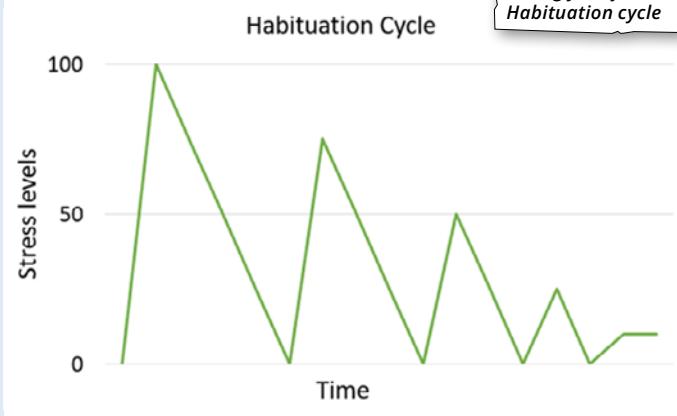
relief when you got out of that situation. But ask yourself this, was that relief short lived? Often times people report a lingering feeling of guilt or perhaps negative thoughts like "you should have done that". Avoidance also has the side effect of tricking our brain into thinking "I wouldn't have been able to do that anyway so it's good that I didn't even attempt it". The result? We can get caught in a vicious cycle of fear & avoidance where (as depicted in graph 1) our fear continually spikes, and we try and escape the awful feelings: over time we are not able to "prove" to our brains and ourselves that we can indeed overcome this challenge!



#### Feeling the fear but doing it anyway: building resilience

On the flip side, think how we react to facing stressful situations, feeling the fear but doing them anyway? Think back to a time where you felt anxious about a command appointment during recruit training or as a cadet completing your test appointment during platoon field? From a sports perspective: going to county trials, returning to football as an adult or even the social awkwardness of meeting new people at a five-a-side game for the first time. How did it feel afterwards? What did you notice? Perhaps it went well, or perhaps it didn't? Did it feel different the next time you were snagged for Orderly Sergeant? Was it quite so scary the second or third times? Look now to graph two, which depicts how our brains and bodies adapt to challenges in a process known as habituation. As we face stressful situations, we learn how to manage the feelings of anxiety associated with them. Simply put, we prove to our brains that we can tolerate the uncomfortable feelings and have the resources to overcome the challenge. It is important to note that when we face our fears that we have to sit with feelings of discomfort for longer than if we avoid. But, what do you notice from the graph? The second time we face the challenge, our stress levels may not peak as sharply, and likewise the third time we face the stressful situation our discomfort maxes out to an even lower level. Our brains and bodies are getting used to discomfort, anxiety and proving to ourselves that we can adapt and overcome this challenge. Repeatedly engaging with your fears allows you to try new strategies (see previous article on resilience building techniques) and see what methods work, or don't work for you. A final important point here is that challenging our fears builds our confidence and helps to build our baseline resilience skills, the more fears we overcome the more resilient we can become overall!

**Graph 2.**  
Facing your fear,  
Habituation cycle



#### Mindset: Challenging the inner critic

Often times the harshest voice we hear in our day to day lives, is our own voice inside our heads. Why are we often our harshest critics? Think back to a Camogie match or a road race where you didn't perform at the level you would have liked. How did your inner voice sound, was it gentle or was it critical, was it supportive and kind or did it make you feel even worse? From an evolutionary perspective, us humans are wired to focus on negatives and dangers, it kept us alive as cavemen, but this negativity bias is not as useful in the modern world. To put this in a sporting perspective, which is more motivating? To be praised or to be criticised? Do we perform at our best when we feel confident and believe in ourselves or when we feel demoralised and are questioning our worth? Here are some simple tips for reframing negative thoughts and events to more balanced, realistic, and likely much more positive perspectives.

- Ask yourself, would I speak to my best friend, husband, loved one etc., the same way I speak to myself – why? Why not?
- Put your thoughts "on trial". Our brain will often focus on the negatives, but are these negative thought objectively true? Weigh up the evidence which supports, but also challenges this negative thinking. Then take the facts into consideration and see if you can produce a new, more balanced thought: does this new thought make you feel any different?

#### Tying it all together

Bringing together the ideas of SMART goals, managing fear while using it to actually build resilience and creating more positive mindset I'll leave you with some final tips to apply to your sporting, professional and personal lives.

1. A good way to use SMART goals is in tiers i.e Tier 1 is your highest, long term and probably most difficult goal, Tier 2 are medium term goals and Tier 3 are very small goals which can be set and achieved on a day-to-day basis. Having subordinate goals is absolutely vital (as referencing the ACE idea in my previous resilience article), achieving small goals provides an neuropsychological boost to both our mood and helps us stay motivated towards our bigger long term goals.
2. Sleep and diet are the cornerstones of success. Unless you are correctly fuelled and adequately rested you won't be able to perform. In sports there's a saying that if you're struggling with mental clarity, it's your sleep (a whole article in and of itself), if it's your lungs burning it's your fitness and if its your legs seizing it's your nutrition.
3. Building a positive mindset can take time. A useful way to help is to start journalling your negative, and positive thoughts you notice crop up around matches or stressful periods in work. This can help you identify recurring patterns. It is also much easier to use the "putting thoughts on trial" tip when it's written out on a sheet of paper initially.

This was a very brief introduction to some core performance psychology tools which can help you achieve your best both on and off the pitch. If you have any questions on the above, please feel free to reach out to me on the email or twitter handles above!

# A DAY IN THE LIFE

## Cadet Smith



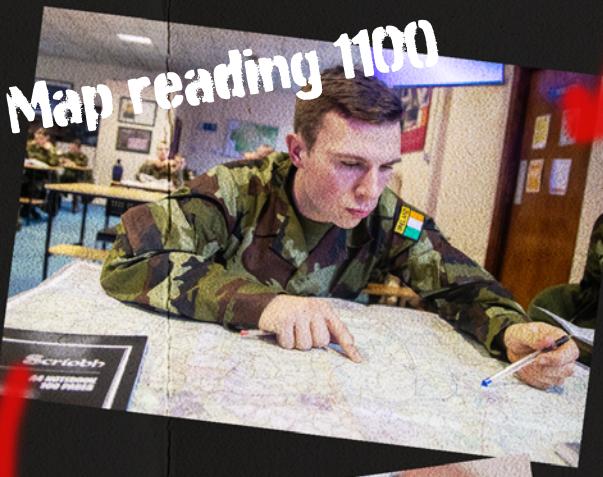
Reveille 0630



Lectures 0900



Get Ready 0645



Map reading 1100



Check Parade 0700



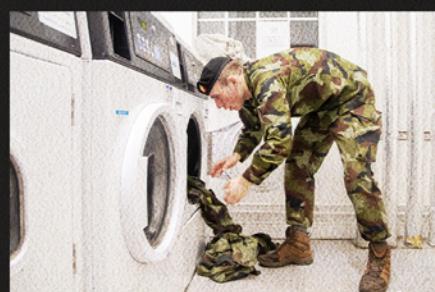
Lunch 1230



Breakfast 0715



Fall in 1330



# ARMY RESERVE MILITARY FIRST RESPONDER COURSE

**Medics never stand taller than when they kneel to treat the wounded.**

— COMBAT MEDICS ASSOCIATION MOTTO

Being a member of the Army Reserves allows the soldier to bring their civilian skills and experience to their units and to support the General Public, while serving in the uniform. Today's Reservists come from many paths of life: civilian engineers, teachers, professional drivers, firefighters, paramedics, pilots – the list goes on. Amongst all these roles, it is the medical professionals who bring their extensive knowledge and experience to both Reserves and Permanent Defence Forces. Many Privates, Non-Commissioned Officers and Officers who currently serve in the AR, are also involved in many medical roles within the Defence Forces, such as medics, instructors, and Military First Responders. In my opinion, the Defence Forces Training Centre, amongst many career courses, organises probably one of the most valuable one, which is also cross-transferable to civilian life: the Military First Responder Course. No previous medical experience is required to become a MFR.

