

THE DEFENCE FORCES MAGAZINE

EST. 1940

ÁN COSANTÓIR



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



JADOTVILLE
CHALLENGE

CHRISTMAS
MESSAGES

PC-9M

[STRENGTHEN THE NATION]

www.dfmagazine.ie



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AN COSANTÓIR

AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

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- Photography
- Interviews
- Social media content creation
- Attend national events



Do you have an interest in journalism/writing and want to pursue your passion contact us here at the An Cosantóir magazine to become a content creator and join the team.

NOTICEBOARD

AN COSANTÓIR 10KM VIRTUAL ROAD RACE 2021 RESULTS

Female Categories	Rank	Name	Unit	Time
Female Senior 1st Place	FQMS	Jackie Wykes	2 BDE ARTY REGT	00:42:25
Female Senior 2nd Place	N/A	Vytaute Zaikauskaite	NAVAL SERVICE RESERVE	00:45:38
Female Senior 3rd Place	PTE	Laoighse Styles	2 BRIGADE DFSM	00:52:46
Female Over 40 1st Place	SGT	Aishling Martin	2 BDE ARTY REGT	00:50:27
Female Over 50 1st Place	COMDT	Finola McNamara	DFTC DFTC CIS GROUP	00:58:57
Female Veteran 1st Place	MS	Bridget Kenny	VETERAN 2 Brigade	00:45:30
Female Guest 1st Place	MS	Leanne Butler	GUEST	00:39:55



Walterstown LGFA An Cosantóir 2021.jpg - Pictured are members of the Walterstown GFC, Navan, who as a team and wearing this years An Cosantóir T-shirt, participated in the An Cosantóir 10km Virtual Road Race
Photo by Dave Clarke

Male Categories	Rank	Name	Unit	Time
Male Senior 1st Place	COMDT	Paul O'Beirne	AIR CORPS NO 3 OPS WING	00:37:38
Male Senior 2nd Place	MR	Conor Farrell	OVERSEAS UNDOF	00:37:46
Male Senior 3rd Place	PTE	Dion Whelan Moore	DFTC 1 MECH INF COY	00:38:06
Male Over 40 1st Place	LT	Mark Ecock	2 BRIGADE CMU	00:39:12
Male Over 50 1st Place	CS	John Boothman	AIR CORPS CIS SQN	00:39:40
Male Veteran 1st Place	MR	Owen Connolly	VETERAN Air Corps	00:38:18
Male Guest 1st Place	N/A	Ray Kenny	GUEST	00:39:18

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FRONT COVER

Provided by Pte Lukasz
Gancarz from a PC-9M
photoshoot

EDITORIAL

Hello, and welcome to our fourth issue of 2021, our 81st volume of the An Cosantóir magazine. This issue brings us to our last magazine of 2021. We hope you enjoyed reading An Cosantóir this year and will continue to enjoy it into 2022.

Our Noticeboard page this issue features this years An Cosantóir 10km Road Race results, another virtual race this year. Well done to not only the winners, but everyone who took part.

On Parade features pictures from the Defence Forces Flickr page, ranging from overseas, fibua and ceremonial events.

Our first feature is a set of messages from Our President, Minister for Defence, our new Chief of Staff and our Head Chaplain, with their Christmas and New Year messages to the soldiers, sailors and airmen & women of the Defence Forces.

Moving on to our first feature article Covid Call Centre by Cpl Shay Singleton, Shay looks back at his deployment to the very first Covid Call Centre set up in 2020.

Sgt Aiden Barrett serving with the 63rd Inf Gp UNDOF provides us with two short pieces about UN post 86Bravo and an Engineers operation in Hermon South.

Pages 18 & 19, from one of our Ambassadors, Pte Lukasz Gancarz, serving with the 7 Inf Bn, D Coy, wrote on his own and his units series of challenges in honour of the soldiers of the siege of Jadotville in The Year of Jadotville Tigers.

Lukasz features again in our front cover article Pilatus PC-9M, looking at the training of pilots in the simulator, navigation and the training role that the

PC-9M provides moving on to other aircraft.

A history piece features next from Christopher Warner about Sean Egan the 1980's Irish hammer throw Olympian. Christopher looks back on Seans early life and time in the Defence Forces.

In yet another brilliant example of how Irish troops compare so highly against other nations, Lt Turlough Gallagher writes about his and his team from the 27 Inf Bn's Gold medal win in Exercise Cambrian Patrol 2021.

Our 'From the Archives' is from March 1989, an article by Mick Dunne called I Wanna Go to Tibnin.

Our DF Podcast feature by Tony O'Brien is from Season 3 Episode 1, Engineer Graduate Programme.

As always, we have our regular features including Sgt Maj Mark Gallagher in our People of the Defence Forces feature written by our very own Cpl Martin Bennett. PSS continue providing vital mental health advice in Headspace and Timing as well as our Internal Comms piece for all the serving soldiers who read the magazine.

«No man will make a great leader who wants to do it all himself or get the credit for doing it» – Andrew Carnegie

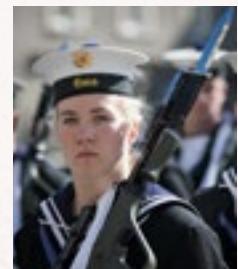
Sgt Karl Byrne – Editor

**Request for Information**

I am creating a pictorial chronology of Women in the Defence Forces to mark 40 years of service. While the book will be predominately a photographic record, I'd also like to include some vignettes and anecdotal records of life in DF. Anybody who would like to be included in the book is strongly encouraged to make contact with me via renken91@gmail.com. The book will feature the following topics - though this list is not exhaustive - early days following the foundation of the State, the Army Nursing Corps, change in legislation during the late 1970s, first eight cadets, first platoon, first apprentices, second platoon, integrated training from 1994, overseas, sport, family service (siblings, parent/daughter) and present day. I will need and

would greatly appreciate members of the first two platoons from 1981 and 1990 to get in touch to educate me on their experiences, as having joined in 94 myself, I am somewhat familiar with life in DF since then!

I would also like access to photos from those early days if people can share with me and I will conduct interviews with volunteers who are keen to be featured. This will be a publication that we can all take pride in and be a part of, so I really would urge people to get in touch. My publication date is aimed at mid-summer and by then hopefully we can hold an event to celebrate 40 years without Covid-19 spoiling play. Thanks in advance.



Sgt Rena Kennedy

ON PARADE

November
December

2021

Photos of 119 Inf Bn UNIFIL MRE Media Day

Photos taken by A/M Sam Gibney

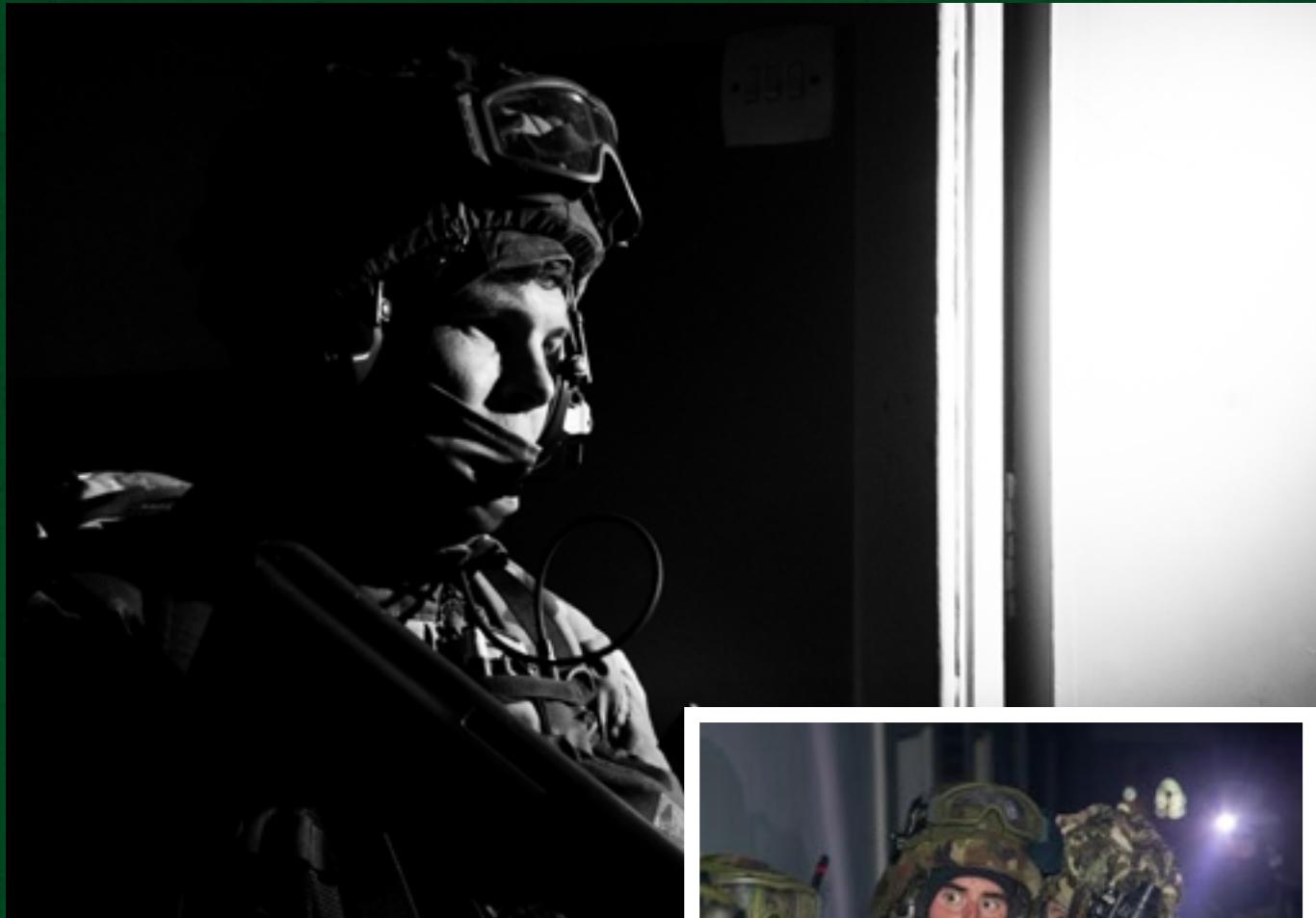


These photos can be accessed through the Defence Forces Flickr page or from this link:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dfmagazine/albums/72157719972515539/with/51559937332/>



Photos of Ex Viking II

Photos taken by A/M Sam Gibney



These photos can be accessed through the Defence Forces Flickr page or from this link:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dfmagazine/albums/72157719883292438/>
with/51503287389/



Photos of Chief of Staff Transfer of Authority

Photos taken by A/M Sam Gibney



These photos can be accessed through the Defence Forces Flickr page or from this link:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dfmagazine/albums/72157719856943364/with/51484582825/>



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

From Uachtaráin na hÉireann President Michael D. Higgins To the Irish Defence Forces



Michael D. Higgins

As Supreme Commander of the Irish Defence Forces, may I send a warm Christmas greeting to each and every member and to your families.

This year, 2021, was another very challenging year. It was one during which we continued to battle with the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Defence Forces continued to support us all and to justify the great pride with which Irish

citizens regard our Army, Naval Service and Air Corps. I thank the Defence Forces for what is their critical contribution to the nation's pandemic response effort, assisting, as they do, the delivery of the national vaccination plan, testing, contact tracing, patient transfer, test sample transportation and so much other crucial logistical and infrastructure support. May I take this opportunity, too, to recognise the sacrifices made by the Irish Defence Forces, in particular in relation to leave forgone, and may I express my thanks in a special way to their families, particularly in this challenging context of pandemic.

This past year has been a complex year for the conduct of

overseas operations, with Óglaigh na hÉireann currently deploying over 890 soldiers on 12 overseas missions around the globe, six of which are UN missions, missions selflessly committing to the cause of peace and international security. To date, Ireland has participated in over 20 peacekeeping missions and completed over 70,000 individual tours. It is the Irish Defence Forces that has the longest unbroken record of overseas service with the United Nations of any country in the world since first deploying to a United Nations mission in 1958.

In September this year, I had the privilege of hosting, in Áras an Uachtaráin, the Irish Defence Forces Values Awards, which recognised the honourable actions of seven serving members of the Irish Defence Forces. That was an inspiring occasion, giving me the opportunity to acknowledge not only the outstanding service of seven exceptional individuals, but also the heroic work of all of their colleagues who serve in our Defence Forces. This year, 2021, also saw the Naval Service celebrate its 75th anniversary, with celebratory events in Dublin and Cork in August and September.

Some significant, indeed historic, staff changes took place this year. May I congratulate Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Sean Clancy who took over, in September, from outgoing Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM. On 25th May, Ireland's first female Brigadier General, Brigadier General Maureen O'Brien, was appointed by the United Nations as Deputy Military Advisor in the Office of Military Affairs, Department of Peace Operations.

May I make special reference in the context of the events of this year to the Defence Forces Emergency Civil Assistance Team for their operation, in support of the Department of Foreign Affairs, in which personnel were deployed to Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, to assist Irish citizens, residents and visa holders to evacuate amid the evolving humanitarian crisis in the country.

The peacekeeping work you do is so vital, and you do so in a time when humanity is faced with unprecedented challenges of a global kind - including dealing with the human consequences of climate change, the challenge of the achievement of a just and sustainable development, responding to global poverty, hunger, and of course bitter conflict.

I would like to conclude by thanking and commending each one of you for your service, for the valuable contribution you make to the cause of peace and justice across the globe, and for providing security and defence to the Nation on land, at sea and in the air, day and night, 365 days a year.

This year, once again, many of you will be separated from loved ones during the festive season as you serve at home and abroad. May I assure you that the people of Ireland greatly appreciate the generosity that this involves from you and your families at this time of year. On their and my behalf, may I wish you all a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Christmas Message from the Minister For Defence Simon Coveney TD To the Irish Defence Forces



It is my pleasure on behalf of the government and as Minister for Defence to convey Christmas greetings to all the Women and Men of the Defence Forces and their loved ones.

I want to thank each of you for your dedicated service to the State in 2021.

It has been another challenging year, and members of the Army, the Naval Service and the Air Corps have continued to adapt and build our Defence capabilities while supporting the ongoing Covid efforts in many different ways. These efforts underpinned our national vaccination campaign, and helped us achieve one of the highest rates of vaccination in the world. Well done to you all for that.

Earlier this year we celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the Naval Service with events in Cork and Dublin. In the summer, our Defence Forces played a central role as we assisted in the evacuation of Irish citizens from Kabul supported by Department colleagues

I was fortunate to attend the Review of Irish Troops heading for service with UNIFIL at Sarsfield Barracks, Limerick in October, and I was once again struck by the extraordinary commitment and resilience of our serving members. Their families will miss them of course at this special time, but we are all so proud of their outstanding commitment and sacrifice in the name of Peace Keeping abroad.

You have had many highlights and exciting changes this year:

In July, you welcomed the new Chief of the Defence Forces, Major General Sean Clancy. Also over the summer, one of your most distinguished military staff, Major General Maureen O'Brien, was appointed by the United Nations as Deputy Military Advisor in the Office of Military Affairs.

You played a tremendous role in the autumn SFI-Defence Organisation Innovation Challenge, which was the culmination of many months of work and all of this was achieved against the backdrop of an ongoing global pandemic, which pushed all of us to adapt in new and flexible ways.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention with respect all those serving and former members of the Defence Forces who have lost their lives this year. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families and friends. Ar dheis De go raibh a n-anamacha.

I wish all members of the Defence Forces, and their families a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

Guím sonas agus sábháilteacht do chomhaltaí na bhFórsaí Cosanta agus dá muintir an Nollaig seo agus san Áthbhlian.

Christmas Message To Members of The Defence Forces from Jacqui McCrum, Secretary General, Department of Defence



December 2021

Dear Women and Men of the Defence Forces

Firstly thank you for your excellent service and commitment during 2021. I am delighted to have this opportunity to convey Christmas greetings to all of you and your loved ones, both on my own behalf and that of my colleagues in the Department.

Once again, in 2021, the members of the Air Corp, Army and the Naval Service were called upon to support the Covid efforts in many different ways while continuing to carry out their many regular roles with professionalism and dedication. Our response as a State to

the pandemic and the success of the national vaccination operations are a tribute to your involvement and commitment.

The Defence Organisation has faced some challenges this year highlighting the work we need to do to support colleagues and ensure that we focus on inclusion and diversity in the future. I know that you will join the Minister, Chief of Staff and myself in meeting this challenge head on, and making the Defence Forces a career of choice.

I was fortunate to attend the Review of Irish Troops heading for service with UNIFIL at Sarsfield Barracks, Limerick in October, and I was once again struck by the extraordinary commitment and resilience of our serving members. I know, at Christmastime, their families will miss them all dearly, but I also know how proud they are of the outstanding work they do overseas in the cause of peace and justice.

I would also like to mention with respect all those serving and former members of the Defence Forces who have lost their lives this year. My thoughts and sympathies are with their families, colleagues and friends.

