

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

AN COSANTÓIR



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



JULY/AUG 2024

UNDOF | DF FAMILY DAY | DFAM

[STRENGTHEN THE NATION]



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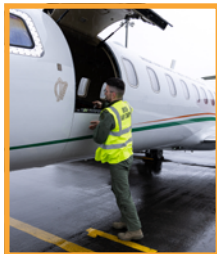
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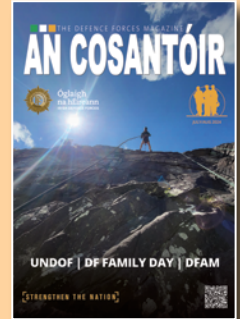
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Front Cover

Photo provided by Sgt Sarah Nolan
3 Inf Bn adventure day in Kerry, Lt Higgins braving a front facing abseil

Back Cover

Armn Sam Gibney
Dublin Zoo

Editorial

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

We have another great issue lined up for our fourth magazine of the year, showcasing various aspects of the Defence We are excited to announce that we have expanded the annual **An Cosantóir 10k race** which will take place on 09 Oct 2024 in the Phoenix Park. This should open up the race to more categories, with more prizes to be won, and hopefully more participation by serving and retired members of the DF, as well as invited guests. Continue to follow us on Instagram and the Connect app where we will continue to post further updates about the race.

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

In our **On Parade** section, we showcase pictures from across the Defence Forces offering a snapshot of some of the great things that serving and former serving members have done in recent times.

Our first feature is an article by Comdt Jim O'Neill, highlighting the projects recently completed by students on the CIS Trainee Technician Scheme. This project is completed in the final year of the Level 8 B Eng in Electronic Engineering (Military Communications Systems) in SETU Carlow.

As we are continuing to feature the new Leadership doctrine and information on leadership, we continue with a piece on the Military College, which develops **Tactical, Operational and Strategic Leadership through the delivery of Professional Military Education.**

Capt Gerry Duff gives us an insight into the **68 Inf Gp UNDOF withdrawal** from the mission, this was the final tour to UNDOF for DF members. Capt Duff gives us details of the daily routine of the mission, the withdrawal and handover to KAZCOY.

Our center spread features photos of the recent DF Family Day for families of DF personnel currently serving overseas, which took place in Dublin Zoo. This day was organised by our office, and was a great success.

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 CS Sandra Murphy who speaks to us about her rewarding career within the CIS Corps. She also discusses her family history with the DF and the excellent education the DF has given her during her career to date.

The **Army Force Design** Office was established in late 2023 under recommendations by the CODF and Col Neil Nolan has provided an article outlining the parameters of the office, the challenges it faces, and what outcomes our members can expect to see.

In our next series of historical articles, **Irish Deserters of the Irish Defence Forces During WWII – An Introduction**

Is an article written by Capt Cían Harte who explores the controversial topic of Irish Defence Forces members who deserted the organisation to join the British Army during WWII.

Sgt Sarah Nolan has penned a piece on **The Defence Forces Association of Mountaineers (DFAM)**. Sarah delivers a great insight into the current roles of the DFAM as an association and the skills and professionalism that is required of our DF CTI's.

In our Reserve section, **The Naval Service Reserve, A truly unique service** is brought to us by Cpl (RDF) Lukasz Gancarz. Cpl Gancarz speaks to serving NSR members about their training, life before the military and current roles within the NSR.

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

If you would like something featured in the magazine or have any ideas, have your say by emailing 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

Progress comes with practice, and practice comes with purpose. Know your "why."

— Melissa Steginus

Sgt John Rossiter
Editor

DEFENCE FORCES 10K AN COSANTÓIR ROAD RACE & 5K WALK
WEDNESDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2024, PHOENIX PARK
ENTRY - €10
INCLUDES T-SHIRT & POSTAGE
OPEN TO SERVING & RETIRED MEMBERS
MILITARY.IE/RUN MYRUNRESULTS.COM

ON PARADE



Presidential Guard of Honour for the Italian President, members of the AC pictured with J1 Ceremonial Staff



Members of the Air Corps 78th Apprentice Class at their recent passing out parade



Capt Margaret Hogan briefing players at the DF Womens 5 a side soccer tournament held in Kilkenny



Capt Eddie MacSweeney at the 300-challenge charity event held in the DFTC DFPES



Comdt Sue Ramsbottom receiving her Lifetime Achievement Award from the GPA for her services as a player to Laois. Comdt Ramsbottom scored in an All-Ireland Club Final at the age of 12 and she is the youngest recipient of an All Star Award.

ON PARADE

1 BAR Gunners course firing in the Glen



A charity plane pull took place in Baldonnel recently in aid of Special Olympics Ireland



Air Corps Fire Fighting course



The Bere Island Military Heritage Festival took place in June. Noelle Grothier, an archivist in Military Archives, gave a talk on sources in the Archive relating to Bere Island.



Operation Carousel carried out by the DF Tpt Corps, who delivered 30 DF vehicles to the Ukrainian Armed Forces



ON PARADE

Members of the DF Medical team who recently won the British Army's international Exercise Ardent Serpent



Members of the 47th Potential NCO Cse prepping before their passing out parade



Capt (AR) Fitzgerald at the launch of the RDF regeneration and development plan which took place in Cathal Brugha Barracks



A/CQMS Kevin Miller and Comdt Keogh after a recent game of golf



Sgt Paul Kealy, DF AVS, on parade

ON PARADE

Members of the 05th Air Corps PNCO Course on their passing out parade



Members of 124 Inf Bn UNIFIL on a medical exercise which took place in UNP-245

DF Men's Football 7s competition - the DFTC team won the cup on the day



Commissioning Ceremony held in McKee Bks where the DF commissioned a new Band Conductor, a Medical Officer and a Pharmacist

CIS TRAINEE TECHNICIANS

FINAL YEAR PROJECT

ARTICLE BY COMDT JIM O'NEILL
PHOTOS BY ARMN SAM GIBNEY

CIS Trainee Technicians study a Level 8 B Eng in Electronic Engineering (Military Communications Systems) over 3 years in SETU Carlow to become CIS Technicians (CISTs) as well as an additional year in the CIS School, this programme will soon become a Level 8 Degree. The final year project module is the culmination of the students' academic studies. The project is designed to showcase the electronic engineering knowledge and skills developed by each student throughout the duration of the scheme.

The aims of the project module are;

- To provide the Trainee Technician with the opportunity to apply and extend their knowledge, competencies and skills developed on the scheme
- To research, design, develop and critically analyse an engineering problem
- To manage, document, and communicate an engineering project
- To develop personal skills of initiative, independence and responsibility

At the beginning of the final academic year each student is presented with a project brief which challenges the student to develop an electronic engineering solution to a unique problem, where possible the students are encouraged to focus on developing solutions to military problems. Once the student has developed their initial idea, they must submit a project specification for approval before work can commence. This specification includes the overview of the problem, their proposed solution and a detailed breakdown of the electronic components they intend to use to create the solution. Minimum specification criteria generally includes; no less than 3 x electronic sensors, a micro controller, server and database.

The Final Year project is assessed via a series of presentations and via the final project deliverables. Presentations are made in front of a panel of SETU academic staff and CIS School staff. This panel assesses the presentations based on structure, time management and delivery. The final project deliverables are assessed under a series of headings: **Literature review** on historical and state-of-the-art publications/resources relevant to the project; **Project plan** presenting the project management element of the work; **Design and implementation** of the solution proposed; **Design innovation**, technical prowess and sustainability; **Manufacture and/or simulation, Validation and testing** of the proposed solution/design; **Discussion of results**, methodology and literature leading to reasonable and objective conclusions; **Communication skills** and technical accuracy of the submitted technical report/paper and finally overall **Effort and participation**.



Pte Cooper

The Lidar Smart Chair Navigator created by Pte Stephen Cooper

"The Smart-Chair Navigator addresses the challenges faced by wheelchair users seeking more independence in their daily lives. Reliance on caregivers for mobility can impact confidence and independence, especially in crowded environments such as airports, hospitals, and homes.

This advanced wheelchair system uses

sophisticated technologies, including sensors, a single-board computer, and a microcontroller, to help users navigate autonomously and safely.

The Smart-Chair detects and avoids obstacles, allowing users to navigate complex environments on their own. For manual control,



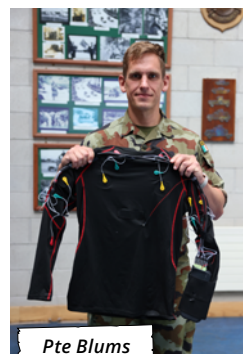
Pte Cooper demonstrating the use of the LIDAR Smart-Chair Navigator with another student

users can operate the chair with a joystick or touchscreen, displaying a map of the wheelchair's current position in an environment to assist in planning safe routes. For those with limited hand mobility, the chair also responds to voice commands and gestures, which can be customised to detect movements of the head, feet or hands.

Remote access via a secure network lets caregivers monitor and control the wheelchair from anywhere in the world, providing peace of mind to the user. A push-notification system alerts caregivers when assistance is needed in the event of the wheelchair toppling over, and an emergency stop button ensures safety by cutting power to the motors if necessary.

Additionally, the Smart-Chair Navigator's integration of these advanced features aims to enhance the overall quality of life for wheelchair users.

It offers them greater autonomy and reduces their dependence on others, promoting a more inclusive and independent way of life. With its blend of cutting-edge technology and user-centric design, the Smart-Chair Navigator represents a significant step forward in mobility solutions."

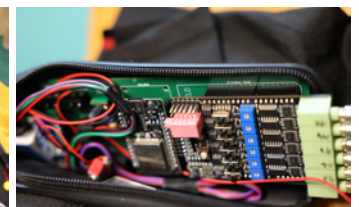


Pte Blums

Tech Top, A Smart Exercise Wearable created by Pte Kristaps Blums

In the Defence Forces PTIs (Physical Training Instructors) are tasked with designing individual and group training programs, provide instruction, guidance and oversight to military personnel in controlled environments. They are limited to determine the intensity of exercise based solely on visual and personnel feedback with no data available to them, resulting in possible sub-optimal exercise regimens.

Tech Top was designed and developed into a wearable to provide real-time data during strength and conditioning exercises in indoor gym facilities. The wearable consists of an array of sensors measuring heart rate, breathing rate, body temperature, muscle activity using EMG (Electromyography) and an MCU (Micro-Controller Unit). EMG is a technique used to measure the potential difference (Voltage) across a muscle using electrodes. This Voltage is created when the brain signals a muscle to contract in the form of electrical impulses. The detected voltage



across the surface of the skin is very small and noisy requiring it to be conditioned before being read by the MCU. This process involves taking the difference of a dual input, amplifying this difference and bandpass filtering the signal before being read by the MCU. The MCU takes multiple samples of this signal and calculates the RMS (Root Mean Square) providing a valuable, less noisy signal for interpretation.

Once the MCU has collected values from these sensors and has completed its calculations, the data is transmitted wirelessly over Wi-Fi using MQTT (Message Queuing Telemetry Transport) communication protocol. This data can be viewed by any device that is connected to the same LAN (Local Area Network) by searching the IP address of the local web server provided the device has entered the correct username and password.



Pte Darragh Carey

DF Waste management system created by Pte Darragh Carey

The Irish army has a long-standing relationship with the United Nations, our largest mission being United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), spanning back to 1978. With this ever-present force in Lebanon comes a large ecological footprint within the country from our troops. With people comes waste and currently the collection and proper management of waste falls on the shoulders of the DF personnel.

Responsible waste management is essential for environmental sustainability, operational efficiency, and positive community relations. Currently personnel are detailed for the collection of waste around the camp and Observation Posts (OPs) taking personnel away from mission-critical tasks. The current method can be counter effective as waste may build up before designated collection times causing overflowing, this can have adverse effects on the environment and health of the troops and also long journeys to OPs could prove unnecessary as the bins may not need to be collected at the designated time. This project implements an IoT waste management system to help monitor the state of the bins in camp and OPs to help with efficiency of collection, preventing overflowing while also reducing the workforce, the ecological and carbon footprint caused by our troops, and reducing costs by constant monitoring and optimizing waste collection routes and times. The bins weight and level can be monitored from a mobile application and website allowing the monitoring of the state of the bins across the camps and OPs preventing a build-up of waste and optimising waste collection routes. The system is also solar powered prolonging battery life.



