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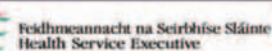
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Working with



On the last Friday in January three colleagues and myself from the South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association (SEMRA) along with Paul Whiting, the Development Officer for Mountain Rescue Ireland boarded a plane to Glasgow. We were joining the Scottish Arrochar Mountain Rescue Team for a weekend Winter Training camp in the Cairngorm Mountains in the Scottish Highlands. Arriving in our bunkhouse at 1.30am on the Saturday, we were greeted by Mark Leyland, (Arrochar Team Leader) and some of the team members who offered us a welcome cup of tea before we headed to bed.

Just a bit of background about our group. Maureen, Grainne, Tristan and myself are all from the SEMRA. We were a mixed group of experienced and trainee mountain rescuers. Paul Whiting is a professional Development Officer who supports Mountain Rescue Teams and is employed by the Mountaineering Council of Ireland. Without insulting any of the group, it would be fair to say I knew very little about snow and Ice work prior to this trip. Unfortunately winter conditions in Ireland do not lend themselves to extremes of snow and ice climbing is now a rare opportunity for most Irish climbers. This trip was aimed at 'upskilling' our team's winter skills.

That night reminded me of Christmases past! The anticipation and excitement of what lay ahead made sleeping difficult. Next morning, we were up by eight, briefed and split into groups with party leaders appointed. Ross from the Arrochar Team was my Party leader and I could tell from the onset that he was good fun and very confident! I soon found out that Ross was a professional outdoor instructor.

The trip to up to Aviemore and the Funicular railway (which is what they call the train) lasted about ten minutes, but felt like an hour. We were booked on the first train up and we planned to make our way to a quiet training bowl beyond the top of the train line. Like most well made plans, this only lasted until we reached the train station. The trains weren't running due to high winds. This meant we had to walk into our training area, which is not a problem, but it does burn up valuable training time and also energy. The groups split up at this point as each needed to find a quiet spot with a safe piece of ground to practice the use of crampons, ice-axe arrests (stopping yourself if you get into a slide) and the use of an ice-axe. The

training was great because the Arrochar Team are not a Highland Team, so this weekend acted as an annual Team refresher to up skill and refresh their personal winter skills. This meant that the Irish delegation could blend in easily and comfortably with our hosts. There is no doubt that we were on a steeper learning curve than our hosts but their professionalism certainly did not make us feel uneasy. Far from it, we were truly part of the group.

I learned quickly how to travel on crampons (John

...There is no doubt that we were on a steeper learning curve than our hosts but their professionalism certainly did not make us feel uneasy.



MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Ten days in the life of a **MOUNTAIN RESCUER**

Photos by:
Brian Cook and
Conny O'Connel

Sgt Liam McCabe (RDFTA) tells the dramatic story of how he had to apply the skills he learnt while on a mountain rescue winter course to real effect on his return to Ireland.

Wayne's walking style was mentioned more than once), how to hold my ice-axe, how to arrest a slide headfirst, head last, head down, head up, on my belly, on my back, without any ice axe and grabbing an ice-axe as I slid. It was great fun, hard work and I still had the bruising two weeks later. It was still only 11am in the morning. Then things changed!

The Team Leader was with our group when his radio 'Lit up'. One of the groups training higher up the mountain had witnessed a woman being blown off the Coire Cas ridge. She had taken a serious fall down a steep snow-covered slope into a bolder field. Mountain rescue First Aiders were at her side within minutes and now they needed more oxygen at the incident site and they needed it fast! Charles, a member of our group had oxygen in his personal

first aid kit and he headed immediately up to the incident location.

The rest of our group closed up the training site and made our way up the hill. Mark was on the phone and the radio coordinating the mountain rescue response. I have

been involved in countless mountain rescue incidents in my time, but this was very different to me. It felt like I was a fly on the wall watching the Arrochar Team 'wind up' a rescue response. We slotted into the team and awaited instructions.

When our group arrived in the holding area just short of the incident site, the group that witnessed the accident as well as another Police Mountain Rescue Team who were training in the area were delivering first aid to the casualty.

Very quickly the Ski Patrol and a tracked vehicle arrived. The casualty was transferred to the tracked vehicle and as the vehicle passed our location I could see that Charles and a group of First Aiders were working hard to keep the casualty alive.

It was a sharp and timely reminder of the seriousness of the environs we were working in. Not long afterwards as we regrouped and had a hot drink, we watched the RAF helicopter touchdown in the car park below in very windy conditions. We could see the stretcher being immediately loaded into the helicopter

Members of SEMRA looking out towards West Wicklow from the summit of Slievemaan Mountain

...we watched the RAF helicopter touchdown in the car park below in very windy conditions. We could see the stretcher being immediately loaded into the helicopter and it quickly moved away towards hospital.



Anybody who has ever used crampons will know that going up steep ground is child's play when compared to coming down.

and it quickly moved away towards hospital.

When our fellow rescuers returned they brought news that the casualty was alive and that she had made it to hospital. They also brought news that she was Irish, not that this should make a difference, but it did to me and to my Irish colleagues. The spirit of the entire group was lifted to hear she was still alive and Mark (the Team Leader) immediately got us back into our training groups and back into our training programme.

As a result of the incident we were now much higher up in the mountain and so we practiced 'moving on steep ground'. We started by taking off the crampons (it's amazing how quickly you learn to depend on them) and cutting out steps with the edges of our boots, then cutting steps with the ice-axe and finally we put back on the crampons and we learned the French and American techniques for walking in crampons. We practiced on easy ground and built up to some serious ascents using crampons and ice-axes. Anybody who has ever used crampons will know that going up steep ground is child's play when compared to coming down. But our instructors were amazing and we all progressed at our own pace and to our own levels. The final hill training for the day involved building snow bollards and belaying members up and down steep ground. After this it was time to work our way down the hill and home.

On the journey down I received a phone call from a

friend in the Glen of Imaal Red Cross Mountain Rescue Team. He had been contacted by the family of a friend to say that she had just been killed in a fall while on a Scottish mountain. The family were frantically looking for information. I am not sure even today who was more shocked! My friend when he found out I was at the scene of the accident (he knew I was in Scotland and thought I might have some contact with Scottish MR Teams) or myself when I discovered the casualty had died. I passed on a basic outline of the incident and the tremendous and coordinated effort of the emergency response onto him and hoped it may act as some comfort to him and to her family. I later found out that the casualties name. She was a very experienced climber and was just days from returning home after a round the world ten month climbing trip.

Back in the bunkhouse, the duty of a Team Leader in Scotland and in Ireland are very similar in almost every way, with one exception.

Never in 15 years of mountain rescue have I seen a Team Leader coordinate the delivery of a five-course meal for almost 30 people with such military precision.

On Saturday evening we enjoyed a great night's entertainment including a magnificent meal (with a haggis starter), a few drinks and a five-minute presentation by all of the Arrochar team members on a pre-nominated area of avalanche awareness. It was hugely interesting as much for the learning as it was for the 'not so dignified' audience response to the speakers. By the time this was finished we were all fit for bed.