I sincerely look forward to working with all of you during 2022 and meeting many more of you in person. For now I wish all of you and your families a happy and a peaceful Christmas. Here's to 2022!

Jacqui McCrum
Secretary General
Ard Rúnaí
An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Chief of Staff Lt Gen Seán Clancy

Christmas Message To the Men and Women of Óglaigh na hÉireann



On behalf of the General Staff it is my privilege to extend season's greetings to you the men and women of Óglaigh na hÉireann, and in particular to those of you who will be spending Christmas away from your families due to service at home or overseas.

I also wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to you all for your work and dedication over the past year.

The Christmas season provides a good time to reflect upon the year gone by. Your support to the State during the COVID-19 pandemic through Operation Fortitude has been a source of great pride for our Organisation. I want to convey to you the appreciation and respect expressed to me by Government, our fellow state agencies and the public, for the committed and determined manner with which you have risen to the challenge posed by the pandemic. Your selflessness is a reflection of the enduring culture of Óglaigh na hÉireann and

the values we all aspire to.

Against the backdrop of the pandemic, you continue to conduct framework operations at home and overseas. Almost 1,700 of our members have served in 14 separate missions and in 13 different countries in the past twelve months. I am acutely aware that the challenge presented by overseas service has fallen heavier on you and your families due to the pandemic and quarantine restrictions. I thank you for your commitment and ask that you pass on my gratitude to your families who make a huge sacrifice so we can serve.

The Commission on the Defence Forces have continued their work throughout the year. The General Staff, the Defence Forces Sgt Major and I, have engaged with the Commission on your behalf to convey our level of ambition for the Defence Forces out to 2030 and beyond. I look forward to continued engagement with the Minister and Department in the New Year and beginning the process of implementing the Commission's report, once it is approved by Government.

At this point, many of you will have received briefings and engaged with the Response Team which the General Staff and I deployed to reinforce the critical components of a positive and healthy organisational climate. I would like to thank you for your positive, thoughtful and informative engagement with the Team, all of which is shaping our future response. I am encouraged and remain determined that we will all work together to ensure that inappropriate behaviours are not repeated or tolerated in the Defence Forces today and into the future.

As we are all aware retention of our personnel continues to be an issue of concern for the Defence Forces. The General Staff and I, continue to work at developing the 'Total Rewards' package for you our members. We are actively engaging as a priority with the Department of Expenditure and Reform through the Department of Defence, in supporting the extension of the Mandatory Retirement Age of Post-1994 personnel. This will ensure the DF retains experienced, professional, and technically proficient personnel and most importantly provide certainty to you our members. We also remain committed to the pursuit of the single medical scheme for all members of Óglaigh na hÉireann.

I stated on taking up the appointment as Chief of Staff that one of my priorities is to ensure your continued development and wellbeing. I am encouraged that 2021, saw one of the largest ever cohorts of Defence Forces personnel of all ranks graduating from third level institutions. While our Organisation facilitates and encourages life-long learning, it is the commitment and dedication of inductees, students and instructors throughout Óglaigh na hÉireann who make this aspiration a reality. I am greatly humbled by your achievements.

Christmas can be a time we remember those who have gone before us. We remember our former colleagues, former members, their families and friends who have died in the past year. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families and friends at this time. Go ndé ana Dia tró caire orthú.

In conclusion, I would like to thank every member of Óglaigh na hÉireann for your devotion to duty in 2021. I wish you and your families a safe and happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year. Nollag shona daoibh go léir.

Christmas Message From the Head Chaplain Fr Seamus Madigan



Seamus Madigan

A Chairde,

I am delighted to be offered this opportunity to extend greetings to the women and men of Óglaigh na hÉireann and to your families, as we prepare to celebrate Christmas 2021. The wonder of Christmas, while never lost on children can sometimes be lost on us adults. The Christmas message; that 'God became flesh' (Jn 1:14) and wishes to be one with us, invites us to live the wonder of each precious moment, to respect the sacredness of each person, to love and protect the natural beauty that surrounds us. God is with us right now, where we are, in all sorts of ways and 'Our Mission, should we choose to accept it,' is to allow God to find us.

The man began to shout:

God, show me a miracle

And a baby was born

However, the man did not bend over the cradle
so that he could marvel at the miracle of life.

Desperate, he cried out again:

Touch me, God, and let me sense you exist
And a butterfly landed softly in his shadow.
However, the man angrily brushed it aside with his hand.
Disappointed and in tears he continued on his journey.
(Author Unknown)

Christmas encourages us to see everyone in this world as a brother and sister with an innate right to be treated with dignity and respect. As my time with the Defence Forces Chaplaincy Service comes to an end, I would especially like to pay tribute to all who advocate for our personnel and I salute those who continue to have the enthusiasm to make representation for a better life for our soldiers, sailors, air crew and their families. Thank you!

We have been through almost two (2) tough years living with the COVID-19 virus. Members of the Defence Forces have been generous and truly exceptional in their response to this crisis and so have our families. May we cherish each moment with those who are precious to us. To all our colleagues on duty during this Christmas time at home and overseas, particularly those of you with children, I want to say a big thank you for your sacrifice and commitment. Wherever you are stationed at this time of year; at home or overseas, on land, sea or in the air, may the child Jesus, born in a simple stable in Bethlehem, touch your life with love and wonder. I hope the Irish Defence Forces, continues its rich tradition of responding generously to the needs of our troubled world and remains committed to providing spaces for people to live in peace, and experience healing, justice and hope.

I am particularly mindful this Christmas of all who have died during the past year in the context of COVID-19. To the families of those who have died, we keep you in our thoughts and prayers. We also pray that the souls of our deceased personnel (serving and retired), especially those who died during the past year, may Rest in Peace.

Next Year (2022) your Chaplaincy Service will celebrate and mark 100 years since its foundation. Over this time many Chaplains have come and gone and some have died, but as far as I am aware, all have loved serving you and our country and have experienced their time with Óglaigh na hÉireann as blest and privileged. This too has been my experience over the past 15 years and I simply say, thank you!

On behalf of the Chaplaincy Service, I wish everyone in Óglaigh na hÉireann, serving and retired, and your families a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas and every blessing for a brighter 2022!

**«We bless this year for all we learned,
For all we loved and lost
And for the quiet way it brought us
Nearer to our invisible destination.'
John O' Donoghue
Beannachtaí na Nollag agus Síochán san AthBhláin!
An tAthair Séamus Ó Madagáin**

God's love endures forever (Psalm 117)



COVID CALL CENTRE

Cpl Shay Singleton author of this article

By Cpl Shay Singleton
Photos by A/M Sam Gibney,
Frank McGrath

A request was made to Brigadier General Rory O'Connor General Officer Commanding Air Corps through Colonel David Corcoran Chief of Air Staff Operations, Air Corps Headquarters from the JOC Defence Forces Joint Task Force COVID – 19 DFHQ, to supply twelve Air Corps personnel for secondment to the Joint Task Force COVID – 19 which would be based in Dublin.

Working as an Admin Clerk in Air Corps Headquarters based in Casement Aerodrome Baldonnel, I was very fortunate and privileged to be asked by the Commandant Donal Curran SO Current Operations Air Corps Headquarters if I would like to volunteer to be involved as part of the Defence Forces Joint Task Force COVID – 19. Without hesitation I took a pace forward and readily put my name forward to help out any way I could. I observed the many sacrifices front line staff including Defence Forces personnel were making across Ireland to combat this dreadful pandemic.

Just before the Christmas breakup, word filtered down from SO Defence Forces Joint Task Force COVID – 19 DFHQ to General Officer Commanding Air Corps by way of Frago 187 of 2020, issued by Defence Forces Headquarters and that the Joint Task Force COVID – 19 was being activated on Sunday 27th December 2020 and all personnel tasked were to report to Cathal Brugha Barracks for a comprehensive briefing.

On a cold crisp morning of the 27th December 2020, I remember eagerly getting into my car with anticipation and many questions with the view and opinion to help in any way I could. It gave me a warm feeling inside that I, a mere Clerk and member of the Defence Forces, in some small way was going to be included to help put an end to this pandemic which has affected the many millions of ordinary people, not only in Ireland but across the world. I then proceeded to Cathal Brugha Barracks to take any challenge ahead and to carry out any task that would be asked of me (as would any

member of our proud Defence Forces who put their shoulders to the wheel on a daily basis, although often unseen and unnoticed to members of the public prior to and during this terrible pandemic).

On arrival to Cathal Brugha Barracks all our Air Corps personnel reported to the 2nd Brigade auditorium Cathal Brugha Barracks for our briefing. There were personnel from across the Defence Forces present including the DFTC Curragh and CMU 1st Brigade south, approximately Twenty personnel in total. We eagerly took our seats and were greeted by JOC Director Commandant Martin Ryan Defence Forces Joint Task Force COVID – 19 and Doctor M Browne from the Health Service Executive who gave the brief, which consisted of handouts and an in-depth look at various scenarios which could arise while manning the call centre and engaging directly with members of the public. This brief which some personal found very comprehensive, compact and slightly daunting lasted approximately three hours. Needless to say, at that stage we all were gagging for a coffee and a ten-minute break after this three-hour brief. We were then informed by Commandant Ryan to report to the EIR building in Dublin City Centre for 14:00 hours that day for further in-depth hands-on training.

All tasked Defence Force personnel gathered at the main door reception area within the EIR building at 14:00 Hours met by Commandant Ryan and further briefed and handed over to a member of staff from the Health Service Executive who issued us with ID Cards to access the building.

Some of the cleverer Defence Forces lads that first day had the foresight to attend the local Spar and arrived with a coffee and lunch roll in hand, as you do. We all then proceeded upstairs for a very short break and continuation of our training which consisted of getting access logins' to the Health Service Executive database reviewing various scenarios we



Comdt Coolahan briefs the Minister for Defence Simon Coveney TD on his visit to the JTF back in June 2020

might come across making calls to the general public.

Our role at the call centre was various and following a ten-hour shift that first day, all our personnel were pretty much up to speed on the task at hand and what was required from us. The EIR building call centre in total was manned on two floors by both civilian and military staff including Defence Forces Army School of Music personnel. The civilian personnel were made up of mostly retired health care professionals, agency staff, students and serving Health Service Executive staff members; basically people from all walks of life making a difference in their own way and for whatever reason as they say in certain circles and to paraphrase - we the citizens of Ireland again are "putting our shoulders to the wheel" to try combat this pandemic.

Initially, the Air Corps, CMU South and DFTC personnel were separated into two shifts, consisting of ten hours per shift. I was selected for shift one which consisted of five ten-hour shifts straight on the first week and the three ten-hour shifts thereafter. A task which most Defence Forces personnel are familiar with, the long days, the hard slog, sometimes without remuneration with no questions asked, but we always complete the mission.

Our role in the call centre using the Health Service Executive database was to contact members of the public to inform them they had either tested positive for Covid 19 "Call Ones" or contacting close contacts "Call Twos" of general members of the public. Most were quite amicable when contacted



Defence Forces Cadet John Higgins working at the contact-tracing call-centre in the O'Brien Science Centre in UCD back in March

although sometimes shocked to receive the call. They were mostly well versed on what actions and precautions to take when dealing with Covid – 19. Most calls made, lasted between fourteen and twenty minutes and my shift average was between thirty and thirty-five calls. Our role was to advise members of the public on current HSE guidelines and to offer advice concerning the Virus and what actions and precautions they needed to take. In one case I found myself giving advice to a doctor who was in close contact. Although I felt uncomfortable giving advice to a qualified Doctor, she remained polite and courteous during the call, a true professional. In another case I spoke to an elderly lady who asked while I was advising her, if I was from the Defence Forces, and I informed her that I was. She replied, "I knew it! You Army lads have a bit of humanity in you". I was very proud to receive such a remark from a member of the public.

During my second week manning the call centre I had the pleasure again after so many years of meeting Brigadier General Brendan Mc Guinness, Commander - Joint Task Force (JTF) accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Murphy OC Ops Cell - Joint Task Force (JTF) Covid - 19 who arrived at the



Colonel Stephen Ryan of the JTF greets minister for Defence Simon Coveney TD to the JTF back in June 2020

call centre for a courtesy visit which was a pleasant surprise for me as I served with Brigadier General Mc Guinness overseas with 57th Infantry Battalion UNIFIL in 1985, when he was a young lieutenant. After a few minutes catching up he continued on with his visit, being fully briefed by a member of staff from the HSE.

Unfortunately, as they say in military circles "the plug was pulled" on the military call centre involvement at the end of January 2021, but I immensely enjoyed my time working on secondment in the call centre and will have long-lasting memories as a member of our Defence Forces, dealing with members of the public and learning first hand how much they actually appreciate all our serving members past and present and although not obvious at times to us, we do not go unnoticed by our wonderful citizens of Ireland. For this, as members of the Defence Forces past and the present, we can all stand tall and proud.

CPL S. SINGLETON SECONDMENT TO JOINT TASK FORCE COVID-19 & HSE CALL CENTRE

UNDOF

By Sgt Aidan Barrett
Photos provided by Sgt Aidan Barrett



Irish troops of the Chéad Chathláin Coisithe (1st Infantry Battalion) providing armoured escorts and force protection for UNDOF HQ staff

The Irish FRC for the past months has provided critical support to UNDOF engineers seeking to implement the reoccupation of UN Post 86 Bravo. This is part of the UNDOF phased return to the Bravo side after the destruction of UN Posts during the ongoing civil war.

Shortly after the initial deployment of 63 Inf Gp, ESSC assets were requested to clear a large area in and around UNP 86B, a former UN position adjacent to the Alpha Line, which had been occupied and destroyed during the civil war. Irish engineers completed this task and the position was handed over for redevelopment by UNDOF HQ. Throughout the deployment, 63 Inf Gp have continued to support this project, providing armoured escorts and force protection for UNDOF HQ staff, materials and other assets in order to ensure safe and secure conveyance of personnel and materials. The reward for this is in seeing the realisation of strategic objectives and the enhancement of the UNDOF mission and its presence in the Area of Separation, as the Uruguayan Mechanised Infantry Company began to occupy this redeveloped post last week.

On 07 APR 21, 63 Infantry Group deployed to the Golan



The area at UNP 86B that Irish Engineers have cleared for redevelopment by UNDOF

Heights, in Southwestern Syria to take up the role of the Force Reserve Company in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force mission (UNDOF). The majority of the soldiers deployed are from an Chéad Chathláin Coisithe (1st Infantry Battalion), based in Dún Uí Mhaolíosa, Renmore, Galway.

The Irish Infantry Group's main task is to operate the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) throughout the UNDOF mission area. They are ready to rapidly deploy at the Force Commander's command. The Group has a wide range of capabilities, including armoured force protection, patrolling and mobility, communications, engineer search and clearance, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, medical and a wide range of operational expertise.

Since their initial deployment they have completed multiple operations by day and night including armed patrols throughout the mission area, armed escorts of United Nations personnel and search and clearance operations of United Nations positions destroyed during the ongoing civil war. The soldiers are deployed in Syria for six months and will return to Ireland in October.



Members of the 63rd Infantry Group, carrying out a force protection patrol inside the UNDOF area of operations



An Irish FRC Engineer in IVO Hermon South during an ESSC Operation

Engineer Operation UNDOF

On the 30th of August 2021, the Irish FRC Engineer Section were tasked with an Engineer Specialist Search and Clearance (ESSC) Operation on routes IVO United Nations position Hermon South along the ALPHA Line in the Area of Separation. This was carried out through extremely rugged and arduous terrain at altitudes of exceeding 2,400 meters above sea level with temperatures exceeding 30 degrees Celsius. ESSC personnel are highly trained on-island to allow these kinds of operations to be conducted safely with a range of specialist search equipment at their disposal.

On 07 APR 21, 63 Infantry Group deployed to the Golan Heights, in Southwestern Syria to take up the role of the Force Reserve Company in the United Nations Disengagement

Observer Force mission (UNDOF). The ESSC Team is a part of this Group.

The Irish Infantry Group's main task is to operate the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) throughout the UNDOF mission area. They are ready to rapidly deploy at the Force Commander's command. The Group has a wide range of capabilities, including armoured force protection, patrolling and mobility, communications, Engineer Specialist Search and Clearance (ESSC), Explosive Ordnance Disposal, medical and a wide range of operational expertise.

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ESSC Searcher making his way to the top of a hill while pathfinding in IVO Hermon South during an ESSC Operation



ESSC Searcher reaches the peak of a hill while pathfinding in IVO Hermon South during an ESSC Operation



Members of the Royal Legion supporting the Jadotville Challenge
L-R Ken Blair, Brian Duffy and Ciaran Crone

THE YEAR OF JADOTVILLE TIGERS

7th Infantry, D Company, Army Reserve year in review

By Pte Lukasz Gancarz

Photos by Lukasz Gancarz, Lt Steve Burke, AC Press Office

Year 2021 marks a very important anniversary in the history of an Óglaigh na hÉireann. 60 years ago, Commandant Quinlan and his soldiers, faced a much larger force, made of Katangan, battle-hardened French and Belgian mercenaries. 157 Irish soldiers faced 3000 enemy personnel and defended themselves for 5 days. Only after spending all the ammunition, Comdt Quinlan made the decision to negotiate surrender. The Siege of Jadotville is a perfect example of a perimeter defence strategy, which is being taught in various armies across the world. The 7th Infantry Army Reserve's year brought more than one opportunity to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the battle, but out of all, the most significant was a chance to support a very noble cause.

Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann (ONE) provides Support, Comradeship, Advocacy and Remembrance (SCAR) for Irish Veterans. At present there are a total of four Homes for Homeless Veterans: Bru Na Bhfiann (Home of the Brave), Dublin; Bru Chostuim (Custume House), Athlone; Bru Doire (Beechwood House), Letterkenny and Bru Na Farraigh (Cobh) in Cork. The fifth home, Bru Ui Choillean with 6 bedrooms is to be established in Cork city and has been planned with the support of Cork city Council. This is the major project for 2022 and a fitting tribute to one of the founding fathers of the State: Michael Collins. ONE also operates 15 Veteran Support Centers, where they offer advice and support to its members while they can also obtain a range of other services through 37 nationwide branches. ONE has 1,000 proud members and 2,100 supporters who donate annually. The membership is open for Army Reserves personnel as well and more information on how to join can be found on ONE website.

How does the ONE got to the idea of commemorating the

Siege of Jadotville? Jim Mc Eneaney of the "Michael Mc Neela" Branch in Dundalk explains: "Our branch is named after our colleague, who was a soldier in the 27th Inf. Bn., here in Dundalk. Whilst on UN mission, Michael was killed in active service in Lebanon on the 24th February 1989 and our ONE branch was dedicated to his name in 2011. The idea for the challenge came from a branch member who recognized the importance and significance of the 60th Anniversary of the Jadotville siege and how we could recognize the bravery of the Jadotville Tigers and at the same time raise much needed funds for ONE."

As a result of many meetings and discussions we in the "Michael Mc Neela" branch, and with the support of our national executive, formed the Jadotville committee consisting of Pat Donnelly, Jim Mc Eneaney and Neil O'Malley (serving Garda) Neil set up our website which was a great help and designed our poster. We "Pop Up Races" to handle the registration for the event.

To encourage as many people as possible to take part we decided that the event would be open for all to walk, run, swim or cycle. However, we did expect the majority would be cyclists.

The goal of cycling a total of 24,000 Km., was the distance to be covered. This is the return distance between Custume bks. Athlone and Jadotville in the Congo. The event was to be completed over 5 days, (29th June – 3rd July).

This timeframe was chosen to acknowledge the time our comrades were in battle.

We decided on the design of the medal and the snood and awarded prizes for the top individual male, female, and teams with the most kms, achieved over the five-day period. Great support was given by our colleague and fellow veteran Paul Clarke who organised and ran a very successful "Walk" in the Phoenix Park on the 3rd July with over 100 participants.

We also got great support and encouragement from our comrades across the border in Northern Ireland. Dr. James Wilson and the Royal British Legion, Ballymoney Branch organised a "Walk" and raised much needed funds for our cause."

The 7th Infantry answered the call. The 2 I/C, NCO's and Ptes of D, some of which are a member of the latest Officer's Course, took care of the preparations for the event. The goal was to get as many Army Reserve soldiers as possible to take part and not only challenge themselves physically but most importantly, raise the awareness and much needed funds for O.N.E. Additionally this presented an opportunity for the AR soldiers to foster the spirit of comradeship among themselves. 37 soldiers of all ranks signed up from the 7th Infantry Battalion D COY. Collectively they swam, ran, and cycled 3558.6 kilometers, some getting very close to the podium. Total funds raised totaled to €3,086.

I asked Jim, should we start preparing for the 2022 edition and this is what he had to say:

"Because of the great success of this event and the very positive response we have and continue to receive from participants, veterans, and their families we are already working towards having a similar event in 2022"

While the Jadotville Challenge was a significant event for 7th Infantry D COY year, troops also played a major part in various activities, ranging from Aid to the Civil Authority, guard duties and most importantly, assisted its Permanent Defence Forces colleagues during their training programs.

Army Reserve soldiers were heavily engaged in manning the



Jadotville Cycle Challenge members posing for a photo in Custume Bks, Athlone before their combined 24,000 kms



Jadotville Challenge competitors look over the map on a navigation exercise in Kilbride camp area



Aviva Covid Centre from the very start of its establishment. After an outbreak of the COVID-19 in Ireland, for one of the first times since the Single Force Concept was introduced and formation of the RDF, unit's soldiers were deployed in areas of their civilian expertise. Troops with medical experience were deployed to serve with the Health Services Executive Staff in clinical care, testing and later vaccination centers. Many troops were dispatched to man the contact tracing duties. Soldiers with press and media experience, myself included, were enrolled to serve within the Joint Task Force Offices Headquarters in McKee Barracks in Dublin. The JTFHQ Commanding Officer was then General Brigadier Séan Clancy, now in the rank of Lieutenant General, Chief of Staff. Soldiers of all ranks came together to fill in the Barracks Guard Duties, to allow the PDF element of the 7th Infantry to assist the Civil Authorities with other COVID related duties. For months both PDF and RDF troops assisted Aer Lingus and HSE, with logistic duties during the Personal Protective Equipment deliveries, so vital for the fight against the pandemic.

When the numbers of COVID cases began to fall, the PDF increased its training operations for both currently serving staff and the Recruits to the force. Army Reserves soldiers stepped up to the task of providing support personnel to a wide range of exercises, from the basic level ones for the PDF Recruits, to the Senior NCO course, where the members of the 7th Infantry AR together with their PDF counterparts got a unique chance to take part in "on the ground" training and exercise elements with SNCO's of all formations and most significantly, the Army Ranger Wing. This exercise, proven that with the level of training and experience obtained in the 7th Infantry, Reservists can not only support high-level exercises

and courses, but benefit from extra training, which it provides. During the SNCO course, soldiers took part as an exercise troop, who were being used by the senior NCOs to tackle various scenarios, testing their knowledge and leadership abilities. Scenarios consisted of casualty evacuation under fire and in rough terrain, convoys including MOVAGs and with elements of ambushes, taking and escorting Prisoners of War and nighttime operations. The base for the training was set in the Kilworth FOB, which mimics the setup seen on overseas missions, when soldiers were tasked with a regular routine, such as guard and patrol duties.

Another big exercise, which concluded the training program of the new PDF soldiers, was the assault on Dublin Port, where 7th Infantry AR provided personnel, who covered the role of the enemy party. The D company was with the Recruits from their very first field exercises to their final major deployment in a training scenario.

From its own personnel, 7 D company 7 Infantry soldiers will become Commissioned Officers in the Army Reserve. Two more Privates decided to join the ranks of the PDF and are now serving in the Ordnance and in the Air Corps as Officers. With new AR recruits joining the basic training program, the 7th Infantry Army Reserve will continue to proudly serve the state by aiding the civil Authorities and will provide support to its PDF colleagues. The Army Reserves soldiers worked way over 3000 man days in various deployments within and outside of the force. Collectively the 2020 and 2021 proved that the Army Reserve soldiers are way more than capable of not only working arm to arm with their full-time colleagues, but most importantly, they can support the civil authorities in all areas from logistics, admin support and medical.



Members of 7 Inf Bn, D Coy, and the winning team posing for a group photo after a map reading event



Members of 7 Inf Bn, D Coy, posing for a photo before a navigational exercise as part of the Jadotville Challenge



Members of O.N.E. in support of the Jadotville Challenge, posing for a photo at the Defence Forces memorial at Merrion Square



A PC-9M sits on a wet runway looking as though it is preparing to take-off, as this was for a press photo shoot

PILATUS PC-9M

The Swiss Army Knife of the Irish Air Corps

By Pte Lukasz Gancarz

Photos by Pte Lukasz Gancarz

The silence of an early morning at Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel, comes to an abrupt stop, when heavy hangar doors begin to slowly move to one side, accompanied by a loud hum of electric motors. Fresh air enters the hangar, where up to this point, Air Corps technicians have carried out checks and maintenance work on the Pilatus PC-9M. While the pilots, instructors and students are arriving at the base, the aircraft are ready for the day. Before the flying staff start their daily routines, engineers will cross check every vital part of the state-of-the-art machine, ensuring that they are in a top shape for the day. Aircraft are towed to the ramp start up area, where fuelling is completed, and Ground Power Units (GPU) are attached. Each aircraft uses a GPU to provide external power prior to the engine start, allowing the pilots to carry out all avionics checks, without draining the battery. While the engineering inspector gets ready to brief the crews on the work done and required for the day ahead, pilots and students are starting their day with a full weather and flying briefing.

Much of the Wings Course student classroom-based briefing bears many similarities to an operational brief. The student pilots are required to start their presentation at 0845 hrs,

precisely!! The student will stand in front of a class, which is now limited to 10 people inside at once, and start a count exactly 15 seconds before the scheduled time. In Ireland, pilots both military and civilian use the Met Éireann Self Briefing website, which provides a full spectrum of meteorological information. When required, British Met Office and other European providers websites give additional information for the United Kingdom and Europe. For the local weather situation, the METAR is the most important piece of information. METeorological Aviation Report provides a short, coded weather update. The next vital piece of information is the TAF: Terminal Area Forecast, which gives forecasted weather information in a similar format as METAR. The Low Level Significant Weather chart gives a much larger overview for Ireland and the UK, showing weather fronts and conditions associated with them. It also informs the pilots about significant weather occurrences such as icing or turbulence. Another critical piece of information are NOTAMs - Notices to Airmen. These reports contains all the information concerning flight operations in the area. This can vary from airport closures, obstacles such as cranes and much more. As the training progresses, students are getting accustomed to how to read and understand each of these services and most importantly, they must relay this information to their fellow classmates and instructors. Daily briefing is the "bread

and butter" for every pilot's planning cycle, whether commercial or military and no flying operations can take place without it.



A PC-9M sits on a runway preparing to take off

Before the students will be given an opportunity to sit inside the PC-9M, they must complete their ground school, which covers a full ATPL syllabus (Airline Transport Pilot Licence) and uses the EASA (European Aviation Safety Agency) training

programme, expanding further into military operations and nuances where required. It follows the airline pilots training schedule quite closely with 14 subjects, that students must understand, assimilate the knowledge and pass examinations. This takes between six to seven months and during this time, students also learn about further aspects of military leadership, as every pilot is also an Officer. Only then will the students begin to train in the simulator, and this is not for the purpose of flying training alone. In PC-9M some of the emergency systems controls are based in the front section of a cockpit, where the student sits. Instructors need to know, that each student knows how to operate the emergency landing gear lever or firewall (fuel) shutoff system. Only then can the training move on into the actual aircraft cockpit.

Flying lessons start from the basics. Effects of the controls, straight and level flying, climbing, descending, and turning. Following this the pilots will move on into "circuit work". This part of training teaches the students how to depart from and approach the airport. It begins with a take-off and a climb. Following this the aircraft is turned onto a "crosswind leg", which is either a left or right 90 degrees turn, while still climbing to a circuit altitude. Then the pilot will fly parallel to the runway, which is called "downwind leg". During this stage, the student is required to carry out pre-landing checks, while communicating their position to the Air Traffic Controller. Another turn onto "base leg" is a 90 degree change of heading towards the runway, followed by a reduction of throttle to slow to the correct approach speed. Flaps are lowered to approach setting while the aircraft descends toward the runway. The last turn is

called the "finals turn" which, as the name suggests, aligns the aircraft with the centreline of the runway – "finals" or final approach. Small, timely corrections on finals facilitate a stabilised approach, which is shortly followed by a reduction in engine power to allow the aircraft tyres touch on to the runway for landing. While on approach, the pilot controls the speed of the aircraft with the pitch setting and the rate of descent with the throttle. Students

must learn how to fly each stage of the circuit pattern and most importantly how to handle the aircraft in both good and bad weather conditions. After as little as 20 hours, thanks to use of the simulator, students are then ready to complete a first solo flight in the circuit. This again allows for all the theory and emergency procedures training to be carried out in the simulator, so when the student eventually gets into the cockpit, there is no time or fuel wasted on the ground.

Stalls and spins build a solid foundation and the confidence required for learning basic aerobatics. Later in the training, pilots are required to carry out full spins with up to 6 rotations, while flying solo. With its great stability, the PC-9M must be forced (with specific control inputs) into a spin and forced to remain in this flight condition. Control input must remain constant during the spin because once the pilot releases the

control inputs, the aircraft's inherent stability characteristics produce a natural tendency to exit the spin. With some other training aircraft, the stall and subsequent spin can be a very dangerous situation at any stage of flight. The PC-9M is designed to recover from a spin with minimal pilot input required and therefore minimal height loss. Flying manoeuvres like these, build confidence and knowledge of the aircraft and are a vital element of safety training. Knowing the effects of and how to recognise the onset of the stall and then spin, allows the pilot to react to it and prevent it from developing, especially during aerobatic manoeuvres. As training progresses, more dynamic aerobatic and max performance manoeuvres are introduced. A light but positive touch is required towards the end of the course when flying in formation with another PC-9M aircraft at speeds greater than 200 knots

Navigation is a significant part of the syllabus, with substantial amount of time allocated to instrument flying training. While students learn how to fly medium-level VFR (Visual Flight Rules, where navigation is maintained by the means of map and terrain features), the PC-9M is equipped with very advanced IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) equipment. This not only allows it to fly in all weather conditions but also carry out ILS (Instrument Landing System) approaches and landings. All aspects of training allow the student to build the required skill of "airmanship"



A PC-9M begins its lift off the runway in Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel



The 104 Squadron badge, proudly worn by every pilot in the Squadron

and progress to more advanced operations, such as further training on larger aircraft, such as PC-12, CASA, and the fleet of helicopters. The Air Corps retired its Cessna/Reims Rocket FR172H in recent years and interestingly enough, this was never the first aircraft on which the students learned to fly. Even with the seemingly much simpler Cessna, students would fly on the PC-9M first and then progress to the FR172H, which were mainly used in operations in the Aid to the Civil Power role. These duties included, overhead surveillance and reconnaissance for cash in transit conveys, aerial surveying, prisoner escort and even parachute training in the past. The aircraft were also used to tow the targets for artillery and anti-aircraft exercises.

How does the Pilatus PC-9M fit into the training role?

When coupled with simulator-based training, it is one of the best training aircraft around. Students can be taught about all the technical aspects of it from the ground up. It works extremely well as a basic training machine; however, it is also a very capable airplane, with exceptionally good spin and stall characteristics. It is equipped with a full "glass cockpit", where all the information is being displayed to the pilot on a large, centralised LCD screen. It also has a very modern HUD (head-up-display) system, which feeds all the basic information about the flight such as speed, altitude, flight path and more. This instrumentation set-up prepares students for interaction with similar systems on more advanced aircraft such as the H135 and AW139 helicopters, PC-12, Lear 45 or the latest version of the Airbus Military C295, which will soon be entering service with the Irish Air Corps.

In the Flying Training School, The PC-9M has three main roles:

1. Flying Training
2. Combat and Tactical Training (Air-to-Ground and Air-to-Air weapons and tactical flying and interception)
3. Ceremonial/Display Flying

Flying Training is at the very core of the Air Corps' utilisation of this aircraft for both Student Pilot Wings Courses and Flying Instructor Courses. However, the instructor cadre at the Flying Training School are trained in the employment of

the aircrafts' weapons systems. The PC-9M can be equipped with underwing rocket launcher pods and machine gun pods for the Air-to-Ground and Air-to-Air role. In various air forces across the world, the PC-9M and the Beechcraft T-6 Texan has proven itself to be more than able to provide a very accurate and effective Close Air Support solution for troops on the ground. It is very fast and manoeuvrable while flying low level,

has a very low IR signature and low noise emission, which makes it a very successful support asset. In the broader picture however, the PC-9M was never built to be a combat aircraft. It was designed to be a truly 21st century training aircraft and it excels in its role in every aspect. The aircraft is fitted with an Integrated Smoke Generation System for use of the aircraft in the ceremonial role at State Commemorative events and large sporting occasions to mention but a few, in addition to Air Displays.

From a technical standpoint, the aircraft, is powered by a Pratt and Whitney Canada PT6A-62 turboprop engine, which is driving a four-blade propeller by Hartzell. This powerplant combination can generate 950shp at its Max Power output. The aircraft can climb at the rate of 20.8 meters per second and can fly with a max cruise speed of 593 km/h. It can

reach altitudes of 25,000 feet and has a maximum take-off weight is 2,350kg.

I had a chance to speak to André Zimmermann, Vice President of Government Aviation Department at Pilatus.

Lukasz Gancarz: How many countries are using the PC-9 now?

André Zimmermann: Variants of the PC-9 have been in use by more than 15 militaries around the world since the 1980s including the Royal Australian Air Force, the Irish Air Corps, the Swiss Air Force, the Royal

Thai Air Force, the Croatian Air Force, the Slovenian Air Force and many others. More than 260 units have been built to date and the PC-9 remains a highly capable trainer aircraft that is extremely popular with its customers.

LG: Is the PC-9 still being developed/modernised and if so, what changes/modifications are on the table?