This course is one of the very few which are regulated by both the Defence Forces and the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC). It consists of eight days of instruction, split between four weekends, and consists of both theory and practical training. The syllabus is very much like the civilian version of it (Emergency First Responder); however, it adds a whole layer of military operations and applications to it. While every soldier receives a full training on basic field first aid, MFR's are trained to provide an emergency medical care to each soldier in both peacetime and combat situations. It is also a great introduction to more advanced first aid, which gives a good knowledge foundation for further

training, such as Emergency Medical Technician. As the training syllabus is PHECC accredited, course participants are receiving both military and civilian certification, while the instructors carry vast medical experience, such as Dublin Fire Brigade.

The first module covers the basics and more advanced aspects of the Cardiac First Responder programme. It covers basic life support skills for victims of stroke, cardiac arrest, heart attack, choking and the use of automated external defibrillator. Taking this knowledge a step forward, MFRs are then trained in basic airway management, which is crucial in any type of injury which involves loss of consciousness and/or physical injuries of the head. One of the leading and very easily avoidable causes of death of trauma patients is poor airway management. Without proper management of breathing, an injured person can simply choke on their own tongue or bodily fluids. MFR students are taught how to manage the breathing using three of the most modern and well researched devices: oropharyngeal and nasopharyngeal airways and inter-surgical l-gel supraglottic airway. While the names might sound confusing for someone who is not trained, individually measured oropharyngeal and nasopharyngeal airways should be always carried in an individual first aid kit. The oropharyngeal device simply keeps the tongue away from sliding backwards and blocking the airway. It also allows for more efficient delivery of oxygen during cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) with the use of mechanical aids from various masks, ventilators, and oxygen. A



Students working in pairs



MFR students practice using splints



Simulated casualty



nasopharyngeal tube would be used when the oropharyngeal device cannot be used. This could be due to oral airway obstruction, lack of facial structures or trismus (lock jaw). It is inserted through the nose and allows for an efficient airflow as a backup method. The most effective and widely used emergency airway management device for the cardiac arrests is the I-gel tube. It has a whole array of benefits but from the MFR point of view, it provides for easier insertion, minimal risk of tissue damage or compression and stability. It can be also used together with mechanical breathing support devices and oxygen straight after insertion. All of these airway management devices are a part of the MFR training and together with complex CPR A training, they arm the students with the most effective aid tools.

Another crucial part of the training is the primary and secondary patient surveys. These are unified across the emergency services staff and allow for a full analysis of the patient, injury, and the location, where the injury happened. In the tactical environment it is adding a layer of army-typical situations, such as Care Under Fire. Patient's survey not only enables the MFR to gather critical information about any underlying health conditions and medical history, but it also enables the practitioner, to prepare a patient's handover report to a medical professional who is taking the patient over. Further modules take the students through soft tissue and musculoskeletal injuries, which then lead straight to various techniques of lifting and moving patients. This also covers both peacetime and combat situations. These can vary in carrying techniques for a soldier who twisted his ankle in training to an evacuation of casualty with a suspected spinal injury under enemy fire.

Part of the training is also covering pharmacology, paediatric care and childbirth, however special focus is laid on bleeding and shock care, which is rather natural given the nature of military operations. Combat medicine is changing daily and what was a norm yesterday, might be a thing of the past today. The instructors are making sure that Students are also being taught how to use various types of compression bandages such as "Israeli" types. As the MFRs can come across various types of wounds, they are also being trained how to use haemostatic gauze and how to pack a wound with it. This would be the best course of action with a gunshot wound or where a bleeding cannot be stopped using tourniquet. A final wound, very common in battle injury is a sucking chest wound. This type of trauma can very quickly become lethal as injured lung will quickly collapse and a MFR is not trained nor equipped to perform a chest needle decompression to treat the condition of pneumothorax, which happens when air enters the chest via wound and fills it with air instead of the lung. MFRs are trained in the use of "chest seal", which allows the air, blood, and fluid to leave the chest but will not allow any air back in.

The final component of the training, which incorporates most of the previous lessons is the battlefield injury management. With casualties in combat action, one thing remains the same – winning the firefight. Medical personnel trying to attend to a wounded soldier becomes a great opportunity for enemy fire, therefore all MFRs are trained on how to work as an integral part of section/platoon and how and when to approach a casualty. Another important part of the process is proper patient survey, as there might be multiple injuries that can be hard to spot. After three multiple choice papers, MFRs are tested in a practical environment, where their colleagues are equipped with various simulated wounds or are simply out in the field unconscious, and it is down to an individual MFR to manage not only the injury but also the surrounding ground and all resources available, including fellow soldiers. Upon completion of the course, MFRs can return to their home units and take on their role during exercises, ranges, and training.

The Military First Responder course is designed to fit into all army applications. It issues soldiers with complex skills and knowledge, which enable them to provide pre-hospital emergency care. They are fully prepared to attend to wounded soldiers under fire and evacuate them for the attention of medical staff. While the Defence Forces have a full Medical Corps in place, it is usually a MFR who will treat an injured troop first and then pass the patient to military EMT/Paramedic for further care. All the skills learned during the course are fully transferable onto civilian life as well, which is an added value to the course. The course is attended by all ranks, from Private through NCOs up to Officers and truly enables all to add a set of great skills to their portfolio.

# THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS AT WAR, 1916 – 1923

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

## PART 2: THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

The Irish Volunteers changed their strategies and tactics as a result of the lessons learned during the 1916 Rising. The Volunteer Executive decided that at the next attempt to gain independence, they would use guerrilla warfare, hit and run tactics. There would be no more taking over buildings and fighting a conventional war. Priority would be given to neutralising the Royal Irish Constabulary, seen by many as the eyes and ears of the British government across the country. The Volunteers would also focus on the intelligence and counterintelligence war, finding out as much as possible about the enemy and passing on that information as quickly as possible to those that needed it, and at the same preventing the enemy from doing the same to the Volunteers. They would also wage a propaganda war against the Crown Forces and the British authorities. It was the intelligence and propaganda campaigns that would be the Irish Volunteer's, Sinn Féin & the IRA's greatest successes.

Members of the flying column 4 Bn Cork 1921



Members of the flying column of the 4th Battalion, 1st Cork Brigade, 1921.  
Left to right: Michael Desmond\*, Paddy Higgins, James Glavin\*, Donal Dennehy\*, Joseph Ahern, Richard Hegarty\*, Joseph Morrissey\*, Michael Hallahan\*, David Stanton and Patrick White.  
\* Killed during the Battle of Clonmult.

Following the 1916 Rising, the most important change was that Home Rule was no longer acceptable. Now their focus was on winning complete independence from English rule and creating a republic.

The General Election of December 1918 was a political turning point for Sinn Féin and the Republican movement. Of the one hundred and five candidates elected to Westminster, seventy-three were Sinn Féin. The elected Republicans refused to take their seats in the British parliament, instead forming the First Dáil which met in the Mansion House in Dublin on the 21st of January 1919. The Dáil declared, 'that a state of war existed which could never end until Ireland is definitely evacuated by the armed forces of England.' The Deputies standing, affirmed, 'we adopt this Declaration of Independence, and we pledge ourselves to put it into effect by every means in our power.'

The Dáil now had a mandate from most of the Irish people for its military campaign against the British Forces. In the eyes of those involved there was now an Irish political establishment with a military force ready for the impending war. From then on, the Irish Volunteers were referred to as the 'Irish Republican Army,' the IRA.

During the War of Independence, the IRA set up an Army Headquarters

in Dublin for command-and-control purposes and divided the country into brigade areas. The brigades were broken down into battalions and battalions into companies. Later in the war, divisions were introduced between Army HQ and the brigades.

Initially, small, part-time IRA squads conducted the attacks on the RIC. The RIC, however, were gathering intelligence as to the identities of these IRA men and began raiding their homes. This forced the IRA to go 'on the run.' This in turn, led to the formation of the IRA flying columns from around September 1920. These flying columns were usually selected from the most active members of the IRA battalions, or from IRA Brigades where large tracts of remote terrain were available for manoeuvring.

In keeping with the new strategies and tactics of the IRA, the opening shots of the War of Independence were fired at members of the Royal Irish Constabulary at Soloheadbeg in Co. Tipperary on 29th January 1919, which resulted in the deaths of two constables. The neutralising of the RIC by the IRA was achieved initially by attacking armed policemen and their isolated barracks, which were soft targets. This suited the IRA's capability at this stage in the war. The authorities were forced to close hundreds of isolated RIC barracks and to withdraw the RIC into the large towns. The IRA also intimidated members of the RIC to resign and potential recruits from enlisting. As a result, the strength and efficiency of the force diminished greatly. This compelled the British government to look for RIC recruits from the UK mainland. The first of these recruits were former enlisted ranks of the British forces and they became temporary constables, better known as 'The Black and Tans.' The second group were former commissioned officers and they became temporary cadets of the Auxiliary Division of the RIC.