Then after what appeared to be ten minutes, it was seven o'clock in the morning and time to get up. Our Sunday training included a train trip to the top and a short trek to a small bowl just north east of the summit of Cairn Gorm Mountain. It was a wonderful training location because it was sheltered, safe, full of clean snow, and big enough for our three groups to work in. We rotated between three workshops digging trenches to evaluate the snow layers and practicing the various avalanche tests that were discussed the night before. We got a very good 'hands-on' feel for layering and snow compaction. The second workshop was based on using the various electronic avalanche transmitters and receivers. These devices are the best chance a person caught up in an avalanche has of being saved. The principle is that all members of a group wear the devices and they are set to transmit while on the hills.

If one member is caught up in an avalanche the remaining group change their setting to receive mode and they can quickly locate the buried member. It was a real eye-opener to see just how effective these devices are.

The final workshop was the most interesting. It was an avalanche probing workshop. For years I have watched on TV as groups of rescuers walked forward inserting probes into the ground on snow covered



Two experienced climbers were in real difficulties in the Lugnaquilla area of the Wicklow Mountain. They had been out since early the previous day and now they were disorientated, unable to move due to steep ground and exposed in freezing conditions with zero visibility and deep snow cover.

hills. Learning how to do this and how effective it really is has been an eye opener. After the workshops Mark called for a lunch break and by now the cloud cover had lifted. The scenery was spectacular as we dined on sandwiches and hot tea. The last task of the weekend was to build an emergency snow-hole. This is a cave into the snow that allows a stranded walker to escape the extreme weather conditions and await help or choose a better time to move on. Some of the snow holes were big, some were small, some were deep and others weren't but boy oh boy did the owners take pride in their shelters. It was hard work but it was great fun and it certainly warmed us all up.

We made our way off the hill and in the car park, the Irish delegation said their heartfelt and most sincere thanks to our hosts and now friends from the Arrochar Team. The drive to the airport took 4 hours and we all arrived home on Monday morning well after midnight. We thought that was the end of our winter training for 2009. How wrong we were...

Fast forward one week...

On Monday night at around midnight on February 9th my pager went off. It was a request for support from the Glen of Imaal and the Dublin Wicklow Mountain Rescue Teams. The South Eastern Mountain Rescue Team (my team) is located next to these teams so it is not unusual for them to call on our assistance. I kissed my family good night, packed my bag, filled my flask and off I went to the Wicklow Mountains. When we arrived at the Army Information Centre (Rescue Base), Glen of Imaal we started to get a feel for the major incident that was building up. Two experienced climbers were in real difficulties in the Lugnaquilla area of the Wicklow Mountains. They had been out since early the previous day and now they were disorientated, unable to move due to steep ground and exposed in freezing conditions with zero visibility and deep snow cover. The Mountain Rescue coordinators as well as trained Wilderness Emergency Medical Technicians from the Ambulance Service talked to the casualties throughout the night.

At 4 am my hill party was tasked to search an area to the south of Slievemaan Mountain which lies to the south west of Lugnaquilla. We were dropped off by Army transport and commenced a gruelling three-hour climb along exposed ridge lines in deep soft snow. When we arrived at the summit of Slievemaan (the top of our search area) we conducted a sweep search of the summit and a hasty search of the south western

An Air Corps helicopter drops off a mountain rescue team as they make their way up Lugnaquilla Mountain during the search.

The Air Corps AW139s, the RAF Sea King and the Coast Guard Helicopters were working like buzzing bees overhead as they ferried the mountain rescuers and the Army Rangers up towards the casualty sites.





side of Lugnaquilla. After an unsuccessful attempt by the Irish Coast Guard helicopter to pick us up from the summit (due to poor visibility) and due to the onset of fatigue and tiredness, it was time for our group to start the long and difficult trek back to our pickup point.

As we descended we were following the progress of the search over our VHF radios. We all got a big boost around midday to hear that our colleagues from the North West Mountain Rescue Team had made a find. The two casualties were located on the opposite side of Lugnaquilla from our search area. Finally the first phase of the operation was over. All of us on the mountain that morning were under no illusion and knew from the grid reference quoted, that the operation was far from over. It was going to be a major operation to extract the casualties because of the deep snow and the steep ground involved.

It was only during our decent that the true scale of the operation started to register with us. Although we were monitoring the emergency channels as we searched uphill, our focus was on navigation and on searching. It was only when we heard our call-sign 'Sierra 2' that we actually tuned into the radio. Now as we descended we were glued to the radio trying to make out the status of the casualties and we became 'in awe' of the strange call-signs from the RAF Sea-King helicopter and the Welsh accents over the radio from the RAF and Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Teams. We could also hear the reassuring familiar voices of our friend from the Glen and Dublin Wicklow, the Mourne, SARDA, the North West, the PSNI, the

Kerry and the Mayo Teams. As we descended through the cloud cover, finally we could see the helicopters that we had been listening to all morning flying over our heads. The Air Corps AW139s, the RAF Sea King and the Coast Guard Helicopters were working like buzzing bees overhead as they ferried the mountain rescuers and the Army Rangers up towards the casualty sites. The Rangers were in the area training and came to assist in the rescue. None of the helicopters were able to penetrate the cloud but they saved hours of manhandling by bringing the rescuers and their gear up to the base of the clouds. As we listened to the operation in full swing, myself and my colleagues were very proud to be associated with the small family that are the Irish Emergency Services.

The Army transport on the road below was a welcome sight as we broke cloud cover, as was the canary yellow of the RAF rescue Sea King helicopter. Although the helicopter was not coming to collect us it was good to see it in the flesh (this was the same RAF helicopter that had transported the Irish casualty from the Scottish mountains the previous week) and we knew it had more critical work to do than to save us another hour of trudging through the snow.

If the Army transport that picked us up on the roadside was a welcome sight, I could have married the Army cook who made the soup.

When we returned to the Army Information centre the area was alive. A full-scale rescue operation had swung into gear immediately after the North West Team located the casualties. Nobody in the base was underestimating the difficulties facing them!

One of the incident coordinators from the Dublin Wicklow Team approached us to see if we were available to go back on the hill. It was about 2pm and although there were a lot of people on the hill, darkness was turning into enemy number one. As we readied our gear, those of us available to return were waiting on helicopter transport when word filtered back that the teams on the hill were now mobile with the casualties and that our services were no longer required. On another day this would have been received as frustrating news. On this occasion we were glad to strip off our gear, say a quick goodbye, depart the scene and return home.

It was around four o'clock on February 10th and I was delighted to be able to ring home to say to my children that I was going to be able to make it home after all for my 36th birthday party. It ended with a great party and a very long night's sleep...■

About the Author

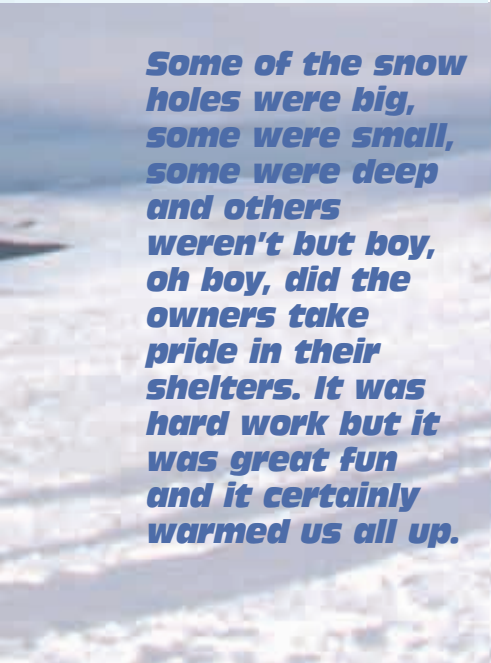
Sgt Liam McCabe (RDFTA) is a member of the SEMRT. He is also the Chairman of Mountain Rescue Ireland. If you would like to find out more about Mountain Rescue, visit mountainrescue.ie



Digging snow holes in Scotland.

