

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

AN COSANTÓIR



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



TECHCRAFT

THE MARRIAGE OF TECHNOLOGY
AND FIELD CRAFT

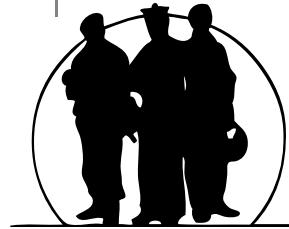
AIRBUS H145M

NEW HELICOPTERS FOR THE
IRISH AIR CORPS

SAILING

HOW THE DF SAILING TEAM
WON THE BEAUFORT CUP

STRENGTHEN THE NATION

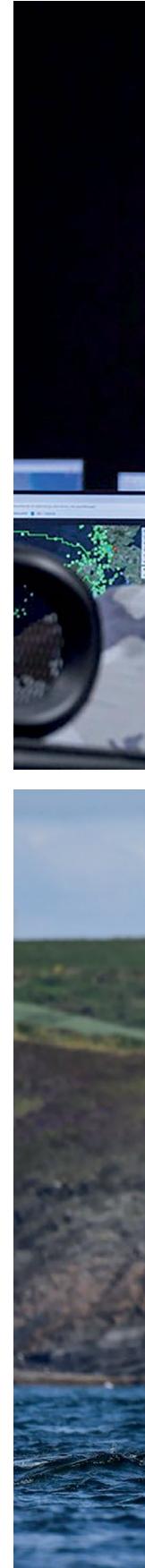


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From the editor

— *Cpl Eric Ryan*

The Defence Forces are undergoing a transformative phase, with the introduction of state-of-the-art helicopters, advanced body armour, upgraded radio systems, and much more, all designed to enhance operational efficiency and ensure readiness for the challenges of the modern world. In this edition, Sgt Maj David O'Reilly explores the ever changing and evolving nature of warfare, where traditional skills like fieldcraft must be integrated with cutting-edge technology. The Air Corps is set to welcome the new Airbus H145M, a significant upgrade that promises to enhance its capabilities. The 2024 Public Perception Survey offers a valuable insight into how the public values the Defence Forces. In March we had our 2nd Overseas Family Support Day in Dublin Zoo which underscores the importance of supporting those serving abroad and to highlight the fantastic job our families do whilst we serve overseas. In a different approach to People of The DF Sgt Dema Houlihan (Retd) provided us with his remarkable family history. We continue to showcase sports with Sports & Clubs and an article from the winners of the Beaufort Cup (Sailing), our On Parade section features some fantastic photos taken from various contributors across the DF. The Defence Forces has reached a massive milestone after the 100th Cadet Class has passed through the Cadet School, our back cover features the 100th Cadet Class and 17th Potential Officer's course Commissioning Ceremony, keep an eye out for the upcoming articles from the Cadet School in future magazines. We hope you enjoy this edition of An Cosantóir, to see more stories from people across the Defence Forces follow us on Instagram, Facebook and the Connect app - @AnCosantoir.

“Your life does not get better by chance. It gets better by change.” — Jim Rohn

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100th Cadet Class and 17th Potential
Officer commissioning ceremony

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TECHCRAFT: THE MARRIAGE OF FIELDCRAFT AND TECHNOLOGY

The function of infantry is also going to have to change if soldiers are to survive facing an AI-driven reconnaissance strike complex. Advance to contact and fighting at close quarters will be the exception rather than the rule... future soldiers will function as battlefield sensors in the forward edge of the battlespace.

ARTICLE BY SGT MAJ DAVID O'REILLY
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY SGT MAJ DAVID O'REILLY

Donald Rumsfeld once reflected, "You go to war with the army you have, not the army you might or wish to have at a later time." The integration of technology into modern warfare has indeed revolutionised the battlefield, making techcraft a vital set of skills for today's soldiers operating in technology-infused battlefield. Concealment, masking and deception, once the hallmarks of traditional fieldcraft, now require a deep understanding and proficiency in technology. The concept was introduced by the US Army Futures Command and embraced by General Walker of the British Army who underscores the necessity for modern soldiers to be both tacticians and technicians. Today's commanders must be proficient systems integrators blending fieldcraft with technology to adapt to the evolving nature of warfare. The transparency brought about by technological advancements demands a new level of adaptability and expertise from soldiers. This paradigm shift reflects the fact there is no longer a templated tactical solution to the battlefield, and reinforces Von Clausewitz's theory that "war is more than a true

The Army deploys from fixed bases, the last time it operated as an expeditionary type force was in Chad (2007-2009), these fixed positions allow our positions to be easily targeted. Survivability on the modern battlefield has changed little over time, with the maxim to be detected is to be targeted, and to be targeted is to be engaged, therefore we must return to our roots of fieldcraft employing concealment, masking and deception in the electrometric space along with the physical space. Our navigation and signals equipment may be subject to targeting or spoofing (the capability of confusing electronic systems). Misinformation and disinformation are very prevalent, and can travel quicker than a speeding bullet and can have a deadly effect.

The following three short case studies demonstrate the impact technology has had in recent and current conflicts. On September 23, 2020, Azerbaijan launched a full-scale invasion of Artsakh, heralding the commencement of the six-week-long second Nagorno-Karabakh War. This initiated a war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It is considered by many to be a milestone in military affairs, as it was the first conflict in which unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) won a war by overwhelming a conventional force. Initially grinding it down to the point of impotency and paving the way for the Azeri ground forces to roll in. Azerbaijan's UAVs obliterated Armenia's formidable array of ground based air defences, after which they systematically decimated Armenia's ground force materiel, including tanks, artillery pieces, and supply trucks.

More recently in Gaza and Lebanon, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) employed AI to identify and target enemy forces. As of 01 Jan 25 the IDF have established an AI and Autonomy Administration with the mission to achieve global leadership in military AI and autonomy. The intent of the new organisation is to build on years of successful research, development and collaboration between industry and the IDF in order to increase the operational tempo and reduce casualties. The ability of being able to digitally map the human and logistical network has proved to be a game changer in speeding up and increasing the quantity of potential targets in their targeting process system. The enhancement of human machine integration has led to an increased operational output.

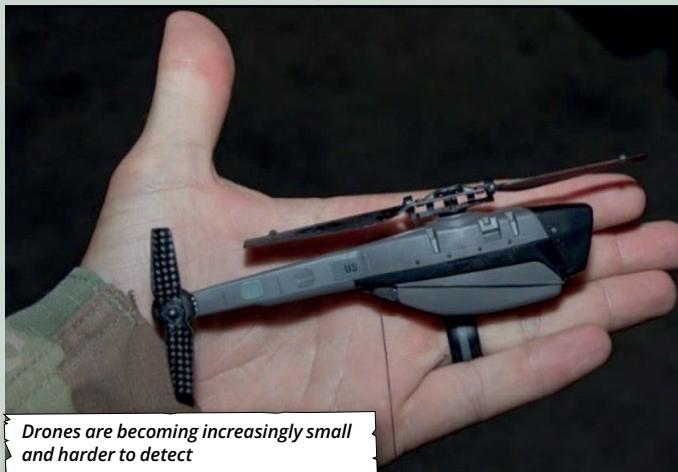
Both the Russian and Ukraine Armed Forces have integrated technology into their respective Armies. As identified by General



chameleon that slightly adapts its characteristics to the given case" is evolving rapidly through infusion of technology in current and future conflicts by enhancing the human machine integration or what the British Army identifies as the human machine team.

The Army is now deployed in regions, which are technology infused, and is not exempt the tactical or strategic effect of that technology.

Zaluzhnyi Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 2009, the Russian military established a separate branch of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, the electronic warfare (EW) troop. In addition, a powerful air component of electronic warfare was stood up which ensures the effective employment of forces and



precision weapons. They increased the production of so-called "trench electronic warfare" ("Silok", "Piton", "Harpoon", "Piroed", "Strizh", "Lisochok"), which evolved at the tactical level. As for the Armed Forces of Ukraine, by 2022, they developed modern electronic warfare assets such as UAVs "Bukovel-AD", "Enclave", "Khmara", and "Nota". UAVs are being increased by deploying the "Pokrova" nationwide EW system with the intent of replacing the satellite radio navigation field to prevent spoofing, suppressing the satellite radio navigation. In 2024, the Russian army further evolved its method of attack by adopting small assault group tactics with commanders monitoring troop movement through live footage and directing troops by radio.



— 669 —
Remote and autonomous systems may assist in generating the necessary mass, but beware the siren call of automation...
infantries somewhere will be digging trenches long into the 21st century

over time, their capabilities have significantly decreased, since the targeting system uses GPS and is very sensitive to the influence of electronic warfare, which leads to a loss of precision.

Russian cyber-attacks failed due to preparations by the Ukrainians with the assistance from Western civilian companies and governments to create effective cyber protection, redundancy and non-computerised alternatives to systems that depend on computers. An interesting study of the war in Ukraine identifies the most important effort in cyber is the defence of critical infrastructure. Unlike during routine security operations and the campaign between wars or special operations, cyber-attacks and influence operations are not the main effort. The main efforts are the large-scale regular military operations and they serve almost

only to support them or enhance them.

In conclusion, we must prepare our forces to operate in a technology-contested space, where we may need to remove or limit our electromagnetic spectrum signature. A recurring theme of dispersal comes to mind the old adage of spread out and do not bunch up. We must examine our electromagnetic spectrum signature in a dispersed manner. We must develop hybrid tactics techniques and procedures for ourselves. To do this we need to revisit our fieldcraft manuals and operating procedures. Just as glass and the telescope became a reconnaissance tool of the past, now small cheap disposal UAVs not alone reconnoitre an area but can map precisely, identify targets and adjust fire on to a target. Instead of falling into old habits and routines, we must ask ourselves, why do we do this and can we do it better? To be detected now in the current targeting cycle is to be engaged, the hardening of our defences may not be the best solution but manoeuvre, masking, and deception may provide as much protection as hardened defences. Our increased demand for data may also make us more vulnerable and less survivable.

There is a requirement for the Army to adapt a 'Janus Face' one side looking back to reconnect with warfighting fundamentals which have been reaffirmed as crucial to compete in the contemporary



operating environment; while the other looks forward and determines how emerging technology can be integrated into tactical operations. Tactics are a science, but applying tactics in combat is an art. A military force wins by seeing how general principles apply to a specific situation and by being creative with combat solutions. In the coming months and years, in order to build a robust and sustainable Defence Force ecosystem throughout the transformation process, many parts must remain in synergy while being maintained and advanced continuously. A paradox is setting up



for future operations by training in the past, we need to close the gap between what is thought and taught in our schools. Perhaps it is now timely to update TM200 accordingly.

Credit for captioned images - Ares & Athena publication issue 25 "Human Fundamentals of organisational design". CHACR published on the 15 July 2024
References and original sources were provided by the author to the editor and can be obtained by contacting the editor

THE FUTURE LIGHT ATTACK HELICOPTER OF THE IRISH AIR FORCE



ARTICLE BY CAPT CAYMAN ROE, AIR CORPS PRESS OFFICER
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY IRISH AIR CORPS PRESS OFFICE

Change is coming to No. 3 Operations Wing. After more than 20 years of service, the EC135s are making way for something new — the Airbus H145M. With four of these helicopters on the way, the Air Corps is set to expand its capabilities in training, operations, and support for the wider Defence Forces.

The EC135 has done exactly what it was brought in to do, but after more than twenty years of service, we're ready for an upgrade. As we become an Air Force, our demands are growing. We need an aircraft that can train the next generation while also contributing operationally. The first of the new helicopters is expected to arrive in 2027, marking the start of a new chapter for No. 3 Operations Wing as the Air Corps moves closer to becoming a fully-fledged Air Force.



WHERE WE STARTED: A QUICK LOOK BACK

302 Squadron in Number 3 Operations Wing is the Training and ISTAR squadron and currently operates two Airbus EC135P2+ Light Utility Helicopters. It supplements the larger 301 Sqn and its fleet of six Leonardo AW139 Medium Lift Helicopters by providing flying training for pilots and aircrew, as well as a number of SOF support roles. This organisational setup of having a separate helicopter type for

a training can be traced back to 1979 when two SA342 Gazelles were bought to provide helicopter flying training in Baldonnel, freeing up the operational fleet of Alouettes that were based around the country for Search and Rescue, troop transport and air ambulance.

THE NEED FOR REPLACEMENT

The twenty-year-old EC135s have provided great service to the unit in training up countless pilots and aircrew however in order to meet the increased capability requirements outlined in the Detailed Implementation Plan a larger fleet of training aircraft is required. This need for increased training output, and the potential to



increase the Air Corps capability in the light helicopter category started the search for a replacement for 302 Sqn's aircraft.

The Air Corps has a good working relationship with the aircrafts manufacturer, Airbus, formerly known as Eurocopter, the same company that manufactured the

EC135. Both companies can also trace their lineage back to the French company Aérospatiale; manufacturer of the Gazelle, Alouette and Dauphin helicopters that we previously operated. Current Air Corps helicopter pilots also have some experience flying the type – recently pilots have trained with the US Army in Fort Rucker flying the UH-72 Lakota and others have trained with the RAF flying H145 Jupiter HT1s out of RAF Valley in Anglesey. Closer to home the Garda Air Support Unit (GASU) have opted for the H145 to replace their own EC135s. These benefits are all in addition to the full new set of capabilities that the H145M brings to the unit.

THE AIRBUS H145M: EXPANDING THE CAPABILITIES OF NO. 3 OPERATIONS WING

Before we dive into what the H145M will mean for the Air Corps, it's worth asking—how has this helicopter performed for other nations? The H145M is already flying with several military Air Arms around the world, including Germany, Belgium, Cyprus, Hungary, Serbia, Luxembourg, and the United States. In fact, Germany is so confident in this helicopter's performance that they're currently replacing their Tiger attack helicopters with the H145M, a clear sign of its flexibility and reliability in real-world operations.

The decision to acquire the H145M is more than just an upgrade — it's a genuine leap forward. For years, the EC135s have affectionately been teased as 'non-military helicopters painted in military green', but with the arrival of the H145M, this narrative no longer applies.