The experience gained by the IRA during the early phase of the war and the capturing of service weapons, primarily from the RIC, enhanced their fighting confidence and the forming of the flying columns gave the IRA the capability to take the fight to the British Army.

The British Army became more involved in the fight against the IRA, due to the reduction of RIC capabilities. The superior firepower of the British Army was dented, by their lack of local knowledge. In particular, the military lacked local intelligence as to the identities of their IRA adversaries and they certainly did not have the support of the civilian population.

The new guerrilla warfare strategy of the IRA using the flying columns, led to many successful operations against the Crown Forces, particularly in remote locations. The flying columns focussed on their advantages of local knowledge and local support. It was critical for the IRA flying column operations, that a hit and run action did not develop into a conventional engagement.

The IRA operations were compromised on several occasions because the majority of the officers were lacking in formal military training. The most regular failing was in the detailing and managing of sentries. Often the need for sentries was overlooked or



A sign of success, British troops march out of Richmond Barracks, Dublin as the National Army marches into the newly renamed Keogh Barracks.  
National Library of Ireland



**Collins Hit Team**

sentries were posted and forgotten. Their most costly failure for the IRA, for not following the basic rules of warfare, was at Clonmult, east Cork, on Sunday, 20th February 1921.

The east Cork flying column remained in a disused farmhouse for six weeks. The building had only one door and nothing was done about it. Just hours before the battle, the column commander went on reconnaissance and took his second-in-command and third-in-command with him. This weakened the command structure of the column. The two sentries that were detailed, abandoned their posts shortly before the British Army arrived and the acting column commander ignored them. In the ensuing battle, the column was wiped out and only the acting column commander escaped.

The logistics of supplying weapons and ammunition was a major difficulty for the IRA throughout the War of Independence. Some weapons and ammunition were smuggled into the country. However, the bulk of their weapons and ammunition was captured during successful actions against the Crown Forces, particularly during 1920.

Another important new development for the IRA officers after the 1916 Rising, was that they finally realised the importance of including an intelligence branch within their organisation and recognising the importance of winning the intelligence war. The IRA recognised the importance of having their own spies, touts and informers.

The IRA created a directorate of intelligence and Michael Collins was a most successful Director of Intelligence. This was a major new development for the Irish Volunteers/IRA. Michael Collins and his intelligence staff set up a national intelligence network to co-ordinate the IRA's intelligence and counterintelligence war. Intelligence officers were appointed at IRA Brigade headquarters and locally at Battalion headquarters. Individual officers and Volunteers were made aware of the vital importance of collecting information on the Crown Forces. The local officers and members of the Irish Volunteers/IRA were also made aware of the requirement for security of their own information and the need for vigilance at all levels against British spies and informers, which is counterintelligence.

THE WAR FOR IRELAND



Members of the West Mayo Flying Column during the Anglo-Irish War. Their appearance is typical of IRA

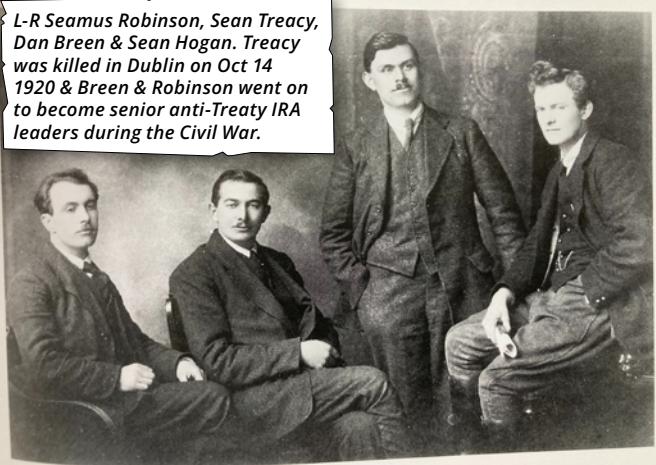
Much work has been done, especially by Peter Hart, on what sort of men joined the Volunteers. The overwhelming majority were Roman Catholic, aged between 20 and 30, and from a working- or middle-class backgrounds. Officers, on the other hand,

The IRA had a single head, or director of intelligence. This enabled all intelligence to be collected, analysed and passed on quickly, so that actions could be taken. Fortunately for the IRA, the Crown Forces had a head of Military Intelligence and also a head of police intelligence and neither side trusted the other. As a result, for most of the War of Independence, there was only the minimum of intelligence shared between the RIC and the British Army.

The IRA recruited their own spies, informers and in Dublin, the famous 'Squad.' These were successfully incorporated into the IRA's war fighting machine and they became the main operatives in the IRA's intelligence and counterintelligence war against the Crown Forces. These IRA spies, informers and the 'Squad' became extremely successful and their work weakened the Crown Forces fighting and intelligence gathering capability.

The widespread support of the population was vital for the success of the IRA. A guerrilla army could never survive in the field without this support. The proof of this widespread support can be seen in the diverse occupations and professions of the imprisoned republicans. Every male occupation in Ireland was represented among the almost four thousand IRA men held as prisoners and internees.

*L-R Seamus Robinson, Sean Treacy, Dan Breen & Sean Hogan. Treacy was killed in Dublin on Oct 14 1920 & Breen & Robinson went on to become senior anti-Treaty IRA leaders during the Civil War.*



The active involvement of the women of Ireland was another major asset for the IRA. Not only from the members of Cumann na mBan, but also the women and girls in the communities across the country. Their involvement in gathering intelligence, carrying messages, nursing wounded Volunteers, carrying dispatches, hiding weapons, and many other vital activities, were essential.

By the time of the Truce on 11 July 1921, the outcome of the military war between the IRA and the Crown Forces was indecisive, where neither side could declare a victory. The Sinn Féin / IRA combination undoubtedly did win the intelligence and propaganda war. The outrages perpetrated by the Crown Forces, particularly by the RIC Auxiliary Police, the executions of IRA prisoners, the hunger strikes, the official and unofficial burning of property, turned public opinion against the continued occupation of Ireland. This in turn put international pressure on the British government to seek a political resolution to what they referred to as 'The Irish Question.' While the British Army in Ireland still believed that they could defeat the IRA, it was their political masters that capitulated. The British politicians were primarily concerned with their own and their political parties' reputations. This as well as international pressure led to the Truce and to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 6th December 1921. The War officially ended one month later after the Treaty was ratified by the three governments in Westminster, Belfast and Dublin. The Treaty was narrowly ratified by Dáil Eireann, by just sixty-four votes to fifty-seven.

Unfortunately, the terms of the Treaty, in particular the failure to achieve a republic, led to a split in the IRA. There was much more Irish blood to be spilt.

**Author:** Tom O'Neill from Midleton, Co. Cork is an assistant manager on Spike Island. He served in An FCA and the RDF and retired as a Commandant. He regularly has articles on Irish military history published in Ireland's Own. His books include 'The Battle of Clonmult' and 'Spike Island's Republican Prisoners 1921'. He co-wrote 'The History of the 23 Infantry Battalion FCA'. This is the second of three articles on this topic published in An Cosantóir.