Right: The author testing out his snow hole.

Below (right): Some members of the rescue team in Scotland.



Some of the snow holes were big, some were small, some were deep and others weren't but boy, oh boy, did the owners take pride in their shelters. It was hard work but it was great fun and it certainly warmed us all up.





Let's begin by asking, what exactly is a war film? They often deal with naval, air or land battles; sometimes they focus on POWs, covert ops, military training or other related subjects. At times they deal with daily military life or civilian life in wartime. The stories may be fiction, based on history, documentary or, occasionally, biographical. They can also be pro- or anti-war.

To those like me, brought up in the '60s and '70s, watching an endless stream of war movies, sometimes in the local cinema but more often on TV, it used to be a very simple affair of allied heroics and Nazi comeuppance. Sometimes it was Jack Hawkins, John Mills, Richard Todd or Kenneth More who sent the Germans packing: at other times it was Van Johnson, John Hodiak, or John Wayne giving the Japanese hell. Either way it was the same war.

To those with a broader view of cinema, the term 'war film' may mean anything from *The fall of the Roman Empire* to *The War of the Worlds* to *Soldier Blue*. Mankind after all has been at loggerheads for a long time.

War films can, in other words, be defined in numerous ways. For the purpose of these articles I have considered only those movies depicting warfare in the 20th and 21st centuries. Apart from being convenient this has kept the subject within manageable confines. Even with this restriction the number of films made on this subject is staggering. It wouldn't be feasible for me to list all of these films so instead I will attempt to pass through the decades picking out some of the key movies on the way.

The dawn of moving pictures in the 1890s also gave rise to a thirst for information on current events, leading to the first news bulletins. At first pioneer filmmakers ignored war as a suitable theme, although the occasional drama with a military theme was produced, such as *In the name of the Queen* (1898), a brief sketch of a deserter.

The pioneer of authentic war footage was an American, Charles Urban. He came to London and formed the Warwick Trading Company, which became known for its travel and interest films and which employed the first war cameramen. The most celebrated of these was Joseph Rosenthal, who was noted for his work in capturing the first action pictures in the South

In the first of two articles on the war movie genre, Capt John Murphy (33 Res Inf Bn) looks at the genesis of the war movie; how the art of the motion picture has captivated audiences with the adventure and the horrors of modern warfare; and the war films of the early decades.

African War and the first cameraman to film behind the Boer lines. He later went on to cover the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900, the US action in the Philippines in 1901 and the Russo-Japanese War in 1904.

The Boer War, the first war to be reported with moving pictures, was in many ways, a dress rehearsal for the conflicts of the 20th Century, and it is significant that Britain emerged with little credit.

Charles Urban continued to search out disturbed areas of the world in order to satisfy the public's appetite for action footage.

Early 1900s

The era of the dreadnaughts and the arms race prompted some interesting pre-war documentaries. In Britain in 1900, RW Paul produced *Army Life*, or how Soldiers are made, a series of twenty short films 'to illustrate the life and career of a soldier'. It did this by a combination of actuality shots, such as *Cavalry Exercises*, and *Quick Firing Guns*, and staged scenes. The War Office recognised the films' potential for recruitment and made facilities available for shooting.

At almost the same time the United States' film industry, recognising the potential of the medium, covered in great detail the events of the US-Spanish war. Blackton and Smith, and others, made numerous topical stories of troops and transports leaving for the campaign, and some cameramen actually got to Cuba to film the troops landing.

The Great War

By 1914 the number of picture halls was increasing rapidly, and the movie industry developed accordingly. When war broke out in Europe many countries' movie industries quickly got to work making war newsreels. In France a flurry of morale boosting movies were produced, production continued through the war.

Britain produced many jingoistic films throughout the Great War; most notably *It's a long way to Tipperary* (1914), *The Battle of the Somme* (1916), and *The Life of Lord Kitchener* (1918).

After the United States' entry into the war in 1917, the Committee on Public Information was set up 'to sell the war to America'. Its influence throughout the war was significant, setting the tone for four patriotic dramas: *Pershing's Crusaders*, *Under Four Flags*, *America's Answer* and *The Official War Review*.

Charlie Chaplin starred in *Shoulder Arms* (1918), a film that as well as setting the style for war films to come can also be considered the first comedy about war. Chaplin feared that his ingeniously funny send-up of trench conditions would be offensive but thanks to his immense popularity and comic skill the film was an unqualified success, particularly with soldiers themselves. Viewed dispassionately, the Great War had substantial technical, artistic, social, and emotional effects on film making that were fundamental and far-reaching.

1920s and 1930s

When the Armistice was signed in 1918, nearly nine million men had been killed, twenty million wounded, and the economy of Europe was shattered, and all for

PART ONE WAR ON THE SILVER



reasons that hardly anyone could remember. Not surprisingly, the weary, dispirited combatants wanted a respite from war, and one way of achieving this was to remove all manifestations of it from cinema screens. For a time after 1918 war films became taboo and the genre remained unpopular until the mid '20s. *The Big Parade* (1925) and *What Price Glory?* (1926) emphasised the horror and the futility of war. With the coming of the sound era some notable films were produced; Lewis Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), a faithful cinematic distillation of Erich Maria Remark's novel about the gradual decimation of a German unit in WWI, has become the most praised and then certainly the most reappraised of all war films.

Russia had embraced the new medium of film and after the October Revolution of 1917 the new leadership laid great emphasis on the role

films were to play in the new Soviet Union's cultural revolution. Lenin said: 'The cinema is for us the most important of the arts.' Later Stalin echoed these words, declaring: 'The cinema is the greatest means of propaganda. We must take it in our hands.'

The Soviets nationalised the film industry and film schools were established regionally. One of the great classic movies, Einstein's *Battleship Potemkin*, was produced in Russia in 1925, beginning its life as a single

sequence of a larger project that set out to reconstruct the attempted Potemkin mutiny in Odessa in 1905. The film is most noted for its horrendous Odessa Steps sequence in which soldier's fire on a crowd of adults and children and then proceeds to march through the corpses. The film has been twice voted the best film ever made.

Hollywood also produced a number of notable war movies such as Buster Keaton's *Doughboys* (1930) and Wheeler and Woolsey's *Half Shot at Sunrise* (1930), Frank Capra's *Flight* (1930), *The Leathernecks Have Landed* (1936), and *Tell it to the Marines* (1936). Aerial combat featured in *Wings* (1927),

Hell's Angels (1930) and two versions of *Dawn Patrol* (1930 and 1938)

Britain's film industry suffered badly from the

effects of the Great Depression but still managed to turn out several spy-type melodramas. Many have criticised the films made during this period as dull and unimaginative but Britain possessed some of the greatest talents of this time, such as Korda, Saville, Hitchcock and Reed. Then as the 1930s drew to a close a reawakening took place, real quality began to emerge and in filmmaking terms the following period proved to be Britain's finest hour.