Now for the first time we're stepping into a true military helicopter, purpose-built for combat and operational roles, bringing versatility and firepower to No. 3 Ops Wing that we've never had before.

While compact, the H145M is packed with advanced technology and firepower. The Air Corps' fleet will be configured for multi-role operations, including light attack missions, intelligence

and surveillance, maritime security, and utility roles. The aircraft will be equipped with electro-optical sensors, thermal imaging, and communications technology that will allow for long-range surveillance and real-time intelligence gathering. It will also feature a secure communications suite that enhances coordination with ground and naval forces, providing a fully integrated approach to modern defence operations.

On the weapons front, the H145M will be armed with a .50 calibre machine gun and 2.75-inch folding fin aerial rockets. Ballistic armour protection will be installed, ensuring that aircrew have the necessary protection in high-threat environments. Additionally, the aircraft will feature self-sealing fuel tanks, further enhancing survivability in combat scenarios.

The H145M isn't just about combat roles — it's built to adapt quickly. Need to transport troops? Done. Switching to a search-and-rescue mission? Easy. Providing air support to ground forces? No problem. This quick-change capability means the Air Corps can respond faster and handle more missions than ever before.

"These helicopters will not only significantly boost the capacity of the Defence Forces pilot training programmes, but also enhance intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and light combat capabilities of our Air Corps." — Micheál Martin, Tánaiste and Minister for Defence (at the time of announcement)



MULTI-ROLE MASTER: MEET THE H145M

LIGHT ATTACK MISSIONS

The arrival of the H145M marks the first time the Irish Air Corps has operated a fully military-spec helicopter. Previously, our helicopters were mainly civilian types adapted for military roles, but now we have something built from the ground up for operational tasks. Armed with a .50 calibre machine gun and 2.75-inch aerial rockets, this aircraft can directly support ground forces during security operations. An added bonus is its compact size, allowing it to be easily transported inside

larger cargo aircraft like the A400M or C17—meaning we could in future deploy it quickly to international missions or operations far from home, should the need arise.

INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, TARGET ACQUISITION, AND RECONNAISSANCE (ISTAR)

The H145M brings advanced ISTAR capabilities that were previously unavailable to the Air Corps. It comes equipped with electro-optical and thermal imaging systems, allowing crews to carry out detailed surveillance from a safe distance. Think about situations like the recent interdiction involving the MV Matthew, where precise aerial



intelligence was key in coordinating operations between the Defence Forces, Gardaí, and Naval Service. This helicopter will dramatically enhance our ability to monitor movements, track suspicious activities, and improve overall situational awareness both at home and overseas.

MARITIME SECURITY MISSIONS

Maritime operations demand quick thinking and flexibility — something the H145M offers in spades. It includes features like an external winch, fast-roping capability, and an emergency flotation system, making it ideal for maritime scenarios. Whether supporting the Naval Service on a ship-boarding mission or carrying out surveillance along our coastline, the H145M's combination of features allows troops to rapidly respond and engage when necessary. The increased collaboration between the Air Corps and Naval Service will become even more seamless, improving our capability to deal with maritime threats effectively.

UTILITY MISSIONS

Utility operations have long been a cornerstone of Air Corps duties, ranging from emergency medical evacuations and troop transport to aerial firefighting. The new helicopter continues this tradition, but now with even greater efficiency. It's equipped with a NATO-standard litter system for medical evacuations and can swiftly adapt from external underslung loads to personnel transport. Whether responding to natural disasters, supporting Army Ranger Wing operations, or aiding civilian authorities during major incidents, the flexibility of the H145M ensures rapid and reliable support whenever and wherever it's needed.



These four helicopters represent a significant leap forward for the Air Corps, ensuring No. 3 Ops Wing is prepared for modern operational demands while maintaining the flexibility

needed to adapt to future challenges. Crucially, these aircraft are the first in a wider helicopter fleet replacement programme for the Air Corps. The Super Medium replacement project has already commenced with a view to replacing the AW139's as per the Detailed Implementation Plan.

Post procurement project meetings are underway for the H145M, laying the groundwork for the arrival of the new fleet. Training for aircrew and support personnel is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2026, ensuring a smooth transition to operating the new aircraft. The first H145M is expected to arrive in Q1 2027, making it fitting that we acquire an aircraft of this capability as we transition into an Air Force, ready to support Óglaigh na hÉireann wherever and whenever the need arises.

YOUR WORK, THEIR TRUST: PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE DEFENCE FORCES



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

Each year, the Defence Forces conduct a Public Perception Survey to gauge how the public views their role and contributions. The survey is conducted by an independent body using internationally accepted methods to ensure its accuracy and impartiality. The latest survey, completed in September 2024, provides a clear snapshot of the public's evolving perceptions.

HOW MUCH DO THE PUBLIC VALUE US?

Key insights include:

- The survey highlights a growing recognition of the importance of national security which shows that the public is becoming more aware of the role the Defence Forces play in daily life and the need for continued investment in defence and security.

- Increased Importance of National Security:** More adults now believe that national security is more critical to them than it was five years ago.

- Support for Additional Resources:** Nearly 75% of adults support allocating more resources to the Defence Forces.

So What?

- Increased Support for Investment:** With nearly 75% of adults supporting additional resources, there is strong public backing for increased funding and development of Defence Forces capabilities

- Growing Relevance:** The public sees the Defence Forces as essential to national security, reflecting a societal shift toward prioritising safety and security.

- Opportunity to Highlight Achievements:** This public sentiment provides an opportunity to highlight the Defence Forces' contributions and secure broader support for future initiatives.

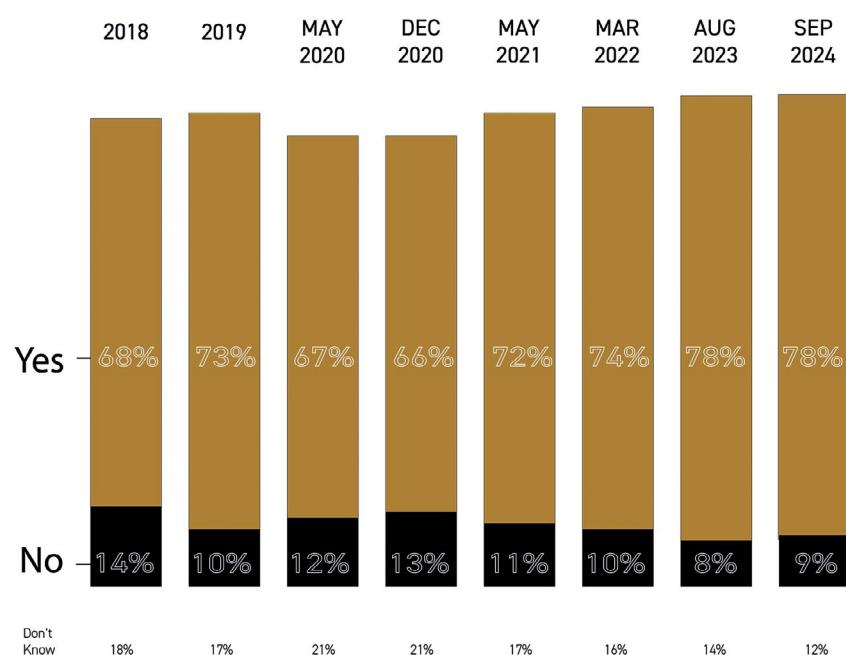
WHAT DO THE PUBLIC ACTUALLY THINK OF US?

- Our Perception:** While internal members may perceive organisational culture differently due to exposure to specific issues, the general public appears to hold a more balanced view.
- Their Perception:** The data shows that the Defence Forces' organisational culture aligns with societal norms, reflecting broader social values rather than being seen as an outlier.

So What?

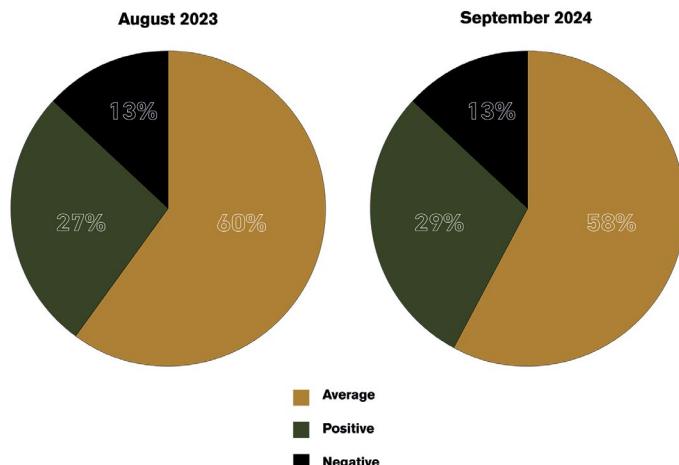
Perception vs. Reality: The Defence Forces should recognise that external perceptions are often more positive than internal assumptions, especially when controversies occur.

Importance in investing in the Defence Forces for Ireland



DO THEY WANT TO JOIN US?

Perception of the organisational culture in the Defence Forces over the past 12 months



Reassurance for Members: Knowing that the wider society views the Defence Forces as a reflection of society rather than an outlier.

Focus on Positivity: Public support remains strong despite negative news, suggesting a positive attitude, messaging and transparency should remain central to how we interact internally and externally.

Key insights include:

- One of the most encouraging signs from the survey is the growing interest in joining the Defence Forces.
- Increased Likelihood of Recommendation:** More people across various demographic groups are likely to recommend a career in the Defence Forces.
- Sustained Growth:** Interest in joining has shown consistent growth, highlighting a growing appeal of a Defence Forces career.

So What?

- Part of our Team:** Citizens still want to serve the nation and join our team

Recommendation-Lead By Example: We need to continue to promote the positivity of the job we do to support the continued growth in the level of likely recommendation of a career in the Defence Forces overall. Increases across a number of demographic groups, with biggest increases noted amongst those aged 35-64. Growth evident amongst Females also.

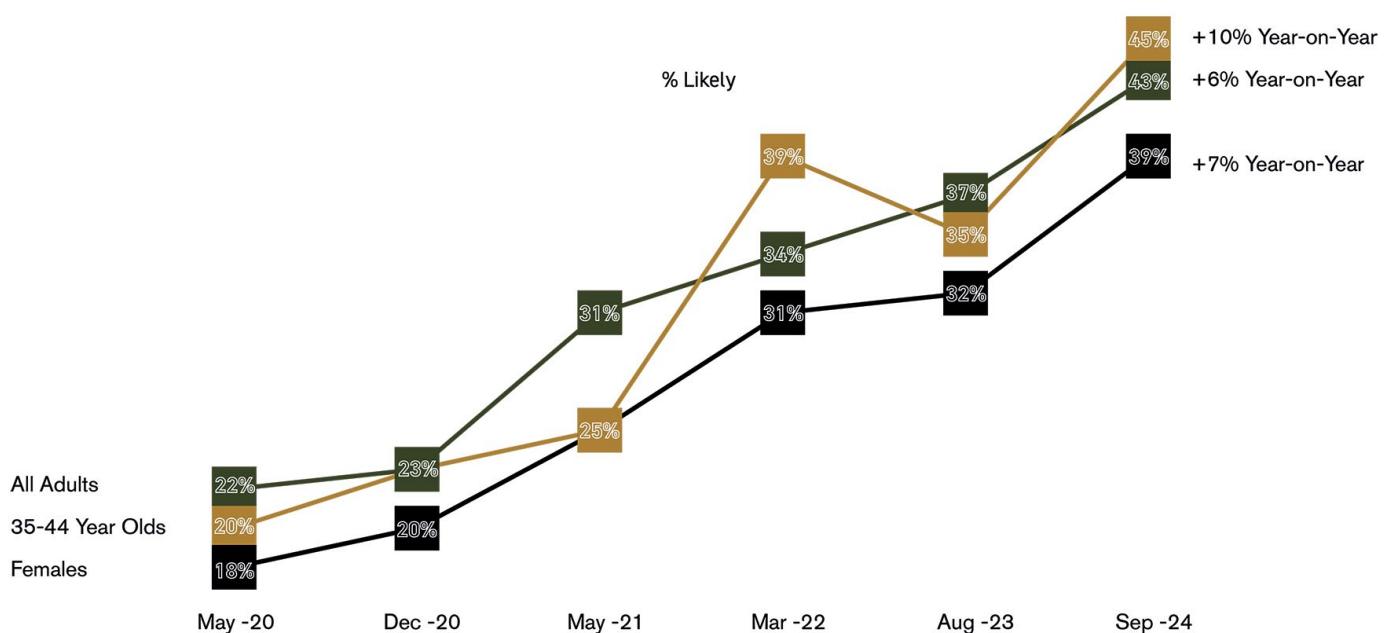
- Recruitment Momentum:** Keep the positive focus and support to recruitment going.

With increased public interest in Defence Forces careers, there is a valuable opportunity to attract a larger pool of talent. This was evident this year with inductions to the Army, Air Corp and Naval Service due to reach 708 by the end of 2024, a 69% increase on 2023 levels.

Likelihood of Recommending a career in the Defence Forces - Growth for females and 35's-44's

(Base: All adults 18+ n=1024)

How likely would you be to recommend a career with the Defence Forces to a family member or friend?



CHIEF OF STAFF INNOVATION AWARDS 2024

RECOGNISING INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE

ARTICLE BY SGT ALAN SMYTH

All entrants to the DF Innovation Awards pictured at the Award Ceremony which took place in Baldonnell in December 2024

Innovation is the cornerstone of progress, and in an organisation as dynamic as the Irish Defence Forces, the ability to adapt, develop, and implement new ideas is critical to success. The Chief of Staff Innovation Awards serve as a platform to recognise and encourage the exceptional talents within our ranks. These awards provide an opportunity for personnel of all ranks and branches to present ground-breaking solutions that contribute to the evolution and advancement of the Defence Forces. By fostering a culture of innovation, the awards not only highlight the ingenuity present within the organisation but also encourage continuous improvement in operational efficiency, sustainability, and personnel well-being.