# PEOPLE OF THE DF

**NAME**  
TOM DEVEREUX

**AGE**  
43

**RANK**  
FLT SGT

**YEAR JOINED**  
02 JUN 98

## CURRENT UNIT

J1 BR

## UNITS SERVED

3 INF BN, 1 MECH INF COY, MIL COL INF SCH & DFPEs, NO 5 SP WG, DFHQ J1 BR

## MISSIONS OVERSEAS

89 INF BN UNIFIL; 94 INF BN UNMIL; MN HQ & LOGS COY KOSOVO; 99 INF BN EUFOR CHAD; UNIFIL 45 INF GP

**INTERVIEW BY CPL MARTIN BENNETT**  
**PHOTOS BY FLT SGT TOM DEVEREUX**

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

I enlisted in the army in 1998, and following recruit training was posted to the 3rd Inf Bn, Connolly Bks, DFTC. I was always interested in being promoted, and progressing my career – I completed my Pot NCOs Cse in 2003 in Athlone, and this course set the stage for my future leadership roles. The Military College was pivotal to my development as a soldier; I completed my Standard Cse in 2007 which prepared me for leadership roles throughout my career, my dedication to service continued which led me to undertake the Senior NCO Cse in 2021. For me, life in the military has proven to be a dynamic blend of camaraderie with some challenges along the way. During my military career I experienced many emotions – from the thrilling highs of fun times to the resilience demanded during tough periods and courses, all of it contributing towards the journey. Overseas missions became an integral part of my military narrative, while also undertaking courses abroad such as, Urban FIBUA Operation Instructor Course (UK), NATO CBRN Defence Course (Germany), Platoon Battle Sgt Course (UK), and the Live Fire Tactical Training Course (UK). These experiences not only broadened my perspective but also allowed me to test myself against individual soldiers from other militaries. A significant factor in all my roles throughout my career to date has involved the mentorship and training of soldiers, guiding them to unlock their full potential and witnessing individuals evolve and excel under my guidance was always a source of immense pride to me. I was promoted to Flt Sgt in No 5 Sp Wg in Jul 23 Air Corps but I am now currently employed in a new position in Strategic HR Planning for Recruitment, post my recent service in the Air Corps.

**What made you decide to join the Defence Forces?**

My military service traces its roots through several generations, beginning with my great-grandfather who served in the 1916 rising and my father (Ger Devereux RIP), who served honourably in Plunkett Barracks, Curragh Camp. I am honoured to build upon this rich family legacy.

This family connection adds a profound layer of tradition and commitment to my own military career.

Moreover, my son, currently serving in Plunkett Barracks, signifies

the continuity of our family's dedication to the Defence Forces.

This intergenerational link underscores the significance of the military not just as a job but as a tradition and a shared commitment to service, that transcends time. It adds a poignant dimension to my own military experience, connecting me to a legacy of service that spans decades and instilling a sense of responsibility to uphold the values passed down through my family.

Growing up on the historic Curragh Camp, I suppose the path to my military career felt inevitable. Guided by the enduring service of my father, the call to join the Defence Forces resonated as both a personal and family journey. Surrounded by stories of dedication and duty, my decision to pursue a military career goes beyond mere professional aspirations, it reflects a profound commitment to uphold a family tradition.

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

Thinking of my military career, all of my achievements as an individual represent a distinct source of pride to me. Some of the defining moments of my career were my overseas deployments and the successful completion of some really challenging military courses.

The recent DF Values Award I received for loyalty symbolised recognition for my dedicated service within the Mil Col over the years. I have had the joy of watching many students graduate during my time working there, and knowing I played a role in their growth, is indescribable.

Yet, amidst these significant milestones, a singular moment stands out as the epitome of pride, and it surpasses all of my own personal achievements.

This was the day my son, Jordan, embraced the call to serve, becoming part of the proud tradition of the Devereux family service with the Defence Forces. Witnessing him carry forward the legacy, fostering the ideals I personally hold dear, is an unparalleled source of fulfilment. It has intertwined family and professional pride, creating a narrative that goes beyond individual accomplishments and contributes to the enduring legacy of Family and the Defence Forces.

### What was your most challenging moment so far in the Defence Forces?

Changing the mindset within the Defence Forces was a formidable challenge that I faced during my tenure in training. The most demanding moments revolved around transforming the approach of fellow instructors, urging them to not only respect students but to actively engage in teaching and mentoring, fostering an environment that cultivates the best NCOs for the Defence Forces. My primary focus was always on instilling the values of fairness and creating a training atmosphere that was both tough and rewarding for students. I firmly believe in pushing individuals to their limits while recognising the unique struggles that they may be facing on each day. Whether on a course or not, the understanding that everyone carries personal burdens became a central principle of my training philosophy in the Mil Col. Convincing others to adopt this mindset proved to be a difficult task at times. It required a persistent effort to alter some established perceptions and encourage a collective commitment to the transformative concept. The key was to convey that embracing this approach would not only benefit the students but also enhance the overall training experience for both instructors and learners. I am proud to say I was part of a learning environment where students flourished, creating an environment where learning and development thrived for soldiers. The shared commitment to this mindset not only enhanced the quality of NCOs produced but also created a sense of camaraderie and mutual respect between student & instructor within the Defence Forces training environment. In addition, long may it last.



Flt Sgt Devereux's son Jordan in training (Glen of Imaal)



Tommy's father, Ger Devereux (RIP) with Sgt Michael Daly (Left) Lebanon.

The office atmosphere is intense, with a constant stream of activities ranging from recruitment initiatives to managing cadet intakes and the enlistment career processes. My typical day encompasses liaising with various stakeholders, ensuring smooth execution of the school outreach program while also mentoring staff.

### What is your favourite quote?

"Respect is something you earn"

"Treat people the way you want to be treated, talk to people the way you want to be talked to, respect is earned, not given"

From a young age, I learned this principle, and as a young NCO, I was fortunate to be guided by exceptional role models in the Defence Forces over the years.

### What is your favourite film?

Oh, come on now! "The Notebook" is the ultimate sob fest, but if you are feeling the need for a moral boost, "Braveheart" it is!

Mel Gibson screaming "Freedom!" – It is like the manliest therapy session you never knew you needed.

### What is your favourite book?

I was not much of a reader until I travelled abroad. My preferred book would revolve around sports, mental fitness, and cultivating a winning mindset for athletes, perhaps drawing inspiration from the All-Blacks books for their insights into excellence.

### What are your goals for the future?

In my future career endeavours, my primary objective is to aim for promotion to the rank of BSM accompanied by the addition of more specialised skills that will not only support my personal growth but also contribute significantly to my role currently within the Defence Forces. I would also like to deploy overseas as a CS within a Coy in order to gain further experience in a Senior Leadership role. My overarching goal is to continue to contribute meaningfully to the overall collective success of the Defence Forces. Supporting my team goes beyond the professional realm, it extends to the personal development and well-being of each member I work with. I will always try to aspire to be a source of encouragement, support and guidance for all my work colleagues.

### Can you give me a brief description of a typical day in your current job?

In my role within Strategic HR Planning for Recruitment and Competitions, each day for me is a dynamic blend of tasks. My current focus revolves around a school outreach program, collaborating with guidance counsellors across Ireland. This involves coordinating visits from members of the Defence Forces to engage with students about potential career paths.



Long time mentor, Ret Sgt Major Neil Matthews on his retirement day, Curragh Camp.



Eamon de Valera (President of Ireland), Inspects a guard of honour of 1916 veterans in Enniscorthy in November 1966, fifty years after the Rising, with Tommy's Great Grandfather "Thomas Devereux" at the end (Right)

# DF Sports & Clubs Update

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



## DF GAA

On Thursday April 18th 2024, all DF hurling and camogie teams from every military barracks across the island will descend on Galway for the annual Chaplins Cup (11 a side) and Parsons Cup (7 a side) interbarracks hurling competition. This competition started in 1923 making this year the 101st year with the various military Unit winners throughout the century engraved on this priceless trophy. In addition, the DF camogie teams will also hold their camogie competition in the same location similar to last year. Please contact your local hurling/camogie rep and get training! Prizes on the day for players/teams include farthest travelling team among other awards.

DF Hurling Chairperson Comdt Stephen Molumphy.

## DF WOMEN'S SOCCER

The DF Women's Soccer team held a camp from 19-23 Feb 2024. The camp was based from Sarsfield Barracks and training took place in University of Limerick. The week culminated in a game versus UL women's team. The DF team currently have several players overseas, on courses and in College. This allowed an opportunity for some new players to showcase their talent. It was not easy to play a match with a team who weren't familiar with each other and some of whom hadn't touched a ball in a long time. Despite the low numbers, lack of contact time and the bad weather the team all acquitted themselves extremely well. It was a pleasure to watch the more experienced players guide the



Soccer: DF Women's Soccer team before kickoff

developing players through the game and equally as good to watch the individual battles that were occurring in different parts of the pitch. In the end the DF women were narrowly defeated 1-0 to UL. Well done to all involved, the next camp is scheduled for week 2/3 April 2024, date TBC shortly, all updates will be advertised through formations and on the Connect app. All new players welcome, please contact Capt Margaret Hogan at [margaret.hogan@defenceforces.ie](mailto:margaret.hogan@defenceforces.ie) if you would like to be involved.