1940s

The first popular war films came from Britain, *The Lion Has Wings* (1939) and *Target for Tonight* (1941), and *Germany, Sieg Im Westen*. By the early 1940s the British began to combine documentary techniques with fictional stories in films like Noel Coward's *In Which We Serve* (1942), *Millions Like Us* (1943), and *The Way Ahead* (1944). Other directors used fiction to carry a propaganda message about the need for vigilance, *Went the Day Well* (1942), or to avoid careless talk, Thorold Dickinson's *Next of Kin* (1942). The latter began life as a military training film, which mixed documentary and fiction so successfully that it was released to cinemas and still drew audiences long after the war.

Other great movies of the period included *One of Our Aircraft is Missing* (1942), *The First of the Few* (1942), *We Dive at Dawn* (1942), and Powell and Pressburger's *Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943), which was the most expensive film made during the war at £1,000,000!

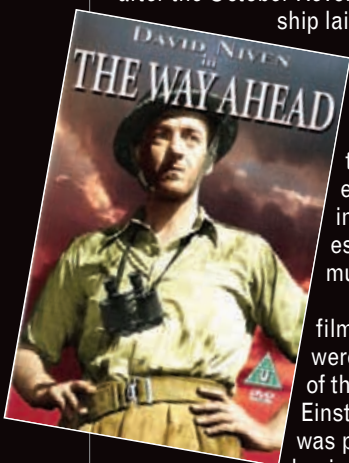
Prior to the Pearl Harbour attacks in December 1941 Hollywood produced some jingoistic and nostalgic movies; one of my personal favourites is *The Fighting 69th* (1940), which, with its strong Irish flavour, was very popular with audiences here. *The Great Dictator* (1940) Chaplin's courageous farce took an uneasy look at Nazi ideology and many contemporary critics thought the film distasteful and unfunny.

The film, however, that drew the strongest emotion was *Sgt York* (1941) as it had an uncomplicated relevance to the contemporary situation and became a symbolic 'call to arms'.

After the United States entered the war Hollywood began to mass-produce war films. Many of these dramatic films were designed to celebrate American unity and demonise the enemy. There is an exhaustive list of films but the following are picked as finer examples of the period: *Guadalcanal Diary* (1943), *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* (1944), *A Walk in the Sun* (1945), and *They Were Expendable* (1945).

Unlike after the Great War the genre continued in popularity after the end of WWII and several films of note appeared during this period such as *Pride of the Marines* (1945), *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), which dealt with servicemen's readjustment to civilian life, *Twelve O'clock High*, *Battleground* (1950), and *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949).

This trend continued and some of the finest films of the genre were produced in the 1950s. More about these films and the great films that came to our screens in subsequent decades in part two of this article next month. ■



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HP's new EliteBook 6930p Business Notebook also meets rugged military standards

The new HP EliteBook 6930p business notebook is engineered to meet tough military standards (MIL-STD 810F) for vibration, dust, humidity, altitude and high temperatures. Typical business people may not work outside in dust storms or when the humidity is 95 percent and the temperature reaches 140° F. But the HP EliteBook 6930p can handle that and more. By using Rugged Technology, peace of mind is given to IT professionals to know that their hardware is delivering the very best Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) together with the best ROI for their business.

Not many Manufacturers can claim a 24 Hour Battery Life in a Notebook, but the new HP EliteBook 6930p can deliver up to 24 hours of battery runtime when configured with an optional 12 Cell ultra-capacity battery.

"All day computing has been the holy grail of notebook computing," said Stephen McDonald, Corporate and Public Sector PC Sales Manager, Hewlett-Packard Ireland. "With the HP EliteBook 6930p, customers no longer have to worry about their notebook battery running out before their work day is over."

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The new HP EliteBook 6930p Notebook PC also blends form and function in a sleek, rugged case which has been engineered for the most hardworking mobile professional and the most demanding IT manager. At just 2.1 kg with a 14.1-inch diagonal display, it is lightweight and sleek enough to be the envy of the conference room.

Although it is engineered to military specification, the HP EliteBook 6930p is designed for business – because the working world can be harsh enough. Inspired by aircraft construction, the HP DuraCase has a magnesium chassis for strength (18 times stiffer than plastic) and a stylish, scratch-resistant aluminum display cover.

The shock-mounted hard drive keeps the system operating during bumpy rides. The keyboard is spill-resistant, with touch-sensitive controls that collect less dust and have no moving parts to break. Options include Webcam; Up to 8GB RAM; HP SureKey and security features like HP File System; HP Privacy Manager; Preboot Security and RAID 1 & 0.



For further information please contact ann-marie.oconnell@hp.com



Coy Sgt Harry Mulhern, the author of the poem.

Below: Sgt Mick Clarke's painting of an Irish patrol in Lebanon.

A number of months back it was brought to our attention that a poem, entitled *The Peacekeeper* in a book honouring those who died in the service of peace in South Lebanon was signed with the letter 'H' and the author unknown.

In fact it was the man behind the letter 'H' - Coy Sgt Harry Mulhern (Retd) who raised the alarm after it was made aware to him a number of years back by another former soldier.

The 89 Inf Bn was the last Irish battalion to serve with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). They withdrew in 2001 and the Defence Forces marked the end of 23 years of service and the sacrifice of 47 Irish soldiers, who died in Lebanon, with a series of nationwide parades and ceremonies.

A booklet was produced listing a roll of honour of those who died, along with information on our service with UNIFIL and two poems, both entitled *The Peacekeeper*. This booklet is still available to those who visit the Cedar Room in the Church at Arbour Hill,

The Peacekeeper

*On the hills in Southern Lebanon, night-time, crisp and cold
A soldier tensely waits for dawn to unfold.*

*Vigilant eyes searching, for movement on his ground
Conscious of, alert for the dangers all around.*

*In the distance, thunder, the pounding heavy guns
Tearing asunder Arab fathers and sons.*

*To the West Palestinians, Phalangists to the East
In between them, the innocents praying for peace.*

*The wrongs of generations, on the nations poorer souls
Cause today's confrontations, with guns instead of polls.*

*How complexing for the soldier, wearing blue beret
Comprehending his disorder and the country it besets.*

*On hills in South Lebanon, the night has passed
A lonely soldier waits, vigilant to the last.*

a room dedicated to our overseas service in Lebanon.

When Harry saw his poem signed 'H' and author unknown he was a bit bemused as to why he wasn't credited with penning the poem, as a framed copy of it hung in his office and it was common knowledge that he was the author.

The inspiration for Harry to write the poem came in 1981, while he served in Lebanon. He was moved by the suffering of the Lebanese people living within the Irish Area of Operation and he like a lot of Irish soldiers who served in Lebanon, formed a great affection for them.

Harry noted that the Irish soldier is respected and welcomed as a peacekeeper, because they have a nature built on sympathy and respect for those who suffer.