This year's awards saw an impressive response, with a total of 15 applications – 9 individual and 6 group submissions. Each application demonstrated a strong commitment to developing innovative and practical solutions to challenges faced by the Defence Forces. The projects spanned a wide range of areas, from technological advancements to personnel welfare, reflecting the diverse skill sets and expertise within our organisation. The winners of the 2024 Chief of Staff Innovation Awards are shining examples of this excellence.



Individual Winner Lt Paul Briscoe - Analysing Hydrogen fuel cells to enhance and develop a defence energy architecture.

INDIVIDUAL WINNER: LT PAUL BRISCOE

The individual category winner was Lieutenant Paul Briscoe, who presented a pioneering project on analysing hydrogen fuel cells to enhance and develop a defence energy architecture. His research and findings offer a blueprint for ensuring installation self-reliance and resilience by integrating hydrogen fuel technology into Defence Forces infrastructure.

Lt Briscoe's project addresses one of the most pressing challenges of modern defence operations—energy sustainability. By exploring the potential of hydrogen fuel cells, he has contributed to an innovative solution that could significantly reduce dependency on conventional energy sources while simultaneously enhancing the Defence Forces' ability to maintain operational effectiveness in diverse environments. His work not only benefits the Defence Forces but also aligns with Ireland's broader commitments to renewable energy and sustainability.



Group Winners: A Novel Approach to PTSD Treatment - Ms Eimear Ní Fhallaín, Dr Philip Brady, Dr Fionbarr Lenihan and Private David Killilea.

GROUP WINNERS: A NOVEL APPROACH TO PTSD TREATMENT

The group award was presented to an exceptional team comprising Dr Philip Brady, Private David Killilea, Ms Eimear Ní Fhallaín, and Dr Fionbarr Lenihan. Their project introduced a novel, cost-effective, and rapidly deployable treatment programme aimed at addressing PTSD within the Defence Forces.

Mental health remains a critical focus within military organisations worldwide, and PTSD continues to be a significant challenge for serving and retired personnel. The winning team's approach prioritises accessibility, affordability, and rapid deployment, ensuring that those in need receive timely and effective support.



AB Ryan Cornally, PO Brendan O'Reilly, CIS Gp Naval Service

By combining scientific expertise with practical application, this initiative represents a vital step forward in enhancing the psychological resilience of Defence Forces personnel.

SHOWCASING IRISH INNOVATION ON THE EUROPEAN STAGE

The recognition of these remarkable projects does not end with the awards ceremony. As a testament to the value and potential of their work, Lt Paul Briscoe and members of the winning group will travel with the RTI office to Warsaw, Poland, in May to participate in the European Defence Innovation Days. This event provides a unique



Pte Adam Gregory, Ord Sch

opportunity for Ireland to showcase its innovative talent on the European stage, engaging with other EU member states and fostering collaboration in defence research and development.

The opportunity to host stands at this event allows the winners to present their ground-breaking projects to a broader audience, highlighting Ireland's commitment to innovation and excellence in defence. This exposure not only reinforces the reputation of the Irish



Cpl Kevin Corcoran, DFSM

Defence Forces as a forward-thinking organisation but also paves the way for potential partnerships and further advancements in these critical areas.

ENCOURAGING FUTURE INNOVATION

The Chief of Staff Innovation Awards underscore the importance of fostering a culture of creativity and problem-solving within the Defence Forces. They serve as a reminder that personnel at all



Attendees at the DF Innovation Awards

levels, regardless of rank or role, have the ability to contribute to meaningful change. Whether through technological advancements, sustainability initiatives, or welfare programmes, these awards celebrate the

wealth of talent and expertise within our organisation.

As we look ahead to future iterations of the awards, the hope is that more personnel will be inspired to put forward their ideas, drive change, and help shape the future of the Defence Forces. With each new innovation, we strengthen our capabilities, enhance our resilience, and reaffirm our commitment to excellence in service of the nation.

The achievements of this year's winners exemplify the power of forward-thinking and dedication. As they represent Ireland on the European stage, their work will stand as a testament to the innovation and talent that exist within the Defence Forces — proof that progress and ingenuity are at the heart of our mission.

2025 AWARDS

If you have an innovative idea that can add value for Defence or improve our processes, apply for the Chief of Staff Awards 2025. The program will open to applications in Q2 and will be advertised on the CONNECT app. If you have any questions or would like more information about these awards or other innovation opportunities please reach out to RTI@defence.ie

INDIVIDUAL ENTRANTS

Name	Project	Award
Rec Emmet Field, 2CIS (AR)	Self Sufficient Design	Certificate
Capt Chris O'Slatara, 2CIS (AR)	Squadnet Sitaware Blueforce Tracker	Certificate
Pte Adam Gregory, Ord Sch	Remote X-Ray Development System (RXDS)	Merit
Lt (NS) Damian Long OTS Naval College	Asynchronous CPD courses for seagoing personnel within the Naval Service	Merit
Lt Col Alan Courtney, 7 Inf Bn	Officers Overseas Mandatory Selection Calculator	Certificate
Lt Paul Briscoe, 1BCS	Analysing hydrogen fuel cells to enhance and develop a defence energy architecture to ensure installation self-reliance and resilience	Merit (Individual Winner)
Lt (AR) Colm Doody, DF Psychologists Office, J1	The operational Psychologist – Optimising deployed personnel performance and safe guarding mental health	Certificate
Mr David O'Looney, D Tpt (Civilian)	Bike maintenance hub promoting sustainable commuting	Certificate
Cpl Kevin Corcoran, DFSM	Reducing Physical Strain for DFSM Percussionists	Certificate

GROUP ENTRANTS

Name	Project	Award
Pte Gary Turner, Pte Gearóid Redmond, Ordnance group, Ordnance school.	CW- European rover challenge	Certificate
DF Psychiatrist Senior Registrar (civilian), Dr. Philip Brady, Pte David Killilea, DF Physiotherapist Ms Eimear Ní Phalluín, DF Psychiatrist (civilian), Dr. Fionnbar Lenihan, Central Medical Unit	Novel, Cost-Effective, and Rapidly Deployable Treatment Program to Address Psychological Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	Merit (Group Winners)
CS Michael McKeown, Cpl Dave Connaughton, Cpl Patrick Mulhall 2BTC Athlone	Digital Indoor Range and situational based training software	Merit
Ms Eimear Ní Phalluín, Dr Fionnbar Lenihan, Lt Col Patrick Kelly, Central Medical Unit	DF Physiotherapy Future-Soldier: A Life-Long Soldier Well-Being & Health Protection System	Merit
Cpl Carol Maloney, Pte Kevin Connolly, Pte Connie O'Mahony, Pte Sean Forde, Pte Martin O'Connor, Pte Alan O'Driscoll, Pte Liam White, 1 BAR & 1 CIS	Collins Barracks Family Room	Certificate
AB Ryan Cornally, PO Brendan O'Reilly, CIS Gp Naval Service	Visual Signalling – Flashing Training Program	Certificate

PART TIME FULL ON



ARTICLE BY PTE (AR) CAOIMHE RUIGROK (2 BDE TPT)

Having previously served in D Company 62 Battalion, I rejoined the Army Reserve in 2023 under the previous service application scheme, this time, joining 2 Brigade Transport Company based in Cathal Brugha Barracks. Training began as part of a joint recruit platoon under the current combined recruit syllabus for Army Reserve and Naval Service Reserve recruits. The platoon was drawn from a range of units, including Transport, Cavalry, Communications and Information Services, Central Medical Unit, and Dublin Unit NSR recruits.

Due to direct recruitment by corps, there was a greater age range, with many recruits working in established professions that aligned with their chosen Corps. The platoon comprised of people born in Ireland, Albania, Canada, Russia, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Induction training began at the end of 2023, followed by recruit training in early 2024.

Training quickly focused on weapons, starting with the Steyr, followed by the GPMG. My first observation this time around was the change in modules at each stage, from recruitment through induction to formal recruit training. Recruits were provided with a clear syllabus, training objectives, and learning outcomes, along with greater awareness of the requirements at each stage. One thing that has not changed is the time and commitment of the Officers and NCOs at every training evening or weekend. Serving in the Reserve, regardless of your role or unit, is a serious time commitment and often underestimated.

In June 2024, the platoon completed two weeks of full-time training at the Defence Forces Training Centre and five weekends at Cathal Brugha Barracks or Gormanston Camp. This included two weekends on the range in August and November, firing the Steyr and GPMG, respectively, along with any coursework assigned between each training period. In December and January, all recruits completed their 24-hour guard duty at Gormanston Camp.

While parading during the week gives a great opportunity to get to know each other, the two weeks of full-time training are essential as they provide the opportunity to bond and get to know your colleagues. It is over the full-time training and weekends that you discover the strength of each person and start to work better as a team, especially moving forward to three-star training.

Although the platoon numbers have reduced, with some deciding to join the PDF and others finding the time commitment incompatible with full-time employment, for the remainder, our training culminated in a passing out parade on Sunday, 02 February 2025. Two platoons of Corps recruits passed out in Cathal Brugha Barracks receiving our new rank markings from General Officer Commanding 2 Brigade, Brigadier General Stephen Ryan. A total of 44 new Two Stars/Ordinary Seamen ready to take on the next stage of training.

I joined Transport because I wanted an active role in the Defence Forces during my spare time. Transport is a busy unit with many taskings to support both permanent and reserve training. We are now progressing to Three Star training, followed by unit-specific training. This places another significant demand on our time as we prepare for further blocks of full-time training and training weekends. In time, I hope to qualify as a driving instructor to give back to the unit that is currently training me.

In my platoon alone, we have engineers, a medical scientist, an optometrist, an EMT, a DEI manager, and many other professionals and students in degree courses and apprenticeships. I am a Barrister, CEDR mediator, and a qualified chef. I, along with many others in my platoon, look forward to the Defence Forces' recognition of external qualifications, as this will enable a range of reservists with professional qualifications to assist the Defence Forces in the future.



WHAT IS RDF TRAINING LIKE?



The **Reserve Defence Forces (RDF) Joint Induction Training** is a comprehensive syllabus that is designed to transform new recruits into disciplined, physically fit, and motivated soldiers or sailors. The training aims to instil basic military skills, a sense of duty, patriotism, and an understanding of Defence Forces' ethos and traditions. The syllabus supports the delivery of the RDF Regeneration and Development Plan (RDFRDP) which seeks to build a Reserve with an effective strength of 80% by 2028.

TRAINING OVERVIEW

The RDF Joint Induction Training is divided into **three phases**, totalling 234.75 hours. The first phase, conducted over 35.25 hours, takes place in **home units** and includes a Defence Force orientation package, logistical administration, and health and safety education. This phase aims to facilitate the cultural transition from civilian life to a structured military environment.

The second phase consists of **six training weekends**, amounting to 81 hours. During this phase, recruits focus on foot drill and rifle marksmanship, including firing Steyr Table 8. The third phase is a **14-day block of Full-Time Training (FTT)**, totalling 118.5 hours. This phase emphasises arms drill, sentinel drill, guard mounting, and GPMG training, including firing GPMG tables 9 and 10.

KEY TRAINING COMPONENTS

Foot Drill and Arms Drill are essential building blocks as recruits bed into a structured military environment. Recruits learn elementary

drills, self-discipline, and prompt obedience to orders. Various foot and arms drill movements will be practiced to build the "muscle memory" required for drill in operational units, including parades and guards of honour.

A large component of recruit training is set aside for rifle marksmanship training where Recruits are trained to handle, maintain, and fire the Steyr rifle safely and accurately. Recruits undergo extensive practice sessions to prepare for Tests of Elementary Training (TOET) and must pass their Personal Weapons Test (PWT). On completion of the Steyr, Recruits move onto the General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG) Training where they're taught how to handle, fire, and maintain the GPMG in a light role. As with the Steyr, they must successfully complete TOETs before moving onto their PWT on the range.

Recruits will learn the duties of guards and sentinels, when operating as a member of a barrack guard or when deployed as part of a Mobile Security Group. This includes briefings on COD6 and the guiding principles for the use of ball ammunition. Recruits must then prepare for at least one 24-hour regimental guard duty in their home barracks.

Significant time on the syllabus is set aside for physical education which includes a rigorous physical fitness program to develop stamina, endurance, strength, and flexibility. Recruits must pass the Defence Forces Physical Fitness Test.

In addition to drill, weapons, duties and PT, Recruits will attend lectures on various topics, including the Defence Forces' organisation, interpersonal relationships, stress management, and the Law of Armed Conflict. They also receive training in hygiene and sanitation, fire safety, and the use of the Roll Over Protection System (ROPS).

ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Recruits are continuously assessed through practical tests, written exams, and oral assessments. They must pass all "Star Tests" to qualify as Two Star Privates or Ordinary Rates. The training also includes the SOAR (Situation, Observation, Assess, and Recommend) system, which provides regular performance appraisals and constructive feedback.

The RDF Joint Induction Training is a challenging yet rewarding program that prepares recruits for further specialised training and a fulfilling career in the Reserve Defence Force.



CAVALRY SCOUT TACTICAL COURSE



ARTICLE BY CAPT PAUL SHEEHAN
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CAPT PAUL SHEEHAN

On the 11th FEB 2025 students from all Cavalry Squadrons met in the Cavalry School Auditorium to commence their journey on the 4th Cavalry Scout Tactical Course. The Cavalry Scout Course was introduced in early 2022 to replace the Cavalry Reconnaissance Course. This change marked the need to keep pace with developing military technology in warfare. The 'human-in-the-loop' (Scout) employs modern technology coupled with a high level of soldier skills, to provide close to real time information in collaboration with other arms to contribute to real

During week one, students received training on vehicle dismount drills, classroom lessons, the principles of medium reconnaissance, care under fire drills (CUF), and river crossing techniques with the main focus on dismounted patrolling TTPs. Students deployed to the Glen of Imaal in order to hone these skills and ensure standardisation of TTPs. Students spent two nights on the ground during the first week to revise Patrol Harbour and night operations. By night, students were trained in conducting ambushes, close reconnaissance and other aspects of night operations. By the close of week one, students realised one key take away; in areas where friendly forces armour assets are denied, dismounted Scouts must learn to thrive.