## DF ADVENTURE RACING

Round 2 of the Adventure Racing Ireland Team Adventure Series was held on 02 Mar 24 in the Keeper Hill/Silvermines area.



Adventure Racing: Lt Col Maeve O'Grady at the finish line of round 2 of the Adventure Racing Ireland Team Adventure Race series held in Keeper Hill/Silvermines Mountains



Adventure Racing: Sgt Eddie Casey out on the course



Adventure Racing: Sgt Eddie Casey and Lt Col Cathal Keohane on course during round 2 of the Adventure Racing Ireland Team Adventure Race series

A number of DFAR personnel were competing including Sgt Eddie Casey, Lt Col Cathal Keohane, and Lt Col Maeve O'Grady.

Defence Forces adventure racing club will be hosting Round 4 of the 2024 series based out of Kilworth Camp and surrounding areas. Further information to follow.



## DF ROWING

The Irish Defence Forces Rowing Club recently held a weeks training camp in Fermoy Rowing Club in order to sharpen skills and select crews for up coming events. The camp consisted of Rowing machine workouts, indoor Bike sessions weight sessions and Water training.



The club formed in 2020 currently has a strength of 32 members across the Defence Forces including Army, Air Corps and Naval Service personnel and is based in the National Rowing Centre Farran Woods Cork where the bulk of our water sessions take place.

Next up for club members sees the club travel back to Dublin on the 6th of April to its past history to visit Islandbridge, competing in the Neptune Regattas where on the day the club will hope to enter 4 different categories.

If you have rowing experience and would like to get involved or would be interested in our Learn to Row programme please contact head coaches BQMS Dave Williams or Pte Rob Diffley on [dave.williams@defenceforces.ie](mailto:dave.williams@defenceforces.ie) and [Rob.diffley@defenceforces.ie](mailto:Rob.diffley@defenceforces.ie) for more info.

## DF ATHLETICS

The DF indoor athletics competition took place in Athlone IT on Wednesday the 20th of March. It was great to see some familiar faces,

**Athletics:** CS Ian Martin from 3 Inf Bn getting his medal for taking 1st place in the 3000 metre event in the mens over 40 category



**Athletics:** Sgt Neville Coughlan from the Air Corps receiving his prize for winning the shot putt event



**Athletics:** Comdt James Ledingham burning it up in the mens 3000



**Athletics:** Pte Conor Shovlin from 3 Inf Bn receiving his medal for taking 2nd place in the mens long jump

while also seeing lots of new talent emerging on the scene. The men's 60 metre event was won by Pte Sheridan from 3 Inf Bn in a very competitive event, he also placed 2nd in the men's 200m event.

3rd Inf Bn showed up very strongly with CS Ian Martin also winning the men's over 40 category in the 3000 metre event. Comdt Kedney showed he still has the goods winning the men's 200. Not for the first time, Comdt James Ledingham won the 3000 metre event, he went out in the lead early and continued to push the pace and as always he showed a very strong kick in the final lap. Overall it was a very enjoyable day in a highly competitive but relaxed environment.

## OVERALL RESULTS

60 Metre Sprint	1st Pte Sheridan 2nd Pte Brennan 3rd Cpl Nicholson
800 Metres	1st Comdt Mulligan 2nd Pte McSorley 3rd Pte Shovlin
3000 Metres	1st Comdt Ledingham 2nd Pte Redmond 3rd Pte McSorley
3000 Metres masters	1st CS Martin 2nd Pte Devaney
35lb for distance	1st Comdt Bouchier 2nd Sgt Coughlan 3rd Pte Walsh
Shot Putt	1st Sgt Coughlan 2nd Comdt Bouchier 3rd Pte Quinlan
Long Jump	1st Pte O'Malley 2nd Pte Shovlin 3rd Cpl Nicholson

# DF LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

BY CAPT AUSTIN DOYLE  
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CAPT AUSTIN DOYLE

The leadership seminar took place in Athlone's Custume Barracks on the 27th and 28th of February. It was organised by the Defence Forces Leadership Doctrine Working Group. The working group had made a number of recommendations in their review report in October 2022, that in order to maintain organisational focus on leadership, it would be beneficial to conduct regular leadership seminars to support leadership development outside of formal PME (Professional Military Education) programs. These seminars, including the recent one in Athlone, are essential CPD (Continuing Professional Development) opportunities for Defence Forces leaders. The seminar was run over two days with 40 junior leaders on the first day and 40 senior leaders on the second day. This was divided into eight places from each of the five Brigade, Formation and Services as well as eight places from Defence Forces Headquarters.

On both days, the opening address was given by Deputy Chief of Staff, Major General Adrian Ó Murchú, who was visiting the 68th Inf Gp in Syria at the time and used the Connect App to communicate his address. Major General Ó Murchú reflected on how we are in the most significant programme of transformation in the Defence Forces in our lifetime. He went on to talk about the Chief of Staff's vision statement for this programme which is defend our state, transform our forces and value our people and made it clear that the key factor in successful transformation was leadership, and in particular that values based leadership would help the Defence Forces get the transformation right. He also stated that we must all work together and be guided by our values and by the updated leadership doctrine to be the very best leaders that we can be. Major General Ó Murchú concluded by saying that the leadership seminar was a very important step towards developing as leaders, and invited all participants to engage with the day in order to get the most from it.

After the opening address the remainder of the day was run by the two facilitators, Professor Bryan Watters and Dr Caroline Micklewright who had travelled from the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, Cranfield University. Cranfield University are one of two colleges that provide academic provision to the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom which provides higher education for personnel of the British Armed Forces. Cranfield University have partnerships with many governments, NGOs and within the international defence and security sector, some of their areas of expertise include: Change Management, Human Resources, Leadership, Organisational Behaviour and Strategic Management which made them perfect partners to facilitate the seminar.

During the first session, titled "Leading and Managing Change", attendees delved into various perspectives on change, strategic drift, and organisational evolution. Tools and models such as Gap Analysis, McKinsey 7S Framework, Lewin's Change Model, Force Field Analysis, and Kotter's 8 Step Model of Change were discussed. A case study of Women in the UK Armed Forces provided practical insights into change management by Dr Micklewright.

In the syndicate discussions following the first brief, attendees explored the three most important and helpful elements of the updated leadership doctrine in the context of change. The discussions were wide-ranging, benefiting from the diverse backgrounds and appointments within the Army, Air Corps, and Naval Service.

The second brief of the day was titled "Changing Culture and Obstacles to Change." This brief delved into what culture was and the importance of understanding culture - Culture eats strategy for breakfast. Edgar Schein's model of organisational culture looks at culture in three tiers. Artefacts which are tangible manifestations of culture, Values are ethical statements of what is right, and Assumptions which are unconscious and taken for granted ways of seeing the world. Schein's model states

that the leader can change culture, however there are a number of challenges to overcome (see below)



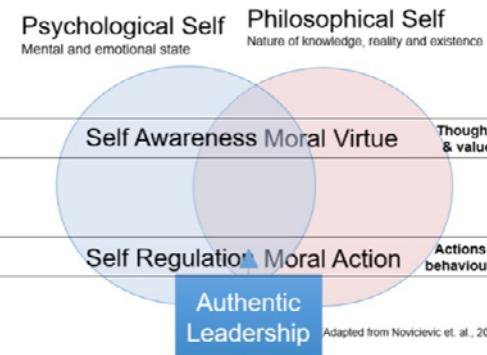
Identifying cultural obstacles to change was another crucial aspect of the seminar, the discussions highlighted the complexity and challenges associated with cultural transformation within a military organisation.

Resistance to change can come in many forms - personnel may take the change as implying criticism of the way they are; Personnel may be fearful of losing power, position or status; or indeed it might be how the change could affect their job security. The John Fisher Transition Curve brought this change process into a more meaningful light (below)



Following this brief the seminar once again broke into discussion groups. The wide range of backgrounds of attendees again shone through, with many personnel raising very interesting and relevant points from their respective areas of work. The final session of the day was titled "Will you be an authentic leader?" Attendees were encouraged to apply the new leadership doctrine into their daily lives through concepts such as self-awareness and Authentic leadership which was delved into a little deeper with the Psychological Self (mental and emotional state) and Philosophical Self (nature of knowledge, reality and existence). When these thoughts, values, actions and behaviors are merged you will find Authentic Leadership (image below).