AZ: Whilst the first PC-9s were produced in the mid-1980s, the configuration baseline of the aircraft has



A pilot of the 104 Squadron sitting in the cockpit of a PC-9M preparing for take-off



Two Air Corps PC-9M pilots prepare for a routine flight out of Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnell

undergone significant changes in line with the technological developments within the aerospace industry, in particular with regard to avionics and other primary components in order to meet the ever changing requirements of an integrated pilot training system.

Pilatus recognises that every customer is different and has specific training needs and requirements. We therefore work very closely with our existing and future customers to further enhance the product and to ensure that they get the best value training by using a state-of-the art platform. Pilatus respects the knowledge and long term planning of the customer by providing specialist advice to aid their decision making.

As far as the existing PC-9 customers are concerned, Pilatus works with the respective Air Forces to develop bespoke modification packages that meet their specific future training needs. Over many years, we have gathered vast experience with upgrade programmes for our trainer aircraft products.

LG: What are the main advantages of the aircraft over other, similar training platforms?

AZ: The PC-9 M is the latest version of the successful PC-9 series, offering high performance, excellent handling characteristics, advanced instrumentation, and a greater range in training effectiveness. The PC-9 M is built upon a solid foundation of experience with the PC-7 and the PC-7 MkII with which it shares modular design and production methods, outstanding reliability, and low operating costs. Pilatus has continually upgraded the PC-9 M to improve its operation, while maintaining low life-cycle and acquisition costs.

Pilatus, with the depth of experience gained through many years of manufacture of training aircraft, has designed an Integrated Pilot Training System. This system is designed around the Pilatus range of training aircraft and includes not only flight training but also the elements of synthetic and academic training. In the recent years, Pilatus has significantly enhanced the capabilities of our simulators for the modular trainers (PC-7 MkII & PC-9 M). These product enhancements are in line with the latest technological developments within the aerospace industry.

Unlike many of our competitors, Pilatus is able to offer a holistic solution: An integrated and state-of-the-art training systems tailored to the customer's needs, products with an unbeatable reliability and proven track record and first class support. Pilatus provides all the elements required for an efficient pilot training: aircraft, ground-based training systems, documentation, engineering support, supply chain management, maintenance, and supervision. By selecting Pilatus, the customer can rely on a single, strong, and reliable partner.

We see this as one of the main advantages when compared with our competitors. Last, but not least, we are also very proud of the high Swiss quality of our products. Pilatus has been producing and selling aircraft worldwide since 1939, earning a reputation for excellence.

LG: General public and military personnel are not always aware, that the Beechcraft T-6A is based on the PC-9. Can we actually say so or are there too many differences?

AZ: In order to compete in the United States Joint Primary Aircraft Training System (JPATS) competition in the 1990s, Pilatus and Hawker Beechcraft Corporation developed a modified version of the PC-9, initially called the Beech Pilatus PC-9 Mk. II which won this competition out over seven other contenders. It was later renamed the Beechcraft T-6A Texan II and is now built and marketed independently by Textron Aviation Defense in the USA.

LG: Does the PC-9 M share any features or similarities in training with the PC-12, which the Irish Air Corps are also using?



A member of the 104 Squadron sitting in the PC-9M simulation craft conducting flight training

AZ: The PC-9 M and PC-12 were designed from the outset for completely different roles; military trainer versus passenger/cargo transport. However, as they were designed at broadly similar times, and by the same engineering team, then there are similarities in aspects of the design philosophies that increase the familiarity for the maintenance staff.

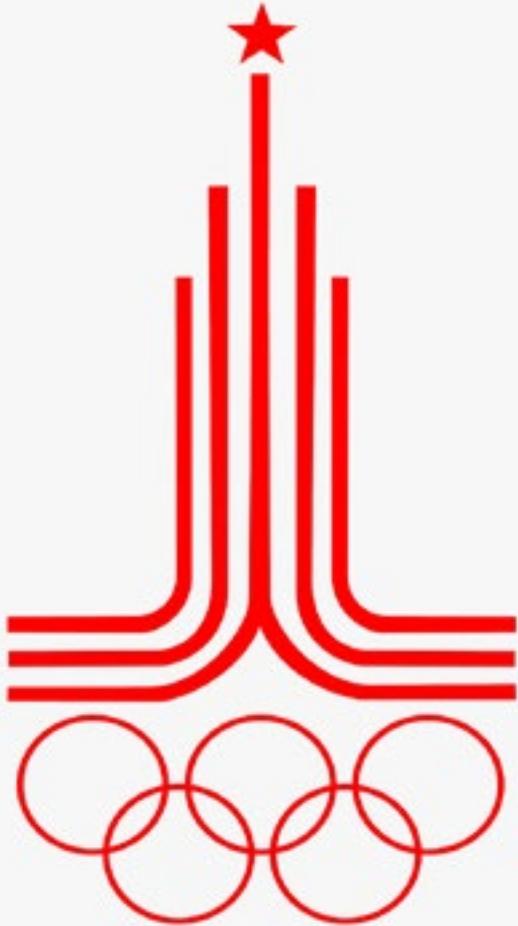
To conclude, what are the personal qualities that the Air Corps are looking for in their future pilots, who will be taught how to fly on this state-of-the-art trainer?

In addition to the standard qualities of an Officer, training and working as a pilot requires a number of additional competencies. High levels of fitness are required to fly in high-performance aircraft which can produce and withstand high G force. Being a team player is paramount in aviation, as in any other branch of the Defence Forces, everything is a team effort. Stress tolerance coupled with high levels of Technical Aptitude are key attributes to being a successful military pilot. In an emergency, being tolerant of a high stress load and having technical expertise allows for a timely and correct response to any potential danger.

Learning to fly the Pilatus PC-9M is only the very first step in what is a highly rewarding career as a military pilot in the Irish Air Corps. With further options of flying in No. 3 Operations Wing on the myriad of missions performed by the Airbus H135 and Leonardo AW139 or in No. 1 Operations Wing, flying the multirole aircraft fleet of the CN235, PC-12 or Lear 45, it's fair to say that the PC-9M is the ideal platform to train the future Pilot Officers of the Irish Air Corps.

SEAN EGAN

By Christopher Warner
Photos provided by Christopher Warner



The 1980 Olympic symbol for the games in Moscow

Growing up in Ireland during the early 1970s, Sean Egan dreamed of being a rock star. He joined the Army instead. However, the brawny redhead would eventually perform in front of large crowds worldwide, competing as an elite hammer thrower.

John ('Sean') Egan was born on 18 October 1956 in Dublin to James Egan and Claire (nee Burke). His father, a native of County Kilkenny, served in the Irish Army for 21 years 271 days before retiring in 1973 as a Company Quartermaster-Sergeant. Sean attended Curragh Boys National School, and also Templetuohy National School when CQMS Egan was stationed in Cyprus with the United Nations.

After returning to the Curragh for secondary school, Egan formed a three-piece band with classmates Jim Sullivan and Niall Powers (a drummer who later went on to play



Sean is photographed here practicing his technique in the hammer throw event

with Bob Geldof). With Egan on bass and Sullivan on guitar, the trio called themselves «Broken Cobweb» and hoped to follow in the footsteps of other burgeoning Irish acts at the time like Rory Gallagher and Thin Lizzy. But one afternoon in McDermott Quarters, Egan's chance encounter with an odd-looking stranger would change everything.

«This fella used to walk past every so often with a Mohican-style haircut,» Egan recently told An Cosantoir. «I was curious who he was, so I followed him one day into the gymnasium and saw that he was dragging these things around. I didn't know it at the time, but they were hammers.» The athlete turned out to be Terry Gent, the 1972 national champion, who



A picture of Sean Egan in a newspaper, at a competition separate to the Olympics



Moscow 1980 Flag-bearers of states-participants of the XXII Summer Olympic Games inside the main arena, the Grand Arena of the Central Lenin Stadium

introduced Egan to the sport.

Hammer throwing involves a 16-pound metal ball attached to steel wire and a handle. For natives of the Emerald Isle, the event has a long, storied history dating back to the Tailteann Games – an Irish sporting festival celebrated more than a millennium before the ancient Greek Olympics. According to legend, mythological hero Cú Chulainn gripped a chariot wheel by its axle and heaved it farther than any other mortal.

The contest would evolve and feature various implements, such as a sledgehammer, which gave the sport its name. Naturally, Irish-born athletes dominated the event, winning seven out of the first eight Olympiads and setting numerous world records. Although throwing heavy objects typically relies on sheer muscle, the hammer is one of the most technical events in track and field. The discipline requires both strength and cat-like agility – a unique blend of talents that suited Egan perfectly.

The budding young athlete found the rotational technique surprisingly easy to learn, applying natural athleticism honed from football, swimming, and gymnastics. «I was always good on my feet,» Egan said. But despite showing early promise in school, he briefly gave up the hammer while transitioning into the military. Fortunately, his interest was soon rekindled under the guidance of seasoned Army throwers Pat Healy and Frank O’Shea.

After being assigned to the Army School of Physical Culture, the private adopted a comprehensive training regimen. The hard work quickly paid off. In 1975, Egan captured the first of three consecutive All-Army Championships, emerging as one of the top throwers in the country. Three years later, he won his first national championship and broke John Lawlor’s 18-year-old Irish hammer record with a throw of 65.56 metres.

By 1980, Egan had set his sights on loftier goals: representing Ireland as an Olympian. At the year’s first meet, he established a new national record of 70.24 in Darmstadt, West Germany. But more importantly, the mark qualified for the Olympic Games later that summer in Moscow. There, he ran into a powerful Soviet juggernaut, led by defending Olympic champion Yuriy Sedykh. The Red Army officer broke his own world record with a throw of 81.80 in a Russian sweep.

Egan would continue his career on the international stage while also winning seven national hammer championships. He also claimed the 56lb weight throw crown in 1992. After six years in Óglaigh na hÉireann, he then embarked on a variety of civilian pursuits that included a landscaping business and coaching at DCU. He currently resides in Stillorgan, Co. Dublin with his wife, Regina. And yes, he still enjoys strumming his old guitar.

EXERCISE CAMBRIAN PATROL 2021

By Lt Turlough Gallagher (Patrol Commander
Exercise Cambrian Patrol 2021)
Photos provided by Lt Turlough Gallagher

"MARCH OR DIE"

At 0500 on the 10th of October 2021 an eight-man team from the 27th Infantry Battalion crossed the start line for Exercise Cambrian Patrol 2021. Over the course of the next forty eight hours, they were to be tested in a range of military skills over approximately seventy kilometres of the rugged and unforgiving terrain of the Brecon Beacons and Black Mountains in Wales, carrying upwards of forty-five kilograms of kit and equipment. This was the culmination of over three months of intense and demanding training and would see the team tested both physically and mentally in qualities ranging from leadership and navigation, to section battle drills, with



Exercise Cambrian Patrol Gold Medal 2021

casualty treatment and evacuation. After a gruelling two days they were rewarded for their endeavours and achieved a gold medal standard. They were one of only three international teams to obtain this prestigious award.

Exercise Cambrian Patrol is an annual international military exercise hosted by Headquarters 160th Welsh Brigade in the UK Armed Forces and first began in 1959 when a group of Welsh Territorial Army soldiers designed a weekend training event featuring a long-distance march over the Cambrian Mountains and culminated in a competitive rifle shoot on the Sennybridge Training Area. The exercise has been improved and adapted significantly over the years and incorporates

much more of an operational mindset with a focus on military scenarios all the while paying tribute to its roots of endurance both physically and mentally. The exercise is world renowned, often described as NATO's toughest patrolling test and attracts teams from across the globe to include Germany, USA, Canada and India with 2021 being no exception.

Following the disruption caused by the COVID 19 pandemic and the subsequent cancellation in 2020 this year, a renewed enthusiasm was evident with over 96 teams volunteering for the patrol from a mix of regular, reserves and university officer training teams from the UK Armed Forces and 17 international patrols. Commander 160th (Welsh) Brigade and Exercise Director, Brigadier Andrew Dawes CBE said:

'I'm thrilled the exercise is back on track following an enforced absence in 2020 due to the pandemic. Now in its 62nd year, Cambrian Patrol continues to challenge patrols from across UK Defence and from around the world. The format remains focused on the battlecraft syllabus to an annual training test standard. One may think this sounds simple, but you would be quite wrong. The patrols will operate tactically to complete their assigned mission whilst dealing with the pressures of the scenario, opposing of indigenous forces, the weather, the environment and, of course themselves. Although it's not a competition the patrols are assessed and will strive to do their level best to return to base with a Gold, Silver, Bronze or Certificate of Merit.'

The level of the award is dependent on the standard achieved by each of the teams while completing the different aspects of the exercise. A Gold Award is an accumulation of 75% or more of the points available and no less than 65% on any single assessed task. A Silver Award is an accumulation of 65-74% of the points available and no less than 55% on any single assessed task. A Bronze Award is an accumulation of 55-64% of the points available. A Certificate of Merit is assessed as a team completing the exercise in the time allocated and scoring less than 55% of the points available. On average over one third of teams do not complete the exercise with only five percent achieving a Gold Award.

The team itself began training in July 2021 and was comprised of serving members from the 27th Infantry Battalion. The eight man patrol team consisted of Pte James McClarnen, Pte Kevin Hill, Pte Kevin Barry McKerr, Cpl Sean Paul McCabe, Cpl Gerard Rodgers, Sgt John McGuigan, Sgt Brian Loughran and Lt Turlough Gallagher with an administrative team of Cpl Alan Ferguson, Pte Mark Fitzachery, Pte Ryan Browne, Pte Conor Thornton and Pte Ryan Duffy to co-ordinate training and logistical requirements.

The initial phases of training focused on building up of the



CPER's Training in Gormanston Camp carried out by 27th Infantry Battalion prior to there deployment to the competition area in Wales

physical and mental resilience required for the mere length in distance of the exercise and consisted of measured route marches which slowly increased in both distance and weight across the different training areas in the Defence Forces to include the Cooley Mountain Range in County Louth and the Glen of Imaal in County Wicklow. This incremental increase in both the distance and weight over the course of six to eight weeks allowed each member of the team to slowly adapt to the ever increasing demands placed on their bodies and acted as a safeguard against potential injury. Throughout this training phase not one injury was sustained by the team which is testament not only to the training plan that was afforded to them by the 27th Infantry Battalion but also to each member of the team in how they applied themselves professionally to it ensuring appropriate recovery measures were taken after each rigorous session to allow them to fight another day.

Following the weight and distance acclimatising training, military skills became the main objective during the final weeks. This included orders procedure, dismounted close combat skills in the context of military operations in urban terrain (MOUT) and section level quick attacks, battlefield casualty drills (BCD), armoured fighting vehicle (AFV) recognition, counter chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (C-CBRN) drills, water obstacle crossing drills, countering the

explosive ordnance threat (C-EO), operational law and ethical behaviour, media handling, artillery target and emergency close air support procedures, patrol reporting and radio communication skills.

Because of the wide range of experienced personnel and instructors both within the team and the 27th Infantry Battalion most of these military skills could be revised and practised within the 27th Battalion installations of Aiken Barracks and Gormanstown Camp with both of these areas offering excellent facilities which could be tailored for the specific needs of the team. The team also utilised training facilities in the Curragh Camp Artillery School and were given the opportunity to use the newly installed Virtual Battle Space Simulator under the instruction of Sgt Alan Smyth and Lt Gary Marron. The level of instruction given to the team on artillery targeting procedure was of the highest standard and it was an excellent opportunity to use the state of the art facilities to put the team through their paces.

Media training was provided to the team by Captain Risteard Byrne. This was not only an educational session with regards to media handling, but also in regards to the patrol itself. Captain Byrne had completed Exercise Cambrian Patrol on two previous occasions as Patrol Commander achieving both a Gold and Silver Award. The guidance he was able to offer



the team was invaluable. These insights could only be gained through first hand experience of the exercise and would not have been possible to simulate through training scenarios alone.

Throughout the training phase the administrative team under the command of Cpl Ferguson endeavoured to ensure no stone was left unturned in regards to the preparation and execution of all scenarios, as well as critical analysis of how the team performed and what areas needed improvement. Having previously represented the Defence Forces on the international level with the Irish Sniper Team in Canada, he was able to translate his experiences and knowledge into focused and well rounded scenario based training.



Advance to Contact Drills

The team travelled to Wales on the 06-OCT-21. Prior to commencement of the exercise on 10-OCT-21 they had to undergo weapons handling and pyrotechnics training with the UK Armed Forces weapon systems which they would be using on the patrol. This training was provided by the 2 Royal Irish Regiment who were acting as the team's host unit. The team also received briefs in climatic injuries and UK section level orders to ensure a level of continuity among the international team's standards and the marking performa being used to assess each team's performance.

Throughout the exercise itself, each member of the team performed to an exceptional standard both in their physical and mental resilience as well their application of the training they received. Pte James McClarnen acted as the lead scout and primary navigator throughout the duration of the exercise.

Using his reconnaissance experience he expertly navigated the team through the rugged and unforgiving terrain of the Welsh countryside in often visual white out situations using only a compass and map as all electronic and digital devices were strictly prohibited.