The use of drones are becoming increasingly effective for reconnaissance

time Information Fusion, thus contributing to the Commanders Decision Making Process. Prior to commencing the Scout Tactical Course, as a prerequisite, students must first pass the Scout Sensor, Scout Communication and Scout Navigation Modules of the Scout Course. The aim of the tactical course is develop basic soldier skills and provide students with a comprehensive knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of a Cavalry Scout. It focuses on attaining high standards of weapons handling, the ability to react to contact and dismounted patrolling Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs). The Cavalry Scout Tactical Course is conducted over an intensive four week period in Cavalry School.

During week two students were introduced to Observation Post construction, survivability and extraction. Owing to the modern technologies introduced during the sensor block, namely the multi-sensor binocular FLIR RECON B2-FO and SAAB BARACUDA net camouflage, an emphasis was placed on safe standoff. Students were taught Artillery Call for Fire procedures thanks to the Artillery School staff and the use of their simulator. Students deployed on exercise



A student on the course covers off with a training rifle during river crossing drills

'First View' and exercise 'Close Look'. This saw 'A Troop' deploy 40km beyond friendly lines. Friendly force armour was kept in defilade owing to the anti-armour threat and Scouts deployed forward into Stranahely forest. Dismounted Scouts conducted a search and utilised sensors to find active enemy in the area. Sensors deployed in this search included drones, FLIR RECON and Foxtrack Ground Surveillance Radar (GSR) along with dismounted patrolling. Once located, Scouts then transitioned into the FIX

phase of the operation, maintaining eyes on the enemy who were occupying 'dug in' defensive positions. Scouts maintained 'eyes on' for a 48hr period through the use of dismounted Observation Posts. Once all useful information was extracted Scouts conducted an Artillery Call for Fire mission and withdrew to the protection of armour.

Upon completion of the exercise, students transitioned to water confidence training undertaking detachment level river crossing at Poulaphouca Reservoir, a rite of passage for many reconnaissance trained soldiers down through the years. Assistance from the DF Dive Group ensured a safe and well-executed serial.

Week three saw students change pace, transitioning to combat tracking. The aim of this week is to ensure students not only gain awareness of tracking quarry (enemy) but also make them aware

of their own signature and how to reduce their sign. Students spent long days and nights learning to identify the minutest of sign up to large signatures such as footprints broken twigs, incident sites and identification of aging sign. This new skill was welcomed by all students and continues to be highlighted as a favourite element of the Scout Tactical Course. Students benefited from instruction on combat tracking provided by colleagues from the 4th Security Force Assistance Brigade of the US Army.

Week four saw students deploy on confirmation exercise 'Sabre Strike'. Continuing the scenario from the previous exercise, enemy forces had withdrawn to a consolidation point some 15km rearward of their previous forward line. Having inserted in armour in defilade once again troops began combat tracking until information gained led to the location of enemy forces. Over the next 48hrs, students created the conditions suitable for Reconnaissance Handover (RHO) to Infantry Close Reconnaissance troops following behind in order to destroy the enemy consolidation point and push the enemy out of the Wicklow Mountains area. With friendly forces blocked, scouts had to affect their own raid destroying the enemy forces in the area. Upon completion, Scouts conducted a CASEVAC to an exfiltration



Students learn tracking skills as part of the course

pick up point where students were greeted by their CRVs and the long awaited "End Ex". At the end of week four, as is now the tradition, the award of Best Student is presented to the student with the overall top marks on the course. This year the best student went to Tpr O'Dare from 1ACS.

This year's Tactical Course benefited hugely from co-ordination between the CIS and Cavalry Schools in order to field trial the THALES Software Defined Radio (SDR) scheduled for roll out across the DF at the

end of this year. Scouts utilised both the SQUADNET and SYNAPS 'H' radio with crew utilising the SYNAPS 'V' fitted to CRVs during Exercise 'Sabre Strike'. The SDR is a generational change from the SINCGARs radio. Drone images were shared from the Scout in the



Mowags are vital for long range reconnaissance patrols

training area in Wicklow through their SYNAPS 'H' and were viewed by higher command in the DFTC within minutes, not only proving the radios capabilities but marking the advancement in a Scouts ability

to provide timely and accurate information.



Night orders being conducted under red light

The Cavalry Scout Tactical Course continues to be a cornerstone that all personnel within the Cavalry Corps must achieve in order to advance their career within the Corps. This Course gives students the 'tools in the toolbox' to overcome challenges in demanding environments wherever they may deploy in future.

Carpe Diem.

JOINT COMMON OPERATIONAL PICTURE – DELIVERING NETWORK ENABLED OPERATIONS

ARTICLE BY CDR BRIAN MATHEWS, DF JCOP PROGRAMME COORDINATOR
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CDR MATHEWS

Over the past ten years, the Defence Forces has been digitally transforming our conduct of operations, by harnessing technology to enhance our capability through a shared situation awareness across our full spectrum of operations. This has been achieved through the CIS led Joint Common Operational Picture (JCOP) programme connecting sensors, effectors and decision makers together on a common C5IS platform sharing information in near real-time to significantly increase the decision making cycle and enable faster operational response through collective understanding of active operations.



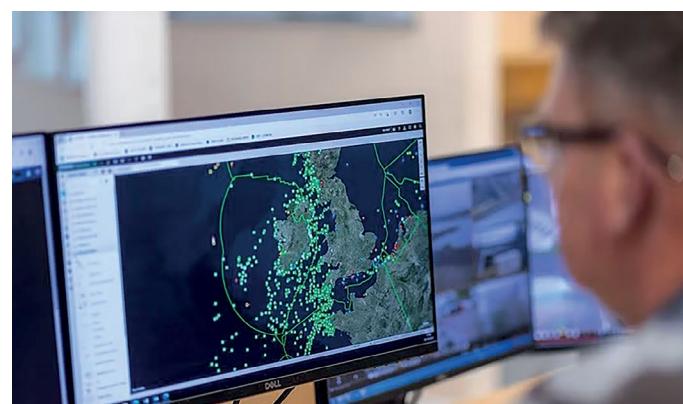
operations both on-island and overseas and is the hub where all information across the JCOP merges.

The key components of the JCOP are a common secure network (the CIS Network) ubiquitous across the force, and a common situation awareness system called 'SitaWare HQ' provided by the Danish company Systematic. Although this platform was originally focused on the land domain, the DF recognised the potential of a common technology platform across the force, to create a JCOP and were amongst the first to use SitaWare in the maritime domain to deliver the Naval Service's Recognised Maritime Picture (RMP). The RMP has been a critical enabler to build maritime domain awareness in support of maritime defence and security operations (MDSO) in Ireland's vast maritime area of operations of approximately one million square kilometres. In the air domain, SitaWare 'in flight' was captured as a requirement for the next generation of Air Corps aircraft and both



the ISTAR PC12 aircraft and C295 MPRA aircraft are SitaWare enabled, which is a first for this technology platform attracting much international attention. In essence, the sensors onboard these aircraft supported by the Air Corps mission support facility, can be shared in near real-time with the JOC, Naval Service ships, the naval operations centre, the Army Ranger Wing, and any other decision maker or tactical element involved in a specific operation. During regular day-to-day operations such as MDSO in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) or peace support operations overseas, the JCOP been a force multiplier where a combined shared awareness delivers a far great effect than the sum of our parts.

For specific focused operations, the JCOP ensures the right information is presented to the right decision maker or effector and at the right time. This network-enabled capability was to the fore during Operation Piano, a joint maritime interdiction operation of the 'MV Matthew'. The JCOP was used to track the suspect vessels on the RMP, coordinate surveillance using NS ships and AC MPRAs, and then orchestrate a boarding operation by the Army Ranger Wing by helicopter, during which the PC12 ISTAR aircraft streamed video of the boarding to the JOC in near real-time. Operation Piano resulted in the largest seizure of narcotics in the history of the State.



¹ Command, control, communications, computers, cyber, information system

² Intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance

³ Maritime patrol reconnaissance aircraft

2024 DEFENCE FORCES REVIEW: 'CLIMATE CHANGE, SECURITY AND DEFENCE'

Climate change is a major issue of the 21st century, impacting the climate system, the environment, and human societies. It has sparked debate about its effect on security and defence, with formal policy documents from the EU and NATO and discussions in the UN Security Council.



The relationship between climate change and security is complex. Climate change poses serious threats to human security, including extreme weather, food insecurity, and displacement. These impacts are most severe in poorer countries, but they can destabilise states globally. The concept of 'climate wars' suggests that climate change could increase the likelihood of armed conflicts, particularly civil wars.

Militaries are also affected by climate change, with extreme weather altering operational conditions and creating new challenges. Armed forces may be called on for humanitarian aid or disaster relief. Additionally, militaries are significant contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and are under pressure to reduce them.

The Defence Forces Review 2024 highlights ongoing efforts to address the security implications of climate change, including the development of technologies to reduce military emissions. The Irish Defence Forces are already engaged in these efforts, helping with disaster relief and reducing their own carbon footprint. Climate change will remain a critical issue for militaries in the future.

This year's edition was in collaboration with University College Cork. The

joint editorial team was Professor Andrew Cottey, of UCC, and Comdt Gavin Egerton and Lt Cdr Stuart Armstrong from the Defence Forces.

Following a call for papers published in May 2024, the editors received more than 20 submissions from which they selected 13 to be published in the Review. The essays published are from both DF and non-DF personnel, and the full Review is available at the following link <https://www.military.ie/en/public-information/publications/defence-forces-review/df-review-2024-final.pdf>

We have presented here a sample of titles from the published essays, as well as a list of the thesis titles from the 6th Joint Command and Staff Course, who completed an MA in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies, taught in partnership between Maynooth University and the Command and Staff School in the Irish Military College.

Running on Empty towards a Mad Max World? Climate Change and the "Western Way of War" in Question by Dr Brendan Flynn

Is Climate Change a Driver of the Far-Right? By Comdt Paul O'Callaghan



The Impact of Climate Change on Naval Service Diving Section Operations by Lt (AR) Cian Lynch

Climate Action: A Leadership Opportunity for the Defence Forces by Comdt Eoghan Carton

6TH JCSC THESIS TITLES

Benefits of Mentoring Programmes in the Defence Forces	Lt Cdr Patricia BUTLER MSc
Preparing for the Concrete Jungle: Adapting Irish Army Doctrine and Training for Urban Operations	Comdt Brian CAHILL BA, HDip, MSc
Beyond Rhetoric: Building a Culture of Diversity and Inclusion in the Irish Defence Forces	Comdt Michael CAMPBELL
Climate Action: A Leadership Opportunity for the Defence Forces	Comdt Eoghan CARTON BEng, CEng, MIEI
An Examination into Russia's Use of Private Military Contractors As a Tool to Achieve Their Geopolitical Goals in Africa.	Comdt Mark CONWAY BSc MSc
Mentoring in the Irish Defence Forces: Opportunities and Challenges	Comdt Shane COURTNEY MA
The Impact of Psychological Safety on Retention: Realising Mitigation Potential in Organisational Crisis	Major Michael W. DABECK BSc, MSc
The Path to Senior Leadership. An Exploration of the Experiences of Motherhood in the Irish Defence Forces	Lt Cdr Grace FANNING BSc
Saving Salvable Lives: The Derivation of an Information Management Framework to Enable Irish Emergency Communications at All Phases and Levels of Crisis Management Operations	Comdt Denis FLYNN BSc (Hons), M Sc. M Eng. MSEM
Crew Resource Management (CRM) – Does the Application of Crew Resource Management in the German Navy Provide the Potential to Improve Leadership and an Effective Leader- Follower Relationship?	Commander Rouven GRUENHAGEN
"The Illumination of Motivation" Lessons from Motivational Theory: Irish Defence Forces Privates Who Remain in Service	Comdt Thomas HOLMES
Enhancing Ireland's Defence Forces Cyber Capability	Comdt John KENNY BSc MSc
Physical Activity As a Tool to Build Resilience and Good Mental Health in the Defence Forces	Comdt Ian KILBRIDE
Is Ireland Europe's Weak Link for Maritime Surveillance? Can Artificial Intelligence Bridge the Gap?	Lt Cdr Claire MURPHY BBus (Hons), HDip
Examining Remote Work in Militaries Post-COVID: Opportunities and Challenges for the Irish Defence Forces	Comdt Vincent McGRATH BSc MSc
How Does Ireland Inc. Develop and Maintain Resilience against Space-Based Threats?	Comdt Aonghus Ó HALMHAIN BEng BSc
Does Peer Influence Play a Part in the Decision-Making Process with Regards to Retention and Turnover of Personnel in the Irish Naval Service?	Lt Cdr David O'FLYNN
Should the Irish Defence Forces Look to Rehire Retired Military Members to Fulfil Civilian Type Roles within the Organisation?	Comdt Ian O'RIORDAN BA, H-Dip
A Case for Robustness in Cadet Training	Comdt Aidan RYAN BSc MSc
In Sport and in Life, Be the Best You Can Be Representing Your Country. Is the Irish National High-Performance Boxing Unit Delivering World Class Athletes to its Maximum Potential and Can Elements of This Set-up Be Transferred to the Defence Forces and the Defence Forces Boxing Infrastructure.	Comdt Adrian WATSON

DEFENCE FORCES OVERSEAS FAMILY SUPPORT DAY



The second Defence Forces family day for families of personnel currently serving overseas took place recently in Dublin Zoo with around 400 family members attending. The purpose of this day was to recognise the support our families give to each and every member of the Defence Forces to help us do our job. The day was really well attended, with the sun even making an appearance! Lots of children of DF personnel were there who had mummies, daddies, aunts and uncles deployed with UNIFIL, EUBG and KFOR and were delighted to get their face painted. We even debuted our new Defence Forces colouring book which is available for anyone who'd like to get the crayons out – just email info@military.ie ! The next family day will take place over the Summer, keep an eye on our social media for info.