A/M Craig Ratchford

GPS-Guided Autonomous Lawnmower by A/M Craig Ratchford

Description:

The idea behind this project was to design and develop a GPS-guided autonomous lawnmower, tailored for maintaining large grassland areas, specifically around the runways of the Irish Air Corps. The lawnmower uses various electronic and communication systems to allow autonomous operation, efficient grass

cutting, and enhanced safety, as well as reduced downtime of runways while increasing efficiency.

Some Key Components and Features:

1. **Drive System:** The lawnmower is equipped with small high torque DC motors for driving and directionality.
2. **Cutting Mechanism:** A small high speed DC motor powers the cutting

blade. The height of the blade is adjustable via a servo motor, allowing for customization of the grass height.

3. **GPS Navigation:** The mower uses a highly accurate GPS system with centimetre-level precision. This system defines a virtual boundary or perimeter within which the mower operates.
4. **Boundary Learning and Control:** A user-friendly Phone application was developed as part of the project. This application allows users to teach the mower the perimeter of the garden or grass area. As the lawnmower is driven around the boundary using this App, it records GPS waypoints. These waypoints form a virtual boundary. This is then fed into an algorithm which allows the mower users to determine where it is within the virtual boundary.
5. **Obstacle Avoidance:** The system includes obstacle detection and avoidance mechanisms. This feature prevents collisions with humans, pets, and other obstacles, ensuring safety during operation.
6. **Communication System:** The lawnmower is equipped with a communication system capable of sending alert SMS messages to designated personnel. These alerts notify specific personnel such as the BOS, orderly Officer of various events, such as collisions, blade exposure, or potential theft.
7. **Central Control Unit:** A central microcontroller coordinates all aspects of the mower's operations, including navigation, motor control, obstacle avoidance, and communication.

Application: The autonomous lawnmower is designed to maintain extensive grass areas, particularly those around airport runways, where manual mowing can be labour-intensive and time-consuming and expensive. The use of high-precision GPS allows for efficient and consistent grass cutting within defined boundaries. The system's safety features, and remote alert capabilities make it suitable for operation in sensitive and potentially hazardous areas, such as military airbases.

This project brings together everything learned over three years of studying electronic engineering, including both hardware and software aspects. It involves building and programming a GPS-guided autonomous lawnmower, putting problem-solving and testing skills into real-world practice. The project combines knowledge from different areas of electronics and shows how to create a practical and useful device from start to finish.



3rd Year CIS TTS Students and Project Names

Rank	Name	Project Name
Pte	Carey	DF Waste Management System
Pte	Monaghan	Breathing Apparatus Entry Control Board
Pte	Cooper	LIDAR Smart-Chair Navigator
Pte	Blums	TechTop
Pte	McKiernan	BOS Logger
Pte	Christie	DF Smart Harness
Pte	Doris	UV Monitoring and Protection System
Pte	Sneyd	Road Traffic Accident Monitoring system
Gnr	Clery	Low-Cost Automated External Defibrillator
Pte	Shea	Swimming pool Monitoring System
Cpl	O' Callaghan	Duty Alcohol Detector (D.A.D)
A/M	Ratchford	GPS Guided Autonomous Lawnmower
Sgmn	Houlihan	CIS Base Workshops Vehicle Management System

DEVELOPING TACTICAL, OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE DELIVERY OF PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION (PME)

ARTICLE BY VARIOUS CONTRIBUTORS

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY COMDT DAVID FARRAGHER



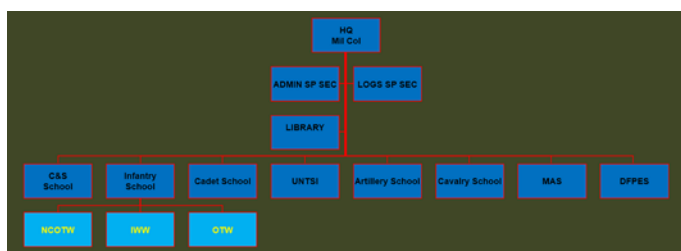
Established on the 06 October 1930, the Irish Military College has had primacy for the provision of military education and training to Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) of the Defence Forces. The advocacy of an established training college has enabled Defence Forces personnel to fulfil their leadership roles effectively, domestically and on deployment overseas at the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

The Military College continues to play a key role in the delivery of the Defence

Forces philosophy of lifelong learning, enabled in an educational environment for both junior and senior leadership that is conducive to training, study, learning, reflection and personal development. This is achieved through the maintenance of four (4) key conditions within the college:

- Adherence to Defence Forces Values and Dignity Charter for all Students.
- Providing a doctrinally sound appropriate learning environment.
- An environment where all students of all ranks can be stimulated and challenged.
- An ethos where cooperation and teamwork sit alongside initiative, independent thinking and self-reliance.

In terms of delivery of leadership training, the Military College is comprised of eight (8) schools and the DF Library.



The Cadet School, The Infantry School, and The Command and Staff schools, along with the five (5) other schools (Cavalry, Artillery, UN, Military Administration schools and The DF Physical Education and School (The Gym)) are committed to imparting either skills training, or tactical, operational, and strategic level leadership training at the Military College. As a result, it is essential to analyse the approaches and techniques utilised by each school in nurturing and cultivating leadership attributes and capabilities for those who attend the College.

Cadet School

Leadership training and development is inculcated throughout a Cadetship. The primary function of Officer Cadet training is to develop character and leadership skills in the Cadets. Leadership training is characterised by practical, theoretical and experiential learning throughout the 17 months of the Cadetship. This is progressive in nature with the Cadet advancing through four (4) distinct phases of training each characterised by increasing levels of skill attainment, character development and autonomy in learning.



Leadership development is sequential and progressive throughout each stage. It includes the delivery of leadership lessons, with a focus on the DF leadership doctrine and practical case studies of leadership in action. It extends beyond the classroom to the tactical environment, where Cadets are exposed to tactical exercises and scenarios that require the Cadet to perform in leadership appointments. Tactical training is in fact, the vehicle through which much of the assessment of leadership ability and resilience is conducted. It includes a variety of platoon and company level exercises in both conventional and non-conventional scenarios.

Training is planned to promote personal development and to provide Cadets with ample opportunities to develop their leadership styles where their progress can be measured and assessed. These opportunities are garnered through various leadership appointments ranging from Weekly Orderly Sgt to Cadet Captain, from Syndicate I/C to Logistics Cadet. These assigned appointments, which can range from one week to six months in duration, are designed to empower the Cadet and to develop a sense of responsibility and competency in terms of leadership skills.

It is the role of the Cadet School staff to fully develop a Cadet's potential. A variety of teaching methodologies and assessment tools are used to help to foster and develop leadership skills. Leadership skills are challenged and honed in various ways, such as the delivery of presentations, executing class taking lessons, verbal test talks and collaborative syndicate work.

Leadership training in the Cadet School is the medium through which the DF ensures that Cadets are prepared for exercising command and authority across the full range of military functions both at home and overseas. The Cadetship culminates in the Commission awarded by the Commander in Chief, Uachtarán na hÉireann, which invests the authority to execute lethal force and command military forces. All Cadets who successfully complete the academic requirements of the course are awarded a Level 7 Diploma in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies from Maynooth University.

Command and Staff School

The Command and Staff School (C&S) has been at the vanguard for the Irish Defence Forces educational development over the past two decades, and through its engagement with Maynooth University provides Officers of OF-3 rank (Commandants/Lt Commanders) from all services of the Defence Forces (Army, Navy & Air Corps) with accredited post-graduate Level 9 education in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies. Professional Military Education (PME) for senior officers provides them with strategic and leadership focused training, with leadership training the



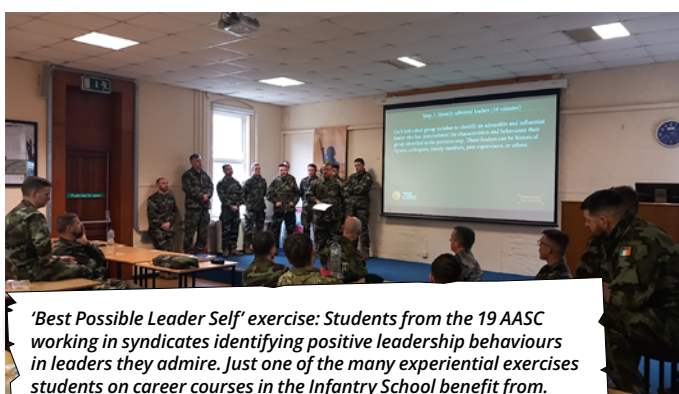
Officers on completion of their Joint Command and Staff Course, and Land Component Staff Course held in the Command & Staff and Infantry Schools

cornerstone of the Joint Command and Staff Course (JCSC), ingrained in every aspect of the course and examined across all seven modules.

Leadership is specifically addressed during the 'Command Leadership Ethics & Management' (CLEM) module. The module is divided into two separate individual instructional blocks, delivered at the start and at the end, essentially book-ending the course. The first block emphasizes Presentation Skills, Personal Awareness and Development, and Personality Profiling to assist students to understand their unique traits. The second block emphasizes Military Command, Leadership, Ethics, and Management. A Leadership Portfolio is maintained by all students throughout the course and is used to chart their individual journey through all modules of the course.

The leadership training provided by the Command & Staff School however is not just about producing effective commanders, it is about cultivating individuals who embody the values of the Defence Forces by instilling these principles. Dr. Lawlor (2021) highlights that Clausewitz in On War, states that "knowledge must become capability" (von Clausewitz, 1993). Therefore, the transformation of organisational knowledge into capabilities needs to become a tangible outcome for the organisation's investment in education".

The Command & Staff School continues to espouse these values to students so that they are not only competent, but also ethical and compassionate, capable of guiding and meeting any challenge required of the Defence Forces at home or while deployed abroad on overseas service. The Defence Forces Leadership Doctrine provides an invaluable resource in achieving this objective.



'Best Possible Leader Self' exercise: Students from the 19 AASC working in syndicates identifying positive leadership behaviours in leaders they admire. Just one of the many experiential exercises students on career courses in the Infantry School benefit from.

The Infantry School

The Infantry School strives to develop effective leaders who are authentic and consistently live their character grounded on values based action and the development of themselves and their teams. The NCOTW is responsible for the delivery of Defence Forces NCO career courses within the Infantry School. These courses, the All Arms Standard Course (AASC) and the Senior NCOs Course (SNCOC) as well as the Corps specific Infantry Platoon Sergeants Course (IPSC) are based on the premise that to achieve excellence and mission success, it is essential to develop NCO Leaders of Character and Competence.



The learning pedagogy utilised by the Infantry School is founded on an experiential (learning) philosophy and methodology. NCOs on the AASC and the SNCOC benefit from two (2) to three (3) days of leadership studies respectively. Day one (1) of these courses is developed to build on the NCOs previous knowledge of Defence Forces Leadership Doctrine and is predominately an academic/theory piece. Day two (2) and day three (3) the focus switches to an experiential leadership model, where students will be given models and will be asked to apply knowledge through their experience, group discussions, self-awareness activities and case studies. The IPSC concentrates on the practical progress of Leadership development through exercises and appointments throughout the course.