He equally observed with admiration the sacrifices that Irish soldiers, men and women were willing to make for others with no thought to their own safety or comforts. Their training and acceptance of strict discipline coupled with long periods of duty far away from family and friends often in harsh conditions is a rare characteristic in a modern and affluent world. They are truly representatives of what is good about Ireland today. ■

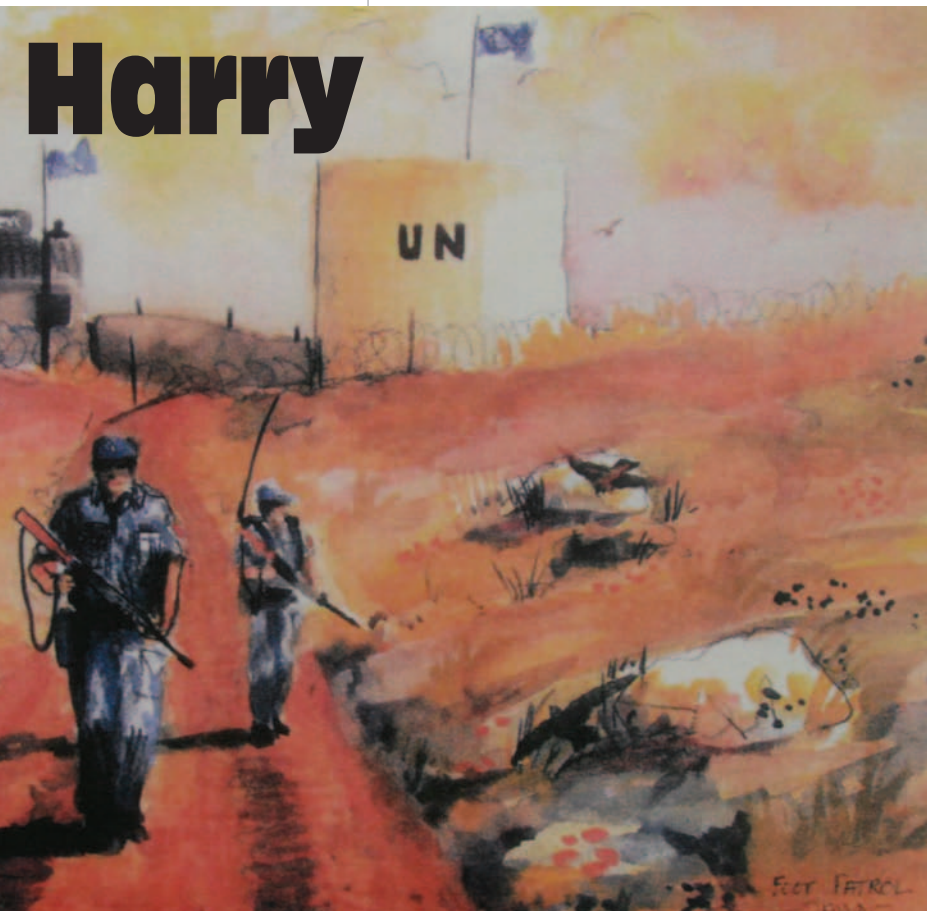
About the author

Coy Sgt Harry Mulhern (Retd) joined the Defence Forces in 1963 and served the majority of his career with the 2 Grn Coy, S&T Corps along with short periods of service as a CQMS with 11 Fd Engr Coy FCÁ (1974-76) and then as Acting Sgt Maj McKee Bks Coy during the 1980s. Harry also served twice overseas (Cyprus and Lebanon) and he was a founding member of the Defence Forces Benevolent Fund (Eastern Command) before he retired in 1986. His son, Paul is an serving Senior NCO in DFHQ.

Since leaving the Defence Forces, Harry has worked in the Health Service and is currently a Civil Servant with Revenue. In 2006 Harry received a National Award for Safety Innovation in the Workplace for his work in the area of Health and Safety. He has also kept close ties with his former colleagues of the now disbanded 2 Grn Coy and helped established a group called: Friends of 2nd Garrison. In 2006 and 2007 members of the group, led by Harry completed the Dublin City Marathon raising money for Temple St Hospital and The Cystic Fibrosis Association.

H is for Harry

From time to time, *An Cosantóir* is asked to set the record straight, especially if an error or oversight in regards to the printed word is made. Recently Sgt David Nagle met up with a Coy Sgt Harry Mulhern (Retd), the author of a once un-credited poem written about our service overseas in Lebanon.



While researching for my book on Irish WWI veterans, 'A Coward If I Return, A Hero If I Fall', (due for release Autumn 2009) I came across the story of a Sergeant in the Connaught Rangers from Athlone named Michael Curley. Little did I know at the time but I had just happened upon the story of one of the most important men in the Irish Volunteers movement - in fact, one of the original founders of the force. The modern Defence Forces can trace its proud history back to the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Volunteers owed its existence to the Midlands Volunteers - an organisation that Michael Curley helped to create in Athlone, prior to the national movement. He is therefore an important historical figure, not just in terms of Athlone history but on a national level also. His life should not be forgotten, and because of this I am now trying to launch a campaign in Athlone for a memorial to be erected in his memory.

Born on January 25th 1885 in Coosan, Athlone, Michael Curley was only 16 when he joined the Connaught Rangers in November 1901. He had previously worked as a printer and compositor, and a labourer, and had also served for a time in the 6th Battalion of the Rifle Brigade - a part-time reserve unit similar to the modern day RDF. Curley was recorded as being a short man, only 5' 3", and eight-stone in weight when he became one of thousands of

Irishmen serving fulltime in British uniform.

In March 1907, Curley was sent overseas for the first time when he was posted to Malta for seven months. He returned to Ireland in October of that year and the following month was married to Agnes Gavin in St Mary's Church in Athlone. In August 1908 the couple's first child was born, and then, in April 1909 now Lance-Sergeant Michael Curley was discharged from the regular army. His contract of service was up and Curley chose not to renew it. So while he would still be kept on the army's books as a member of the active reserve he was now free to return to civilian life.

It was during this period that events in Ireland were heating up. Fearing the imminent introduction of Home Rule in Ireland, and not wanting to be ruled over by a predominantly Catholic southern parliament, Ulster unionists formed the Ulster Volunteers in 1912 (soon to be renamed the Ulster Volunteer Force, or UVF) - a military body that would be used to resist the implementation of Home Rule by force if necessary.

In September 1912, 250,000 Unionists signed the Ulster Covenant, another display of their desire to stay a part of the United Kingdom.

Forgotten Volunteers

The story of Michael Curley

In this article Pte Neil Richardson (56 Res Inf Bn) tells the story of one Irishman who served in the British Army and went onto to fight for Ireland's freedom

A photograph taken by Westmeath Independent photographer GV Simmons, shows the committee of the Midlands Volunteer Force (MVF) with Michael Curley seated front row, first left.



The MVF on parade in Athlone.

If it weren't for war clouds forming in Europe who knows what Michael Curley would have become had he stayed in Ireland. An acknowledged founder of the Volunteer movement! An Irish hero of the fight for independence! He was already both of those things, but thanks to the outbreak of the First World War, his name would soon disappear from history.



HERITAGE

Volunteer Curley



In the south those who looked forward to Home Rule as the first step to a free and independent Ireland saw the UVF as a serious threat to their goals. However, it was not, as many people assume, in Dublin's Rotunda Hospital in November 1913 that the first band of Irish Volunteers came into existence, but in Athlone several months earlier.