PEOPLE OF THE DF

FAMILY NAME:
HOUЛИHAN

FAMILIES COMBINED SERVICE:
467 YEARS

COMBINED OVERSEAS TRIPS:

55

UNITS REPRESENTED:

44



RSM Mike Houlihan's Stand-down parade



RSM Paddy Houlihan



Paddy and five of his sons, Larry, Dec, Cyril, Mike and PJ



Sgt Dec Houlihan and son Gnr Gary Houlihan



1982 - BQMS Larry Houlihan's Stand-down parade



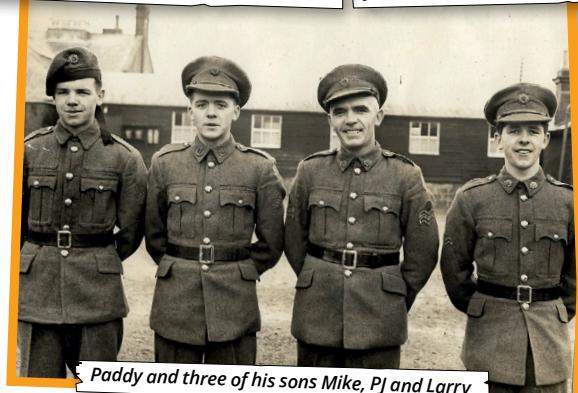
Larry, his three sons Paddy, Dema, Dougie and Grandsons Keith & Ryan pictured at the Congo presentation cert 2024



Mike with his three sons Mikey, PJ & John at his Stand-down parade



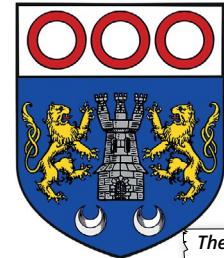
Larry's three sons and two grandsons, pictured while they were all serving in the CIS Corps



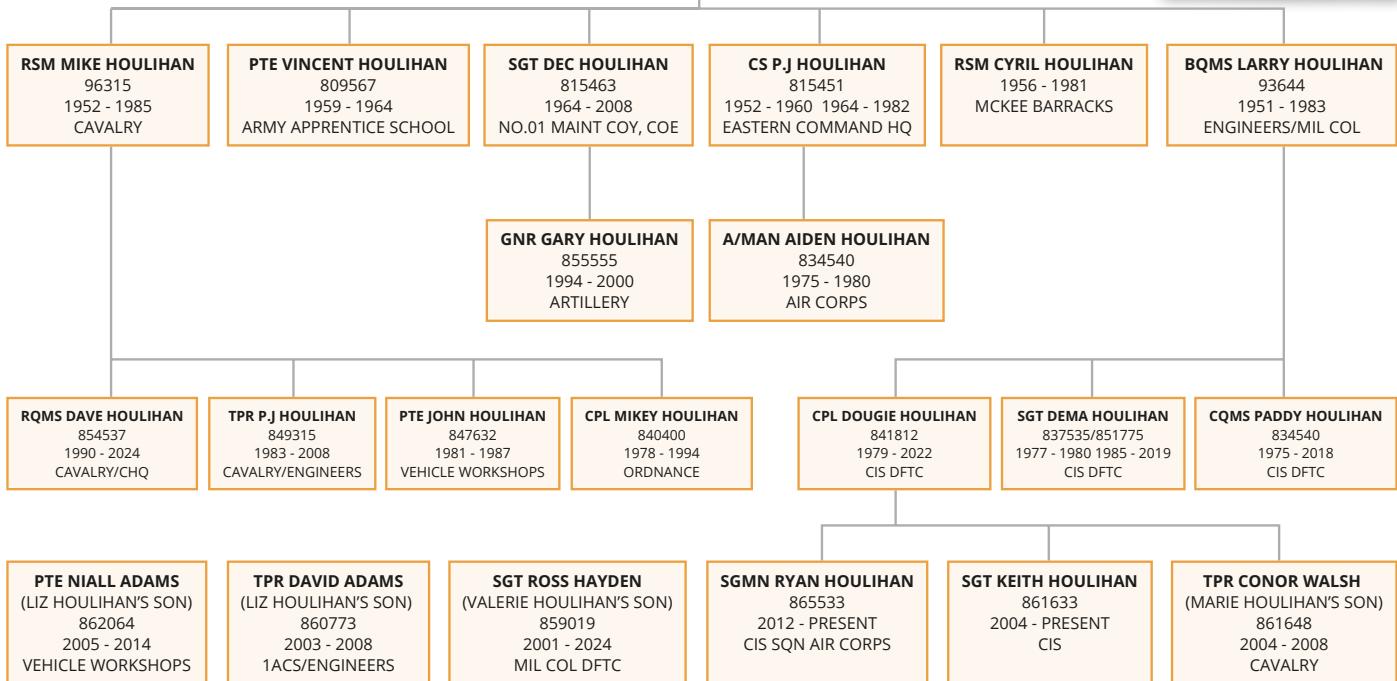
Paddy and three of his sons Mike, PJ and Larry



Mike, Larry, Cyril, Vinny and Damie Houlihan



The Houlihan family crest



Short family history from Sgt Dema Houlihan (Retired)

My Granddad Paddy Houlihan joined the army in 1928. Himself and my gran Sheila had twelve children, ten boys and two girls. Unfortunately, one passed at childbirth and another at nine months. Of the ten sons, six joined the army at various stages of their lives, some at 17-18, others later on in life after trying other avenues. Some left after 21 years and went on to be teachers and security personnel.

My Granddad was RSM in Clarke Barracks, Curragh Camp and due to unfortunate circumstances had to retire from the army upon reaching the age of 49, or 31 years' service. This nonsensical rule was abolished after 12 months, but all too late for Paddy as he was deemed overage. He did manual labour on the newly built Curragh Gymnasium for a few months but eventually decided to take up an offer of manager of Kylemore Bakery (based on experience gained running The Curragh Bakery for numerous years) in North Frederick Street, Dublin where he took up residence with half of his family, with the other half staying in the Curragh area. After a few months the family moved to Killala Road, Cabra. My Gran's favourite quote was "What's meant for you won't pass you".

The Defence Forces has always been very enjoyable and beneficial to the Houlihan family, and a great career at home and abroad. Paddy's six sons between them had nine Grandsons join the army, who then had a further six great grandsons follow in their footsteps. It's an extended Family and well spread out as some of the great grandsons' mothers are Houlihans. Factor in those that are married to soldiers, or soldiers' sons or daughters, and you get the picture!

Six siblings still going strong with my dad Larry just gone 91, and Mike turning 90 in June this year.

Long may it last...

The Houlihan families impressive list of overseas service

The approximate list of 55 overseas missions, (but probably forgetting a few trips).

LEBANON UNIFIL	27 TRIPS
KOSOVA KFOR	6
CYPRUS	5
CONGO	4
LIBERIA UNMIL	3
CHAD EUFOR/MINURCAT	3
SINAI	2
BOSNIA	1
SYRIA	1
AUSTRALIA/EAST TIMOR	1
HONDURAS	1
BALKANS EBCM	1

CQMS Paddy Houlihan's Exceptional overseas service with 18 trips

100 Inf Bn Minurcat - Chad
 Eufor (Chad)
 35 Inf Gp Kfor - Kosovo
 95 Inf Bn Unmil - Liberia
 No 2 Irish Component Eufor BiH
 Kfor - Hq Kosovo (Skopje)
 No. 2 Ircor Interfet Australia/East Timor
 IHSG - Honduras
 Ecm - Balkans
 28 Ircorp (Unifil)
 No 24 Ircorp (Unifil)
 No 22 Ircorp (Unifil)
 65 Inf Bn (Unifil)
 63 Inf Bn (Unifil)
 61 Inf Bn (Unifil)
 58 Inf Bn (Unifil)
 53 Inf Bn (Unifil)
 48 Inf Bn (Unifil)



DEFENCE FORCES SAILING DELIVERS AT THE BEAUFORT CUP INTERNATIONAL SAILING REGATTA



ARTICLE BY CDR BRIAN MATHEWS, HEAD OF DF SAILING



WHAT IS THE BEAUFORT CUP?

The Beaufort Cup is a biennial international 5 day sailing regatta hosted by the Royal Cork Yacht Club during Cork Week with the support of the Defence Forces and Department of Defence. Since its inception

in 2016, the Beaufort Cup has proven to be a resounding success, with upwards of 50 racing teams from various uniformed services competing over the years for the coveted Beaufort Cup Trophy and a sizeable donation to the winning teams chosen charity. Sailing teams from all over the world enjoy exciting sailing conditions in one of the finest natural harbours of the world while also experiencing the splendid views of the south coast of Ireland for the offshore race to the iconic Fastnet Rock lighthouse and back. Off the water, the excellent shore-side facilities allow the teams the opportunity to develop and foster relationships, which serve to enhance a spirit of co-operation, and mutual respect at all levels.



WHO PARTICIPATES?

Taking its name from the Irishman Sir Francis Beaufort, inventor of the Beaufort Wind Scale, the Beaufort Cup fleet traditionally comprises of racing teams all too familiar with the higher end of the Beaufort scale. Both

national and international uniformed services of the Navy, Coast Guard, Army, Air Force, Police, Emergency Rescue Services and any other relevant services are invited to participate in the regatta. A seasoned campaigner of the Beaufort Cup, Peter Quinn (USN rtd), Director of US Patriot Sailing perhaps best captures the Beaufort Cup appeal;

"Campaigning for the Beaufort Cup is an experience in world class Corinthian offshore sailing, international camaraderie & diplomacy, and the brilliant warmth of the Irish welcome! The Irish Ministry of

Defence and the Royal Cork Yacht Club have created a premier charity sporting event deserving of international recognition and participation. In 2022, it was a big organizational step for US Patriot Sailing to compete in this regatta - our experience in Cork was so great that we committed on the spot to return in 2024 with 3 crews. We have a keen eye on winning the Cup, yet equally focused on reconnecting with friends made during the last Beaufort Cup campaign and on establishing new friendships across each of the international crews. When you come to Cork, bring your best - both on and off the water - this event will be a highlight in your life of memories!"

For the Defence Forces Sailing Club, Beaufort Cup is our flagship event as event organisers and participants. DF Sailing has always fielded a strong racing team, and have emerged as the Beaufort Cup champions on three of the four iterations of the event. Our most recent campaign in 2024 was significant as for the first time we won all 6 races in the regatta, often by seconds, which shows the level of competition in the fleet.



BEAUFORT CUP 2024....THE PREPARATIONS

'Most battles are won before they are fought' and this saying certainly rings true for yacht racing; preparation is key to success. Through the unwavering support of J7 Sports & Fitness Policy Section, DF Sailing conducts regular sail training during the sailing season where DF personnel are introduced to

sailing practices, seamanship, safety on the water and boat handling. Here to fore this training was delivered by Flight Sergeant Adrian 'Jack' Mulligan, a keen yacht racer and key member of the DF sailing racing team. Jack identified those with racing potential during these training sessions and this allowed us to select the strongest racing team from all DF & RDF personnel who responded to the calling notice. Sailing takes many forms like most sports and in line with other years, our goal was to get everyone on the water safely making



Cork Week Harbour Race - 'All In Start'
Photo credit James Tomlinson

sure their experience is memorable for all the right reasons! Having received 20 applications to participate from across the DF and RDF, we fielded three teams for the event; two entries for Beaufort Cup and a third entry in white sailing within Cork Week, getting everyone on the water. The main racing team was selected, remaining experienced sailors were assigned to our stalwart entry 'Meridian' owned by Tom Roche a retired Naval Officer who has teamed up with DF Sailing for all Beaufort Cup regattas with 50% of the crew being DF personnel as per the entry requirements. We remain very grateful to Tom for his steadfast support to DF Sailing over the years. The less experienced sailors raced onboard 'Arc Angel' owned by Capt (NS) William Roberts and raced in the non-spinnaker fleet of Cork Week.



THE DF SAILING RACING CAMPAIGN

The Beaufort Cup 2024 fleet comprised of 8 racing teams from far and wide; with three highly experienced teams from the US Patriots; a team with a fresh new racing yacht from the UK Royal

Navy, the reigning Beaufort Cup Champions Crosshaven RNLI, Rosslare RNLI, and two DF entries. We knew we couldn't 'bring a knife to a gun fight' and had to secure a yacht to stand up to the challenge. I remain extremely grateful to Finbarr O'Regan of Kinsale Yacht Club who agreed to charter his beloved J109 'Artful Dodger' to DF Sailing for the event. The racing team are familiar with J109's and so this made a perfect match. The team of 9 was joint in all respects with 3 Naval Service, 2 Army, 3 Air Corps and our former Minister Simon Coveney - the patron of Beaufort Cup and a very capable, experienced yachtsman who has raced in every edition of the event to date. While I was the team Skipper with responsibility for the team; the performance of the boat and tactical decisions rested with Lt (NS) Marcus Ryan, a rising star in national sailing and winner of the J24 European Championships - a first for Ireland.



Artful Dodger Racing BC 2024

ourselves with the boat. We also received coaching to work on our racing techniques. With Simon Coveney helming the boat, it was a whole new dynamic for a junior Naval Officer to give orders to a Minister but a true team is greater than the sum of its parts and this was just one of the many instances where the DF values were clearly visible in action. On the eve of the event, a diver cleaned the hull and we were ready for battle!

THE OFFSHORE CHALLENGE

After a year of planning, Beaufort Cup 2024 kicked off on Mon 15th of July with the iconic 24hr, 120-mile offshore race from Haulbowline Naval Base, around the famous Fastnet Rock in West Cork and back to Cork Harbour. Traditionally it is an upwind slog to the Fastnet into prevailing south-westerly winds followed by a run downwind back to Cork Harbour, but this year we had light easterlies that became very light as the day progressed. The fleet divided with those fitted with large spinnakers running dead downwind along the coast while those with asymmetric sails went offshore to sail angles going downwind. It was a nerve-racking day with the fleet separated by miles, however when we converged to round the Fastnet we were in a good position, leading the fleet around the rock; Marcus'

tactics were vindicated! Motivated by our position we managed to lead the fleet back to Cork Harbour, holding off the faster Nieulargo of Crosshaven RNLI, winning the offshore race and receiving line honours as the first boat to finish. We were presented with the prestigious San Souci Cup for our success in the offshore race at the Beaufort Cup Gala Dinner hosted by the Minister for Defence at the Naval Base Haulbowline.