Pte Kevin Hill performed the role of scribe for the entirety of the patrol. This challenging appointment meant that Pte Hill had to be constantly aware of his surroundings taking note of all relevant information to be transferred into a comprehensive patrol report at the end of the forty eight hours. Being sniper qualified, he shone in this role and his careful and consistent note taking were of the utmost importance during a high pressure debrief session of the team at the conclusion of the exercise by the directing staff.

Reconnaissance qualified Pte Kevin Barry McKerr was integral to the team's success, in particular during the orders procedure and delivery. His attention to detail and craftsmanship allowed for an impressive ground model to be constructed, aiding in a detailed delivery of the exercise orders, ensuring every member of the team knew exactly what was expected of them over the course of the forty eight hours. His own personnel commitment and loyalty to the team should also be highlighted. During the training phase he welcomed a new addition to his family and although this was obviously a demanding time for both him and his family, he approached training with complete professionalism and applied himself to the tasks at hand in remarkable fashion.

Cpl Gerard Rodgers took on the role of signaller and was responsible for communication of reports back to higher command as well as reporting of rendezvous points and report lines as the team progressed through the different aspects of the patrol. He also acted as the Counter CBRN specialist and his knowledge and expertise came to the fore during both the training phase while instructing the other members of the team and during the exercise itself in the C-CBRN stand, in which the team encountered a change in equipment and standard operating procedures they had trained with. This may have caused problems only for Cpl Rodger's expert knowledge in the basic principles of C-CBRN that he was able to apply thus ensuring the team continued unhindered.

Sgt John McGuigan was given the arduous appointment of team medic. He impressed the directing staff who singled him out for individual praise during the casualty evacuation stand in which a friendly forces patrol had ventured off

a secure road into a minefield, resulting in multiple and complex injuries to personnel. His systematic approach, calm communication and application of clinical skills ensured the friendly forces received rapid and lifesaving medical treatment resulting in the team scoring highly in this scenario.

Cpl Sean Paul McCabe demonstrated his professionalism and instructor level knowledge throughout the duration of the patrol. His counter explosive ordinance skills were put to the test when clearing a path through a minefield in order to clear a safe passage for the team to use. He also displayed impressive knowledge during the AFV recognition scenario. This was a time pressure situation that required a calm disposition in order to correctly identify a range of armoured vehicles on a computer simulation during a period in the patrol in which all team members were struggling with sleep deprivation and concentration.

Sgt Brian Loughran excelled in his role of 2IC of the team. Having completed Exercise Cambrian Patrol in 2017 and achieving a Silver Medal award there was a sense of unfinished business that needed to be addressed.

From the first day of training to the final minute of the exercise, Sgt Loughran's experience and leadership was evident to be seen. His quick thinking and ability to adapt to an ever changing environment, was essential during all aspects of the exercise but this was of particular importance during the water crossing obstacle.

Safety parameters set in place from the directing staff

meant the team's normal procedure for crossing were not allowed and a new plan had to be conceived, explained and implemented in a ten minute period, all while under the cover of darkness with the team spaced out in all round defence. This was a make or break moment for the exercise but because of the professionalism of both Sgt Loughran and the team, they were able to overcome it and progress on.

On completion of the exercise, Chief of the General Staff of the UK Armed Forces General Sir Mark Carleton-Smith addressed the weary but satisfied soldiers. "Congratulations to you all. The hard part is well behind you and that was putting your hand up and deciding you were up for a challenge and actually that you want to be tested and you

are going to relish the opportunity. That's an even harder ask if you've flown in from the other side of the world, at the tail end of a global pandemic. Its not for no reason the Cambrian Patrol has got the reputation it has, which is, I think, a hard earned reputation for being the single toughest international patrol in the world. And only you will know if you think that is an appropriate judgement on it. Anyone who finishes has made a massive achievement and you should be incredibly proud of yourself".

It is important to note that although the team trained and performed well over the course of the training phase and the exercise, none of this would have been possible without the help and support afforded to them by so many people within the Defence Forces. A word of thanks to Lt Col David



Irish Cambrian Patrol Team receiving their Gold Medal in Sennybridge Training Area, Wales.
 Back Row (L – R): Cpl Alan Ferguson, Cpl Gerard Rodgers, Pte Kevin Barry McKerr, Pte James McClarnen, Pte Kevin Hill, Lt Turlough Gallagher, Lt Col David O'Shaughnessy.
 Front Row (L – R): Sgt John McGuigan, Cpl Sean Paul McCabe, Sgt Brian Loughran, Pte Mark Fitzachery.

O'Shaugnessy (OC 27th Bn), Comdt Mark O'Sullivan (2IC 27th Bn), Capt Killian Owens (CO Sp Coy 27th Bn), Sgt Maj John Doyle (BSM 27th Bn), Sgt Jeff Meehan (Sp Coy Stores 27th Bn), Comdt Joe Gleeson (OIC IWW), Comdt Niall Buckley (OIC 2 Bde Tpt), CQ Jim Collins (Procurement Section DFHQ), Maj Feargus Rice (2 Royal Irish), Capt Sam Maybin (2 Royal Irish), Sgt David McMasterson (2 Royal Irish) and a special acknowledgement to Pte Jennifer O'Connor in J7 Training. Without her knowledge and experience in organisation and liaison for an international training event, the team would not have been able to travel to the UK in the first instance.

I Wanna Go To Tibnin

—By Mick Dunne—

It was January 29th and at the very moment we touched down at Bristol I should have been taking off with Olympic Airlines for Tel Aviv and a visit to the UNIFIL Headquarters at Naqura. It had been arranged that the Bank of Ireland Allstar football award won by Lt Shay Fahy, 64 Inf Bn (UNIFIL) would be presented by his OC and, as Secretary of the Allstar Steering Committee, I had been chosen to bring the precious trophy out to the Lebanon.

As Robbie Burns once wrote "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a-gley" So the start of the journey wasn't at all auspicious and thanks to a fog-bound Heathrow Airport there had to be rapid changes in the plans. Capt John Murnan, who was to be my guide and mentor during my brief visit, was intercepted over his car radio somewhere between Nahrariya and Tel Aviv with the message that "Dunne had gone to Bristol!"

High Flying Pressure

But it all came out well in the end - after a bus journey from Bristol to Heathrow and the luck of getting the last stand-by seat on the last El Al flight out to Tel Aviv.

That was Sunday, and by Wednesday night I was back in Dublin with a videotape of Lt Col Pat McMahon, the Commanding Officer of the Irish Battalion, presenting the Allstar award to Shay Fahy. This was edited on the Thursday and used during the live transmission on RTE television of the glittering Allstar Banquet from the Burlington Hotel on Friday, February 2nd.

With the five Mearns Allstars making a dramatic return from their Canary Islands holiday in time that only just, because of a late departure from Madrid! Shay Fahy was the only Allstar winner unable to get his award in person on the night. So, many people including former GAA Director General Sean Ó Súilleabháin thought the video insert from the UNIFIL Headquarters was one of the highlights of the night.

The Show Must Go On

The video of the presentation was made by a television crew arranged by RTE Sport through Visnews, the London TV agency which has a bureau in most of the major cities throughout the world. But two days before my departure the arrangements very nearly fell through when a telex from Visnews advised us that their Jerusalem bureau had informed them that the Israeli crew were unwilling to cross the border into Lebanon because of the grave dangers there. All of which wasn't very reassuring for me.

Worse, though, was the disappointment because we had envisaged doing our filming at the outposts in the hills and we had visualised very dramatic shots of bunkers etc. In other words, we would show the "desolate, deprived, disconcerting and dangerous conditions" Lt Fahy and his colleagues were exposed to!

Contingency Planning

Some quick thinking by Captain Murnan enables us to find an alternative location less dramatic, but more tranquil. John arranged for us to use the grounds of the DGT Rec House attached to UNISU in Nahrariya. (By the way, I hope all you military are impressed with this civilian's facile and familiar use of those initials!) But

having met our cameraman, whose name I couldn't pronounce much less spell, imagine our astonishment when he told us that he and the sound technician hadn't the slightest objection to going into Lebanon. Regrettably it was then too late.

Having interrupted an aerobics class of about a dozen OGL personnel wives, mostly Australian, we eventually got our filming done. It was most appropriate that the presentation to Shay was made by Lt Col McMahon since the latter is a former footballer and, in 1953, won a Leinster Championship medal with the Cork minor team.

Those of you who watched the Allstar Banquet on television will agree that it was worth all the trouble and the arrangements made by RTE, Bank of Ireland and the Army people in both the Press Office and with UNIFIL. Although it was necessarily short on the night, it was much better than having Shay's trophy accepted by some Cork official or whatever.

A Promise Made

The pity of it all was that we were not able to get up into the hills. Personally I would have liked to have met many more of the Irish Contingent over a longer period. But perhaps in the not too distant future there may be another occasion when I can have a longer stay.

It certainly was a most enjoyable, if brief, visit. As I mentioned already the outset was somewhat hairy - not the least tricky bit being my attempts to explain what a GAA Allstar was to an Israeli security agent at Heathrow. A very courteous and patient individual, he knew English but his depth of the language was somewhat limited and I believe he wasn't very interested in sport. Would you believe, he never heard of Gaelic Football or the Cork team or even Shay Fahy!

Already mentioned are some of the people who were so helpful to us. My thanks particularly to Comdr David Ashe and Capt Peter Burns here in Ireland and to Lt Col Pat McMahon. My sincere good wishes to all the members of 64 IRISHBATT, of all ranks, who made me so welcome on what could be literally termed a 'flying visit'.



Lt Col P. McMahon, OC 64 Inf Bn (UNIFIL), presents the BGL GAA "Allstars" Football Award 1988 to Lt Shay Fahy on behalf of the Steering Committee

(Photo: MJO Irishbatt)

Mick Dunne is Gaelic Games Correspondent with RTE and is Honorary Secretary of the Bank of Ireland Allstar Steering Committee.



64 Inf Bn UNIFIL



Photos (above) and (below left) taken on 7 Dec 89 show 'C' Coy hosting a New Year's Party for the children of Brachet and for those from some areas in the City A/C sheltering. Comdt M. Caughran is in the middle of some of the children who attended, and another group gathered at the Coy HQ restaurant being welcomed by Capt J. Curley and Pte's E. Sweeney and A. Manning. (There wasn't a bottle of orange or lemonade to be got for weeks after!)



The weather has also been preoccupying the 'fitter element' at Brachet Coy 'Techtown' as well. Sgts Mark Daly and Ger Devereux are seen (above right) having 'chimney sweep' and refurbished a 'range stove' while the shot (below) depicts Tpr Mark Murphy checking out the heaters in a Pinhard M1 APC with Capt M. McQuillan, Tech Officer (bottom right) well rugged out for Santa spotting or is he curiously waiting for 'his' APC to be mobile again?

As well as entertaining the local children 'C' Coy are helping to ensure that they are comfortable while attending Brachet 'National' School. The winter has been very cold and thus a consignment of paraffin heaters were bought by the Coy pars and presented to the local school. Our photograph above shows Comdt M. Caughran handing over some of the heaters to Mr. H. Daher, Headmaster with Mr. M. Chapman, Coy Sgt M Chapman and Mr. J. Doohan 'in the frame'.



DEFENCE FORCES PODCAST

ENGINEER GRADUATE PROGRAMME

By Tony O'Brien

Photos provided by DF Flickr

Overseas experience, leadership and management training, working as part of a team and personal development are some of the attractions of being a young engineer in the Defence Forces as opposed to a similar position in civilian life.

That's the message in an interview with three Army engineers conducted by Capt Cian Clancy for a Defence Forces Podcast and focussed on the Army Engineers Corps Graduate Programme. Cmdt Sharon McManus told how 18 years of her 25 years in the Defence Forces were spent in the Corps of Engineers. She explained how she joined the Army in 1996 and after her Cadetship decided to study Civil Engineering in NUI Galway followed by a Masters in Sustainable Engineering in UCC. This culminated in her work in the Director of Engineers in 2012 with the Defence Forces being accredited to the International Energy Management Standard ISO 5001.

Not long after that she got the opportunity to work in the European Defence Agency for a number of years, essentially leading the European Army Forces Energy and Environmental Research Strategy. Most recently Cmdt McManus has been working on a research technology and innovation feasibility study for the Defence and is currently getting ready to deploy overseas to Lebanon.

Explaining the work of the Corps of Engineers, she said it had a number of different roles which could be split into different sections. "In the conventional military sense our three main roles would be mobility, counter-mobility and survivability, or force protection as we call it," she said.

Mobility meant ensuring troops on the ground could move forward at all times. That included things like clearing obstacles or clearing minefields in certain conventional situations, building bridges and lines of communication. Counter mobility involved impeding others mobility using explosive demolition for example. The main "bread and butter" activity, she said, was survivability, especially in the overseas context.

Looking back on her three overseas trips – to Liberia, Kosovo and Chad – Cmdt McManus said lot of that work was focussed on survivability in the camp for the troops on the ground which really meant providing the physical protection for the camp, power generation distribution and transmission, water purification, wastewater treatment, any infrastructural element and firefighting.

In Ireland at home, they looked after the civilian side of

engineering. "We look after the facility management, the engineering and maintenance of all our barracks – essentially all our campuses - around the country. This includes project management, contracts tendering and management, engineering design and a really solutions-focussed approach to the management of our campuses," she stated. There were some cross cutting activities particularly in the sustainability area and they had a very substantive sustainability agenda, a very ambitious energy management and renewable energy programme for the Defence Forces. This also had a certain amount of societal impact.

Team work, just as elsewhere in the Defence Forces, was a



2 Members of the ESSC (Engineers Specialist Search and Clearance) team carrying out IED drills on the 62nd Inf Gp UNDOF MRE

key component within the engineer corps. "An engineer is not the expert in terms of the technicians work and vice versa. You really have to work as a team with that kind of solutions focused approach to the challenges on the ground. Practically speaking when you find yourself in the middle of Africa, in the middle of Chad, you can't run down to a local hardware store or get a part supplied within a number of days.

"You really have to innovate on the ground and the only way to do that is by using the team and by working together to find solutions to problems such as pumps breaking down and no water available for the camp. What are you going to do in that situation? So, it is really interesting, really challenging and very fulfilling when you work as a team and find solutions to those situations," she explained.

Such opportunities might not arise for a conventional civilian engineer. "It is very different. I'm not sure if many engineers, particularly graduate engineers, understand the breadth of work available within the Defence Forces and the Corps

of Engineers and the type of challenges or the exciting opportunities that are available for young engineers. You don't have to go into engineering through the standard routes, into consultant engineering or into an industrial setting. There is this whole other areas, combat engineering and overseas humanitarian work which is really exciting."

Looking at the Graduate Programme, Cmdt McManus said it was focussed on undergraduates or graduates who can join the Defence Forces as an Engineer Cadet. She added: "For people who don't understand that, a Cadetship is an elite leadership programme, it is probably one of the only opportunities you would get at that age to do leadership and management to that standard. It is a 17-month programme. "If you are successful in finishing that you then do an engineering focussed training programme. This focusses on the combat engineering and the infrastructural engineering aspect of the Defence Forces. That programme lasts about 15 months so altogether you have about three years of



Pictured in the background is one of the ESSC trucks as members of the ESSC (Engineers Specialist Search and Clearance) team carry out orders for the 62nd Inf Gp UNDOF MRE

training once you join. Thereafter you are a fully qualified combat engineer.

"You will spend time in a unit in the Defence Forces and that would culminate in an overseas mission where you essentially would lead the engineer team on the ground as part of a wider battalion team. You are the lead, you are the person to make an impact, you will be the one to make a difference. Altogether it's about a 4-to-5-year graduate programme where you will receive excellent leadership and management training, very focussed specific combat engineering skills and culminating in an overseas mission."

As regards academic qualifications, she said the Young Engineers Officers course resulted in a Level 9 Master's in leadership and Management and Engineering. The course also offered a wide range of skills. "When you do your engineering degree in college, you learn the principles of engineering and how to think like an engineer. But those concepts are really stretched to their limit in the Defence

Forces because you are asked to apply those principles of engineering – and the way of thinking like an engineer – to many different engineering disciplines and very many different experiences and applications.

"So, it is very wide ranging. Everything from power distribution and transmission to water and environmental issues to infrastructural elements. It doesn't matter what your engineering discipline is, you will have to upskill in those. You will also have to upskill in combat principles, a lot of work on explosives, demolition, bridge building design, project management, leadership management skills, HR. Working in that team environment, collaboratively with other engineers with their own discipline and also with your team of technicians," she said.

Regarding financial remuneration, a graduate engineer joining the army engineers cadetship, the starting salary was approximately €20,000. "That does seem quite low, but it is essentially a training programme and an internship. As soon as you qualify, as soon as you finish the 17 months, you immediately go on to an engineer's salary which is approximately €50,000. So, your starting salary as an engineer in the Defence Forces is €50,000. You can compare that on the Engineers Ireland salary survey and you can see it is more than comparable with what is on offer outside for graduate engineers. So financially it is quite attractive."