In September 1913 a group of workers in Athlone formed a body of volunteers with the object of opposing the 'Covenanters' - as the militant supporters of Carson were called - if need be by arms. They drilled openly, elected a committee, called themselves the Midland Volunteers and very soon had marches or processions in the town and vicinity with about fifteen hundred men.¹

According to other sources, this organisation - the Midlands Volunteer Force (MVF) - was formed even earlier, in August 1913, when preliminary meetings to set up the organisation took place.²

The founding fathers of the MVF were predominately ex-British Army men who worked in the local woollen mills, and it is at this point that we return to the man of our story, for Michael Curley, whose entire family was employed in the woollen mills, was one of these men.

Given the fact that he was a former Sergeant, Curley was in the perfect position to become one of the drill instructors for this new body of Volunteers and he obviously believed passionately in the ideals of Home Rule.

On October 11th 1913 he drilled and paraded his new recruits for the first time, along with several other ex-British Army NCOs. Curley was also a member of the elected committee of the MVF. The MVF paraded on the green behind St Mary's Church and this was photographed by Westmeath Independent photographer GV Simmons. Another of his photographs shows the committee with Michael Curley seated front row, first left. Some are holding a document calling for 'every young Irishman who loves his country and is prepared to serve her as called upon (to) at once join the Volunteer Force.'

By October, the MVF was planning to expand by setting up companies and squadrons in neighbouring Midlands towns and villages. Then on November 6th

1913 Liam Mellows happened to be in Athlone on business when he encountered the MVF.³

Similarly, Roger Casement wrote in the same month that, 'I have in mind a great scheme of Volunteers for all Ireland. To begin in Athlone - they have begun there already...'⁴

Inspired by the MVF the idea of an all-Ireland Volunteer force was brought back to Dublin and within just a few weeks became reality when the Irish Volunteers were formed on November 25th 1913. Thousands of Irishmen who were eager for Home Rule flocked to the ranks of the organisation and the MVF soon decided to join the larger, national movement instead of remaining independent.

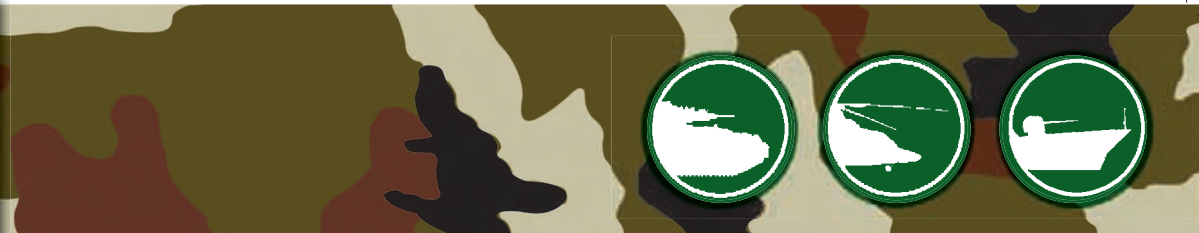
As recruitment and training began nationally, a report in the Irish Volunteers' journal soon appeared that mentioned Michael Curley by name. 'Excellent progress is being made in Athlone and instructors P Croghan and M Curley express themselves pleased with the way the men under their command are conducting themselves and the wonderful progress made in drill.'⁵

If it weren't for war clouds forming in Europe who knows what Michael Curley would have become had he stayed in Ireland. An acknowledged founder of the Volunteer movement! An Irish hero of the fight for independence! He was already both of those things, but thanks to the outbreak of the First World War, his name would soon disappear from history.■

To be continued...

Footnote

- 1 Sean O'Mullany, 'Athlone started the Volunteer Movement,' The Athlone Annual (Athlone, 1963), p23
- 2 Sean O'Mullany letter to Oliver Snoddy, September 18th 1964
- 3 Westmeath Independent, November 8th 1913
- 4 Green Mss. NLI 10464. Dated November 1913
- 5 The Irish Volunteer, October 10th 1914



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(Ladies and Men Combined)

**Magazine Fort, Phoenix Park
Tuesday 30th June 2009
at 8.00pm**

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Defence Forces Athletic Grounds
Phoenix Park (opposite Dublin Zoo)

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Prizes: Usual BHAA Categories

Enquiries:
Cpl Colin Robinson 8046808





This month in our series of articles written on behalf of The Military Heritage of Ireland Trust Ltd on aspects of the military exhibition at the National Museum, Collins Bks, Comdt K Milner (Retd) talks about the 1908 Pattern British Army Cavalry

In the extensive collection of weapons and artefacts from the 1916-21 period in the National Museum, Collins Barracks, Dublin is a 1908 pattern British Cavalry trooper's sword.

The first action taken by the British military authorities on Easter Monday 1916 was to send a troop of lancers up O'Connell Street to the GPO. The subsequent action lasted minutes with the lancers quickly withdrawing leaving a number of troopers and horses dead and wounded in the street in front of the GPO.

The lancers involved in this action were armed with the 1908 pattern cavalry sword, which was the last sword issued to the cavalry of the British Army. It was widely held to be the most effective cavalry sword ever designed, ironically just as the sword had become obsolete as a weapon.

In military circles there had long been the debate over whether the use of the point or the edge was the better method of attack for a cavalryman. With the introduction of the 1821 pattern, the British Army adopted a series of 'cut and thrust' swords with slightly curved blades which were theoretically stiff enough for a thrust. The 1821 swords and their descendants were inevitably compromises and not ideal for either cutting or thrusting, but the Army considered the adaptability to be of more importance.

John Gaspard Le Marchant, the great trainer of British Cavalry in the late 18th century, felt that the weapon employed in the charge was irrelevant. The effect of the charge was in the momentum of the horse and rider. However the debate still continued throughout the 19th century as to which form of sword was the most effective - curved or straight.

The introduction of the 1908 pattern sword ended the debate. This sword was designed purely as a thrusting weapon. The skewer shaped blade was designed with a thick 'T' shaped cross section to prevent the sword from bending in the thrust. It had a large steel bowl-shaped guard to protect the hand.

The grip, made of bakelite or rubber, was of rounded rectangular section in a semi-pistol configuration. This design caused the blade to naturally align with the arm when the arm was extended, in position for a charge using the point. A thumb stop was indented on top of the grip, just behind the guard. The long pommel helped to keep the point of balance of the sword

close to the guard, balancing the sword for its length.

The length of the blade at just over 35' (890mm) was said to be able to match the reach of the lance (still in use with some armies at the turn of the 20th Century) or the bayonet with the sword arm fully extended.

King Edward VII described the sword as 'hideous' when the pattern was submitted to him for formal approval, and he had to be persuaded of its utility before eventually conceding.

Although NCOs and Troopers were issued with swords, Officers had to purchase their own. Until 1912, officers continued to carry swords with the three bar pattern hand guard. In 1896 this pattern had been officially discontinued, but regulations stated that officers need not adopt the new pattern until their own sword have become unserviceable. The old pattern therefore continued until well into the 20th century.


All this changed when, in 1912, an officer's pattern sword was introduced. This was the same pattern as that on issue to other ranks with embellishments. The bowl was engraved with a floral pattern mimicking the pattern of the 19th century sword. The blade, plain for NCOs and troopers, was engraved and the grip was of the same form, but the chequered rubber or bakelite grip was replaced by grey ribbed sharkskin, bound with German-silver wire. The pommel, plain on the trooper's version, was chequered and decorated.