INSHORE RACES

The Beaufort Cup fleet of 8 racing yachts followed the regular Cork Week programme following the offshore challenge, with the incredible all-in Harbour Race on Wed 17th of July where over 150 racing boats started

together and raced around a course in Cork Harbour. We emerged victorious out of the Beaufort Fleet and won the remaining 4 short inshore races on laid courses on Thurs 18th & Fri 19th, although it must be said on two occasions it was only be seconds, such was the competition.

DEFENCE FORCES ARE BEAUFORT CUP CHAMPIONS

At the prize giving, the Defence Forces were declared the Beaufort Cup champions winning the trophy and awarded €5,000 for our chosen charity, Cork University Hospital Children's Ward. It was a great crescendo to a memorable regatta with top-class performance yacht racing. The visiting teams are the distinct component that makes Beaufort Cup such a success and their participation was acknowledged, indeed the US Patriots won best crew for Cork Week 2024.

DF Sailing wishes to acknowledge the support of the Defence Council for Adventure Training (DFCAT) led by J7 Sports and Fitness Policy Section who continually support and guide DF clubs. The Beaufort Cup draws on resources from across the DF under the sponsorship of the Deputy Chief of Staff (Operations); visiting military teams are accommodated at Collins Bcks, the DF/RDF participants are accommodated at the Naval Base, 1 BDE Band supports the event, plus a myriad of logistics support that the event requires. This continued support is acknowledged as the critical enabler to the event's success.

DF Sailing conducts multiple sailing activities during the year from dinghy sailing



courses to yacht sail training, and DF racing events. If you wish to find out more about sailing in the DF, please contact J7 Sports and Fitness Policy Section.

Finishing the Offshore BC 2024

JOINT COMMAND & STAFF COURSE CYBERSECURITY & HYBRID THREATS: THE PAST SEVEN YEARS - AND THE NEXT

ARTICLE BY DINOS ANTHONY KERIGAN-KYROU
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY DINOS ANTHONY KERIGAN-KYROU

In January 2015, a couple of years before I started instructing on the Senior Command & Staff Course (SCSC), I gave the first lecture to the Junior Command & Staff Course on emerging security challenges. That year, with great accuracy, the Defence White Paper by Defence Minister Alan Shatter made clear the new types of challenges we were to be facing. The definition of 'national security' had considerably changed over the previous two decades; threats had become less visible, more diverse, and unpredictable. Examples included regional conflicts, organised crime, terrorism, and state failure.

Between 2017 and 2024 (the SCSC becoming the Joint Command & Staff Course in 2018), the OF-3 officers who undertake the JCSC benefited from the expertise of a broad range of instructors from government, business, international organisations, academia, and



Russia utilised online social media to influence the 2016 Brexit referendum

the military. They represented world-ranking academic institutions such as Arizona State University's Thunderbird School of Global Management, Oxford

University's Blavatnik School of Government, and Lancaster University's Department of Politics; leading consultancies such as Wise Law Melbourne, Layer 8 Cybersecurity, and Digital Business Ireland; businesses such as Airbox Systems, Rivada Networks, Barclays Bank, and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals; and military and governmental organisations including the Irish Data Protection Commission, Royal Australian Air Force, UK Cabinet Office, US State Dept, Royal Military College Canada, US Joint Special Operations University, US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, LA



Organisations that provided invaluable and crucial instruction to the JCSC on Cybersecurity and Hybrid Threats

County Sheriff's Dept, UK Joint Services Command and Staff College, Hellenic Military Academy, German Federal Foreign Ministry, US FBI, the Bundeswehr, NATO, National Cyber Security Centre Ireland, Parents for Peace Canada, the Marshall Center, Partnership for Peace Consortium, US Navy, and the NATO / EU Hybrid Centre of Excellence. The EU - including the European Security and Defence College, the ENISA cybersecurity agency, European Defence Agency, and European External Action Service (EEAS) also provided

invaluable teaching. Expert instructors who had recently led organisations such as EEAS, the EU's police agency Europol, the US National Security Agency (NSA), and UK's National Cyber Security Centre, all shared their critical and invaluable expertise.

The wide range of instructors were invited because the threats we face are becoming ever broader and less predictable. 'Hybrid' security challenges - which are both 'military' and non-military - are increasingly diverse but much more prevalent. Cybersecurity was identified by former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in her report 'NATO 2020 New Strategic Concept', as one of the key defining hybrid issues.

Cybersecurity is the security of Cyberspace - the online environment in which we all now live and work. Cyberspace clearly provides invaluable societal benefits - far too many to mention here. However, technology is indifferent to concepts of right and wrong (at least it is for now, in these early days of Artificial Intelligence.) Cyberspace can be a facilitator of progress - or an enabler for nefarious actors seeking to cause harm. We saw this clearly with the 2021 cyber attack on our HSE health service.

As we explored in previous editions of An Cosantóir, cyberspace is utilised by criminals, malign states, and terrorist actors.

Cyberspace is the primary enabler for terrorism. Indeed, Sir Alex Younger, former director of the UK Secret Intelligence Service, states terrorism needs to be defined as a "technique", regardless of its "author". Cyberspace enables groups, including Isis and the extreme far right, to initiate or 'inspire' terrorist activities. Terrorist organisations and their supporters disseminate online propaganda creating a false narrative - particularly effective in enabling 'lone wolf' terrorism which is incredibly difficult to detect before an incident. Online radicalisation also has a direct effect on the Defence Forces and the security of the State both here in Ireland and in the many regions of the world in which we operate. Indeed, the consequences of the successful Isis online radicalisation and recruitment of one of our own serving personnel in 2015 could have been catastrophic.

The EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) based within Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre, states that terrorist use of the internet and social media "has increased enormously over the course of recent years". (EU IRU detects and investigates malicious content on the internet and in social media). The US FBI has established the Countering Violent Extremism Program (CVE), which aims to help young people identify and avoid "poisonous propaganda", especially in cyberspace, where violent extremists "are flooding social media with slick recruiting videos and persuasive calls to action."

Cyberspace facilitates the use of low-cost offensive technology by hostile non-state actors, which would have been impossible just a few years ago. A modern smartphone featuring GPS, accelerometers, gyroscopes, and motion detectors can be weaponized to enable an improvised explosive device, unmanned aerial vehicle, or an improvised missile. Advanced weapons can be manufactured using 3D printing with plans obtained online. Terrorists can now acquire the latest technology - not for the billions spent on national defence budgets - but for a few hundred dollars. Since 9/11 al-Qaeda, Isis and their affiliates have continually adapted to this changing environment. The attacks in Iraq, Jordan, and Syria against the US, the Hamas atrocities of October 2023, and the Iranian backed Houthi

attacks on Red Sea shipping have all utilised this easy-to-access, cheap technology.



**Leading expert on cybersecurity and cognitive warfare
Dr Aleksandra Nesic instructing on the JCSC**

running and money laundering in return for cash, vapes, phones and designer clothing - activities which result in their families being in debt to the criminals and subject to the most extreme forms of exploitation. Indeed, cyberspace is used across the world for such criminal activity. According to JCSC instructor Lt John Sullivan of the LA County Sheriff's Department the use of social media by gangs and criminal cartels is multifaceted including recruitment, (enabling a sense of 'identity' for vulnerable individuals), facilitating criminal activity, and, in some countries, communicating direct threats against rivals, journalists, and government officials, including police and mayors. This creates a 'narcocultura' with devastating consequences for communities, states Lt Sullivan.

Some countries will utilise cyberspace for their own hostile intentions. Cash-strapped North Korea uses 'ransomware' to acquire revenue. Cyberspace is used by China to steal data and intellectual property. Cyberspace is used to influence public opinion and referendums. Russia was likely able to influence social media to affect the 2016 Brexit referendum; indeed, Robert Gates, former US Defense Secretary and CIA Director stated there is "no doubt in my mind that Putin intervened in Brexit". This had profound consequences not only for the UK but also for us here in Ireland and across the EU. Moreover, Russia utilises cyberspace disinformation to ferment hostile attitudes against refugees, to increase dependence on its energy reserves (by propagation of false information about alternatives), and to attempt to shape public opinion on its illegal invasions of Ukraine.

Likewise, the Myanmar government uses cyberspace via social media to spread disinformation and facilitate its vast levels of violence against the Rohingya population. Cybersecurity here is about ensuring that social media platforms such as Facebook are not used for 'fake news' which can be used either to influence public opinion or indeed enable violence against entire communities.

Online 'social engineering' is used for a vast number of cybersecurity breaches. Hostile actors create false profiles, luring victims to give-up highly personal information with which they can be blackmailed. What we post online - photos of our families, partner's work location, our house, where we are being deployed - can be used to create a complete understanding of us and our families, which is then used to threaten us. 'Sextortion' blackmail is a primary method used to gain access to governments and militaries. Emails and texts are easy to fake. Clicking on a malicious link causes our phones or smartwatches to be used as a microphone, camera, or location tracking device when we are at home or deployed overseas. Such 'phishing' messages are highly convincing, appearing to be from someone you know and trust. Preventing this social engineering manipulation is one of the most important cybersecurity aspects for the Defence Forces. The way in which nefarious actors target children, teenagers, military

Online social media, including Snapchat and Instagram, are used by criminals here in Europe to groom children and other vulnerable people online into conducting criminal activities such as drug

personnel, and people of all ages is incredibly similar. We significantly need to improve our awareness and understanding.

Ireland has recently become a member of the Hybrid Centre of Excellence (Hybrid COE) Helsinki, an EU / NATO backed organisation researching and advising on hybrid threats. Membership of Hybrid COE is invaluable for the present and future security of Ireland.

Over the next seven years we will continue to see cyberspace utilised by those who wish to harm us. It is imperative we think about cybersecurity holistically so that we can combat these threats and challenges. A miscomprehension about what cybersecurity is puts us all at enormous risk. Cybersecurity is not about computers, networks and firewalls and this incorrect assumption means we fail to protect our cyberspace, with potentially devastating consequences arising from the hybrid threats and challenges we will increasingly face.

Addressing this misunderstanding about what cybersecurity actually is has been the single most critical part of my role in the last seven years. The most important matter going forward as I step away from the JCSC is emphasizing that cybersecurity matters to every one of us and affects our security, the security of ourselves, our families, friends, and colleagues across the EU and here in Ireland.



Houthi Terrorist Attacks on Shipping

Dinos Anthony Kerigan-Kyrou coordinated and instructed cybersecurity and hybrid threats on the Senior Command & Staff Course, and then the Joint Command & Staff Course, between 2017 and 2024. He is an instructor on NATO DEEP - Defence Education Enhancement Programme. He is a co-author of the NATO / Partnership for Peace Consortium Cyber Security Reference Curriculum, and the NATO / PfPC Hybrid Threats and Hybrid Warfare Curriculum. He is an assistant instructor at the NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre (NMIOTC), and an adjunct instructor for the European Security & Defence College. Dinos is on the Editorial Board of the PfPC publication Connections, and is Senior Advisor to the NATO DEEP eAcademy.



Burmese Military Genocide - Initiated Online

DESERTERS OF THE IRISH DEFENCE FORCES DURING WWII

MOTIVATIONS TO DESERT

ARTICLE BY CAPT CÍAN HARTE

This article is the fourth and final in a series exploring the controversial topic of Irish Defence Forces soldiers who deserted the organisation to join the British Army during WWII. This article specifically explores the idea that soldiers deserted to join the British military establishment for reasons of adventure and seeking military combat.

Seek Adventure & Action?

'Young men of adventurous spirit may thus be tempted to join the British Army in the hope that they may see active service' - Defence Force CoS (1941).

In attempting to find a common denominator among the motivations of those who deserted and joined the British Army, the most compelling factor is the argument that this specific group of British Army volunteers sought adventure and action. They deserted due to inactivity within the Defence Forces and joined the British Army to engage an enemy – to seek the thrill of combat.

As McElwaine states: the effects of adventurousness may 'not be capable of historical verification using documentary sources only, but they certainly can, and have been, verified using oral sources when dealing with an issue such as motivation of individuals in enlistment'. In endeavouring to understand whether the argument of 'seeking combat' holds weight, documentary evidence cannot be utilised. Motives of adventurism and action are not inked on paper. Oral evidence, with all its flaws, is the critical investigative outlet for this specific question.

Even before detailing individual accounts and reasons, the considerable number disparity between those who joined full-time after the Call to Arms versus those who joined for the duration of the Emergency is a telling sign that for most enlistees during this period, they saw military life, not as a long-term plan or as a career opportunity. But then again, the vast disparity between those who opted for a full-time duration as opposed to the volunteer force (LSF/LDF) also indicates that they wished to engage in the full-time soldiering aspects for the duration of the Emergency and were more eager to "get involved" so to speak.

Among the few interviews conducted with deserters, seeking adventure/action/combat is a common reason given in one form of language or another. Among the most well-documented deserters



WWII Emergency Service Medal, 1939-1946

was Phil Farrington (who deserted twice). He openly stated: "I was looking for adventure" and explained how "I wanted to have a go". Joe Walsh from Athy, a deserter himself who joined the RAF (715 Motor Transport Light Repair Unit) in October of 1942 stated how the "only regret I had was I did not go sooner. I might have seen more action. I would have loved to have been an air gunner and wouldn't have minded the risks." For some Irish servicemen at this time, they had already 'had a go'. Limerick native Christopher Robinson (who seemingly left the Defence Forces by legitimate means during WWII) was manning a 40mm Bofor

anti-aircraft gun along the Bull Wall, Dublin, during the night of 31 May 1941, when a German bomber entered Éire's airspace. As the gunner, he opened up on the aircraft: "We let hell go loose with our guns firing away that night". Despite his and his comrade's best efforts, Christopher failed to impede the pathway of the German bomber that would drop a bomb on the North Strand area of Dublin, killing 28 and wounding 90 people. "After that bit of action, my mind was made up. It was further afield for me". Christopher had gained a scent of warfare and the thrill of combat was calling out to him. When asked by Prof. Roberts why he was volunteering for the British Army, Kevin Williams spoke of how it 'might have been an adventure, the excitement of the whole thing – nothing unusual about it. Lots of fellows from Southern Ireland (doing the same).'