However, Cmdt McManus said she believed that most people, especially at that age, were not motivated by money but by the career opportunities and the experiences and the work they are going to be doing. There were really exciting opportunities and a chance to hone leadership and management skills in the Army which a graduate engineer would not get outside the Defence Forces.

"A lot of young engineers don't realise how important those skills are until they are much further down the road in their career. But these are the type of skills that you get through the Cadetship and the Young Engineers Officer course. They are extremely transferrable, they are extremely rare so they are very valued and also they are the type of skills that really can't be taught. You have to absorb them tacitly through experience and through being challenged in certain ways. They are the type of skills that won't be replaced by technology or AI in the future so they will become very valued skills. I think that is a very valuable asset you get from both the Cadetship and the Young Engineers Officers course", she stated.

There was also the lifestyle, the friendships made and the opportunities to travel either on long term missions or short-term courses and seminars. There are gyms in every barracks and medical and dental needs are covered. "But for me it is about the friendships you make and the bonds you make with people. For me it has been about, and has always been, about the range of experiences you get. I am in the Defence Forces almost 24 years, but it feels like I have had three or four different jobs because of the range

of experiences that you get along the way," Cmdt McManus added.

Capt Brian Coughlan talked about his 17 years' service with the Defence Forces, the last 10 of which have been with the Corps of Engineers. He said he studied Civil Engineering in NUIG and in 2020 finished a Masters in Engineering Management in UCD. He served as a Platoon Commander in the Curragh and as an instructor in the School of Military Engineering. His most recent appointment was as a Staff Officer in the engineer branch of the Defence Forces headquarters where he looked after combat engineering and overseas operations. He has had three overseas tours of duty – one in the Golan Heights and two in Lebanon.

Talking about the course programme, he said the first 17 month of the Cadetship was exactly the same as any Cadet entering the Defence Forces. But at the end of that the Cadet will join the Corps of Engineers.

"We are looking at development of military fundamentals, your leadership training and development of you as an individual at that stage to become an officer in the Defence Forces. You then move on to the Young Officers Course, now known as Masters in Military Engineering Management. This programme is 15 months in duration and covers all of your basic military engineering skills plus your project management, energy management and other areas of infrastructural management within the Corps of Engineers."

Capt Coughlan added: "What we are trying to do here is build on the fundamental building blocks that you have learned in your Cadetship in terms of your leadership, your development and how do you lead engineering groups both at home – in aid to the civil authorities – or alternatively on United Nations missions overseas. Following on that you will be deployed to a unit in Ireland and again you will gather more fundamental leadership traits from leading operations.

"So, it might be engineers specialist search missions, it might be development of infrastructural projects within a barracks. Then the final and culminating point of the programme which we would expect will happen between year or five is your overseas deployment with the United Nations which really for all engineer officers and all officers in the Defence Forces really a career highlight and really puts into practice everything you have learned. These are the skills and the traits that you can develop within the Defence Forces which you don't get outside in many engineering consultancies or within production facilities.

"Really it is a fundamental building block that you can then carry forward in your career within the Defence Forces or if at the end of your five years you decide to leave the Defence Forces you now have a leadership skill set and a trait that you can take on and you know develop your own management role within external organizations if that's the path you so choose at the end of the five years."

He accepted that the Young Officers Course was robust and wasn't for everyone. However, if after the initial period a person decided this life wasn't for them, they could take a step back and leave the Defence Forces. "Ideally we would like that everybody would see out the five years, but we do have instances where people would join and for various reasons, personal professional or otherwise, decide to move on and again we would wish them well in their endeavours outside of the organisation."

Talking about the course, Capt Coughlan said that on the combat engineering aspect, the young officers are taught about the fundamental building blocks and developing on from their Cadetship so that they leading teams in terms of building bridges, conducting explosive demolitions, engineer specialist search and clearance operations which might be clearing minefields in the Golan Heights in Syria or clearing routes in Lebanon or, alternatively, blowing up explosive remnants of war in the likes of uh Liberia or Chad



The ESSC (Engineers Specialist Search and Clearance) robot pictured here from the front awaits its deployment on an ESSC display in Casement Aerodrome Baldonnell back in 2019

"What we're trying to do is we're training you for all of the likely scenarios that you will face as an engineer platoon commander," he said adding: "We build on those blocks and it's very incremental, very decision focused. Really what we're trying to do is push the engineer officer into a situation where they are going to have to make decisions and going to have to develop their leadership traits. You will have to assess the mission that's been given to you, you'll have to analyse what sort of task is responsible for what assets you have available to you, what time constraints you have available and then you have to come up with your plan, develop it and manage it and lead it from start to finish.

"If we consider something like commanding a fire crew or developing that sort of role it's not an everyday opportunity that other engineers get but it's something that we must focus on because it's one of our primary tasks overseas and again the responsibility stands with the engineer the officer, there's no one there to hold your hand. It has to be

quite a pressurised situation and you have to develop quite quickly but we believe that having come through a four-year engineering degree, having come through your cadetship and then being put in this position within the Master's programme that you can develop and lead from there."

One of the highlights for a student on the course, he said, was a module where they do a dry run of a camp construction overseas. "So again you're given a task where you're deployed to a sub-Saharan African country and you have to plan out where is your water purification system going to go; how are you going to plum it, how are you going to manage it, where your electrical services system is going to go, where your camps, where your accommodation units, all of these elements and again it's something that we have done for real whether it's our deployments in Lebanon, in Chad, in Liberia. Again the first people on the ground are the engineer officers."

That is all covered in the first nine months of the programme.



Images from the ESSC robot and other surveillance cameras fed back to a laptop in the ops room of an ESSC display in Casement Aerodrome Baldonnell back in 2019

The second six months is more around professional qualifications and development as an engineer "so it's your project management qualifications, energy management qualifications, development of construction tender documentation, fire safety and health and safety and all areas of that which you will be responsible for if you're deployed in an infrastructure maintenance company."

For those coming from an electronic or and electrical or mechanical engineering background there was quite a lot of development in terms of their knowledge of civil engineering works, technical guidance documents, building regulations, things like that. Generally, within a pool a young officer's course or on the Masters course you will have six to eight students all from various different backgrounds and everybody brings their own both development from their college course but also their own personal experiences to the table and it can be a really well-rounded group that are working together to achieve the qualification at the end of the

Masters"

Speaking about the range of tasks an engineer could be involved in, Capt Coughlan recalled his own first deployment oversea in 2014 to the Golan Heights. "My original tasking was that I was going out as a mine clearance officer, an engineer specialist search and clearance officer. Two weeks before we deployed, we were tasked with a completely separate mission which was to go to camp construction. So, we'd spent two months planning and preparing to go out as a mine clearance team, as an engineer specialist search and clearance team and then suddenly two weeks beforehand we were told no you're now going to go and you're going to construct kitchens, you're going to construct accommodation units, you're going to be responsible for range reconstruction.

"Because we had the experience both myself as an engineer officer and my tradesmen that I had with me, we had all these skill sets and with a lot of experience prior to deploy we were able to very quickly change our focus based on what we covered previously and our own personal experiences up to that point."

Lt Donal Clare told how he joined the Army in 2017 having studied Mechanical Engineering in DIT. He finished there in 2016. He is now coming to the end of the Army Engineer Graduate Programme and is preparing for his first overseas deployment to Syria. "I'm currently at the end of the graduate programme, it's four to five years in total. That means I've developed skills at a basic level in the Cadetship. I've honed those skills specifically in an engineer sense, in young officers programme and I'll now go overseas to apply all those skills that I've learned. It's a challenge I'm looking forward to. I'm going to the UN mission in Syria."

He said he had been asked why, having done engineering, he joined the Army. "People don't put those two things together. But I always say to them it's something I have always been drawn to a career in the Defence Forces specifically as an engineer. The reason I chose this career is, it's the unique environment that you're involved in day-to-day, you know it's a unique problem-solving aspect that you have to apply in demanding situations."

Talking about the course, he said there were the personal development aspects as well adding: "It was difficult and challenging, what the Army does is it builds you to a particular level that allows you to lead other people. Personally speaking, I reached new levels of fitness, the kind of depths I never thought I could reach."

To listen to this podcast follow the link below:-

<https://www.military.ie/en/members-area/social-media-links/df-podcast/season-3/s3ep1-the-army-engineer-graduate-programme.html>

PEOPLE OF THE DEFENCE FORCES

By Cpl Martin Bennett
Photos provided by Sgt Maj
Mark Gallagher

An Interview with Sgt Maj Mark Gallagher



Rank - Sgt Maj
Name - Mark Gallagher

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

To date my career has been quite extensive and I have passed through some of the best units in the Defence Forces. I joined the DF in Apr 1994, trained in the Command Training Depot West (CTDW), passed out as a 28 Inf Bn soldier, but due to operational requirements, myself and nine other recruits were reassigned to 4 Cav Sqn, Connolly Bks Longford. I spent 13.5yrs in the 4 Cav Sqn where I made some lifelong friends of which only a handful are still serving. I did not realise it then, but those were some of the most formative years in my military experience. It was a fantastic unit with some of the most highly skilled, highly motivated, focused and driven personnel that I have ever had the pleasure to serve with and call my friends.

In Oct 2006, I was seconded into 4 W Bde HQ – Operations section and transferred there in Jan 2007, where I spent over 6 years in the role as Bde Ops/Trg Sgt and it was during my time in Bde HQ that the 2012 DF reorganisation occurred. I was also serving overseas. I was also on the list for promotion and as the 4 W Bde colours were laid to rest, and when I was still serving overseas, I was promoted Coy-Sgt into 1 Cn Cois, A-Coy; an appointment that I held for 7.5

years. During my posting to 1 Cn Cois I also was privileged to have had the opportunity to take over the role of A/BSM for a period of 18 months. The operational challenges and demands that the unit met and successfully conducted over those years was immense and is a testament to the professional soldiers that serve in An gCéad Chathlán Coisithe.

At the end of this term, I transferred back to my native town of Athlone in June 2019, where I served with 6 Inf Bn, B-Coy. B-Coy are the centre of excellence for the DF Light Tactical Armoured Vehicle (LTAV). Shortly after returning to Athlone, I was selected for overseas again and deployed with 115 Inf Bn, UNIFIL. During the tour again, I was on the promotion list and was promoted to the appointment of 1 Brigade Sergeant Major on 10 March 2020. This appointment would mean that I was now back on the road travelling again as it is located in Collins Barracks, Cork where I am currently.

After 27 years, my personal career has seen me on the road for 21 years.

Overseas trips:

- 78 Inf Bn (UNIFIL) – BMR
- 82 Inf Bn (UNIFIL) – BMR
- 88 Inf Bn (UNIFIL) – C Coy
- 90 Inf Bn (UNMIL) – Sp Coy RECCE Tp (New Deployment)
- 93 Inf Bn (UNMIL) – Sp Coy RECCE Tp
- 97 Inf Bn (tChad) – Bn HQ (New Deployment)
- 3 IR COMP, (UNIFIL) – Sector West Bde HQ
- 47 Inf Gp (UNIFIL) – B-Coy
- 17 IRCON (KOSOVO) – Joint Effects Centre
- 113 Inf Bn (UNIFIL) – Bn Sp Gp
- 115 Inf Bn (UNIFIL) – Bn Sp Gp



Marks first trip overseas in 1995 on the 78th Inf Bn, Lebanon at the Grapes of Wrath



In 2003 on the 90th Inf Bn, Mark served with 4th Cav Sqn in Recce Troop in Liberia, seen here relaxing on his safari bed making out a set of orders for a patrol



Mark poses for a photo in a An Cosantóir 10km Road Race T-shirt in tChad 2008 on the 97th Inf Bn

What made you decide on a career in the DF?

As a young child, growing up in the garrison town of Athlone I had always been fascinated by the Army vehicles and troops as they passed through the main streets. I also had a family connection with all things military covering a time from Irelands struggle for independence to participation in both world wars. I left school early after completing my Inter Cert exams to take over the family run business. After a few short years the family business closed, I was gained employed with a civilian auto glazing company. I worked there for 6 years and during that time, I was proud to have established, set up and run two new branches in Galway and Limerick. However, I could not settle and in early 1994 on seeing a notification in the paper about the new DF recruitment, I decided that I was now ready to follow my childhood ambition. I was the second eldest in my platoon. At that time, there was over 2,000 applicants for 40 jobs.

What was your proudest moment in the job?

I can honestly say that I have had a few. The most recent is placing first in the DF OOM for promotion to Sergeant Major. Returning late in my career to education and obtaining third level qualifications in a variety of areas: Adult Guidance & Counselling (DCU), Strategic Workforce Management (IT Carlow), Mentoring (Kingston College).

Another proud moment was when I lead the DF representative body internationally for the centenary of the battle of the Somme in July 2016 in Thiepval, France. I had a dual role on that occasion, i/c enlisted personnel and escort to An Uachtáran na hÉireann Michael D Higgins.

Overall, the proudest moment for me with the greatest overwhelming sense of achievement, was when I was promoted into my current appointment as the senior enlisted appointment within 1 Bde as the brigade sergeant major. I am finally in an appointment where I can cause influence and effect in others and where I can pass on the benefits of my learned experiences to a much wider audience.

What was your hardest/toughest moment in the job?

As a young soldier on my first trip overseas to UNIFIL south Lebanon in the winter of '95 until the spring of '96, I served in the 78 Inf Bn, Battalion Mobile Reserve (BMR) with the Cavalry Troops, manning AML 90's and SISU APC's. For a first trip at the start, it was operationally quite enough, as I had expected from all the endless briefs that we got prior to our deployment. Coupled with that and thanks to the experience and guidance of the senior soldiers within the BMR unit, many who had multiple tours completed at this stage, I quickly became acquainted with the day-to-day operational tempo and routine. This would also include the near daily 0600hr skirmishes between the local militias (IMAL, Hezbollah, et. al) against the South Lebanon Army, also known as De Facto Forces (DFF) who were backed by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF).

At the outset, it was quite unnerving but my confidence grew as the tour passed. In the final 6 weeks of the tour, things turned from one extreme into quite a different situation. Hostilities erupted between the two groups and escalated very quickly. The Israeli's mounted a large offensive operation which was given the code name "Grapes of Wrath", this code name still makes the hairs on my neck sit up to this day. I would say that this was a defining moment in my career development both as a soldier and as a human being.

The level of destruction and large-scale loss of life (mainly civilians, women and children) was extremely overpowering. It is with the help of my training and the experience of those senior soldiers of the BMR that surrounded me, that allowed me to focus on my job and carry it out to the highest standard. It was in that space that I matured as a professional soldier, I now understood why I was there and most importantly, what my job was! To this day, it still has a profound effect on me and I am still trying to decide whether it was positive or negative.



Mark is photographed here in tChad 2008 on the 97th Inf Bn in front of a C130 Hercules aircraft

Despite many tours of duty and all the extended courses that I have done, at home and abroad, I would have to say that another aspect would have to be the difficulty when it comes to leaving family and friends behind as you deploy overseas. I have to say it does not get easier no matter how often you travel, for you or your loved ones, and with that comes the fact that I, as a father of five young children, have missed significant events in their lives.

As my career and promotion prospects developed and advanced over the years, I also found that it was also tough at times to leave units and personnel behind that I had built up a close and professional working relationship with. This occurred because of promotion and requested transfers.

Any honest individual would admit that it is by working closely with others and having an open mind that you develop and grow, and that those experiences will help shape and mould the person that you will become not only in your career but also in your personal life.

To all those that I have served with both at home and abroad, to those with whom I have shared experiences and learned with, and those with whom I have, and will continue to grow with, I would like to say a sincere thank you.

What skills or values have you developed from your time in the DF?

For me personally loyalty is definitely one of the most developed character traits that I have. I believe that you must first be loyal to yourself, your beliefs, your professionalism

and most of all be loyal to those with whom you work. In my career, I have not had to rely on my rank or appointment to obtain loyalty from others, whether superior or subordinates. I have created and developed ways of fostering loyalty in others by ensuring and supporting its growth and by applying a humanistic approach to the job. I always say that none of us were born soldiers; this is a profession or calling that we have each individually heard and answered.

With that in mind, we must remember that behind each uniform there is a person, there is a life, there is a human being. I believe in respect, I believe that if you respect others, that this in turn will be repaid back to you. These are some of



Mark pictured here in 2014, back in Lebanon serving on the 113th Inf Bn as a Company Sargeant

the points that influence my own personal leadership style. It has been adapted and moulded into what I need when I need it. It is ever changing and developing to suit the need of the situation that is at hand. I fully believe in and support the Defence Forces Values, but you must take them and make them your own, own them. They are everyday values for inside and outside of the organisation.

If you could go back in time, what time and place would you go back to?

It would have to be back to my recruit training and our arrival into the 4 Cav Sqn afterwards. The people that I trained with were an exceptional bunch of people. The female members were the first female soldiers to join and serve as combatants. They were the first of their kind and were to be the pathfinders. They excelled and went on to achieve many great things. Out of the total 40 recruits, 20 were posted into the unit. We were the largest group of soldiers that had arrived into the unit in some years. We had bonded in training and that stood to us when we reached our new home in an operation border unit.