Throughout the courses we will facilitate the following lessons:

Overview of Leadership Training – Senior NCOs Course & All Arms Standard Course				
Core reference guidance has come from the Defence Forces Leadership Doctrine DFDM – J2 (June 2023)				
Character	Influence	Military ethics & Values	Culture	Mission Command
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical thinking Emotional Intelligence Unconscious bias Learning styles and Personality assessments Self-Awareness and Self-Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full range leadership (transformational leadership) Leading/Following Coaching/Mentoring Advanced communication techniques such as negotiation, networking and social and political acumen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibilities Ethical theories Ethical Decision making Decision making framework Ethical risks and risk mitigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading organisational culture Cultural Intelligence Resilience Organisational Culture Feedback culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding Command, Leadership and Management 7 independent conditions of Mission command SNCOCs leader's role in support of Mission Command

The recent publication of the DF Leadership Doctrine (DFDM-J2 2003) is an excellent resource providing an explicit leadership framework, which is the bedrock of all leadership studies conducted in the Infantry School. I strongly encourage all NCOs to read and familiarise yourselves with the content of our DF Leadership Doctrine. This will be a good start if you want to be in the team that has been credited for being the **'glue that holds the organisation together and the oil that keeps the cogs moving'** (DFDM –J2, 2023, p. 36)



All Arms Standard Cse students complete their Leadership command test appointments

END OF AN ERA

DF FRC WITHDRAWAL FROM UNDOF 2024

ARTICLE BY CAPT GERRY DUFF
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CAPT GERRY DUFF



FRC QRF conducting a QRF rehearsal involving CASEVAC to a UN OP



Members of the unit pictured with UNDOF Force Commander, Lt Gen THAPA (NEPAL) at the Indian Contingent Festival of Colour

On 05th April 2024, the 128 members of the 68th Infantry Group departed Camp Faouar, Golan Heights for the last time. This marked the end of the 10-year Irish Defence Forces deployment as the Force Reserve Company (FRC). It also coincided with the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of UNDOF. The complexity of a withdrawal along with handover to a new troop contingent from Kazakhstan was compounded by the outbreak of the Gaza Conflict on 07th October 2023.

After a highly successful pre-deployment training package, the main body of the 68th Infantry Group deployed to the Golan Heights on 25 September. In theatre training commenced immediately with the Force Headquarters giving a two-week window for the new FRC to reach Full Operational Capacity (FOC). Along with routine patrolling, area familiarisation and CONPLAN recce, the main effort of the FRC was the Quick Reaction Force (QRF). Rehearsals were conducted at a high tempo that remained in place for the entire deployment.

No-one could have predicted how the actions of 07th October would affect the AOR and the region in general. After the outbreak of the conflict in Gaza, FRC informed the Force Commander that they could 'stand-up' as the FRC with immediate effect and did not require the full training time to reach FOC.

The FRC then set about establishing their routine and continuing their CONPLAN and QRF rehearsals. We experienced a number of GROUNDHOGs due to armed elements firing into the Area of Separation

(AOS) into the Alpha side. This led to response by the Israeli Defence Forces in the form of artillery and rocket fire back into the Syrian side of the AOS.

The FRC settled into their routine very quickly, conducting regular MOWAG and AUV patrols within the AOS. In Dec, the FRC were the first unit to patrol to the southern tip of the AOR, on the Jordanian border in over a year which benefitted the mission, including increased positive engagement between the UNDOF HQ and Alpha-side forces.

The unit also conducted a number of Deliberate Operations during this time such as a number of UXO disposals in densely populated areas by the Ordnance Section and route clearance operations of UN Observation Posts by the Engineer Section. All operations were conducted to a very high standard due to the excellent standards of all personnel involved.

Withdrawal Plan

A Campaign plan for withdrawal was devised by OC 68 Inf Gp, Lt Col Oliver Clear early in the deployment, with several planning meetings taking place. All key appointment holders within the unit were invited to contribute to the planning process, no matter how small they thought their idea was. This was a welcome initiative as it ensured unity of effort, with all members of the unit striving to complete this task to a high standard. The first part of the plan involved testing the complex border between Syria and Lebanon without delay in order to gauge the approximate timeline for a crossing to be completed, as all DF vehicles, equipment and personnel would have to complete this move as part of a withdrawal.

OC 68 Inf Gp, Lt Col Oliver Clear hands over the UN flag to incoming FRC Comdr from KAZCOY



The repatriation of Mission equipment to Ireland via Beirut port



BSM Anthony Jinks and CS Stephen Lynch at the 68 Inf Gp Half Marathon that took place at the end of deployment

A successful move of vehicle parts was completed into Lebanon in Jan 24. This gave us the approximate time it would take for storage containers to clear both Syrian and Lebanese customs checks and gave us a rough timeframe to work off for the rest of the withdrawal moves.

From the beginning of February, with two months of the deployment remaining, the unit's work ramped-up as we had to prepare for the withdrawal whilst conducting a detailed, safe and orderly handover to the new FRC Contingent deploying from Kazakhstan.

Mission Command. Theory vs Practice.

Mission Command is a central part of leadership training in most modern armed forces. It is regularly spoken about in our own Military College on the many Officer and NCO career advancement courses also. This deployment with UNDOF was the first time where I witnessed MC in action. The CO levelled a huge amount of trust in the Officers and NCOs of the unit to complete both the withdrawal and the handover after issuing his commanders guidance. This level of trust ensured that the unit strived to succeed to support the commander's intent.

The S4 Cell under the control of Capt Andrew O'Neill and BQMS Colm Donnelly were tasked to plan and conduct the withdrawal. Concurrently, the S3 Cell with Capt Cathal Owens, BSM Anthony Jinks, CQMS Thomas Campbell and myself were tasking with the planning, conduct and supervision of the handover to Kazakhstan FRC (KAZCOY).

Handover to KAZCOY

An Advance Party from KAZCOY arrived in the mission area in February. Kazakhstan's deployment to UNDOF was a national effort, as it was their first overseas deployment with the UN. Joint training commenced immediately with KAZCOY Officers, NCOs and APC drivers accompanying FRC personnel on patrols to familiarise themselves with the AOR. The members of KAZCOY were highly motivated, eager and driven so this assisted greatly in the handover process.

The main point of contact was the KAZCOY DCO, who had previous overseas experience as a staff officer in UNIFIL. The new KAZCOY FRC would mirror the Irish FRC ORBATT in the way their QRF was structured by way of vehicles and personnel.

KAZCOY deployed their main body in March with all vehicles, equipment and personnel landing in Damascus. FRC then had the task of conducting route familiarisation and QRF rehearsals with all KAZCOY pers. For a period of four weeks, this intensive training package was conducted by the excellent officers and NCOs of FRC who assisted KAZCOY on a daily basis with this task. Capt Muir O'Murchu and Sgt Warren Curtin were the driving force behind the slick transition from Irish to Kazakh FRC due to their tireless efforts daily with orders, patrolling and rehearsals.

Over a period of two weeks, the remaining withdrawal moves were scheduled to take place. This had to be synchronised with the handover plan as the FRC were required to maintain operational readiness until 12 days prior to our withdrawal. Four moves were scheduled to move vehicles and equipment to the port in Beirut where a J4 work party awaiting to supervise the loading of a container ship that would transport all this equipment back to Éire.

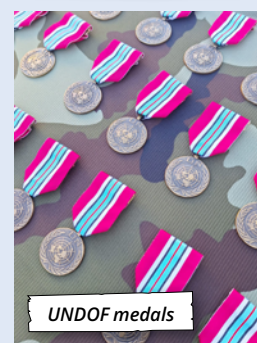
Vehicles and equipment were loaded and moved in packets with no issues encountered at the border crossings. The relationships developed during our deployment (and previous deployments) with Syrian Armed Forces (SAF), Senior Syrian Arab Delegate (SSAD) and UN MOVECON were a key enabler to this withdrawal and should be established and maintained in future DF overseas deployments.

On the night of 04 April, a poignant and sad occasion took place as Irish troops paraded for the last time in the FRC Square, with the tricolour lowered by BSM Jinks. The 68th Infantry Group then mounted transport and withdrew to Beirut for the flight home. This marked the end of the DF 10-year deployment as the UNDOF FRC.

Overall, this was a busy, eventful and challenging deployment for 68 Inf Gp. The success of the work completed, in an ever-changing operational environment was testament to the excellent teamwork, determination and commitment displayed by all members of the unit throughout the deployment.



Capt Duff speaking to the media during the media visit to UNDOF



UNDOF medals

68 Inf Gp Unit



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF 102 SQN AIRCREW

ARTICLE BY CPL RORY COMERFORD
PHOTOS BY CPL RORY COMERFORD



Cpl Comerford performs many different checks before all flights

overseas a course came up to join 102 Squadron as Ground Crew. At that time I didn't know much about the course or what 102 Squadron do so I spoke to several of the crew within 102 Squadron who informed me that after completing the ground crew course it would lead onto the Aircrew course. This was exciting for me because I learned that this would involve travel around Europe and seeing new and interesting places along with completing Air Ambulance missions. This side of the Air Corps really appealed to me.

When I initially applied for the course, there was an interview where I was asked certain questions to see if the role would be best suited for me. After the interview I was delighted to find out that I was selected for the course. On the course itself I learned more about what the job entails such as stocking the aircraft, aircraft danger areas, VIP handling and also

I am currently employed as rear aircrew on the Learjet 45 & Pilatus PC12 in 102 Squadron, No. 1 Ops Wing. I joined the Defence Forces back in early 2017 as line personnel. Once I finished training, I joined No. 1 Ops Wing as Logs staff in tools and safety equipment stores. I enjoyed my time spent in stores as I was able to learn a lot from the technicians about the maintenance procedures for the aircraft we had in the hangar. In 2019 I was given the opportunity to go overseas to UNDOF with the 59th Infantry Group. It was a great trip to be on as it has given me the opportunity to see how the Army operates as a functional unit. When I returned from

many other different responsibilities. It was also a great added bonus to receive Tech pay 2 once I was qualified and started working full time in the squadron. I have been with 102 Squadron since 2020 and during this time I was fortunate enough to complete a Potential NCO's course in 2021. Soon thereafter I began the Aircrew course to progress my career in 102 Squadron.

The course to become qualified as Aircrew on the Learjet-45 and Pilatus PC12 is around 8 weeks long with both theory based and hands on lessons. The course has a variety of different aspects to learn about such as, dealing with different handling agents, HACCP, emergencies that can arise on board the aircraft and also completing Air Ambulance missions. After completing the theory side of the course I began training on multiple flights to put the theory into practice. These flights included Ministerial Air Transport, Military Transport and Patient Transfer Operations. I had to complete 5 flights in total on the Learjet to become qualified and a further 3 on the PC12 to be rated on that aircraft. On top of all the training we receive in house we also go to Savannah, Georgia in the United States to complete cabin safety training. This was a great opportunity to further my skills and share insights into problems that can arise with people from many different walks of aviation. Once I completed all my training and the flights required to fully qualify me as aircrew I was promoted to Corporal in 102 Squadron. This was the beginning of my aviation career and as an added bonus, I now qualified to receive both tech and flying pay.

While working day to day in 102 Squadron my day can vary from carrying out normal military functions to going flying for a wide variety of operations. These





include Air Ambulance missions which can involve transferring patients to anywhere in Europe. For a lot of these missions the patients are between the ages of three to ten so there is always great satisfaction when we successfully transfer them abroad for medical treatment or return them home after treatment. We are always trying to upskill and practice with our equipment so operations are very fluid and if problems arise we can act quickly and competently in any situation. The other main part of our flying involves Ministerial Air Transport. For these missions we regularly fly our country's leaders to any part of Europe so there is a lot of preparation involved. I really enjoy these operations as it gives me the opportunity to see new and sometimes sunny places where I could be for one to three days. The most memorable trip I had was when I went on a triple overnight to Turkey and Greece. During this mission I spent one night in Hatay, one night in Ankara and another in Athens. I was delighted to visit Athens as I was able to visit the Acropolis! During my time as Aircrew I've visited a lot of other interesting places such as Reykjavik, Zurich and Stockholm. I have seen a lot of cities over my short period of time flying with the Air Corps and still enjoy seeing new places I never thought I would get to visit.

When I'm not flying, I'm always looking for opportunities to up-skill or hone the skills I have learned during my time flying. When I'm not flying on the aircraft I'm assisting others preparing for their flight by dealing with any ground tasks as required. These can cover an array of responsibilities from checking emergency equipment on board, to stocking the aircraft and preparing the appropriate paperwork to make the flight fall into place. In my role I have always been afforded the opportunity to take part in all sorts of extra activities such as playing golf with Air Corps Golf Society, to training troops which was a highly rewarding experience for

me to take part in. I have also been given the opportunity to take part in other courses outside of the unit such as a Flight Dispatcher course, MedAir training, Flight Safety international Cabin training and so on. All of these courses come with civilian certification which are recognised globally.