The opinion of British servicemen regarding the Irish personnel joining the war effort and the answers Irishmen gave to their new military compatriots are also of interest. When Con Murphy told members of the British Army of his national origins: 'Several times the young



fellas who were conscripted would say, "It isn't your war at all, why are you here?" They couldn't get over we'd volunteered. I told them we just wanted to see life or something like that'. The age-old pursuit of Irishmen longing to see the world was ever-present in Irish society during these times like it is today – but unlike today, the British Army was one of only a few mechanisms wherein you could experience a wider optic of "life".

An Air Corps soldier stated, "I was in the Irish Army Air Corps up to 1942-43, and there was a mass exodus into the RAF". "By 1943, there was no risk of invasion of Ireland, and our time in the Army seemed a waste of time in many ways". He sought to use his skillset abroad. Widders quoted the soldier 'Ken McL' from Dublin, a British Army member during WWII. Ken explained how "lots of fellas from the Irish Army enlisted with me". They "wanted to see what was happening. They wanted some adventure...in fighting units". Joe Walsh of Athy further stated how "as far as I could make out, there were dozens of Irish Army deserters joining the British forces". The latter two consist of second-hand accounts – Ken and Joe were speaking for many men and a general feeling among ex-Defence Forces personnel with whom he would have shared innumerable speaking time reminiscing of home while deployed. Wills would write how for some deserters, 'the desire to use skills learnt in training in a meaningful way' played a role in their decision to desert. A soldier who would join the British Army during WWII, Don Mooney, stated: "We were a bunch of students...we didn't think very much about the depths of what was happening, it was just that it was going on. And I suppose honestly that it was the excitement of it, and the only thought we gave it probably was we didn't want to be wasting all this excitement by sitting out at the Curragh or Gormanstown or somewhere like that for the war. So, a lot of us just went up to Belfast and signed on the dotted line and went". Don was not a deserter. However, he gives an invaluable insight into the mindset of a young man who perhaps had joined the Irish Army and found himself in 'Gormo' or 'The Curragh' in uniform but sitting out the war.

The perception among certain politicians reflecting after the war in determining their motives certainly ascribed the motive of seeking adventure. T.D. Coogan (F.G.) spoke on their motivations for deserting during the passing of the Emergency Order that created the Blacklist: "not going to defend the men who left their country during an Emergency, but many joined up in the hope that as the country was in danger, they would see active service here. Fed up with boredom and the routine of the barrack square, they left to engage in active fighting. Whatever the motive was, the majority left because they were active, adventurous soldiers". Traynor spoke in the Dáil post-war about the low recruitment levels into the regular armies and juxtaposed against those still travelling north to join the British Army: the men 'going up north or to Britain to join the Army abroad were going in the spirit of adventure. It was not that they did not want to serve Ireland. T.D. J. O'Leary speaking in the Dáil in 1948, said some of the deserters had "fighting blood and wanted to get into a real fight".

While one could not venture as far as stating that men in this category were Walter Mitty's or adrenaline junkies - it is safe to assume that many did indeed wish to see and engage in combat – however ignoble such a motivation now seems to the contemporary reader. 'Those who deserted the Irish Army for the British were in effect swapping inert, defensive warfare for the challenges of mobilisation'.

Even to this day, within the Defence Forces and international militaries (in their form of sobriquet), the divide among the troops of so-called 'barrack soldiers' and 'ground troops' remains. The divide entailed those who were content to undergo a career of garrison duties and those who sought to go on courses and exercises. During the Emergency, the ground-orientated troops of the Defence Forces were not satisfied with the organisation and sought their fix for adventure and action elsewhere. With this group of men, the perennial question of why Irishmen would voluntarily leave a country's neutral military that exposes themselves to danger is a frivolous and redundant one - one assumes all people look for safety and comfort – this is not the case. Private Thomas O'Duffy of the 5th Infantry Battalion, for instance, while being interrogated



Lt General Dan McKenna, Chief of Staff of Defence Forces (1940-1949), faced many crises during his tenure including periods of spiked desertion during particular periods of WWII

by Intelligence officers - having been caught as a deserter on leave from the British Army - spoke of how he had deserted because of 'too much duty, too many guards'.

"I climbed into my first uniform partly for the fun of it". When the environment did not match these expectations and thoughts of fun quickly dissipated in favour of duties – the desire of a soldier to remain in an Irish uniform declined

dramatically. In one of the few insights ascertained from surviving NOK of Irish deserters, a granddaughter of Thomas Flynn of Sligo stated how: "the thing he did tell me was that he came over and joined the British forces as he was bored and wanted to see some action".

Even for those men who remained loyal, contemplating deserting to see action was natural and seemingly ever-present – at least in their desire to see some combat. Upon being asked whether they felt left out of the global conflict – a group of retired officers who had remained loyal and (some) reached the highest strata of the Defence Forces' ranks answered in the following manner: Lt. Col. Duggan:

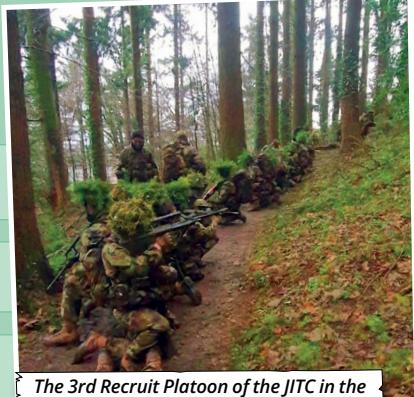
'There was a sense of, if you had become bitten by the soldier's bug, a sense that it's a pity that we didn't see any active service and action'. 'There was the sort of sense of having missed out riding into battle', 'and there was a feeling of frustration, like when the Americans came down well-dressed and got all the women and everything else like that'.

Brigadier-General Daly stated how: 'there was a certain feeling of anti-climax that the whole thing was over without having become embroiled in any fight.'

There will always remain individual reasons for deserting that time has rendered to the virtual scrapheap of history – that will never be known despite intense levels of mining. Even when some individually unique reasons for deserting do appear – they would seem to be the exception to the general rules/reasons described above. A perfect example is that of William Houlahan who in chasing love followed his partner across the Irish Sea and into the British Army. Another is the case of George Berrill of Drogheda who explained how: 'I was on a charge there; [I was a] bad boy. And someone told me I'd get six months, for being absent without leave, so I skipped'. Perhaps George is not alone in this regard, only his honesty makes him a seemingly unique case. John Malachy Daly of Co. Louth would desert from the Defence Forces after having crashed a car in Dundalk in which he was driving without any insurance. By the time of the hearing, it had been made aware to the justice presiding that he had since joined the British Army.

Young men were idealistic but not ideological in that many still glorified war and the prospects of participating in it. This eagerness to witness and engage in military action was exponentially greater among the deserters for they had joined the Irish military at a time of great national danger, trained up on various weapon systems and thought they would see action – but would later find that no such action was forthcoming from the summer of 1941. With leave and discharge tightened to a stranglehold – the only option for many seeking such experiences was to desert.

ON PARADE



The 3rd Recruit Platoon of the JITC in the herringbone during a 24 hour exercise



RDF Recruits received their 2 Star rank marking at their passing out parade in Cathal Brugha Barracks



NS CIS Members continue to take part in training exercises to ensure operational capability



Cadet Mats on top of Tonelagee during the navigation block of instruction for the 101st Cadet Class



JITC 3rd Recruit platoon continue to be put through their paces during Battle PT (Credit @lukemetcalfe_photography)



Lt Col James O'Shea alongside BSM Noel Gallagher, presented Aidan Rattigan, Manager Beechwood House of Letterkenny ONE with a cheque in the amount of £1583, collected from the members of the 28th Infantry Battalion. Helping to support our veterans



DF Snipers during a joint MOUT Instructor course and 2-3 Star course exercise in Poolbeg



Cpl Martin Cummins in the air during the DF Rugby game against An Garda Síochána in Templemore



The 44th Recruit Platoon from 28 Inf Bn recently passed out as 2 Star Privates



Members of the 101st Cadet Class taking part in exercise "Scratch"

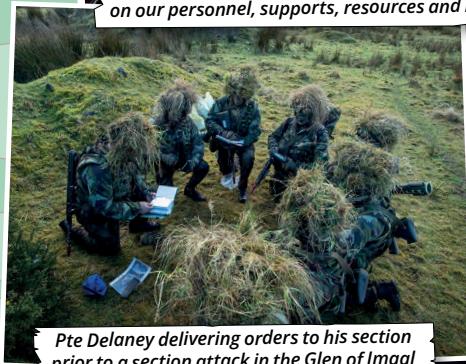
ON PARADE



An Tánaiste and Minister for Defence Simon Harris, TD met with military leadership in McKee Barracks, the meeting was focused on our personnel, supports, resources and infrastructure



Pte Lauren Dunne provides suppressive fire for her section during section attack assessments on the PNCO course



Pte Delaney delivering orders to his section prior to a section attack in the Glen of Imaal



Tpr Diego Cappoci assaults the enemy position under the cover of smoke



Members of the 2-3 Star course from 7 Inf Bn conducted heli drills in Baldonnel



Sgt Mc Eneaney presented a framed jersey to the JTC from her international debut with DF Women's Soccer team



Airman Eric Cumberton, Airman William Brien, Airman Conor McKeown, and Airman Raephly Hannan pictured having completed the Air Corps Helicopter Aircrew Course



CPO Mick O'Connell, O/S Ardian Majaj, O/S Dennis Hardi, and Rec Ben Millar engaged with the local community in Waterford at a Naval Service Reserve stand



Members of 1ACS provided a guard of honour for An Tánaiste and Minister for Defence Simon Harris on his visit to DFTC



Col Prendergast, Dj4 accepting the award for Logistics and Transport Team of the Year at the Irish Logistics and Transport Awards ceremony

ON PARADE



Comdt Kevin McDonald (retired) presents a signed copy of his book "A Life Less Ordinary" to Dearbha Sheridan, Mullingar Library, with Regt Sgt Major Noel O Callaghan (Retd), who recorded his oral history of service for Defence Forces Military Archives & Westmeath Heritage Oral History Projects



DF Band members performing at the passing out parade for the 68th Platoon in Aiken Barracks



The 2 BAR Gunners Course fired the East Pier Battery in Dun Laoghaire harbour



Comdt Niamh Ní Dhroma scoring a try for the DF Women's team against US team Norwich Military University



Members of the 07th PNCO Course NCOTW completed their MOUT phase in Poolbeg



Chief of Staff Lt Gen Seán Clancy marked the historic occasion of the first female Army Sgt Major & BQMS in the Defence Forces. Sgt Major Sandra Murphy and BQMS Paula Quinn, joined by their families met with COS in McKee Bks. Both Senior NCOs are from families with significant military service over generations



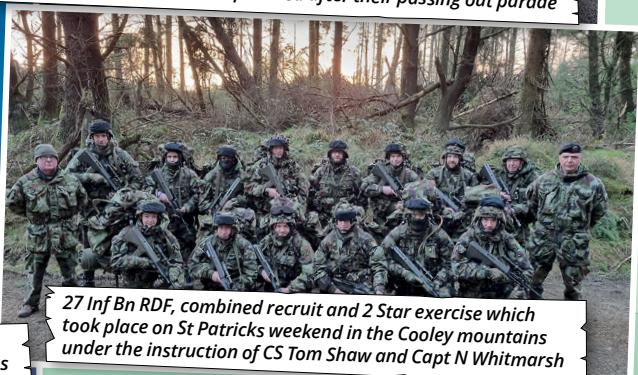
Army Reservists from 27 Inf Bn took part in ceremonial taskings for St Patrick's Day



The 3rd JITC Recruit Platoon pictured after their passing out parade



The Black Knights DF Parachute Team conducted a display in the JITC for the recent open day which hosted the families of the 4th and 5th Recruit Platoons



27 Inf Bn RDF, combined recruit and 2 Star exercise which took place on St Patricks weekend in the Cooley mountains under the instruction of CS Tom Shaw and Capt N Whitmarsh

ON PARADE



Chief of Staff Lt Gen Seán Clancy took the opportunity to visit to the JIJC and address the recruits of the 04 & 05 JIJC Rec Platoons after completing his USP ARPs. The COS highlighted the investment and developments currently taking place in the Defence Forces as well as the opportunities that the Defence Forces can provide in their future careers in the Army, Air Corps and Naval Service



Lt Col Curtis presented members of 125 Inf Bn with their UNIFIL medal



125 Inf Bn UNIFIL were presented their medals and shamrocks on the helipad of UNP 2-45 on St Patrick's Day



Members of the 02nd Air Progression Course at their graduation in March



Tpr Brian Kennedy was crowned CISM Military Games Champion after 3 wins during the competition



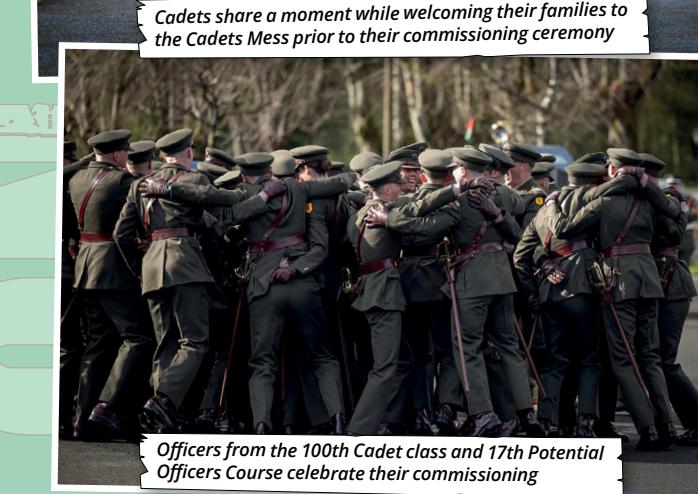
On Wed, 26 MAR 25, An Tánaiste and Minister for Defence, Mr. Simon Harris, visited UNP 2-45. It was a special occasion for him to meet with Irish soldiers on his first visit to UNIFIL, see our operations first-hand and witness the important work being carried out as part of the mission