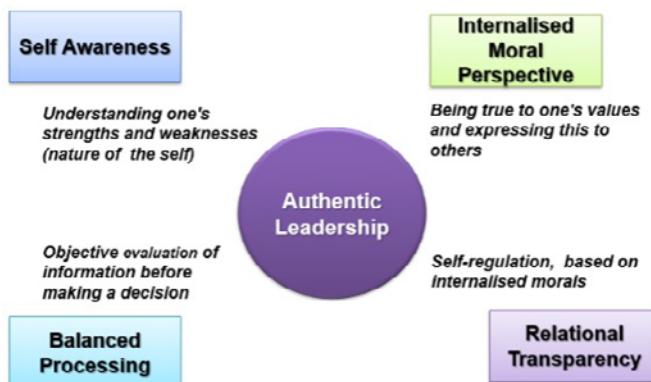
## The Two Aspects of 'Self' – Authentic Leadership



Another angle on being an authentic leader was taken from Walumbwa et al. (2008) where they gave the leader a moral compass. The four points were Self Awareness, Internalised Moral Perspective, Balanced Processing and Relational Transparency.

## Authentic Leadership: The Moral Compass

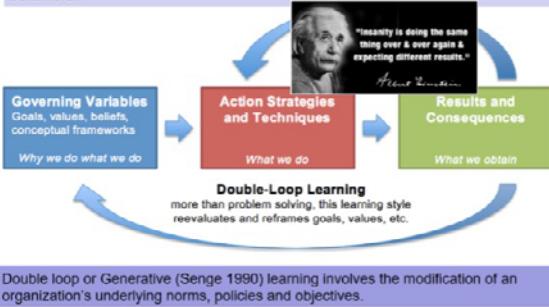
(Walumbwa et al., 2008)



Attendees were also briefed on Single and Double Loop Learning (which was also the pre reading for the day). This concept looks at where some organisations use single loop learning to look at what we do in our action strategies and techniques that may be causing the issue while we should be implementing double loop learning which looks at why we do, what we do which is the governing variable (goals, values, beliefs that cause the issue to arise - see image below).

### Single and Double Loop Learning

Single loop or Adaptive (Senge 1990) learning permits an organization to maintain its present policies or achieve its present objectives by adjusting or adapting its behaviors.



Adapted from interpretations of Argyris's writings. <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/argyris.htm> and <http://bsix12.com/double-loop-learning>.

Overall, the seminar received positive feedback from attendees, indicating its effectiveness in addressing the topics of change management and cultural transformation within military leadership. With common themes bubbling to the top it was evident that the seminar provided valuable insights and strategies for attendees to apply within their respective roles. Throughout the briefs the facilitators' ability to contextualise their lectures with examples from their military service was appreciated by attendees.

In conclusion, the leadership seminar provided a comprehensive exploration of change management and culture within military organisations, offering practical insights and strategies for attendees to enhance their leadership capabilities in dynamic environments. The attendees of the seminar were able to add significant knowledge to their skill set to support them in leading in the environment of culture change and organisational transformation in which the Defence Forces finds itself.

There will be further leadership seminars later in the year, updates will be provided through the Leadership Hub on Connect or through your chain of command. If you visit the Leadership Hub on Connect you will also be able to access the leadership doctrine in PDF and audiobook formats, as well as a video from Professor Bryan Watters discussing "leading change".

**Special thanks to GOC 2 Bde and OC Custume Bks for hosting the event.**

### PROFESSOR BRYAN WATTERS

Professor Bryan Watters had a distinguished career in the British Army before joining Cranfield University. He commanded 1st Battalion the Cheshire Regiment and held key leadership positions, including Director

of Military Studies (Colonel Training) at The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, and Vice President of the Army Officer Selection Board. He was also a member of the Directing Staff at the Joint Services Command and Staff College and the Founding Director of the Ministry of Defence Strategic Leadership Programme.

In active service, Professor Watters commanded in various theatres, including Northern Ireland, Rhodesia, Belize, Bosnia, Iraq, and Kosovo. His leadership was recognised multiple times in the UK's Operational Honours and Awards List, including the Order of the British Empire (OBE), Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS), and Commander in Chief's Commendation (CinC's Commendation). Additionally, he was awarded the Legion of Merit (Officer) by the United States.



Prof Bryan Watters presenting

### DR. CAROLINE MICKLEWRIGHT

Dr. Caroline Micklewright transitioned to academia after a successful career as a logistics officer in the Royal Air Force. Her expertise lies in air movements and information technology, with service in various locations including the UK, Falkland Islands, and Iraq. Dr. Micklewright's logistics background encompasses strategic planning, fuels, logistics support, warehouse management, and project and contract management, where she collaborated with industry partners supporting fast jet aircraft.

Dr. Micklewright holds a Master's in Information, Management, and Technology from Cranfield University, a Master's in Research from the Open University, and a PhD from the Open University, awarded in 2021. Her doctoral research focused on the impact of organisational behaviors and culture on personnel leaving military service.



Dr. Caroline Micklewright presenting

Keith Caffrey posted an update.  
10 days ago  
Leadership Hub

DCOS Sp delivered an opening address to the DF Leadership Seminar whilst travelling to visit the final Irish UNDOF contingent.



# VETERANS INTERVIEW

## NAME

GRATTAN O'ROURKE

## YEARS SERVED

21 YEARS AND 2 MONTHS

## AGE

45

## UNITS SERVED

1 BAR, 1 BDE HQ

## RANK RETIRED

SGT

## MISSIONS OVERSEAS

83 & 85 INF BN UNIFIL; 2 IRISH GUARD UNMEE; 92 & 95 INF BN UNMIL; 38 INF GP KOSOVO; 101 INF BN MINURCAT; UNDOF 50 INF GP

## FINAL UNIT

1 BAR

## DATE JOINED

15 SEP 97

**INTERVIEW BY SGT JOHN ROSSITER**  
**PHOTOS BY CPL MARTIN BENNETT**

**Can you briefly tell us about your career at home up till the day you retired?**

I joined the DF in September 1997 and retired in March 2019. I completed a lot of courses over the 21 years of my career, including LFTT, PTI course, NCO Course and Standard Course. One course that stands out though is probably the Battle CIMIC course in Scotland with the Royal Marines. During my career, I worked as the Gym Sgt in Collins Barracks, and also an LFTT instructor for 1 Bde. I was involved in fitness testing in the gym for IT's and also for the NS, working under the instruction of the BPEO on a daily basis. I also had the chance to work in 1 Bde operations for about a year in 2007 after working overseas in an operations role in UNMIL as Ops manager from April 06 to Dec 06.

**What was your favourite rank while serving in the DF, and most enjoyable period in service and describe why?**

I enjoyed all my ranks but the most memorable rank for me was being a Sergeant in the 1 BAR. I suppose this rank gave me the chance to impact young members of the unit both while I was at home and on overseas missions. Having the opportunity to help develop and mentor young soldiers was always a great privilege. I have to say I really enjoyed my time in the gym also as I was always trying my best to improve people's fitness and their overall health in my role as the Gym PTI.

**Most enjoyable unit that you served in?**

I suppose the best unit of course was my home unit 1 BAR. My father, Declan O' Rourke (RIP), was a Sgt Major in the Regiment and served there until he retired and has sadly since passed away. I also served in Ballincollig Bks before it closed in 1998. I had the pleasure of deploying overseas with the 83rd UNIFIL with lads from the unit. The 1st Regt gave me a lot of scope to develop as an individual soldier and a person. The unit commanders down to my

best friends supported me throughout my time in that unit. I also have made friends for life from the unit, we are still in contact to this day and many of these people have been there for me through thick and thin in life.