When I'm tasked with a MATS (Ministerial Air Transport Service) mission, I arrive two hours before the departure time of the flight to get everything prepared. These tasks include checking the stock on the aircraft, ensuring all the emergency equipment is there and functioning correctly and double-checking that all the paperwork is in order. Myself and the pilots would sit down and brief to talk about the factors affecting the flight such as weather en-route and the flight time to allow me to plan my service. Weather is an important factor in our role I always try to get as much detail as I can from the brief with the pilots. Once all that is complete and if there is time available I go through what I call "my pre-flight ritual", where I'd sit have a nice cup of coffee listen to certain songs to make me nice and relaxed before getting on board the aircraft. When the PAX (passengers) arrive I greet them at the aircraft and once they have all boarded I close up the doors and brief the passengers on all the safety features of the aircraft. While taxiing out to the runway I do my last checks and give the cabin secure signal to the pilots. Once we're airborne I start a service (if required for that flight) and that would take up most of the flight time. Upon landing at our destination we as a crew would close down the aircraft and deal with the handling agent to get whatever we need for the next stage of the mission which typically would be going back to Baldonnel. After the aircraft is closed down we make our way to a hotel and in general, we would have time off to go and explore whatever city we are in and try the local cuisine (a great perk of the job!). When the

time comes to return home we would make our way back to the aircraft and follow the exact same process as we did on the way out. After arriving back at home base we are greeted by the ground crew who assist in any way we need. This is typical of how a mission would go. In my opinion it's one of the best parts of the job as it allows me to travel around Europe while still working in the Air Corps.

In conclusion, I have really enjoyed my time as part of 102 Squadron. It has been a memorable experience and it's a great squadron to work in. The work I do is very rewarding for what I want from a job. I like to travel and see new places and this is what appealed to me the most when I decided to become aircrew on the Learjet and PC12. In the near future we will hopefully have a new aircraft that will have more capabilities and will give me more opportunity to travel to even further destinations around the globe. Our unit is going to be running a course for air and ground crew in the coming months and I think it's a great opportunity for other to enjoy the same experiences I have had so far in my role as Aircrew. I'm excited to pass on skills I have obtained over the last few years to potential candidates who share similar interests to me. I look forward to the future of 102 Squadron with more opportunities to see many new places and hopefully a new aircraft to learn some new skills.



FAMILY DAY FAMILY



DEFENCE FORCES FAMILY DAY *in Dublin Zoo*

BY COMDT HELEN HOSBACK

PHOTOS BY ARMN SAM GIBNEY, CPL MARTIN BENNETT

On a rainy day in the middle of July, the Defence Forces hosted a Family Day in Dublin Zoo for families of DF personnel currently deployed overseas. The day was a resounding success with almost 600 family members visiting Dublin Zoo on the day, and collecting their goodie bags from DF staff who were there to welcome family members. This day would not have been a success without the work done by staff in the DF Info Office and the volunteers from McKee Bks Coy but particularly the families who made the effort to attend on the day.

As members of the Defence Forces we are required to regularly work away from home, be it on duty, courses, conferences abroad or overseas deployments. None of this would be possible without the support of our families behind us.

It was a privilege to meet the families of personnel that are currently deployed, and we look forward to meeting more in the future.



Y DAY FAMILY DAY



PEOPLE OF THE DF

NAME

SANDRA MURPHY

CURRENT UNIT

CYBER DEVELOPMENT PLANNING OFFICE

RANK

CS

UNITS SERVED

DFTC CIS GROUP, 2 BDE CIS COY, DFHQ
CYBER DEVELOPMENT

YEAR JOINED

SEPTEMBER 1ST 1994

MISSIONS OVERSEAS

80 INF BN UNIFIL, MNTFC KFOR, EUTM
UGANDA, 59 INF GP UNDOF AND EUTM MALI

INTERVIEW BY CPL MARTIN BENNETT
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CS SANDRA MURPHY

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

I joined the Defence Forces on September 1st, 1994 and completed my recruit and 3* training in Cathal Brugha's BTC. As of September 1 this year, I will have served 30 years in the DF. I was posted to 6 Field Signals upon completion of my training and served as a Communication Operative (CommOp) until I completed one of the initial Trainee Technician Schemes (TTS) in Information Technology (IT). I've served in the DFTC for 26 years between the Military Admin School and the CIS group as a CIS technician. During this time I completed my NCO, Standard and Senior NCO course and completed the many star tests that enabled me to become a Tech 6 technician. On promotion to Company Sergeant, I was posted to 2 Bde CIS Company, where I served for 3 years. Presently, I am serving in the Cyber Development Planning Office. During my 30 years I've completed 5 overseas trips.

What made you decide to join the DF?

After finishing school in 1990, I wasn't ready to pursue college and wanted to start earning money. I initially attempted to join the Defence Forces that same year but was unsuccessful. I then spent four years working before trying again in 1994, and this time, I was accepted. My decision to join was greatly influenced by my family's military legacy; my father served in the DF for 31 years, and my grandfather also served until his retirement at age 60. I also have a brother serving in the DFTC. Additionally, I was very fit back then and believed the military environment was one where I would thrive. The promise of a pension after 21 years of services was also a nice carrot.

What was your proudest moment in the DF?

I have several moments in my career that I am particularly proud of. One significant achievement was my promotion to CS. Up until the last promotion competition I was the only female CS in the army currently serving. While there are female Flt Sgts in the AC and a Chief CPO in the Navy there wasn't any female CS's in the Army. However,

my proudest moment came in 2019 when my daughter passed out as a member of the Defence Forces. This was particularly special because it marked a historic achievement for my family as we are the first mother and daughter to have served in the Irish DF and this is an achievement I'm very proud of.

What was the most challenging moment in your career?

My most challenging moment was leaving my children for the first time to serve overseas. At that time, my daughter was 6 and my son was 8. While some might view my decision as selfish, I did it to advance my career in the DF. I knew that overseas service was crucial for promotion, and without it, I would not have achieved promotion to my current rank. It was also a requirement for the technical grade. Leaving my children to fulfil this requirement was incredibly difficult. However, looking back, I believe it was the right decision.

What are your plans and goals for the future?

Currently, I am completing a MSc in Industrial Networks and Cyber Security, which is due to end in December. In September, I will begin



CS Sandra Murphy, Tech 6 Technician, CIS Corps

an MSc in Forensic Computing and Cyber Crime Investigations at UCD. I started my current role in the Cyber Development Planning Office in 2023. Although I have spent my entire career in CIS, this new role presented a new challenge as I have not previously served in this field. My goal is to develop in this area.

A significant personal aspiration is to achieve the rank of RSM in the future. Having progressed this far in the DF, I hope to continue and attaining this rank would be a remarkable achievement, especially as a female member of the DF.



CS Murphy's first trip overseas to Lebanon in 1996



At CS Murphy's daughter Sarah's passing out in Dundalk

How have you found juggling motherhood and your career in terms of work/life balance?

When you first join the army, you often don't envision how your future will unfold, including marriage and having children. Initially, the focus is on building a career, however, when children come along, things become more complicated, especially when considering overseas or lengthy career courses. These responsibilities can be challenging to manage, particularly if they require extended time away from home.

I was fortunate to have my parents and in-laws nearby, which provided invaluable support with babysitting. Still overseas deployments were difficult. I went overseas 5 times, with four of those occurring after I had children. The first overseas deployment after having children was by far the most difficult. However, it became somewhat easier with each subsequent trip.

I made a conscious decision to take a break from overseas when my daughter reached her teenage years because it was crucial for me to be at home during this time. To this day, I don't regret that decision. Balancing motherhood and a military career is challenging but achievable. Having a supportive husband and family nearby made it a bit easier for me.

What are the biggest changes to the CIS Corps over the years?

The CIS Corps has changed significantly, especially in the past 5 to 10 years. With the developments in the Next Generation Working Environments (NGWE), Software Defined Radio (SDR), SitaWare and Cyber Security, the Corps has come a long way in the area of technology. Education of our CIS personnel has improved dramatically over the years with technicians now leaving college with level 8 degrees. However one of the critical challenges the CIS Corps face is retaining our newly trained technicians. Many leave for better-paying positions in the private sector or even in the public sector. Despite investing heavily in their education and training, it has become increasingly difficult to retain these skilled personnel. Despite the challenges we now face, after 30 years of service, I still love my job and I still get up in the morning wanting to come to work. My love for the Corps has not changed.

You are the first mother and daughter in the DF. What advice did you give to your daughter when she was joining?

Yes we are the first mother and daughter to serve in the DF. Honestly, I didn't realise Sarah wanted to join the DF; I was in Syria at the time and she called to tell me that she had her fitness test the following week. My only advice at that time was to make sure she knew how to do the press ups and sit ups correctly. I was concerned about the fitness test, but thankfully, she passed.

When she started her training, I advised her to keep her mouth shut, keep her head down, and remember that, despite how tough it might get, the instructors were trying to bring out the best in her. I told her to endure the rough patches (and there were) and to push through. Throughout her recruit training I kept my fingers crossed because she is very independent and makes her own decisions, which I truly love about her.

Now my advice is to consider the Trainee Technician Scheme. Although it isn't currently on her horizon, I hope in time, she will see its value. I believe this is the future for CIS personnel, and I would love to see her progress in her career and rise through the ranks, as I did. This is important because, like her mother, she isn't afraid to speak her mind so it's important to at least have the rank behind her.

What opportunities has the DF given to you?

The Defence Forces has given me many opportunities. It definitely gave me the opportunity to grow as a person, a mother and a woman. It has also given me the opportunity to travel all over the world on my five missions overseas and courses. It's given me the opportunity for further education even though initially, when I joined the army, it wasn't education I wanted. I wanted to work rather than go to college but as I progressed and matured, I really appreciated that opportunity.

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

I would tell my 18-year-old self that college is not the only path to achieving your goals. While I didn't initially start my journey in college, I have returned to it 4 or 5 times since then. Higher education can come later in

life when you're ready to pursue a degree, a master's or whatever your aspirations may be. Don't feel pressured to rush into college at 18. Take your time to explore different opportunities and find what truly drives you.



L-R A/FS Leona Walsh, Sandra, Sgt Rena Kennedy, Fire Fighter Roisin Boyne.

AFD – ARMY FORCE DESIGN

INTERVIEW WITH COL NEIL NOLAN
INTERVIEW BY SGT RENA KENNEDY

The establishment of an Army Force Design office was a recommendation of the Commission on the Defence Forces, can you outline to our readers when the office was set up and who are the staff currently employed therein?

The selection process for the Army Force Design Office took place in the latter part of 2023, with the final member of the team on-boarding in January 2024, when the office reached Initial Operating Capability (IOC). The office currently consists of six personnel – three officers and three NCOs drawn from across the Army. We range in ranks from OR-6 to OF-5, and each member has considerable domestic and overseas experience. While the team is very small in the context of the body of work being undertaken, it is highly motivated and heavily invested in delivering for the Army.

The Army Force Design process sits in the Strategic Objective that focuses on “Services to be reformed and restructured.” How large a challenge does this reform present and what are the steps taken to date be it consultancy, research, design, analysis etc

The task of re-designing the Army is a challenging one, and must be viewed from a number of perspectives. Firstly, if we look at what the CODF report found with regard to the Army, it noted that the current structure was implemented “without an extensive Force Design and analysis process” and recommended that the Army “would undergo a higher level of structural transformation than the other two services.” There are a number of legacy issues which need to be addressed in terms of capacity and combat capability so that we can effectively generate the Force Elements at Readiness that we need to perform all tasks assigned by government, both domestically and internationally. Furthermore, when we look at the evolving geopolitical and security environment, and in particular the impact of Emerging and Disruptive Technologies on operations in the land domain, we see a developing picture of complexity, volatility and challenge. The battlespace is expanding as weapon systems develop increasing range, precision and lethality; while unmanned and autonomous systems are creating a more transparent operating environment. All of this presents a considerable challenge in the context of designing an Army that will thrive in the future operating environment. It also represents a great opportunity

however, and while orchestrating the many projects underway in the context of the Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP) is very challenging for everyone, there is great unity of effort in striving to meet our end-state, which is “a more agile and

flexible Army Force Structure, which is regionally balanced, modern, postured to defend the State and can meet current and future operational tasks.”

Is there a logical journey map or project management process followed and did you engage external/foreign militaries for comparison who have undertaken such reform?