The 1908 and 1912 pattern swords can be seen as the ultimate design of the cavalry sword (the US Army adopted a very similar cavalry sword in 1913, called the Patton sabre) even though it was a full century after the cavalry swords obsolesces for military purposes.

The most compelling criticism of use of the point in cavalry combat, however, lies in the possibility of it becoming the victim of its own success. With the force of a fast-moving horse and rider behind it, a well-aimed sword thrust would certainly achieve considerable penetration, even up to the hilt. As the horse and rider passed the unfortunate recipient of the thrust, the sword would be very difficult to drag clear of the body, leaving the rider at best disarmed or at worst unhorsed or with a broken wrist. ■

On Exhibit





Readers are invited to submit letters on any subject they wish, although of course the content should relate either to the *Cosantóir* itself or to a topic of interest to a military audience. You may have views on articles that you have read in *An Cosantóir* or ideas for topics that should be covered. You may have an opinion on the content or presentation of the magazine and whether it serves or fails to serve its readers.

Alternatively, you may wish to address a topic of interest in the military or security sphere, either domestic or international, or reflect on some aspect of military history. You may wish to tell our readers of an experience you have had or open a discussion on equipment. You may be seeking information or you may wish to reply to another letter. The list is endless.

As a general guideline, letters that are constructive in nature and offer solutions along with criticisms will stand a far better chance of publication than those that are just a list of gripes. However, letters of complaint about the magazine itself will be treated on an equal basis with positive ones and we will not shy away from publishing letters that do not portray *An Cosantóir* in a good light.

Length is also an important consideration as our space is limited and therefore shorter letters will have a better chance of making it into print.

While, as already stated, you may write on any topic you choose, to get the ball rolling we are inviting letters expressing views on the quality, content and relevance of *An Cosantóir* to today's soldier. A Defence Forces diary will be sent to any reader whose letter is published in our March or April issues.

Our standard policy will be to include the names of the authors of letters but the editor may, at his discretion, publish an anonymous letter in which the author has requested his or her name to be withheld. However, this will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

The editor may publish a comment or reply to a letter if he feels it is appropriate.

Letter may be sent by post to

**Letters to the Editor,
An Cosantóir,
DFHQ,
Parkgate,
Dublin 8,**

or alternatively by email to ancosantoir@defenceforces.iol.ie.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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A Bv206 in action in the Glen
of Imaal.
Photo by Armn Billy Galligan

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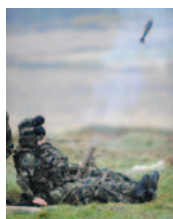


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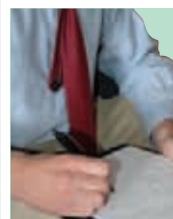


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Barrack Closures will feature in next month's issue

news update... news update... news update...



Doctor On Call

Maj Gen Dave Ashe (D COS Sp) is seen here congratulating Doctor (Now Captain) Syed Shah on his appointment as a Medical Officer. From Pakistan, Capt Shah has worked in the Irish medical profession since 1997. Photo by: Armn Billy Galligan.



An Air Corps First

Recently Sgt Anne Kelly (402 Sqn) became the first female technician to receive the Aircraft Inspector's Authorisation. Also pictured (l-r) are: for Lt Col John Moloney (OC 4 Sp Wing) and Comdt Mick Moran (OIC Quality Assurance Sec). Photo by: Air Corps Photo Sec.

The Sound of Music

The band of the 28 Inf Bn, based in Finner Camp, Co Donegal are a force in their own right! Using pipes and drums, they have entertained thousands at countless parades, marches and festivals, all over Ireland and the world. The band are pictured here in March with Brig Gen Gerry Hegarty (GOC 4 W Bde), Lt Col Joe Scanlon (OC 6 Inf Bn) and Sgt Maj John Touhey (back row right) during a parade in Custume Bks, Athlone. Photo by: Comdt Carey (HQ 4 W Bde).



98 Inf Bn Stand Down Parade

Photos by: Armn Billy Galligan
On April 23rd former members of the 98 Inf Bn EUFOR Chad gathered in Stephens Bks, Kilkenny City for the battalion's stand down parade. Lt Col Kieran Brennan (OC 98 Inf Bn – now OIC PR Sec, DFHQ) led his troops for the last time as the battalion colours were laid to rest, before being put on display in the Curragh Camp Church. After the parade a mass co-celebrated by Fr Bob McCabe (Padre 98 Inf Bn) and Mons Eoin Thynne (HCF) was held, followed by a reception.



Lt Col Brennan presents Comdt Sean White with his overseas medal.



Money Money Money

In April, 4 Fd Arty Regt presented a cheque for over €10,000 to the Stroke Unit in Mullingar Hospital from the proceeds of the Columb Bks Fun Run, which was held in February. Pictured (l-r) are: Lt Col Arthur Armstrong (OC 4 Fd Arty Regt), Dr Sean Murphy, Katherine Kenny, Col Sean Murphy, Sgt Maj Noel O'Callaghan (100 Inf Bn MINURCAT). Photo by: Sgt Maj Noel O'Callaghan.

news update.. news update.. news update..

NEWS UPDATE



Lt Col Brennan on behalf of the battalion, presented a cheque for €5,000 to the O'Neill Centre, Enable Ireland Kilkenny. This centre supports the parents of children with Cerebral Palsy. Also pictured (l-r) are: Caroline Long, Lucy Dooley Comdt Harry O'Connor. A cheque for €17,500 was also presented to the Army Benevolent Fund.

Fr McCabe and Mons Thynne celebrate mass.



Pictured at the stand down parade (back row l-r): Lt Col Brennan, Tony Coy (Kilkenny IWA) and Cpl Brian Byrne. Front row (l-r): Daniel Bradshaw, Marion Byrne and John Grace. While in Chad Cpl Byrne ran a marathon and he rose over €500 for the Irish Wheelchair Association.



Bon Jour Irlande

Pictured during St Patrick's Day celebrations at EUFOR Chad OHQ, Paris (l-r) are: Lt Gen Pat Nash (OP Comd), Pte Anthony Kelly (DFSM) and Fr Robert McCabe CF. Photo by: Fr Robert McCabe.

news update... news update... news update...

Sailor Honoured

Photographs by
Thomas Lawlor (Naval Association)

On April 24th, over 80 members of the Naval Association and invited guests gathered in the Mansion House, Dublin to honour Capt (NS) Jim Robinson DSM prior to his retirement from the Defence Forces.

A presentation of Waterford Crystal and a framed Naval Association Crest was made by Thomas Kavanagh (Association President) to Capt Robinson for his dedication to service as a Naval Officer and in helping to foster closer links between the Naval Association and the Naval Service throughout his career. Presentations were also made to Cdr (NS) Mark Mellett DSM, who will be taking over from Capt Robinson as Officer Commanding Naval Base and Dockyard, Haulbowline and to Dublin's Lord Mayor Cllr Eibhlin Byrne, who graciously allowed the association to use the Mansion House for this occasion.