Grattan seen here recently in Mayfield Community Training Centre

**Can you maybe tell us the hardest event or period in your career and why?**

I suppose the hardest thing in my career was retiring from the DF. This was a decision that felt right for me at that time, there was many a long nights spent lying awake trying to wrap my head around my decision to stay or go. I had handed over 21 years of my life and to now just try and move on. It was like my identity was

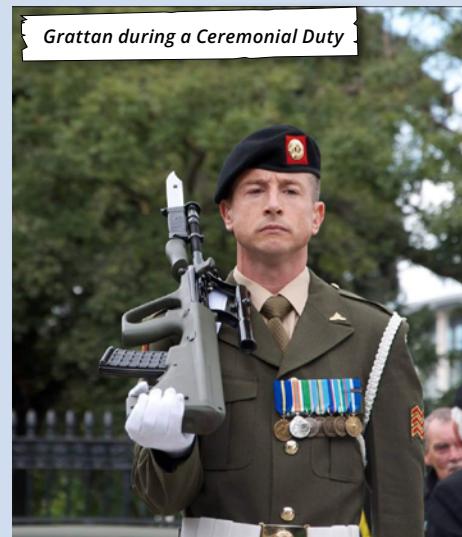


From instructor to teacher  
Grattan in his current role now

gone, who I was as a soldier, 21 years of amazing job and working with amazing people. I suppose looking back now, I was not ready for that next phase.

**In the area of overseas can you discuss your favourite mission and why?**

I completed eight trips overseas and all of them were amazing from being a gunner in Lebanon to the ALO in UNMIL. I suppose one stands out and that is as the ALO in Liberia, I had the opportunity to be involved in the moving of Charles Taylor to the Hague to stand trial. My role, which was orchestrating the movement of troops and equipment from Liberia to Sierra Leone. As impressive as it sounds I was just a small cog in the overall plan but the experience that I got from this was amazing. I got to work with multinationals and experience lots of different cultures.



**Looking back on your last day in service, can you describe that day and the emotions you felt on that last day?**

The last day when I was handing back my uniform was surreal, all my mates were all chats and we had a coffee morning in the gym. This was a great way to mark the day. I suppose I grew up and matured in the Army from age 19 until I was 42 years of age so it was all I knew really. So obviously there was apprehension but still excitement of what might lie ahead.

**Have you kept up a link to serving members and your local barracks?**

I have the privilege of an invite to the coffee morning that the retired members of the DF have once a month in the mess. This is a great way for people to stay in contact or keep those vital networks going. Also as I have mentioned I have some amazing friends both serving and retired who I'm proud to call my friends and meet with regularly.

**Reflecting on your career is there any person who made a major impact on your career as a mentor or leader?**

I suppose as a young gunner in the 1st Regt all of the senior gunners



and NCO's gave me great advice and guidance during my career, I got a lot of mentoring from them. I suppose the best leader that I had the privilege to meet during my career was Lt Gen Dermot Early (RIP) he was a great leader to me. He was extremely personable and he seemed to know everybody by name. When he shook your hand it almost felt like the ground moved underneath you. He never looked down on anyone and spoke to you as an equal. He would even remember the time and place he met you for the very first time.

**So can you chat to us about your time after leaving the DF, what have you been doing and how was the period after leaving adjusting to civilian life?**

So since departing the DF I was first managing a gym in Cork City, this gym had a 2000 membership base which was quite a large membership. A while after I left COVID-19 happened while I was

managing the gym, initially it was extremely challenging and it was quite difficult to navigate through that period.

Fast forward a year later I had the privilege to deliver education for Rehab Ireland, it was a great experience working there. My current role is in Mayfield Community Training Centre delivering a QQI level 4 in many different subject areas. I've been there almost 3 years now, it's a really rewarding job helping others to up skill and develop.

**What advice do you have for someone retiring today?**

Get your ducks in a row, educate yourself as much as possible.

Research and try to know what opportunities are out there and seek advice from others who have already walked the path you're about to embark on.

**What skills do you feel you brought with you from the DF to civilian life?**

I feel I had a lot of skills leaving the DF, like the ability to make sound judgement, working to a tight deadline. There were a lot of transferable skills as I have gone from being a military instructor to a teacher in the civilian world. Planning and the ability to communicate are something soldiers do well.

**What advice would you give to young soldiers now starting out their careers in the DF?**

Learn and keep learning, do as much as you can and make a plan and stick to it. Be positive and keep asking your senior NCO's for advice and guidance along the way.

**And last question, do you miss the DF, and if so what do you miss?**

I miss it all from the friends for life, the opportunities to travel and see things that others will never get the chance to – it's hard to explain to civilian friends, only those who have served understand.

# PEACEKEEPING FOR HERITAGE

## TRAINING UN PEACEKEEPERS IN CULTURAL PROPERTY PROTECTION

BY GRETCHEN ALLEN, SENIOR CONSERVATOR NAI, MEMBER INCBS  
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY COMDT DANIEL AYIOTIS

This past December, the Irish National Committee for the Blue Shield (INCBS) held the second annual United Nations Training School in Ireland (UNTSI) Cultural Property Protection course in conjunction with Blue Shield International and the Irish Defence Forces. The course was held at the Curragh Camp in Co. Kildare and focused on Cultural Property Protection (CPP) of both tangible and intangible heritage in a UN Peacekeeping context. The programme featured lectures, group activities, and on-site tours over the course of five days from December 4-8, 2023.

A total of 30 people--23 military personnel and 7 civilian heritage professionals--attended the course from Ireland, the UK, and the continental EU. Military delegates were required to have deployment experience and came primarily from the Irish Defence Forces. Small groups attended from the Netherlands, Germany, and the UK.

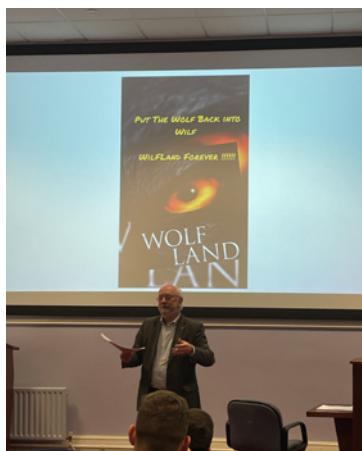
The first half of the course was comprised of lectures given by representatives from CPP organizations within or adjacent to multiple different national militaries including France, the UK, Lebanon, the Netherlands, and the USA. These informed attendees about CPP as a concept and how CPP efforts could be integrated into military and UN Peacekeeping missions. The lectures also emphasized how CPP could be critical to the success of Peacekeeping missions and relationship-building with local populations. Group activities during this part of the course focused on historical scenarios where CPP or lack thereof played a massive role (eg. the bombing of the library of Sarajevo), and groups were tasked to re-examine these scenarios and think about how CPP could have been better implemented.

The second half of the course centred on a fictional role-playing scenario where attendees were given a brief on the political situation and CPP needs of "Wilfdon", capital of "Wilfland". Attendees were given a UN mandate, a history of the country and the contributing factors to its instability, briefs on different CPP issues, and information on the equipment and capabilities of their fictional UN Peacekeeping troops. Within this scenario, attendees went on site visits to the Curragh Camp military museum and then on a full-day trip to Dublin where Merrion Square, the Military Archives, and St. Patrick's Cathedral stood in for major Wilflandic heritage sites. Keepers of each site role-played along with the briefs so attendees could ask questions while assessing the CPP risks. Following the site visits, attendees separated into groups and prepared a brief that was then presented to the Force Commander on the final day.

Responses to the course were enthusiastic. The variety of speakers, visits, and activities kept the course interesting and well-paced. Many of the attendees complemented the subject matter and the teaching, with one saying "The course opened up my eyes to the important work of the Blue Shield. It's an organisation that nations should all use." Staying on base

at the Curragh Camp fostered camaraderie between participants of all nationalities and encouraged further discussion outside of the course. For future iterations of the course, the goal will be to invite Peacekeepers from outside the EU and the UK to encourage a more diverse pool of attendees.

Overall the second annual UNTSI CPP Training course was a success, and efforts will be made to include it in the yearly programme for both the INCBS and the UNTSI. This will further the awareness of the Blue Shield's CPP principles in UN Peacekeeping forces and help strengthen the relationship between the two organizations.



*Lectures from course leader Professor Peter Stone, UNESCO Chairholder in Cultural Property Protection and Peace at Newcastle University and President, Blue Shield International*



*Captain Ainke Petersen, Cultural Property Protection Staff Officer from the Dutch Armed Forces, briefing the course during the exercise phase*



# Access to Private Health Care in The PDF

## ...How It Works



### STEP 1

You attend the Medical Aid Post/ Sick Parade and are seen by a contracted civilian GP or an MO.

**This is the first step and must take place for payment by the DF to occur later.**



### STEP 2

The doctor refers you to a private external medical provider for an INITIAL consultation/ investigation.