Unlike other militaries who have dedicated long-term defence planners, the Army has no such dedicated function – hence the establishment of the Army Force Design Office. While the staff are exceptional professionals, Force Design is not something we have experience in, nor do we have any Irish doctrine underpinning the discipline. Consequently, a number of actions were taken to build up our knowledge base; they include the commissioning of research into Force Design methodology, carried out by Brig Gen (Retd) Dave Dignam; extensive engagement with other countries, including visits to Norway and US Army Europe; meetings with the New Zealand Defence Forces, and VTCs and other exchanges with a wide range of international militaries and institutions, including NATO. While countries tend to approach Force Design differently, there are a number of common threads which have informed our thinking and our Force Design process. We have completed a number of steps, which we are now validating in the context of the recently-published Defence Policy Review. These include an analysis of the security environment and its implications for Force Design; an analysis of defence policy in the context of the roles of the Army; a mission analysis of our primary roles and an extensive stakeholder engagement process which has seen us engage directly with all Formations, Corps Directors and special staff. Once this phase of the work is completed, we will move into scenario based planning and experimentation, which will allow us to identify in more detail the gaps in our structures and capabilities when measured against the tasks that fall out of the roles assigned by government. This will then allow us to examine candidate structures to fill the identified gaps.



In parallel, we are about to launch a piece of work on the Army identity, including Mission, Vision and Values, and this will involve both an online survey through the Connect App, and focus groups with all formations. I would encourage all of our personnel to get involved and to have their say.

According to the Detailed Implementation Plan, the Army Force Design has been initiated earlier in 2024 with “high level design” developed over Q3 and Q4 of 2024. Are you on target to complete the design phase?

Firstly, good progress has been made to date on an analysis of the key factors which have a bearing on Force Design, which is ultimately the process of translating policy into a future structure which can be realised within the means available. There are a few points to note however. The Commission have observed that many of its recommendations are sequential, and there is a top-down sequence to the Force Design of the Army, i.e. the staffing and structures of the Strategic HQ, and in particular the Joint HQ need to be addressed before the Army can go firm on an optimal high level structure for the force. Indeed the recently-published Defence Policy Review specifically references the fact that the development of the services will be heavily influenced by the planned high level C2 reforms, including the redesign of the Strategic HQ and necessary governance structures. Therefore, while there may be slippage in the high level structure milestone, the detailed design is due to be completed

in 2025, and that remains the intent, subject to the necessary higher level steps being in place. I would add however, that the most important consideration here is to get it right, and that is a key focus for everyone involved in this process.



The CODF Report states (page 12): “In respect of the Army, the Commission has identified a range of issues with the current Army structure including that the current brigade system primarily comprises two regional administrative structures that are not deployable and do not align to international standards in terms of their strength or capabilities.”

Can you simplify the problems associated with our current organisational structure as outlined by the Commission?

From a structural perspective, the most pressing issue facing the force is the lack of an Army Headquarters. This is a critical deficiency which impacts on unity of effort, capability development, service representation and resource allocation. More broadly, our structures lack the capacity to generate Force Elements at Readiness in a manner which is optimal and sustainable. This has led to a number of knock-on effects, including an erosion of our combat effectiveness, and challenges in sustaining the force. Both the White Paper on Defence, and the Defence Policy Review, recognise NATO standards as the ISO for military capability. If we measure our current structures against the applicable NATO capability codes, we find that we have many gaps. While our personnel have all performed exceptionally well when assessed as part of the NATO OCC process, in many cases it has taken an organisation-wide effort to bring units up to NATO standards – even temporarily. I would add that we have not been making optimal use of our Reserve, which will play a fundamental role in our future army, as will civilian appointments in enabling roles. The Force Design process presents us with an excellent opportunity to close many of these gaps in the coming years, and to ensure that we develop an Army which is trained and equipped to best international standards, and capable of generating, sustaining and applying effective land power to fulfil all roles assigned by Government.

What reform piece are you most enthusiastic about and again can you explain to our readers WIIFM - “What’s in it for me?”

I think that everyone should be excited and optimistic about the Army of the future. For the first time in many years, we will have a new Army

Headquarters responsible for raising training and maintaining land forces for both single service and joint operations. I see this as a significant step forward for the development of the Army, because in addition to providing further career development opportunities for our personnel, it will also bring purpose, vision and unity of effort to all parts of the force, in addition to greater focus on capability development, combat effectiveness and readiness – our core business. I think that there will be very exciting opportunities ahead, both domestically and internationally, as we enhance our interoperability and embrace NATO standards where possible. Ultimately, as set out in the Defence Policy review, the Army is of central importance in offering scalable and responsive options to Government in protecting Ireland’s interests, and in that regard, we should all be excited about our next chapter as a fundamental institution of the State.

Speaking directly to serving members who are coming to a point in their service where they may be deciding to leave or remain, can you outline your top three reasons they should remain (with specific focus on what the Army/Air Force/Navy may look like in 2028 at the end of LOA2”).

Firstly, the quality of the Army’s personnel has been recognised time and again – whether it be our performance on international courses and competitions where we are benchmarked against the very best in the world; our adaptability in successfully executing complex kinetic and non-kinetic operations at home; or our status as a partner of choice on overseas Peace Support Operations. The Detailed Implementation Plan affords us the opportunity to recapitalise the Army across the combat functions – delivering new equipment and materiel to provide enhanced mobility, firepower and ISTAR capabilities, all nested within fit-for-purpose structures. Work is well underway in identifying the next generation of armour to replace the current fleet once it reaches the end of its service life; the Defence Policy Review has prioritised the development of Ground-Based Air Defence for the Army; the latest technology in Software Defined Radio systems are currently being rolled out across the service, and several soldier systems are at various stages in the procurement pipeline. This will ensure that the qualitative edge that our personnel afford us is further enhanced by world-class equipment and an agile and flexible Order of Battle.

Secondly, the recently published Defence Policy Review has provided clarity with regard to the roles and priorities of the Army. It clearly sets out a primary role of national defence, and stipulates that we must be prepared to serve on higher intensity and robust peace support operations. In order to meet these policy requirements in the context of an evolving security environment, the Army will need to focus on readiness to a much greater degree in the future. We will need to develop and inculcate an operational mindset, and a robust operating concept which will see us shedding many of our non-core tasks and a return to the core business of collective training, readiness and interoperability. This will see us deploy on national and international exercises in combined arms, joint and multi-agency environments much more frequently than is currently the case. Our Force Design will be fundamental to creating the conditions for our readiness and combat effectiveness.

Finally, the Army of the future will be very different in composition to the Army of today. The reserve will be integrated into our structures to a far greater degree, and will play a more central role in support of the PDF. Civilian Staff will provide us with the continuity we need in appropriate areas of work, thereby freeing up our soldiers to perform core tasks, and working alongside our sister services as part of an effective joint force will become routine. When we take a step back and consider the full scope of initiatives currently underway as part of the DIP (including changes to HR policies, new accommodation and facilities and new kit and equipment) and fold them into an agile and flexible Army force Structure, we can see that the conditions are being created for the development of a world class army and a life less ordinary.



IRISH DESERTERS OF THE IRISH DEFENCE FORCES DURING WWII

AN INTRODUCTION

ARTICLE BY CAPT CÍÁN HARTE

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CAPT CÍÁN HARTE

This article will be the first in a series exploring the controversial topic of Irish Defence Forces soldiers who deserted the organisation to join the British Army during WWII.

In January 2020, I was reading local newspaper articles of the Emergency era in search of stories of Sligo soldiers when I happened upon a man by the name of 'Mr Gorman' of Sligo town who had been brought into court for a misdemeanour on Sligo's main thoroughfare - O'Connell Street post-WWII. It transpired that Mr Gorman had been a member of the Irish Defence Forces, an organisation he deserted before the outbreak of the Second World War to join the British Army. He would go on to fight at Dunkirk and in North Africa against Rommel's Afrika Corps, only to seemingly desert from the British Army too and return to his native Sligo. After the hearing of his misdemeanour offence was processed in court, Mr. Gorman was handed over to Irish military authorities to receive judgment from a military court for his act of desertion. After randomly coming upon this short article, I next happened upon a man named 'Mr Dolan' of Sligo town, who rebuked the district judge upon being handed back to the Military Police to be judged before a military court for the act of desertion in 1943. He would exclaim threateningly upon being led away from court: "Wait till Hitler comes over".

My interest was piqued, and as I started to search for "Irish Army deserter" and other similar terms of reference through various newspaper databases and archives, I was astounded by the sheer quantity of material. There were thousands of entries in local and national newspapers dealing with the details of a court session wherein a deserter had been brought before a district judge for this military crime. My initial reaction: could that many have deserted from the Irish Army during a time of national peril?

The topic of this discussion is understandably sensitive. It is sensitive to family members of the deserters who feel the state, wider society,

and even, at times, their very own neighbours were overly harsh in their treatment of their ancestors for the controversial decision they made to firstly desert and secondly join the British Army. Without fear of creating a false sense of equivalency, the subjects covered in this book were and remain sensitive (albeit in a politically passionate form rather than a personally emotive form) to those who hold the opinion that Irishmen should never join British Army Regiments - most particularly so soon after independence had been achieved - put to one side the fact that the soldiers first deserted from the state's new national army.

The passage of time has helped alleviate some of the bitterness and rawness of the subject for the groups mentioned above, but a discussion such as this can still stir the passions. We need to look no further than recently attempted and abandoned RIC commemorations in 2019-20 for evidence of this.

Éire seceded from the United Kingdom in 1922 and simultaneously established its own National Army (known as the Free State Army, later known as the Irish Defence Forces). Regardless of this historic national step, the centuries-long tradition of Irishmen joining the British military did not cease. Instead, the custom continued, and during the Second World War, despite Éire's official neutral stance, tens of thousands of Irishmen joined the British military. Within this number is a unique sub-group of soldiers who took a more significant risk by enlisting - those that deserted from the Irish National Army.

As a form of repercussion for deserting the Irish Defence Forces, the Fianna Fáil government, led by Eamonn de Valera as Taoiseach, summarily dismissed them from their military service in 1945¹. Furthermore, their names were published in a controversial document titled: "List of personnel of the Defence Forces dismissed for desertion in time of National Emergency pursuant to the terms of Emergency Powers (No 362) Order 1945 (S.R. & O. 1945 No 198) or Section 13 of the Defence Forces (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1946 (No 7/1946)." This document (or "blacklist" as it was to become known) was subsequently circulated to all civil service departments and state-run services, e.g., post offices, health services, state-owned bus, rail, air, and shipping companies). This was intended to bar those listed from any form of government employment. Moreover, all these men lost their entitlements to gratuities, allowances and pensions for services rendered, dated from the day they were recorded to have gone AWOL from the Irish Defence Forces. The total number on the list is 4,983 soldiers.

During the Second World War, it is estimated that some 60-70,000 citizens of Éire joined the British Army. Interestingly, the number exceeded that of Loyalist Northern Ireland. The total known number to desert the Irish Defence Forces was more than 7,000 (with an estimated slight majority of this number joining the British Army), meaning that some 10% of Irish citizens who joined the British military during WWII were, in fact, deserters from the Irish Defence Forces. The Irish Defence Forces had approximately 42,000 permanent serving personnel within its various services throughout the war². The Irish Defence Forces was suffering from a retention crisis during a time in which the continuity of the state was under immense pressure and in receipt of covert (and at times overt) threats to its sovereignty. Of the 7,000 plus estimated to have deserted, slightly fewer than 2,500 personnel returned to their units or were apprehended (some were tried by a military tribunal, and others were locked up in military jails).



Figure 1. Con Murphy in military attire. Picture from Irish Independent Article (07/05/2013). Con Murphy remarked bluntly how "I was browned off with the Army and cutting turf - it wasn't soldiering at all" (Widders, Robert. *Spitting On A Soldier's Grave: Court-Martialled After Death, The Story of The Forgotten Irish And British Soldiers* [Poland, 2017], p. 46). Con Murphy was referencing the 'Turf-Cutting Campaigns' the Defence Forces were utilised for throughout the Emergency period, a campaign of such a non-military nature that it would drive hundreds from the force to pursue soldierly passions elsewhere.