The older generation of soldiers were both fascinated and irritated to some measure with all these young ones marching, running and parading around the place Depot style. We had arrived, our induction training completed and our new learning had just begun. It was a wonderful time with new characters and mentors to contend with. We were young, fit and had money in our pockets. But money wasn't, and still isn't everything. The knowledge and experience that we received in the unit was of the highest order and we were tested on more than one occasion, but these Depot kids proved themselves. That would be a testament to those who trained us and those that had now taken over that responsibility along with our commitment. They were good



Mark poses for a photo at the Tibnin, Irish Defence Forces memorial, dedicated to the 47 Irish Defence Forces troops who sadly lost their lives serving in Lebanon



Mark taking a selfie in front of a Black Hawk helicopter during the 17 IRCON US Fire Power Demo flight to Macedonia

times.

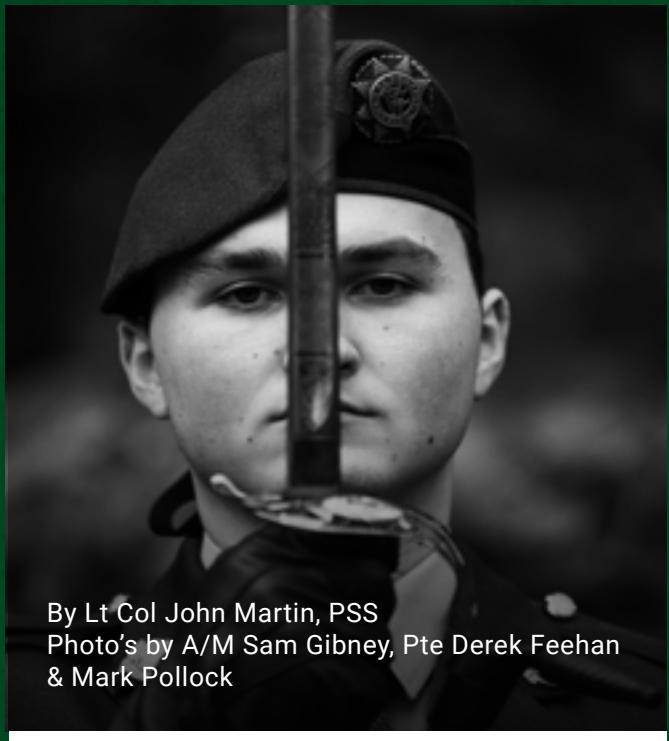
What advice would you give to a young soldier starting out in the DF?

The most important advice that I would give is be honest. Be honest with yourself; know your strengths and weaknesses. Look for and choose a mentor carefully. Stimulate your motivation early and do not wait around for opportunities to fall into your lap. Get out there, create the opportunities; invest blood, sweat and hard effort into attaining your goals. The Defence Forces is all about building up individuals, giving them skills and creating a winning team. No one is in this organisation alone. We are all a team. If you put in the work, you will get the rewards. Be patient and meticulous in your preparation, skills and drills. Aspire to be the best that you can be, feel it, own it, be it. The Defence Forces will provide you with the necessary support and development, it's there.... you just have to unlock it.

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

As I mentioned earlier, I was late in joining up. I was 23 years old. Firstly, I would ask "what does 18 year old me want?" How many 18 year olds really know what they want?

I would tell 18 year old me to get stuck in from the start. Commit to the training, mind-set and regime of the organisation. Be proud to serve your country, to serve under your national flag. To know that you now follow in the footsteps of many a soldier that has gone before you. You do not own it, it is not yours. You are a caretaker, a gate keeper, a custodian. You are passing through. It does not matter if you do a few days or 40 plus years for the time that you are in; remain committed until you leave. Therefore, do a good job and be proud to have had your time to serve along with the many greats that have gone before you and provided you with the privilege that you now hold. The honour to wear the uniform of Óglaigh na hÉireann.



By Lt Col John Martin, PSS
 Photo's by A/M Sam Gibney, Pte Derek Feehan & Mark Pollock

Not everything is black and white, people may be struggling even though they put on a brave and strong face

HEADSPACE & TIMING

Taking care of each other at Christmas time (and all the time)

Christmas Already!

I am sure I am not the only one who is mildly surprised to see the Christmas Decorations going up on the streets of our cities and our towns! After all it seems like only yesterday that we were looking forward to the summer, and yet here we are, with some people are already putting up the Christmas tree! And who can blame them! The uncertainty of COVID 19 has dragged along with us all year and we are tired of it – For some of us it has significantly affected our family incomes – For others it has disrupted all kinds of plans, especially anything involving travel. And then of course for many of us it has been a cause of real concern about our health, and the health of the people that we care about.

It's a good time for us all to remind each other of the need to take care of our mental health. There are a lot of things that we can do. The first is to make sure that we are in good physical condition – Controlling our diet and our alcohol intake as well as giving up smoking all provide a good basis for good mental health. You should also make sure that you

take care of any health worries that you might have in good time – Don't put things off – Taking action early reduces your worries and in most cases helps you to a better outcome. On the financial side, now is a good time to make sure that we have planned for Christmas. It is a really great idea to have a realistic and workable budget in place before the season really kicks off – Identifying available resources and having a list of priorities is always a good idea to ensure that we don't lose control of our finances – If you would like to know more please contact your local PSS team.

A quick word about our colleagues deployed overseas. Christmas can be particularly difficult when a loved one is away and sometimes the support of colleagues can be really appreciated. If you have friends who are deployed at this time of the year be sure to check in with them – even a simple WhatsApp message to people who are away, or to their families left behind can mean a lot!

Suicide Awareness and Prevention

Suicide is an issue that we sometimes like to avoid, and that is understandable. At the same time it affects almost all of us in some way or another during our lifetimes. We know now that being open about suicide, and not afraid to talk about it, can help reduce the risk and make it more likely that vulnerable people will get the help they need in time. The PSS works closely with the National Office for Suicide Prevention to minimise the risk of suicide to our personnel and their families. This gives us access to really high quality suicide awareness and prevention training and I would like to briefly describe some of them.

START is a ninety minute online interactive training programme which you can access and complete in the privacy and comfort of your own home. It is designed to give you the skills, knowledge and the confidence that you need to keep others safe from the risk of suicide. You can complete the training all in one go, or you can do it in stages, depending on what suits you best. You can register to do START free of charge through your local PSS team – Just supply a civilian email address and your first and second name and we will do



You may think it but you're never struggling alone, there are always others who have gone through what you are going through, don't be afraid to reach out for help

the rest.

The next programme that we use is SafeTALK. Our PSS team members are qualified SafeTALK trainers and you can access this training through your chain of command or by contacting your local PSS team directly. SafeTALK is a really effective half-day of face to face training using a mix of trainer-led and multimedia presentations. When you have finished SafeTALK training you can expect to be able to more easily identify people who may be at risk of suicide. You will know how to intervene in safety and with confidence and how to get people to the right help and support.

ASIST training is an acronym for Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. It is a two day workshop and is especially useful for people whose role may bring them into contact with vulnerable co-workers or other. In a Defence Forces context ASIST is appropriate training for NCOs and Officers in training institutions or who are employed in command appointments either at home or overseas.

All training opportunities are available to serving personnel and to adult members of their families. We also able to facilitate training veterans through our veterans associations. Remember that suicide awareness training may NOT be suitable for everyone. It depends on where you are at in your life, your state of mind and recent life experiences. PSS teams



If you feel like you're drowning, don't give up, some of the strongest people you know at some stage in their lives may have felt they were drowning, until they reached dry land, you can too

are available to discuss with you to ensure that all personnel are protected. We need to talk about suicide and to keep ourselves and our families safe!

Final Message

So the message is clear! It has been another tough year, and we are all looking forward to the end of this crisis. In the meantime we have managed to get this far by taking care of ourselves, and by taking care of each other. We succeed as a community and we have made a big contribution to maintaining the health of others through wearing our masks, getting our vaccinations, maintaining our social distancing and washing our hands.

Let's make sure that we do the same for our mental health by being more aware of each other, by being prepared to reach out if we think that someone needs our help, by knowing the services that are available within the Defence Forces and the Community, and by being willing to get the right training to ensure that we have the skills, the knowledge and the confidence to help each other when we most need it!

You can contact your local PSS Team directly for support or information on anything written above or for any other matter. If you would like details of how to contact your local PSS Team please email pss@military.ie



Dark times don't last forever, every day the sun comes up, you just have to lift your head and your spirits to see it

INTERNAL COMMS

Internal Communications Update is created by the Defence Forces Internal Communications Team. Our aim is to deliver accurate and timely information of interest to our members in order to increase awareness on current and future developments across the organisation.

Our segment in the An Cosantóir along with our online member's area on military.ie will allow information of interest to be distributed across the DF.

The Member's Area of military.ie is to enable our personnel to access information while off-site.

Confidential Contact Person (CCP)

The Confidential Contact Person process has been introduced to reflect the seriousness of the allegations of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or gender discrimination present in the Defence Forces. There is a commitment to an Independent Review but this will take time to establish. The CCP process has been established in order to provide an immediate opportunity to come forward and to direct support to those personnel who require it. It will also enable the Minister to gauge the extent of the issue and inform the Independent Review process. Both the CCP and support services are outside of the chain of command and are completely independent and confidential.

On 6 October 2021 Minister for Foreign Affairs & Defence, Mr Simon Coveney announced interim support measures for members of the Defence Forces, past or present, who have been affected by unacceptable behaviour such as bullying, harassment, sexual harassment discrimination or sexual assault.

In order to encourage impacted persons to come forward, the Minister announced that a totally independent organisation, Raiseaconcern, has been appointed as Confidential Contact Person (CCP).

The role of the CCP is to assist persons who have been victims of such behaviour by listening to them and helping them document their complaints in a safe, supportive, independent environment. If you are such a person, you are encouraged to come forward.

The CCP will not be investigating your complaint, nor will they be providing a counselling service, but as well as taking a written record of your complaint, they will advise and guide you on both processes.

The CCP has no contact with, and is entirely independent and outside of, the Defence Forces Chain of Command and the Defence Organisation.

The CCP will provide the Minister with periodic updates on the number and types of cases and issues they are seeing but will not reveal your identity or details that may identify you. The summary information provided to the Minister will inform the upcoming Independent Review process recently announced by the Minister.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1) Who are Raiseaconcern?

Established in 2013, Raiseaconcern is an independent Irish owned and operated organisation located in Sallins,

By Lt Austin Doyle
Photos provided by Lt Austin Doyle

Co Kildare. Raiseaconcern works with private sector and public bodies in the prevention, detection, investigation and remediation of workplace wrongdoing.

2) What is their role as Confidential Contact Person (CCP)

As CCP, Raiseaconcern's role is entirely independent and outside of the Defence Forces Chain of Command and the Defence Organisation.

The role of the CCP is to be available to listen and assist serving or former members of the Defence Forces, both male and female, who have been the victims of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or gender discrimination in the workplace in documenting their complaint. If you are such a person, the CCP process is in place to give you the opportunity to tell this independent body about your concerns. It is important that this information is gathered in order to quantify the extent of the various issues and inform next steps and the Independent Review. Raiseaconcern will remain available to keep communication channels open with the individual should that individual wish to do so.

Raiseaconcern will not be investigating allegations made, nor providing a counselling service but will advise and guide you on these.

3) How do I raise a concern with the CCP?

You can make initial contact with the CCP by:

Landline: 01 6107929

Mobile: 086 0299929

Email: defence@raiseaconcern.com

Post: Raiseaconcern, Station House, The Waterways, Sallins, Co. Kildare W91 DN60

Having given brief details of your concern to Raiseaconcern, they will log your contact and revert to set up an appointment to obtain a more comprehensive account of your concern. They can do this by telephone, by webcam meeting (MS Teams) or in person in their offices in Sallins, Co Kildare. In exceptional circumstances, Raiseaconcern will make arrangements to meet you at a suitable alternative location.

4) Who is this service open to?

This service is open to both serving and former members of the Defence Forces, male and female.

5) What will happen at my appointment?

You will be met by two experienced Raiseaconcern staff who are Confidential Contact Persons (CCP). One will lead the meeting and the other will assist you by taking a written record of your complaint.

Raiseaconcern will guide you through a process to ensure they capture all relevant information. The written record will not be a word for word account of what you say but will capture the key points clearly. A draft of your written record will be sent to you after the meeting to provide you with an opportunity to make any necessary corrections or clarifications or to add anything you have forgotten.

Before the written record is finalised, the CCP will ask you to agree the content.

6) Can I bring someone with me?

If you wish, you may be accompanied by a colleague, a friend or family member, an adviser or a support person of your choice.

7) What happens next?

Based on what you tell the CCP, they will provide you with guidance on where you can get any further supports you may need and what your options are. See below.

The CCP will seek your permission to hold all personal data and other information you give them. They will treat that data in accordance with the Data Protection Acts and GDPR regulations. They will store the written record of what you have shared safely and securely and your identity will not, under any circumstances, be disclosed without your agreement.

Initially, the CCP will analyse all the information received and prepare a high level analysis of the overall cases reported without identifying anyone. The findings of this preliminary exercise will be submitted to the Minister for Defence. This will be entirely independent of the Defence Forces Chain of Command.

Your detailed complaint will be retained by RaiseaConcern and will not be used as part of any other process until such time as the information-gathering process is completed.

If it is decided that the information you have given to the CCP should form part of a further independent process which may require you to be identified, the CCP will contact you to explain the process and the part you may have to play in it. They will also seek your permission on whether or not you wish to be part of that process, and if your information can be passed on.

8) Is there a cost to me?

No.

9) Where can I go for immediate support?

The supports currently open to you are listed below and will be discussed at your meeting with RaiseaConcern. Further supports may be put in place based on the nature and volume of matters raised with the CCP.

10) Supports which are independent of the Defence Forces Chain of Command

INSPIRE Confidential Counselling.

Inspire is a 24 hour/365 day external confidential counselling service, independent of the Defence Forces and the Department of Defence and provides a referral and support service on a wide range of personal and work-related issues.

Inspire has provided this counselling service to the Defence Forces for a number of years. It is understood that some people may be reluctant to use the counselling service as they do not think the service is confidential. It is strongly emphasised that Inspire provides these services independently of the Defence Forces and that this has been reaffirmed, in writing, by Inspire Wellbeing. Inspire is paid by the Department of Defence to provide the service and provides statistics such as the number of calls, types of calls etc. This is purely for accountability and for visibility on the range and type of issues arising. At no point is a person's name included in these statistics.

The counselling service is confidential at all stages. Anyone who accesses the service does not have to tell anyone that they will be contacting Inspire, as confidentiality underpins every aspect of their service delivery.

Inspire maintains a strict policy in accordance with privacy laws and professional ethics and all case records and information about services provided, are maintained in the strictest confidence. If anyone has any concerns about the confidentiality of the services, or you wish to speak to someone at Inspire about confidentiality, then please do not hesitate to contact them.

The service is available to serving personnel of the Defence Forces and currently to their partners or spouses and adult children living at home. The service has also been made available to those who has contacted RaiseaConcern/ Confidential Contact Person.

As before, serving members are reminded that there is no requirement to go via the Defence Forces Personal Support Service (PSS) to contact INSPIRE.

Callers simply mention "Defence Forces" when they call and they will be routed to the appropriate person.

To access INSPIRE, please call 1800 409-673.

Personnel serving overseas can access the service using 00-353-1-685-681.

For serving members, the Personal Support Service (PSS) also remains available.

Chaplaincy Service

The Chaplaincy Service also provides confidential, comprehensive pastoral support and spiritual care to serving personnel at home and overseas. You should contact your local chaplain in this regard.

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (RCC)

The RCC operates the National 24-hour Helpline 1800 778888 for those who need support in any part of the country www.drcc.ie

11) What mechanisms are available to me to have my complaint investigated?

This will be discussed at your meeting with RaiseaConcern. There will be no obligation on you to proceed to an investigation – you may just wish to share your experience.

This initial exercise will be to document your concern only, but if immediate steps are required to be taken, these can be discussed with the CCP.

The existing grievance and investigative processes within the Defence Forces remain available to serving Defence Forces personnel who wish to use them. Both serving and former personnel may also submit their complaint directly to the Ombudsman for the Defence Forces.

For allegations of a potentially criminal nature, both serving and former Defence Forces Personnel are advised to contact An Garda Siochana through the National Garda Protection Services Bureau (NGPSB). This too can also be discussed at your meeting.

General Staff Update from 2nd November

In order to review the latest revised national guidance and the further easing of restrictions, a COVID-19 JOPG was held

on the 21 OCT '21. The General Staff reviewed the issues raised and provided the necessary Decisions and Guidance. The medical force protection of all personnel remains the priority of the General Staff. We will continue to monitor any further changes in measures or restriction levels to limit the spread of COVID-19, in line with Government guidance. Where necessary, JOPG meetings will be conducted followed by General Staff Decision Briefs.