**Don't worry about paperwork – the Doctor and the Medical Accounts Clerk for your barracks/ station will take care of the sanction form.**



### STEP 3

You will receive the appointment from the external provider directly to your registered home address.

**You decide what is most convenient for you and the Doctor will facilitate.**



### STEP 4

The external medical provider will send the bill to the Defence Forces Medical Accounts Clerk.

**You should NOT have to pay any money. If there is a misunderstanding ask the medical provider to ring the Defence Forces Medical Accounts Clerk. The medical provider will have the contact details.**



### STEP 5

After you attend the appointment, you MUST return to the GP or MO before any more treatment or investigation can take place.

**This is very important. Don't worry - if you need further treatment the GP or MO will approve it in the same way.**

We seven members of the Irish contingent with 1 ISAF (International Security Afghanistan Force) arrived in Kabul on July 5th and were soon trying to make comfortable in a dust filled Turkish tent. It took some days for our bodies to acclimatize to the altitude (6,000 ft), the heat, and most of all to the challenges to our digestive tract that are commonplace and quite severe in Kabul.

We are all employed on the Divisional HQ Staff, based at the Russian Sports Club in the centre of Kabul. The appointments are challenging as none of us had worked at this level before and it took a while to assimilate the terminology and develop the ability to stand back from the minutiae of tactical level problems – the ones we are so at home with.

Of course it was not long before the Irish way of looking at things began to impact on the HQ. Our ability to view issues with a commonsense eye, born of our considerable peacekeeping experience and our national character, is an important asset in an area like Afghanistan. We appear to have a natural empathy not only with the other contingents but also (and more importantly) with the local population.

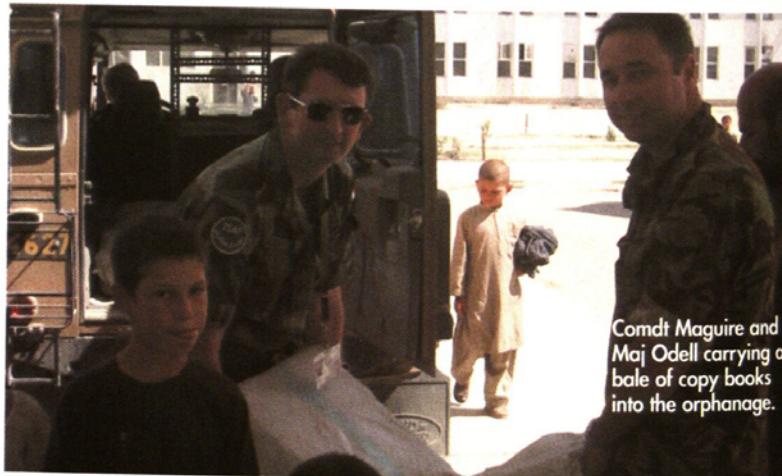
One of my first contacts was with a New Zealander from Media Ops, Maj Steve Odell. Steve came across immediately as a positive, friendly and professional guy, who just happened to also possess a serious bush beneath his nose that was masquerading as a moustache. We hit it off straight away and almost at once I set my sights on relieving him, and the world, of that luxuriant growth. After many sessions of diplomatic bantering and challenges Steve eventually and half-heartedly (initially) agreed to lose 'Mitch the Moustache' for no less than \$500, which would be donated to a local CIMIC (Civil Military Co-operation) project.

Project 'Mitch' took off imme-

# Haíz today sone tomorrow

diately and received support from all nationalities and branches within the HQ. On the night of September 2nd Mitch and Steve were piped onto the stage by Lt Col Harry Nickerson of the Scots Guards and the separation of these two close friends began to a background of much wailing and gnashing of teeth (only from Steve I hasten to add).

Maj James Kelly, also of the Scots Guards, acted as MC and kept the pot boiling



Comdt Maguire and Maj Odell carrying a bale of copy books into the orphanage.



# Row!

By Comdt Jim Maguire

and the money flowing for a full two hours. Cdr Simon Ryan of the Royal Naval Reserve ran a concurrent table quiz, which resulted in a clear winning team and some good-natured controversy. By close of business \$1,100 was in the kitty and Mitch's remains were in an Irish cut-glass bowl that was duly presented to Steve.

The night provided a welcome break from the serious business of the mission. Also in

one night we contributed enough money to make a difference to the lives of many Afghan children.

Only three days later we all received a very real reminder of how volatile this country still is, when a large car bomb was detonated in a crowded marketplace killing and wounding many men, women and children. Life in Afghanistan and Kabul is not kind, but the presence of ISAF provides an opportunity for some normality to be achieved in the Kabul area. The security we provide and the CIMIC projects that are undertaken are very much appreciated by the people of the city.

The contribution made possible as a result of Mitch's demise was not large but it brought the staff of the HQ a little closer to the children of Kabul.

An article that was sent into the New Zealand military journals Army News and Air Force News, by Wing Cdr Johan Bosch is reproduced here with the kind consent of the author. ■



## Half a mo...!

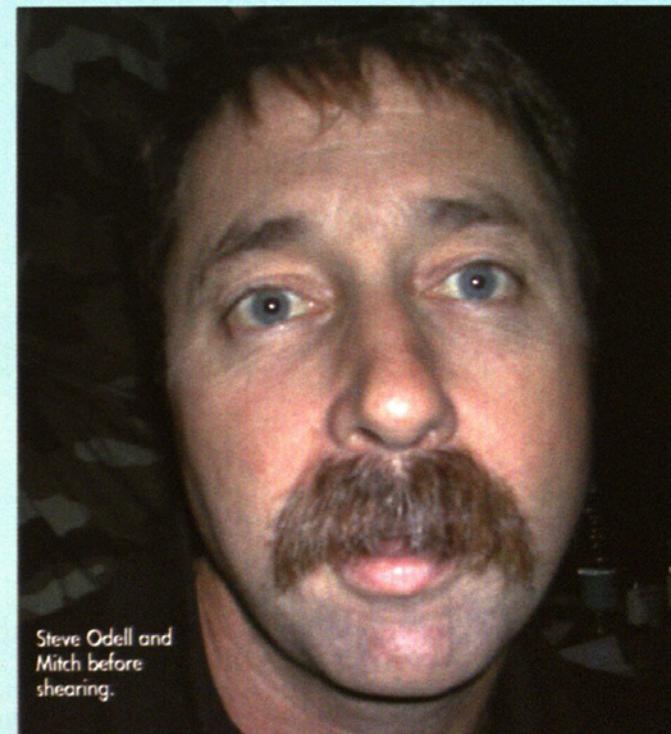
By Wing Commander Johan Bosch, RNZAF

What can you get for half a moustache? If you are in Afghanistan, you can get 2,000 school books, 2,000 pencils, and boxes of other stationery. Comdt Jim Maguire saw the opportunity to transform Maj Steve Odell's (New Zealand) one hairy lip into hundreds of Afghani smiles, and (literally) took it. Pledges were made, money was collected, and a good night was had by all, with only one casualty – the 24 year-old moustache (Mitch to his mates). Over US\$1,100 was raised by the razor.

So what to do with the pro-

before they descended upon us... 750 orphans and fatherless children gathered first out of curiosity, then out of desire, and then out of desperation to get some much-needed school supplies. The initially quiet and ordered politeness soon deteriorated into a free-for-all with hundreds of little fingers clutching for a pencil, a ruler, or a piece of our uniform. Fortunately, there was enough and we escaped uninjured.

For Steve Odell, the trauma (and near injury) of losing Mitch was easily offset by the satisfaction of bringing so much good to



Steve Odell and Mitch before shearing.

ceeds? The previous NZ contingent had already visited the orphans' school in the poorest part of town to feed hungry mouths, donate dolls, and spread some Kiwi goodwill. It was only natural that this orphanage would be the target for the, yet again, burgeoning coffers. Armed with US\$500 worth of educational goodies (the Landrover was full), we descended upon them ...

those who really need it. For Jim Maguire, his outstanding efforts to raise the money were rewarded in the eyes of the children. For myself, I was just glad to emerge unscathed! Seriously though, each time I shave, I pause to consider how so little can provide so much.

Now we just have to decide what to do with the rest of the proceeds ... watch this space ...



[www.military.ie](http://www.military.ie)

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THE NATION