Figure 2. Guardsman John Stout. Served with the Irish Guards and fought at the Battles of Arnhem & the Bulge after deserting the Defence Forces during the Emergency. Picture from the Irish Daily Mail (07/05/2013).

There is a great historical paradox to the tale of the Irish deserters of WWII. Most deserters throughout military history ran from the battlefield – many Irish deserters ‘ran’ towards the battlefield. The motivations, lives, and wartime experiences of these individuals formed the basis of the research into their lives that I hope to investigate, uncover, and ultimately reveal.

From a strictly scholarly point of view, the analyses of Éire and its relationship with WWII have primarily focussed on the experiences of Irish civilians on the Home

Front during the so-called ‘Emergency’ years, the perennial question of whether Ireland remained ‘neutral’ during this time and the state’s reaction to the war (i.e., censorship, economic policies etc.). These topics have been pursued and published in extensive detail and justifiably so. Furthermore, other research interests (that do have a military angle) have tended to focus on the contribution of Irish Brigades and Battalions from a relatively impersonal perspective.

While the lives and experiences of seemingly ordinary WWII Irish soldiers have been discussed in greater detail in more recent years with works from authors such as Richard Doherty and Neil Richardson – a detailed, critical and in-depth analysis of Irishmen who deserted the Irish Defence Forces and who subsequently joined the British Army has yet to be undertaken and intensively investigated. We are still far from satisfactorily resolving the details of the deserters’ issue. Many questions remain about the deserters themselves – when studied in isolation from the general WWII volunteers of Éire.

Whereas in past centuries, Irish soldiers had no homogenous nation-state to swear an oath of loyalty to, this was no longer the case from 1922. Their experiences and decisions to desert, therefore, are somewhat unique to explore and analyse.

In future articles, I will explore some associated questions regarding these men. What were their motivations to desert and enlist in the British Army? Were these men treated appropriately or fairly by the organisation they deserted or the state? Should the deserters be remembered, commemorated, or celebrated? Or ignored and forgotten?



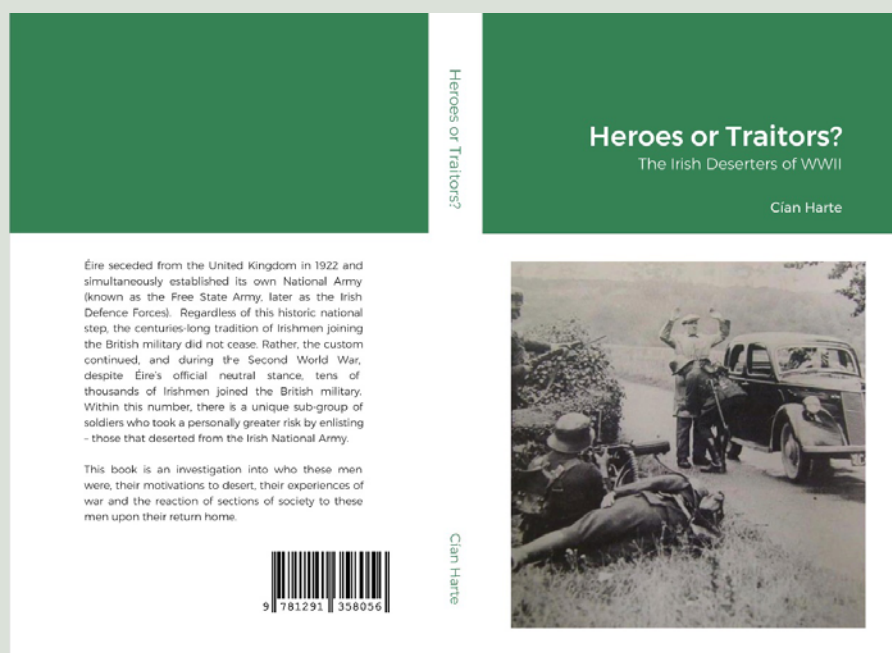
Figure 3. George Gallagher in British military uniform. Picture courtesy of next of kin. George (b. 10/4/1920) was from Castleconnor, Co. Sligo. He would go on to serve in North Africa. After the war, he returned to his homeland of Sligo for the remaining years of his life.

¹ Under EPO 362, 4,634 Irish soldiers who were absent for a period of more than 180 days were dismissed from the National Army. Army personnel who had not been summarily struck off by 08 August 1945 and were absent for less than 180 days (not captured and placed under court-martial) were also dismissed automatically as soon as they passed the 180-day threshold. Additionally, a further 149 soldiers were expelled in March of 1946.

² In all, some 350,000 served in some form of a uniform, whether in the regular army, Air Corps, Marine and Coast Watching Service, Local Defence Force and Local Security Force. There is an excellent chance that the other 90% who joined the British military (officially never having served the state of Éire in any capacity) during WWII may have been a member of one of the above-mentioned reserve units at some point.

Author: Capt Cian Harte was born in Riverstown, Co. Sligo in 1991. He holds a B.A. and M.A. in Ancient History from Queen's University Belfast and an M.A. in Strategic Studies from UCC. He has self-published five history books to date including his latest: ‘Heroes or Traitors: Irish Deserters of WWII’ (2021), available from www.lulu.com or any online book retailers.

Capt Harte's book, 'Heroes or Traitors? The Irish Deserters of WWII' is available from www.lulu.com and online booksellers



THE DEFENCE FORCES ASSOCIATION OF MOUNTAINEERS (DFAM)

ARTICLE BY SGT SARAH NOLAN

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY SGT SARAH NOLAN

The Defence Forces Association of Mountaineers (DFAM) consists of personnel from different units all over the Irish Defence Forces.

It began as a group of likeminded individuals who shared a love for the outdoors and quickly turned into something more. Today, members of DFAM participate in a multitude of activities ranging from Rock Climbing, Mountaineering, Skiing, Alpine Climbing, Ice climbing, Coasteering, and Mountain Biking. While these are some of the activities that the members participate in, we also provide substantial services to the Defence Forces - Adventure Camps, Courses and Rescue elements.

Adventure Camps & Ultimate Hell Week

If you've had the pleasure of being attached to a rope that's running along the side of the water tower in the DFTC, the Mirror Wall in Co. Clare or even the old head in Kinsale, then you've come across some of the Confidence Training Instructors (CTI's) in DFAM. Once completing the CTI course, the instructors will go on to provide adventure camps or days for units, Recruits, Cadets or any group of the DF that request it. These adventure days can consist of an Abseil, Rock Climbing or Heavy Ropes Obstacle Course. While some may say that the heavy ropes obstacle course can be the toughest camp to go for, their opinions often change when standing at the edge of the mirror wall. This is never an issue for us though, as we frequently have troops that are terrified of heights and we rarely fail to get them over the edge - which is what a Confidence Training Instructor is all about - instilling confidence in people and their abilities.

Other aspects of the adventure days can include rock climbing.

Often done in Ballerina, Co. Clare or Dalkey Quarry, Co. Dublin, we will provide a day of outdoor rock ropes. There's no

experience and the to get

of climbing required aim of the day is outside and enjoy doing something a bit different than a unit hill walk. For Cadets and recruits, it also provides a much needed break from the intensive training they go through.

The heavy ropes obstacle course is constructed in Cloughlea Forest, Co. Wicklow.

For some reason, this is our least requested gig - I'm not too sure why! For this, we will plan and build a course over

Shankill River in Cloughlea. The obstacles often consist of a Ratslide, Commando Bridge, Monkey Bridge, zip line and a few extras thrown in for good measure. While this is a different and more physical day out, it's always a fun one. Troops will break a sweat during it, but that's not a big deal as there's a nice dip in the river to end the course.

DFAM also provided obstacles and support during 3 seasons of Ultimate Hell Week for RTE2. CTIs constructed the various rope based obstacles you would have seen on the show. A lot of these setups required some brain storming and pre planning for it to all run smoothly, which it thankfully always did. Some of the setups included: the Water Tower in the DFTC, Mizen Head Bridge, Achilles Copper Mines and an abseil dispatching off the County Council building in Cork.

Courses

Members of DFAM run and participate in a various courses. We have 3 main courses that we run, and one international course that we participate in. On island, we run a Basic Rock Course, CTI course and Basic Mountain Skills Course.

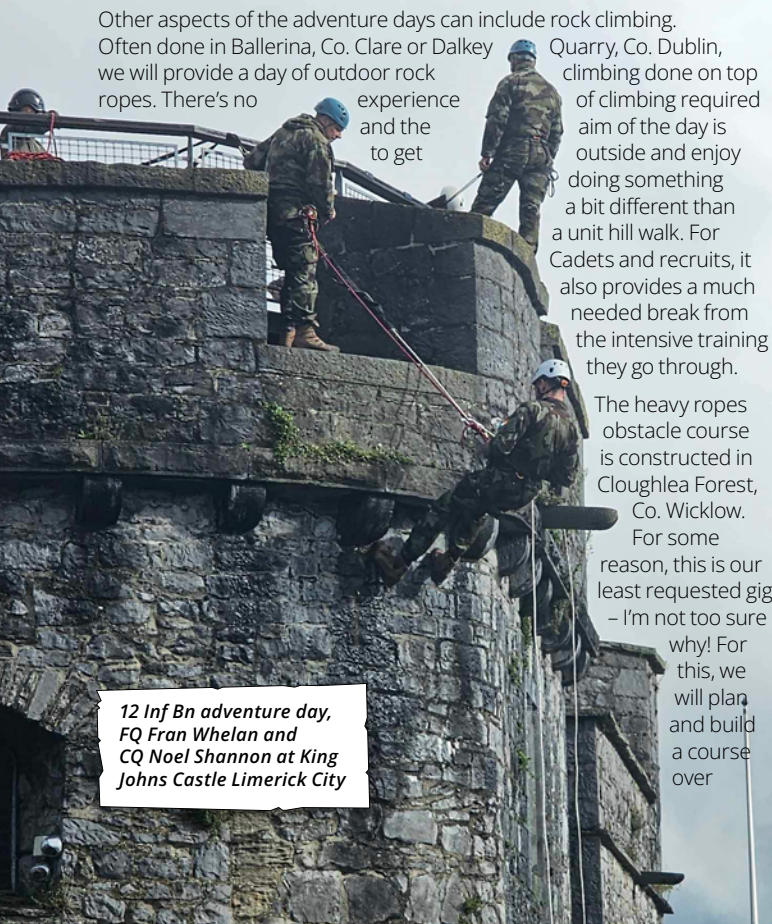
The basic rock course is an introduction to lead climbing. We take students that have various differing levels of climbing experience ranging from none to some and over the course of a week, will teach them how to lead climb, belay correctly and create an anchor system to bring their climbing partner up after them. This is often the introduction to DFAM and is a very enjoyable course. Personnel interested in becoming a CTI should complete a basic rock course before progressing.

The CTI course is ran over 3 weeks and in 3 different locations - Ballyryan, Co. Clare, Dalkey Quarry, Co. Dublin and Cloughlea Forest, Co. Wicklow. During this course, students will learn how to set up an abseil, a top rope system and rescue technique for helping their climbing partner. They are tested on all 3 elements mentioned

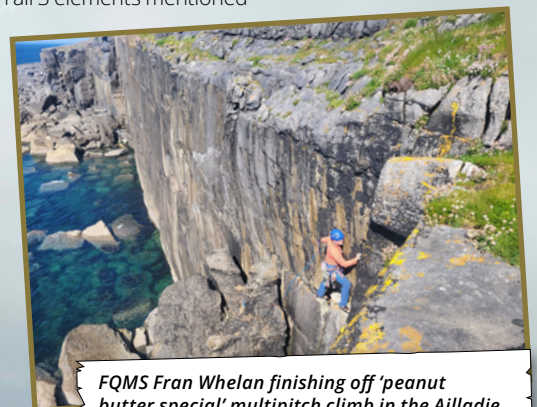
and on passing their assessment will go on to week 3 of the course which consists of learning the heavy ropes obstacle course. This is an extremely tough, enjoyable and rewarding



Sgt Nolan dispatching a cadet off mirror wall for an adventure camp



12 Inf Bn adventure day, FQ Fran Whelan and CQ Noel Shannon at King Johns Castle Limerick City



FQMS Fran Whelan finishing off 'peanut butter special' multipitch climb in the Ailladie

Swiss summer PFP 2023, on Rhone glacier. Capt Tim Quinlan, Sgt Sarah Nolan, Cpl Kady McKenna and Cpl John Sharkey along with Polish military, US rangers & mountain warfare school and Canadian pararescue



Swiss summer PFP outside Andermatt Barracks

course. As we often say to students on day 1 – while there is a lot of climbing over the next 2 weeks, this is not a climbing course. The aim of the 3 weeks is to build students up in their confidence, their abilities and their systems. This

is so that when they go on to run adventure camps, they will ensure that the troops that they have running through their ropes, top rope or abseil are confident in themselves and come away from the activities feeling better than before they started.