1. The following Decisions were provided by the General Staff:

- a. Organised indoor group activities (sports, arts, culture, fitness classes) can take place in line with National and Defence Forces' guidelines, with appropriate protective measures, e.g. social distancing.
- b. In relation to mess bars, entry to organised indoor events must be in line with National Guidelines (i.e., showing proof of vaccination).
- c. Mess Functions are authorised in line with national guidelines.
- d. Return to Work. The phased return to the workplace will continue within National and Defence Forces' guidelines. The Defence Forces' H&S Officer has provided guidance to Fmn H&S Officers with respect to facilitating the return to work protocols for vulnerable personnel.
- e. The system of approval for international travel and the processing of travel arrangements will revert to pre COVID-19 procedures, with immediate effect.
- f. The impact of the use of Antigen testing in induction training has had a positive effect.
- g. Internal/external Defence Forces led Ceremonial engagements may take place in line with National and DF Guidelines. Guards of Honour to revert to full strengths as per Admin Instr A 10 (New series). Masks will be worn where physical distancing cannot be observed.
- h. State Ceremonial engagements will continue to take place as directed by Dept. of An Taoiseach and in line with prevailing National Guidance. Guards of Honour to revert to full strengths as per Admin Instr A 10 (New Series). Masks will be worn where physical distancing cannot be observed.
- i. Defence Forces Attendance at Funerals. In line with national guidelines the number of Defence Forces' personnel attending funerals is not limited once the venue can accommodate appropriate social distancing. In addition, the strength of the escort parties to line the route of a funeral can revert to the numbers permitted in line with Admin Instr A10 should there be appropriate two (2) meter spacing between individuals.

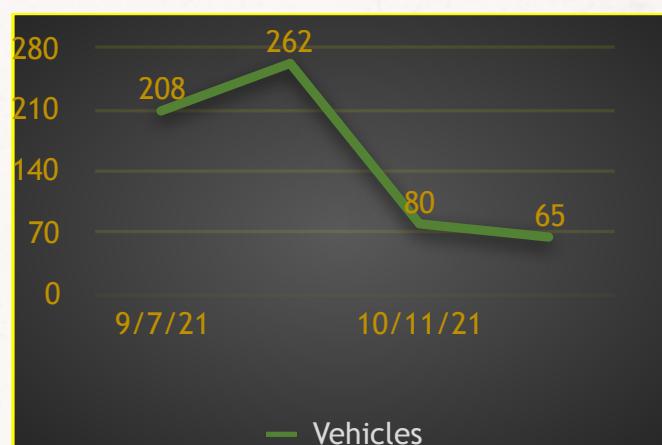
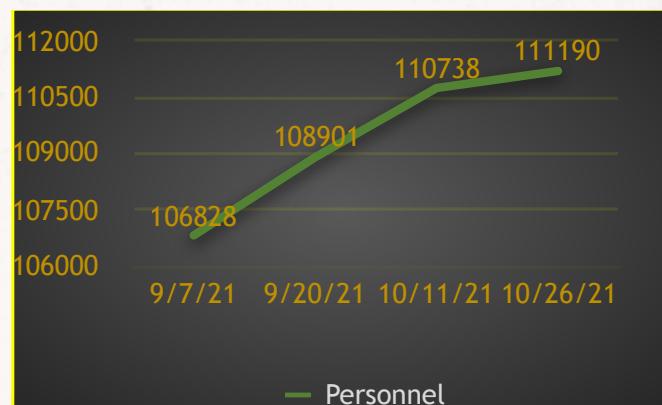
1. The following Updates and Guidance were provided by the General Staff:

- a. The 119th Inf Bn Chalk One began isolation in the Glen of Imaal on the 27 OCT '21 prior to deployment to UNIFIL on 10 NOV '21.
- b. All personnel are reminded that any person who considers that they have any medical issue that may require intervention should make a Medical Officer, medic or contracted civilian doctor aware of the issue, so that appropriate medical care can be provided without delay.
- c. OPERATION FORTITUDE continues with 111,054 personnel deployed on operations to date. DF support to the National

Testing Capability continues. The planned withdrawal of supports to the HSE has continued in line with the proposed drawdown plan. However, due to the significant demand for testing nationally the provision of DF testers across a number of testing sites will continue.

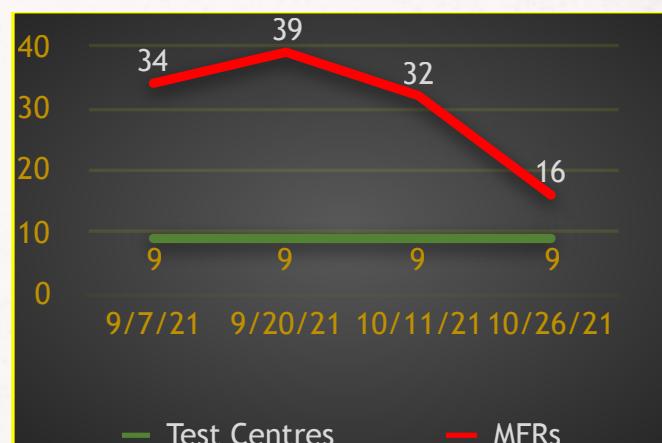
d. The medical force protection of all personnel remains the priority of the General Staff. We will continue to monitor any further changes in measures or restriction levels to limit the spread of COVID-19, in line with Government guidance. Where necessary, JOPG meetings will be conducted followed by General Staff Decision Briefs.

JTF Stats from September and October



Resource Summary of Personnel (Total) and Vehicles (Weekly)

Test Centres (Daily)



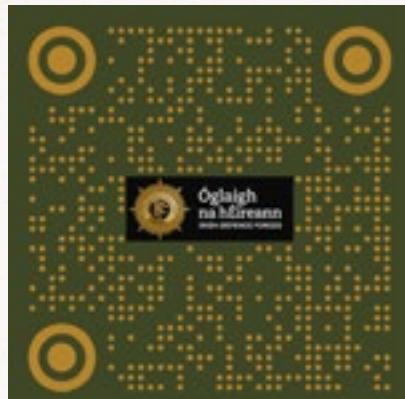
Content on the Member's Area (MA) of Military.ie

The Member's Area of Military.ie has been updated with the below information and you will find the most up to date Internal Communication information will be published.

- General Staff Immediate Action video.
- Lt Gen Clancy's letter to all members as well as his all stations video.
- The Public Relations Branch has launched its monthly update video. The one minute long video is available to watch on all Defence Forces Social Media channels as well as the MA.
- The DF Cross Country Championship takes place on the 17th of Nov.
- Job Vacancies and opportunities: A page has been added to the Member's Area which includes open Expressions of Interest that serving members can apply for. For more information about job requirements or closing dates of the vacancies that are advertised, please check with your unit orderly room.
- The Weekly Internal Communications Update is uploaded every Tuesday to the Member's Area of Military.ie. This will contain a summary from the previous week and also the JTF statistics highlighting the contribution of the Defence Forces to the fight against COVID-19.

Link to the following photo albums can be found on the Member's Area:

- Equestrian School.
- Army Ranger Wing ECAT mission.
- UNDOF MRX media day in GOI.
- Irish Naval Service 75th Anniversary.
- Cav Remembrance day.
- Ministerial review of 64th Inf Gp.
- COS Transfer of Appointment ceremony.
- Ex Viking II.
- DF Values Awards.
- COS all stations recording.
- Ministerial review of 119 Inf Bn.
- 119 Inf Bn UNIFIL MRE media day.



To view more information on all the above please go to The Member's Area of Military.ie. Scan the QR code to straight the Member's Area.

If there is Defence Forces Internal Messages you wish to have published here or on Military.ie please email feedback@defenceforces.ie and/or internalcomms@military.ie



General Staff Immediate Action Video



Corporal Daniel Paisley
2 Bde MP Coy

Monthly PRB One Minute Video

BOOKS

Author: Des Travers
Publisher: Independently published
ISBN: 9798494777409
Pages: 253
Price: €20.99

Ga Gasced an 35ú Rang, What deeds the 35th?

Ga Gasced an 35ú Rang, What deeds the 35th? tells the stories of each of the 35th Cadet Class lives before, during and after their time in the military. Simply put it is a true slice of history wrapped up in a spirit of adventure with an enormous dollop of the personal revealed.

Let's face it, some people dream of success, while other people get up every morning and make it happen. And did these guys? Did they what? Both whilst serving, and in the subsequent years that followed.

I have cracked up laughing, had a tear in my eye, and at all times, a desire to keep reading.

These are real stories by real and at times incredibly brave men whose commitment and leadership has inspired and influenced many the world over; delivering a blueprint, if you like, for how things should be done. There is a reason why the Irish Army are sought after and respected personnel with a wonderful reputation as peacekeepers. And this class embodies so much greatness.

As I read the sheer breadth and scope of material supplied for this book I learned another important lesson, namely that Army men never really retire.

Those same attributes and core competencies, and that desire to serve for which they were chosen as Officers in training back in 1961 are still very evident in their lives today.

Many continue in management roles, often within the community, for



35th Class 60th Anniversary with Members, Families and Families of Deceased Members, 04 Nov 2021.

Front L to R: Carole Lavelle, Monica Martin, John Martin, Ann Kirwan, Claire Hartnett, Lynda Archer nee Cooke, Jane Travers, Celia Travers, Aine Lynch, Anne Fallon and Jamie Travers.

Rear and Flank: George Kirwan, Eugene Lavelle, Des Travers, Paddy Walshe, John Murray, Jim Prendergast, Joe Fallon, Leo Brownen, Padraig O'Murchú, Maurice Sweeney, Walter Hayes, Kieran Jordan, Eddie Heskin, Lucy Moran nee Dodd, Neil Taylor and Carmel Walshe.



Brig Gen John Martin, Cadet Captain presents the 35th Class Service Scroll, Ga Gasced Book and Coin to the Commandant of the Cadet School, Lt Col Darragh O'Brien at the 60th Anniversary of the 35th Class, 04 Nov 2021

the betterment of their communities. They are trusted and valued members of society. They are hugely entrepreneurial and successful too. They have continued to form connections and understand the issues of inequality and privilege and they continue to give back and to serve.

And in the spirit of friendship and camaraderie they have continued to work together over the years, utilising their complimentary skills to achieve at whatever project they have undertaken, throwing work each other's way where appropriate.

Lesson Learned: Number Four: Success is no accident. It involves an enormous amount of hard work, tenacity, dedication, learning, sacrifice and most of all – a love of what you are doing, or endeavouring to do.

And the final lesson I learnt from my involvement with this class is this – that life is most certainly for living. I'm not done yet and I'm going out there and I'm going to give back.

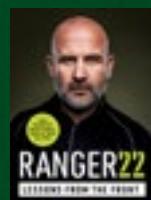
Lynda Archer is a daughter of Lt Colonel Larry Cooke, deceased. Living in London, she is on sabbatical whilst raising a young family but intends to re-enter her field of Marketing & Advertising.

Book Review by Lynda Archer

Woodbine books are an independent bookshop located in Kilcullen, Co. Kildare. They stock a diverse range of books to suit all ages and a wide variety of tastes.

Woodbine books rendered exceptional assistance to the members and families of the 35th Cadet Class with regard to the book's distribution including provision of packaging, labelling etc. They have also agreed to sell copies of the book gratis as a means of lending support to ONE's shelter initiative.

BOOKS

**Author:** Diarmaid Ferriter**Publisher:** Profile Books**ISBN:** 9781788161749**Pages:** 336**Price:** €20.99 (Easons)**Author:** Ray Goggins**Publisher:** Gill Books**ISBN:** 9780717192496**Pages:** 304**Price:** €16.99

Between Two Hells: The Irish Civil War

Diarmaid Ferriter, Professor of Modern History at UCD, is the author of eleven books on Irish History, so in approaching the subject of his aptly named book on the Irish Civil War "Between Two Hells," he is a historian deeply immersed in this topic. There has been a veritable cascade of publications of late on this era in Irish history coinciding with this centenary period, thereby allowing historians at this remove to "cast a cold eye" from an historical revisionist perspective.

Its therefore a crowded race, but this work stands out from the pack. Ferriter ab initio eschews a detailed military historian's analysis of the Civil War, acknowledging that several other notable authors have examined this aspect of the Civil war in minutiae. His point of departure is seeking at this remove to walk in the footsteps of the protagonists at the time, their contemporaneous mindset, what motivated and informed the decisions they took? Because it was these decisions of former stalwart revolutionary comrades who became inveterate enemies that irrevocably led to this tragic coda of the Irish Revolutionary period that impinged societally, politically, and arguably culturally on the psyche of the founding state for many generations. The enduring and bitter legacy of Civil War politics was a defining leitmotif in the Irish political landscape arguably only finally put to rest when Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael went into coalition government after the 2020 General Election, heretofore many a household resonated with often fiery debates of whether one was a Dev or Collins man/woman; indeed, this debate may have waned but is definitively not extinct.

Ferriter not only brings a cold but gimlet eye in his searing analysis, in a work that takes a deep dive into the shades of grey between heretofore simplistic black and white arguments, thereby pulling the reader from the trap of simplistic dichotomies. Personalities and relationships, with concurrent divides and enmities dating back to the very beginning of the revolutionary period are the Ariadne's thread which the author navigates this historical maze. Drawing on previously unpublished archive material, particularly the Pensions Records at the Bureau of Military History, Ferriter writing in a simple and engaging style draws the reader remorselessly back to this epochal period where a whole cascade of events conspired to trigger the conflict. The schism in the republican movement encompassed regional disparities, saw the creation of a new National Army led by the nascent pro-Treaty provisional government and fighting initially at its most serious in Dublin, the battle of the Four Courts, but which thereafter effectively became a southern campaign in the republican redoubt of Munster. People choose sides not just because of ideological reasons but also in the footsteps of key charismatic leaders in which issues of loyalty and fidelity often trumped rationale debates. This was when desperate men and women already exhausted emotionally and physically by the turmoil of the War of Independence found each other locked in an inexorable spiral of events that triggered the Civil War, almost akin to a self-fulfilling prophesy. One of the most fascinating but ultimately tragic effects of the Civil War was how quickly former stalwart comrades choose to demonise and vilify each other, where each saw the other as an irrevocable existential threat to the ideals and concept of the meaning of an Irish Republic. It came to justify deep injustices and cruelty perpetrated by both combatants in the conflict that ensued.

Review by Dr Rory Finegan (Comdt Retd)

Ranger 22

A nail-biting personal story that demonstrates the resilience, mental strength and discipline required to become a leader in the most gruelling of circumstances, Ranger 22 will inspire readers to apply ex-Army Ranger Ray Goggins' lessons to their own lives.

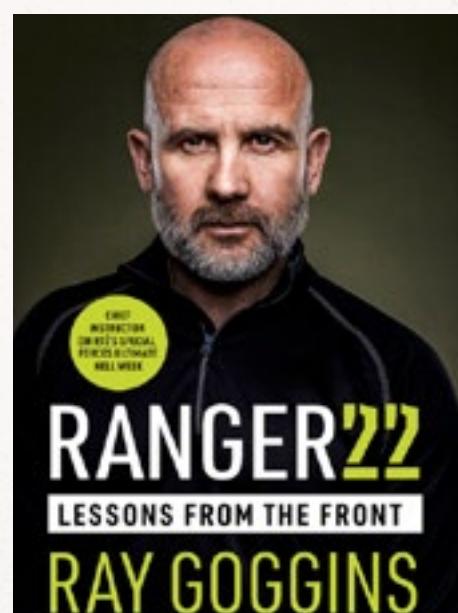
Cork man and Chief Instructor of RTÉ's Ultimate Hell week Ray Goggins always knew he wanted to be in the army. Growing up Ray's father and grandfather had both been military men and Ray never doubted that could be his life too. However, nothing could prepare him for the life-changing experiences he went through while out in the field.

From the hills of south Lebanon to the monsoon jungles of Southern Asia, Ray has operated in a life-and-death world. In the suffocating humidity of Liberia, the mountains of Afghanistan and the snow covered Balkans, he has seen the best and the worst qualities in himself and others. From conflict zones to terrorist attacks and hostage rescues, Ray has learned the greatest life lessons: how to control fear, how to react calmly and positively and how to create a strong baseline from which to take action.

After a life spent on the front line, Ray now trains others to foster a mindset to handle whatever madness life has in store. In this remarkable book, he takes us on an exhilarating journey through his incredible career and draws on the valuable lessons he's learned to help us all deal better with life, whatever the situation.

Ray Goggins served in the Irish Army for 26 years, including 17 years in the Army Ranger Wing, as an operator and leader in a tier 1 Special Operations Unit. With a lifetime of experience in war zones, Ray has also operated as a bodyguard in Europe, Eurasia, the Middle East and Afghanistan. Born in Cork, Ray is now Chief Instructor of RTÉ's Ultimate Hell Week and director of a training and leadership company, Coreskill, working with various corporate organisations and teams.

For publicity enquiries contact Fiona Murphy, Publicity and Marketing Manager, Gill Books, 0868389611, fmurphy@gill.ie





Christmas

To all our readers and contributors we'd like to wish you
a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from
everyone in the An Cosantóir office and JM Publishing