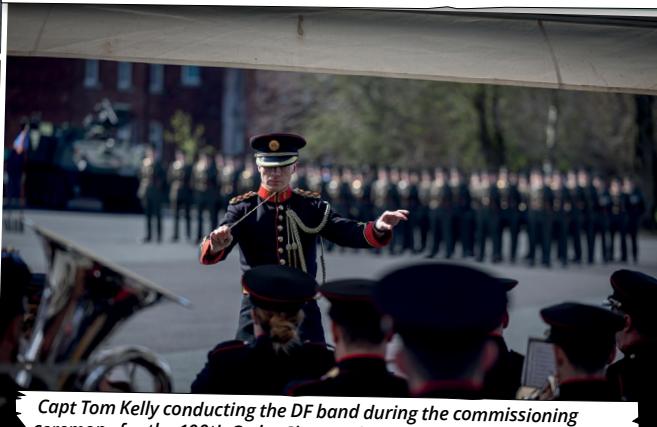
Cadets share a moment while welcoming their families to the Cadets Mess prior to their commissioning ceremony



The 174th Recruit Platoons training culminated after 24 weeks of intense training. They finished off their tactical week with a march with full pack from Blackrock Castle, through Cork City and up the infamous St Patrick's Hill



Officers from the 100th Cadet class and 17th Potential Officers Course celebrate their commissioning



Capt Tom Kelly conducting the DF band during the commissioning ceremony for the 100th Cadet Class and 17th Potential Officers Course

SPORTS & CLUBS UPDATE

DF TRIATHLON ASSOCIATION



The DFTA is in its first established year after being inactive for a period of time. It has been setup to cater for triathletes of all levels within the Defence Forces. Whether you are a beginner looking to complete your first introductory event or a seasoned triathlete planning on that next PB, the DFTA will give personnel the opportunity to develop their skills and achieve their desired goals. We have access to high performance coaches that will help you along the way through tutorials and workshops. We have a number of events that will be shared on the Connect App over the coming year and beyond so please keep a look out!

DF MEN'S SOCCER



The Defence Forces men's soccer team held a training camp from the 19th of March to the 21st of March in preparation for an upcoming tournament with a number of Dublin based ETB teams. The tournament takes place in Dublin from 28th of April until 29th of May. Looking forward the Dutch Armed Forces will visit Dublin for a friendly match in July.

DF RUGBY



DF Rugby commenced 2025 with the annual fixture against AGS. This fixture was deferred from 2024. The game was hosted by the AGS in their Templemore Facilities on 29 Jan 25. DF Women's Rugby lost by 15 to 24. DF Men's Rugby won their match by 45 to 10.

In March, DF Rugby took on Norwich Military University Rugby, who travelled from Vermont, USA. This was an exciting fixture which re-ignited our relationship with our US colleagues. The match was hosted by the DF in Cill Dara RFC. It was a good day for all but especially the DF. DF Women's Rugby won their match by 47 points to 10. DF Men's Rugby won their match by 38 points to 0.



Looking forward, DF Men's Rugby will take on Leinster Juniors in Clondalkin RFC on Wed 02 Apr 25 and the Connacht Juniors in Galway on Wed 09 Apr 25. The intent in Apr is to also conduct an Inter-Bde competition.

DF Women's Rugby are busy preparing for their involvement in the upcoming Women's Military Rugby World Cup which will take place in the UK in Aug 25, and will have a number of training camps in the coming months.

DF HURLING



DF Hurling had a busy 2024 with matches against AIB, the 7's Chaplins Parsons Cup and Inter Bde Championships were hugely successful, last year the Inter Bde Championships were ran like a blitz which was very successful. We had a strong start to 2025: Over 20 students from the DF successfully completed the in-person Safeguarding 1 course and are now prepared to advance to the GAA Coaching Award 1 Course. Looking forward the DF Hurling committee prepare for the 2025 Chaplins Parsons Cup, Inter Bde Competitions, and the Representative Series. For more info follow us on the Internal Comms app @DF Hurling

DF ROWING CLUB



One of the Defence Forces Rowing club crews carrying out a safety check prior to going on the water



Sgt Shane Hennessy COX and Mrs Sanita Pursova getting ready for a water session

The Defence Forces Rowing Club recently held its first training camp of the year at the National Rowing Centre Cork. This was the first of four one week camps planned for the 2025 racing season in a bid to further develop the club athletes skills, competency technique and fitness levels.

The significant aspect of this camp was this was the first camp under High Performance coach Mrs Sanita Pursova. Sanita, who retired from international rowing last year is a former back to back world champion in the single scull and has competed at three Olympics in 2012, 2016 & 2021 Tokyo. Sanita's expertise and technical knowledge combined with her ability to impart it to our athletes was felt instantly and we all look forward to working with Sanita in a bid to go faster.

The camp itself involved a mixture of up to 2 water sessions a day either side of ERG and bike sessions. As we commence our third



What 20km in a quad looks like

year affiliated with Rowing Ireland, the club are as ever looking to expand on its club members, currently standing at 27 across all services within the Defence Forces, however you should note you do not need to be located or living within 1 Bde to be a part of the club. With plans for redevelopment in Island Bridge Dublin and boats ready to be handed over, now is the right time to join our club. Members from the RDF are also permitted to come along and attend one of our camps to either learn to row initially or improve your rowing skill under the guidance of an ex Olympian, which no other club in the Defence Forces can currently offer.

If this is a sport you might like to try, please feel free to BQ Dave Williams or Sgt Ronan Leahy at the following emails for further information on camps dates, events and races.

dave.williams@defenceforces.ie
Ronan.leahy@defenceforces.ie

DF MOUNTAINEERING



CQMS N. Shannon, Sgt D. Nordon, Capt K. King, Cpl G. Sweeney and Pte Peacock

On the 4th of March, 13 members of the Defence Forces Association of Mountaineers (DFAM) embarked on a continuous professional development (CPD) trip to Calpe, Spain. This location was chosen due to its abundance of sport climbing opportunities, with both single and multi-pitch routes available within close proximity. The trip was fully self-funded, providing an ideal setting for members to develop their skills in these varied environments, skills which will be beneficial for teaching students on future courses.



Sgt Nordon, Capt King and Pte Peacock



Typically, the week begins with lower-graded single-pitch routes in Sierra de Toix, allowing everyone to become familiar with the rock. As the week progresses, the group tackles bigger multi-pitch routes at different locations. This year's trip culminated with an ascent of the Penon de Ifach, where five personnel climbed the Via Panny, a 220m, 7-pitch route, while the remaining members climbed Via Valencianos Direct, a 195m, 5-pitch route, concluding the CPD trip on a high note.



FQMS Whelan and Sgt Nolan Via Valencianos



FQMS F. Whelan, Sgt S. Nolan, Sgt D. Clarke and Pte C. Teevan pose for a photo during a climb

FROM THE ARCHIVES

AN COSANTÓIR VOLUME 65 ISSUE 05, JULY 2005

"...last year a decision was made to replace the fleet"

"The EC135 will give commanders eyes and ears deep beyond the forward edge of the battle area"

Since 1963 the Air Corps has operated a variety of helicopter types to carry out military operations and training, search and rescue (SAR), air ambulance, VIP transport, utility/training and various other roles in aid to the civil power. The current helicopter fleet comprises seven single-engine Alouettes (including two which entered service in 1963), one single-engine Gazelle and four twin-engine Dauphins. In addition the Air Corps operates one twin-engine AS355N Squirrel and a twin-engine EC135T2 in a police role.

The age of the existing fleet has reduced operational serviceability, due to excessive maintenance requirements, and has resulted in significant day-to-day expenditure to keep these aircraft airworthy. Consequently, last year a decision was made to replace the fleet. A procurement team was put in place to prepare tender requests and to evaluate the different offers.

Col Thomas Moloney, CAS Spt ACHQ, chaired the evaluation process with Air Corps technical and flying personnel, specialists from the Army and Contract Staff from the Dept of Defence forming the project group. The presence of Army 'end-users' on the board helped to focus on operational needs for military air mobility and tactical operations and to select aircraft which best meet our needs from a technical, flying and military operational perspective.

The board reported in December 2004 and contracts were placed with Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH for two light-utility EC135P2 helicopters and with Bell Agusta Aerospace Company for four AB139 utility helicopters, plus an option for two more.

The cost of these contracts is over 60 million and represents a major investment in the Air Corps and the Defence Forces. The acquisition will bring the very latest and best technologies in the helicopter marketplace to the Air Corps and enable the Defence Forces to enhance its tactical air mobility and other military air

operations capabilities.

The EC135P2 is a modern advanced aircraft built by the Munich-based German wing of Eurocopter. It has a maximum take-off weight of 2,835kg and provides for a crew of two, plus seating for up to five passengers in normal operations. It will be utilised primarily in the role of pilot training but will also provide multi-role capabilities for military air mobility (tactical troop deployment and logistical missions), casevac, emergency medical and inter-hospital air ambulance capability, and various other VIP and utility roles in aid to the civil power and civil authority.

The aircraft cockpit utilises modern flat-screen LCD technology with the provision of a large 6" x 8" screen on the co-pilot side that can display a digital moving map (including Irish National Grid Ordnance Survey maps and the NATO standard Military Grid Reference System), weather radar, or forward looking infra-red (FLIR).

The small, agile EC135 will be the first Air Corps helicopter compatible with night vision goggle (NVG) operations and will have SINCGARS tactical radios as standard equipment. This high specification will enable the Defence Forces to develop airborne reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition (RISTA) capabilities. The EC135 will give commanders eyes and ears deep beyond the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA), bringing the Defence Forces to the next level in terms of our conventional airborne surveillance capability. The addition of FLIR, which is included as an option, will further enhance the aircraft's RISTA capabilities and will truly bring us into the 21st century in terms of high-technology military surveillance.

It has an advanced 3-axis automatic flight control system (AFCS) and is fitted with a flight management system that manages navigation and communication functions. Honeywell weather radar and the newly intro-

Prepare for TAKE-OFF

The Minister for Defence recently signed contracts to purchase light-utility and utility helicopters for the Air Corps. In this article Lt Col Raymond Flanagan, OC 4 Sp Wing (Project Manager), Comdt Conrad Barber, Military Airworthiness Authority (MAA), and Comdt Shane Bonner, No 3 Ops Wing, describe the new aircraft and provide an insight into their capabilities and roles.

*Right:
The AB139 in flight.*



"The provision of window-mounted GPMGs will for the first time give the Defence Forces an armed helicopter capability"

Below:
The EC135 light utility helicopter.

duced Euro Avionics advanced digital moving map system complement the AFCS.

Power is provided by two Pratt & Whitney PW 206B engines that, for the first time in an Air Corps helicopter, have a full authority digital engine control (FADEC) system, providing electronic oversight and control for both engines. A FADEC system enhances safety and reduces pilot workload allowing him/her to concentrate on tactical, operational and other issues while the computer manages the engines.

The EC135 is certified to the highest design and performance standards specified by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), and has Category 'A' certification with Class 1 performance. Category 'A' certification refers to the design standards applied to the aircraft and requires multiple levels of redundancy on all major systems, multiple structural load paths and the highest levels of integrity and strength in design. Class 1 performance refers to a helicopter's capability to either land or continue safely in the event of an engine failure. The high design standards and

performance characteristics of this helicopter will allow it to perform missions that have been hitherto restricted due to the limited performance characteristics of the existing fleet.

The EC135P2 has been developed with modern design concepts and this will result in a less intensive maintenance regime compared to the present fleet. An example of the difference between this helicopter and the Alouette is clearly identified when the maintenance requirements are examined. Currently the Alouette requires maintenance intervention on a scheduled basis at 25, 50, 100, 200, 400, 3,200 hrs, and multiples thereof. The new EC135P2 will not require major scheduled maintenance until it has reached 400 hours of flight time. This reduction in maintenance activity will allow for increased operational availability and reduced operation costs over its life.

A significant secondary capability of the aircraft will be in the air ambulance role for casevac and inter-hospital patient transfer. Currently the Air Corps provides a service to the health boards for air ambulance movements and we have completed 208 casevac/medevac transfers in the last calendar year. The EC135P2 will be capable of a quick conversion to the emergency medical role by the fitting of a special kit designed by Air Ambulance Technology of Austria. This kit can be fitted in approximately an hour and provides state-of-the-art medical equipment to cater for the wide range of medical transfers required.

The AB139 Utility helicopter is a newly launched medium-lift twin-engine helicopter with a maximum 'all up' weight of 6,000kg and has been developed in a joint venture between Agusta Westland of Milan, Italy, and Bell Helicopter Company of the USA. It is one of the fastest helicopters in the world with a maximum cruise speed of 310km/h and has enjoyed significant success since its launch with orders currently in place



Technical Specifications EC135P2 AB139

Length	12.16m	16.66m
Height	3.51m	4.95m
Rotor Diameter	10.2m	13.8m
Take-off Power	2x578kw	2x1252kw
Max Take-off Weight	2,835kg	6000kg
Max Cruise Speed	259 km/h	310 km/h
Service Ceiling	6,096m	6,096m
Crew	1 or 2 pilots	2 pilots

Mission-Specific Equipment EC135P2 AB139

Rescue hoist	Yes	Yes
Cargo hook	Yes	Yes
Fast-roping device	Yes	Yes
Absailing capability	Yes	Yes
Emergency medical kit	AAT (Austria)	Lifeport (USA)
Wire strike protection	Yes	Yes
Weather radar	Honeywell	Honeywell
Moving map system	RDR2000	Primus 660
FLIR	Euronav 4	Skyforce
	Option	Option
Emergency floatation		
System	Yes	Yes (per permanent fit)
Weapon system	No	Provision for GPMG x 2
SINCGARS	Yes	Yes
Marine band radio	Yes	Yes
NVG Compatible	Yes	Yes



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