The mountain skills course has been resurrected and ran over the last two years. Both years it has been ran out of Killorglin, Co. Kerry. The mountain skills course is a strenuous course but also extremely rewarding. Over the course of a week, students will do various routes over the MacGillycuddy Reeks, learning the importance of route selection, contingency plans, appropriate dress, kit and equipment, an intro to navigation, taking a group out and pacing. Each day students will

Sgt Erasmus at the bottom of Mirror wall waiting for a student on the most recent CTI course



Rescue

In the past year, thanks to CQMS Noel Shannon, DFAM has also gotten more deeply involved in rescue elements. Last October we participated in the first on island multi agency rope rescue workshop run by Dublin Fire Brigade. Each team was given various different scenarios in which we had to rescue people from, each one more challenging than the last. There were various different teams participating including Dublin Fire Brigade, Sligo Mountain Rescue, Water Rescue Ireland, Garda ERU, and Malaga Rope Rescue. After various training days and work shopping techniques, we went into the grounds of the DFB training center expecting to have a bit of fun and enjoy the day. What we didn't expect was to win best overall team. For those on the team, this was a huge boost of confidence in our abilities and has pushed us to focus an element of DFAM on

learning rescue techniques. Members of DFAM have previously been called in to assist with SAR operations on Blacksod and Slieve League, further cementing the need for a rescue element and skillset in DFAM.

Notable Achievements

DFAM has various members that have completed some monumental feats. Some of these include: An Expedition to the Himalayas without porters/ sherpas (Comdt (Retd) Kevin McDonald)

Summitting Denali (6190m) in 2019 (FQMS Fran Whelan & Sgt Paul O Connell), Mt Blanc (4805m) (Comdt John O'Brien), Mount Toubkal (4167m) (Cpl Patrick McDonald & Lt Ronan O'Neill)



Rope rescue team from DFB workshops. CQ Emmet Powell, Sgt Sarah Nolan, Cpl Patrick McDonald, Cpl Kady McKenna, FQMS Fran Whelan, Sgt Erasmus, CQMS Noel Whelan (not pictured) Capt Richard Griffiths



FQMS Fran Whelan and Sgt Paul O'Connell, at Gran Paradiso, Italy

FQMS Fran Whelan and Sgt Paul O'Connell on Denali, Alaska in 2019



be given the chance to 'lead' a walk and put the skills they're learning into action.

Each year the Defence Forces will send 4 members of DFAM that have met the qualifying criteria to Switzerland to participate on the international Swiss PFP course. The course is ran over 2 weeks in the Swiss Alps. Over this time, we learn mountaineering, crevasse rescue techniques, ice climbing, short roping, sports climbing and navigation. The course is highly sought after and has personnel from different international militaries. On my course, we worked with Canadian pararescue, US Army Mountain Warfare School, Polish Cadets and US National Guard. The knowledge and skillset that we learn on the course is brought back and implemented to our future planning for courses, making it a vital course to participate in. The Swiss military instructors are highly trained and full of expertise. It's a privilege to work alongside them for the 3 weeks and to gain the knowledge they have. It is also a great opportunity to engage with other militaries and help our mountaineering network grow.

Contact and joining

If you are interested in finding out more on DFAM or courses, you can check out the IKON or CONNECT page and find your local brigade rep. alternatively you can contact:

- treasurerdfam@gmail.com
- Sarah.nolan@defenceforces.ie Treasurer
- Noel.shannon@defenceforces.ie Secretary
- Richard.griffiths@defenceforces.ie Chairman

THE NAVAL SERVICE RESERVE, A TRULY UNIQUE SERVICE

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

The Naval Service Reserve (NSR) offers a truly unique type of duty. The new RDF Joint Induction Training syllabus is delivering foundation military training for the NSR and the Army Reserve (AR). On completion, NSR personnel will pass out as Ordinary Ratings. NSR Ordinary Ratings will then commence component specific training prior to serving onboard an Irish Naval Vessel.

NSR personnel are required to undertake the demanding training in Personal Survival Techniques (PST) and Damage Control Fire Fighting (DCFF) to form part of a ship's crew. Ordinary Ratings must then complete a Task Book in order to be advanced to Able Rating.

The Task Book is broken down into 44 tasks for which each rating must learn to perform the respective job, and then be tested by their Training Officer or NCO who will sign off on their proficiency. A sample of tasks include, Duties of a Look-out, Anchor & Cable party, Ship's Quartermaster and Helmsman. Once the Task Book is complete, the individual can be advanced to Able Rating.



Training on a Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB) is a part of the NSR syllabus

This is an exciting time for the NSR as we will soon be taking delivery of the first of four 14metre, twin engine Motor Launches (ML). These vessels were specifically designed for the NSR and are being built in Ireland. Armed with 7.62mm GPMGs the MLs will be fitted with military communications to undertake our primary role of Port Security for the main trading ports of Cork, Dublin, Limerick and Waterford.

The wider NSR will be looking forward to the arrival of the MLs in particular three members

of the Dublin Unit NSR, A/Sea Andrew Thornton and A/Sea Matthew Broe have just been advanced to Able Rating, and Rec Victoria Hastings Rafferty. They have recounted their experiences of service with the NSR thus far.

The NSR is recruiting now in the four units of Cork, Dublin, Waterford and Limerick. See www.military.ie for details and make your application today.

Ordinary Seaman Andrew Thorton

From an early age I've always had a significant interest in the military, having family members who have served hugely influencing me growing up. Being an avid sailor from the age of 7 I was always drawn to the sea. The Naval Service was an obvious way to have an involvement in the military and the sea being the best of both worlds. In 2022 I successfully completed a degree at the Technology University Dublin, completing a bachelor's degree in aviation technology before going on to do a Bachelor of Science in transport operations and technology in 2023. I am currently working as a Graduate aircraft design engineer with CAE Parc Aviation.

I've been a member of the Dublin Unit Naval Service Reserve since August 2021, undertaking a wide range of training. To date I have successfully completed training in DCFF (Damage Control and Fire Fighting), PST (Personal Survival Techniques), MFR



Sunsets in the harbour have a different vibe to them



Sunrise on the sea

Casevac exercise**Casevac exercise with the Irish Coast Guard**

(Military First Responder) and GMDSS (Global Maritime Distress and Safety Systems) as well as a variety of military and maritime training such as weapons training and seamanship. Additionally, I was also successful in being part of the Defence Forces sailing team for Volvo Cork Week 2022.

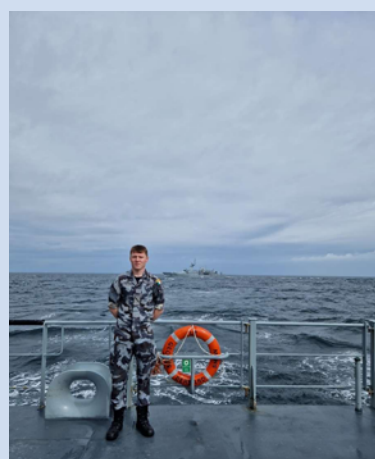
My favourite and most memorable experience to date was having the privilege of being a member of the crew on board LÉ George Bernard Shaw, where I spent 4 weeks on board. While on board I carried out a wide variety of tasks and roles while at sea, patrolling predominantly the West coast of Ireland, seeing places that I would have otherwise not have visited. We took in some spectacular scenery along the way, visiting places such as the Skellig Islands and Bere Island to name a few.

The teamwork and comradeship that I have experienced since joining the unit is next to none with everyone looking out for one another both within and outside of the military environment, building a strong esprit de corps between all members of the unit. This in turn allows us to be a much more clinical, effective, and decisive team. I very much look forward to what the NSR has to offer next.

**NSR crew onboard of LÉ George Bernard Shaw**

Able Seaman Matthew Broe

"I joined the NSR as I always wanted to join the military since a young age. I had no nautical experience whatsoever, and the NSR appeared to be an excellent organisation to challenge myself and learn new skills. I am currently in my final year of Business and Law BSc in TUD. The NSR has been very flexible allowing me to complete various training and courses which fit around my college timetable, while also providing me with opportunities to earn money, supplementing my income during college.

**AB Thorton on board of LÉ George Bernard Shaw during multiship patrol exercise**

Since joining the NSR, I have completed my recruit syllabus, a seamanship course, damage control and firefighting course, a personal survival techniques course, manual handling, jeep and minibus driving courses among other training opportunities. These courses have been pivotal to my personal and professional development and allow me to become

an asset to the NSR and the NS. Additionally, I have learned countless transferable skills, most notably a civilian licence enabling me to tow trailers and drive minibuses outside the DF.

I have served on board both LÉ William Butler Yeats and LÉ Samuel Beckett, where I further developed my skills. The opportunity to work alongside PDF NS personnel was excellent. I was able to put my skills into practice and every day provided countless learning experiences. I have seen the entirety of the Irish coast and have seen many beautiful places I wouldn't have visited otherwise, all while learning new skills.

Joining the NSR has been an overwhelmingly positive experience and has

provided countless new experiences that I would not have been offered in my civilian life. The comradeship and variety of life within the NSR is second to none, and I would recommend anyone who is considering joining to do so."

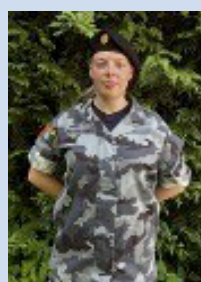
Recruit Victoria Hastings Rafferty - Dublin Unit NSR

I recently graduated from UCD with a degree in Geoscience and now work as a graduate environmental consultant in land contamination and hydrogeology. My role is hands-on, often spent outdoors on construction sites across the country. Outside of work, I spend my spare time following my passion for outdoor activities like climbing the Wicklow mountains and

scuba diving with the UCD Sub-Aqua Club, where I also serve as the Public Relations Officer.

My lifelong love for the sea and the outdoors drew me to pursue a childhood dream of joining the Irish Naval Service. While initially considering the Permanent Defence Forces, discovering the Naval Service Reserve offered the perfect balance to pursue my geoscience career full-time while fulfilling my military aspirations part-time. The opportunities within the Defence Forces, including various courses and the camaraderie, further motivated my decision. Serving on one of our vessels for a patrol is my ultimate motivation.

Currently I am undergoing recruit training with my Unit. I've completed the Personal Survival Techniques (PST) course at the National Maritime

**Rec Hastings-Rafferty NSR**

College of Ireland (NMCI) which was a fun but daunting experience, learning how to abandon a ship and survive. Additionally, I took a visit to the boatyard in Valentia Island in Kerry which provided a first-hand look at the construction of the new Naval Service Reserve motor launches. I was fascinated by the design and construction process of these vessels, fuelling my anticipation for future training opportunities.

In the short term, I aim to complete recruit training and pass out as an Ordinary Seaman soon.

Moving forward, I aspire to contribute my skills to the Defence Forces Dive Club. In the long term I aim to progress into a leadership position within DUNSR. As one of the very few females in my unit, I am driven to serve as a future role model for females and advocate for greater female representation within our ranks.

**Able Seaman Matthew Broe**

DF Sports & Clubs Update

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

Boxing

The DF boxing team are entering the Celtic Box Cup in Dungarvan, Waterford at the end of September. There will be competitors entering from Portugal, Canada, Spain and the UK.

The DF team are going for 3 in a row in this competition., the previous winners include double champion Pte Rachel Lawless 6th Bn, Pte Aaron O'Donoghue 1 Bde CIS, Cpl Jamie Long MP Group.

There will be 4 female competitors and 11 male competitors, we will be running a 2 week training camp in the Curragh in September leading up to the event.

Kayaking



Kayaking: Members of PR Br who recently enjoyed a day out on the water with the DF Kayaking Gp

The Defence Forces Kayak Club (DFKC) promotes and conducts kayaking and paddle sport in the Defence Forces. The club's members support adventure training and other DF events, while also conducting its own member-focused training and skills development. The disciplines include white water kayaking, play boating and canoe polo with an aim to branch out into other disciplines like sea and expedition kayaking. Whether you have previous experience or not, you are more than welcome to join the club. If you don't have any equipment, don't worry, the club can kit you out with everything you need to have a safe and comfortable day on the river. If you are interested in joining the club, contact them on our Connect Page or call down to the next pool session in the DFTC.

For more info contact: conor.hurley@defenceforces.ie or stephen.happe@defenceforces.ie



Grappling: Recent Training day down in Eire grappling club in Tullamore



Grappling: First time training and linking up with the members of the Garda team

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

We now have a BJJ club within the DF which has been training for the last 12 months. There are around 80 members ranging from white belts to black belts including some very high level, competitive athletes and coaches. The great thing about BJJ is that it caters for everyone, from the competitors to the hobbyists.

At the moment there are small groups training locally all over the DF. Members from Air Corps, 27 Inf Bn, Collins Bks, Haulbowline, Killkenny and the DFTC. Over the past 12 months the Club has been invited to attend several sessions outside of the DF, in great gyms all around the country. The Club has linked up with the Garda BJJ team and have enjoyed some great sessions with them.



Soccer: Recent match against vs Peamount FC

DF Womens Soccer

The DF Women's Soccer recently had a game v Peamount FC on 17 July 2024. The DF women lost on a score line 2-0 however the game was very beneficial for the management team as they have a very tough task of narrowing down a panel of 16 to travel to Belgium in Aug 2024.



Soccer: Team pre game warm up drills

Upcoming Camps/Fixture/Events

- 24-26 Aug - Camp and game versus Donneycarney FC in Cathal Brugha Barracks. Game is on 24th at 1900hrs.
- 14 Aug - Game. opposition TBC

- 21-23 Aug - Camp location TBC
- 26-30 Aug - Belgium Game in Belgium
- 04 Sept - FAI Cap presentation McKee Barracks (CAPS for 2023)
- Oct - CAMP TBC
- 11-15 Nov - UKAF game in UK



Mountaineers

FQMS Fran Whelan, Sgt McSweeney, Sgt Darren Clarke and Cpl Oilibhéar Brady, all participated in the PFP (Partners For Peace) Summer Mountaineering Course run by the Swiss Army Mountain Service Competence Centre in Andermatt. It was a great experience for all involved.

Dive Gp: Congratulations to Shane Allen who passed his club diver test

was held on Saturday the 27th of July. It was attended by their past, present and future members.

The southeast Dive Rally was held in Hook Head and was attended by several members of the Dive Gp and was a great day. Also, congrats to Pte Shane Allen who passed his club diver test recently.

Diving

The DF Dive Gp recently had their 50th anniversary in McKee Bks which

Dive Gp: Congratulations to Sophie Donnelly who recently passed her rescue course



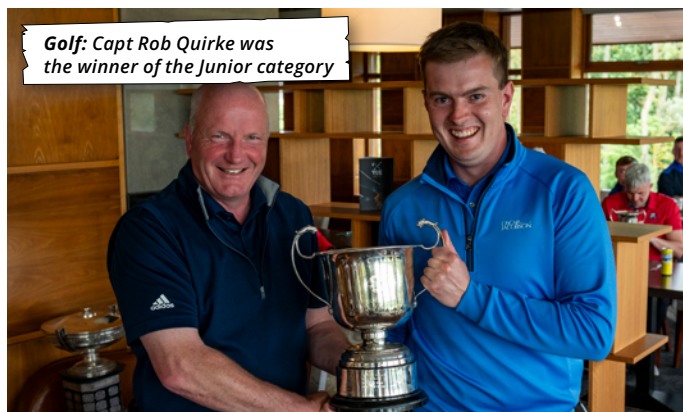
DF Golf

The Defence Forces Golf Championships were hosted by the AC in Castleknock Golf Club on the 27/28th May. Approx 100 players competed on a very challenging course over the two days in a number of categories.

The winners were;

Senior	Winner – Cpl Richard Finn DFHQ Runner Up – Pte James Everard 1 Bde
Junior	Winner – Capt Rob Quirke AC Runner Up – Sgt Sean Fleming 1 Bde
Intermediate	Winner – Sgt Andrew Kelleher 1 Bde Runner Up – Pte Kevin Burke
Veterans	Winner – Lt Col Rory McCorley DFHQ
Retired	Winner – Richard Maloney Runner Up – Pearse Whelan

Next up is the DF Matchplay Championships, scheduled for the 12/13 August in the Royal Curragh Golf Club. Following that will be the Collins



Golf: Capt Rob Quirke was the winner of the Junior category

Golf: DF Golf long time player Cpl Richard Finn, senior winner on the day



Cup on Monday 2nd September 2024, a Calling Notice will be issued by J7 shortly with information on entering the competition.

DF Sailing

The Defence Forces Sailing Club had a great week in the Volvo Cork Week Beaufort Cup which took place in July, winning all 6 races in the sailing regatta including the formidable offshore Fastnet Race. With a fully joint crew of 3 Naval Service, 2 Army and 3 Air Corps personnel along with former Minister for Defence Simon Coveney TD, their combined team work was far greater than the sum of their parts, delivering a strong performance. Team Skipper, Cdr Mathews described the event as a "great week of racing with Irish and international competitors in the fleet, with only seconds separating results." The DF Sailing Club would like to express their appreciation to all in Collins Bks who supported the hosting of international competitors, and all at the Naval Base Haulbowline who hosted the DF participants as well as delivering a memorable Gala Dinner for all Beaufort Cup competitors, hosted by Minister Carroll MacNeill.



Praise for UNDOF Unit

The following is an abridged reproduction of a speech given by Brig Gen Tony Hanlon, Deputy Force Commander UNDOF, to the members of 44th Infantry Group, during their medal parade on 27th September 2014.

“The Defence Forces have a long, distinguished and proud record of peacekeeping with the UN. Since 1958, we have had a continuous presence on peace-support operations across the globe.

“The Defence Forces have had a long and turbulent association with this part of the world. Almost 50 of our colleagues died in Lebanon, with many more wounded or injured. This is a dangerous and volatile region. This contingent is testament to the danger and volatility that lies within this beautiful, tragic place.

“The Force Reserve Company quickly established itself as the key enabler, the pivot, of the operational capability of the UNDOF mission. The contingent moved quickly through pre-deployment in Stephens Bks, Kilkenny, in January; onwards to deployment in March; and to the achievement of full operational capability shortly after arrival in-theatre. Now you are in the final phase: end of tour, relief-in-place and redeployment back to Ireland.

“Regrettably the FC is on leave and it falls to me in his absence to thank you for the critical operational role you played in this mission. Please believe me when I say that you have made an entire nation proud of your operational achievements and the way you added further to the esteem in which Irish soldiers are held internationally. I am immensely proud of you and privileged to be associated with your achievements.

“This contingent, consisting of 130 personnel, is the second rotation of Irish personnel to the Golan Heights. The contingent delivered, and will continue to deliver up until the handover/takeover, the critical enablers of QRF; force reserve; and specialist IEDD, C-IED and EOD capabilities, on behalf of UNDOF.

“I applaud all your first tour personnel. The great depth of experience in your contingent has been the bedrock and guiding hand for those on their first tour of duty. There is a combined 239 previous overseas tours of duty in 44 Inf Gp, from deployments to Lebanon, Liberia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, East Timor, Eritrea, Bosnia, Honduras, Uganda, Iran/Iraq, Chad/CAR, Congo, and now Syria.

“Your primary tasking was to provide a quick reaction force but the reality is that you did so much more. To date you have completed an average of



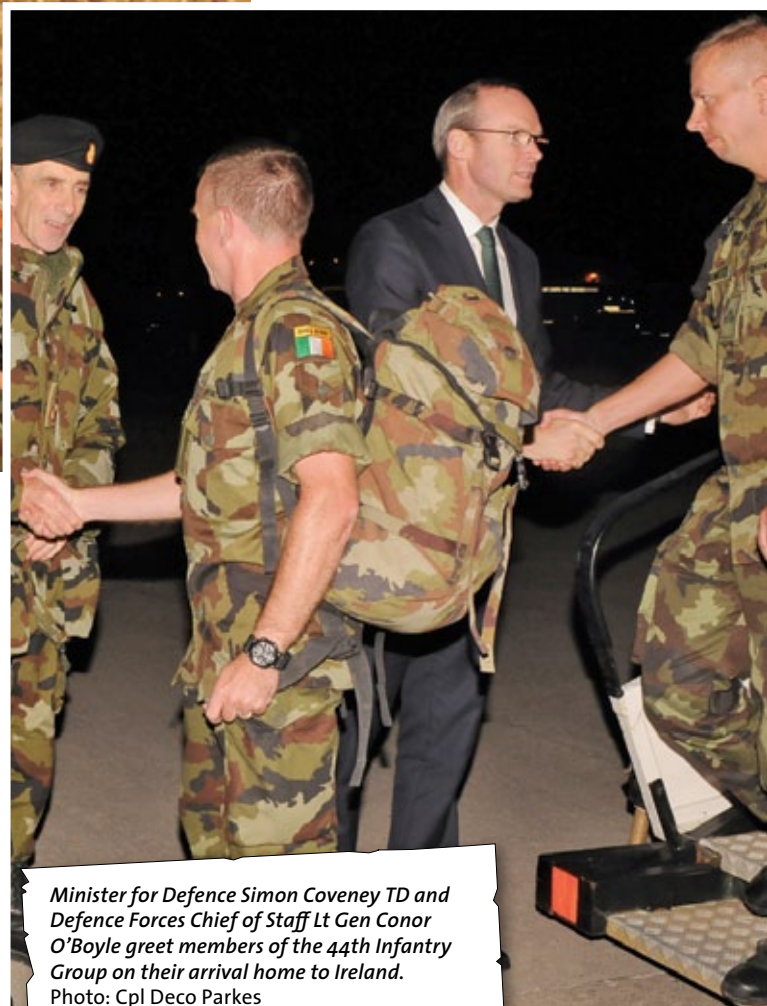


55 armoured patrols and escorts per month and have supported the mission's engineering, policing, transport and logistics, catering, and medical assets.

"The Force Reserve Company also assisted with medical and security training for the Civilian Security Section. Neither was the FRC found wanting with the numerous operations that they conducted or assisted in. This was particularly evident on 30th August 2014 when the FRC evacuated 32 Filipino peacekeepers from UN Post 69.

"Outside of military and peacekeeping duties, your unit also showed a deep concern for those in need. This contingent raised over \$3,300 for the Jack and Jill Foundation in Ireland, which aids and assists families of children who suffer severe intellectual and physical developmental delay. This magnificent gesture is in the proudest traditions of Irish peacekeepers.

"The turbulence associated with the relocation of the mission from the Alpha to the Bravo side impacted heavily on the conduct of the mandate. Despite this, you performed magnificently and professionally and made the vital difference when it was required. The mission leadership has been fulsome in its praise for the operational effectiveness of the FRC in the successful completion of the necessary relocation. You very quickly re-established your capabilities and restored a high tempo on the Alpha side. Operational success is driven by leadership, planning, competence, resources, training, rehearsals and exercises; and through courage. This Infantry



*Minister for Defence Simon Coveney TD and Defence Forces Chief of Staff Lt Gen Conor O'Boyle greet members of the 44th Infantry Group on their arrival home to Ireland.
Photo: Cpl Deco Parkes*

Group demonstrated all of those capabilities and competences in spades.

"Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your exemplary service to UNDOF, the United Nations, and the government of Ireland. The post-modern soldier must be a diplomat, a scholar, an innovator and a warrior. My proud Irish soldiers, you are the very epitome of post-modern soldiers. Congratulations, and be very proud of your contribution to UNDOF in its efforts to support peace and stability in this troubled region." ■





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