The Naval Association currently has over 200 members based mainly in Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Limerick. Their aim is to promote all maritime matters and membership is opened to both serving and retired Naval Service personnel. Apart from their monthly meetings, the association takes part in numerous masses and parades throughout Ireland and plans regular trips abroad. For more on details, checkout homepage.eircom.net/~navalas-sociation



Above:
Capt Robinson DSM, with
his wife Frances and Cllr
Eibhlin Byrne.



Left:
Dublin's Lord Mayor, Cllr
Eibhlin Byrne warming up
the crowd during the cere-
mony. In the background (l-r)
are: Capt Jim Robinson
DSM, Thomas Kavanagh and
Fr Des Campion.



The Naval Association and Naval Service in the Mansion House.



Heroes All - Also at the ceremony were two other
recipients of the Distinguished Service Medal.
Pictured (l-r) are: Cdr Mark Mellett DSM, AB Paul
Kellet DSM (Retd) and Capt Jim Robinson DSM.



Capt Robinson DSM accepting a presentation from Thomas Kavanagh. Also pictured (l-r)
are: Commodore Frank Lynch (FOCNS), Cllr Eibhlin Byrne and Fr Des Campion (Padre to
both the Naval Service and the Naval Association).

news update... news update... news update...

NEWS UPDATE



For Service Rendered

Photographs and text by Pte Neil Richardson (56 Res Inf Bn)

On April 5th at a parade in Custume Bks, Athlone, Comdt Frank Sheeran (OC 56 Res Inf Bn) presented medals to members of HQ Coy, 56 Res Inf Bn. They included:

After the presentation, Comdt Tom Cunningham (OC HQ Coy 56 Res Inf Bn) gave a few words of inspiration. He said that the role of the RDF, like their PDF counterparts, 'is to defend the state against armed aggression, to aid the civil power, peacekeeping, fisheries protection (provided by Naval Service Reserve - NSR)' and while the RDF may not get to fulfil these roles as regularly as their PDF counterparts, he stressed that the RDF provides a necessary service to the state by training to remain ready to reinforce the PDF if ever required.

Also on parade was Sgt Willie Doogan, soon to retire. Willie, a farmer from Tubberclare, near Glasson, Co Roscommon, joined the FCA in 1964. He claims that he originally joined 'just to get a look inside the parish hall', where A Coy, 16 Inf Bn, then met. However, he never regretted his decision to sign up, and can now look back on 45 years in uniform!

Above: HQ Coy on parade.

Below: Sgt Cormac Nott receives his medal from Comdt Frank Sheeran.



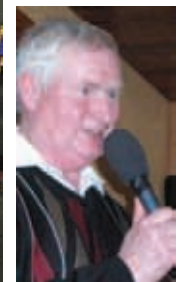
Pte Maeve Harris and Cpl Rois Ní Dhochartaigh.

Name	Award
Lt Noel Cleary (Coy 2i/c)	Medal and 21-year bar
Lt Sharon McManus	Medal and 12-year bar
Lt David Sweeney	Medal and 12-year bar
BQMS Donal Flanagan	21-year bar
Coy Sgt John Roche	21-year bar
Sgt Willie Doogan	21-year bar
Sgt Declan Toland	21-year bar
Sgt Cormac Nott	Medal and 12-year bar
Cpl Albert Lowery	21-year bar
Cpl Patrick Samuels	21-year bar
Cpl Charles Ryan	7-year medal
Cpl Rois Ní Dhochartaigh	7-year medal
Cpl Keith Farrell	7-year medal
Cpl Damien Hunter	7-year medal
Cpl Mark Mulvihill	7-year medal
Pte John Slevin	21-year bar
Pte Dara Mulvihill	12-year bar
Pte Maeve Harris	7-year medal



Comdt Tom Cunningham (OC HQ Coy 56 Res Inf Bn) and Lt Col Colm Harte (EO 4 Res W Bde).

Below: Sgt Willie Doogan (Retd)



Back row (l-r) are: Cpls Charles Ryan, Mark Mulvihill, Damien Hunter, Pte Maeve Harris, Cpls Rois Ní Dhochartaigh, Keith Farrell and Sgt Cormac Nott. Front row (l-r) are: Coy Sgt John Roche, BQMS Donal Flanagan, Comdt Tom Cunningham (OC HQ Coy), Lt Col Colm Harte (EO Res W Bde), Comdt Frank Sheeran (OC 56 Res Inf Bn) and Lt Noel Cleary (2i/c HQ Coy), Lts Sharon McManus, David Sweeney, Sgts Willie Doogan and Frank Mullally.



Brig Gen Gerry Hegarty
(GOC 4 W Bde)

'This was my first half marathon and it certainly won't be my last; it's been the best day I've had since coming down here last September.'



Gda Ronan Harnett

'It was a great day, very well organized and a great run. I'm running well at the moment and came second in the ultra-marathon three week ago so.'



Pte Steven Carr
(DFHQ Tpt Pln)

'Enjoyed it; especially as this was my first half-marathon. I would be lying if I said I wasn't tired, but I would advise anyone to get out there and have a go at it.' Pte Carr ran the half-marathon for the St Francis Hopsice, Raheny raising over €500, and he would like to thank everyone who sponsored him.



The Defence Forces Half-Marathon took place in Connemara, Co Galway on Wednesday April 22nd. The race, now in its fifth year, has gone from strength to strength with just over 300 competitors participating this year, from the Army, Air Corps, Naval Service and the Garda Síochána. This year's event had the added appeal of catering for walkers as well as runners and also the location with its dramatic setting of mountains, glacier lakes, and a rugged green-brown landscape that winds in and around the Connemara wilderness. The course meandered past bogs, hills, lakes and the Twelve Pins Mountains, rising up over the great expanse of Killary Lough and finishing in the quiet village of Leenane.

The sense of comradeship between participants as they covered the lonely, haunting route was obvious throughout the day. The greatest joy for half-marathoners comes crossing the finish line and the sense satisfaction and achievement was evident in the faces of the competitors as they finished.

Everyone who participated was presented with a medal, a t-shirt, a 'goodie' bag and treated to a meal. The overall winner on the day was Pte Paul Buckley (6 Inf Bn), who only returned from KFOR a week earlier. Paul won in a convincing time of 115.15 having come second in this event on two previous occasions and said 'it was nice to win it at last.' He is now looking forward to the All-Army track and field championships in two month's time.

Congratulations to all who took in this year's half-marathon and for those who didn't, you still have next year to experience one of the most enjoyable experiences you can get, by taking part and discovering that you have more strength and endurance in you than you thought.



Brig Gen Hegarty congratulates Pte Buckley on winning the Half Marathon.

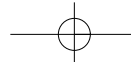


All photographs by
Armn Billy Galligan

Cpl Paul O'Neill travelled to the west of Ireland to report on very popular the Defence Forces Half-Marathon, now becoming a regular feature of the military sporting calendar.



born to run

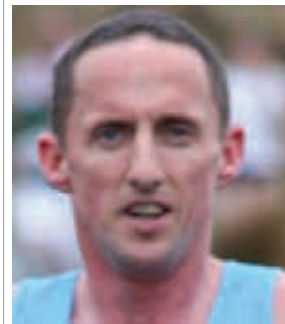


R E S U L T S

Senior Men	Winner Pte Buckley (6 Inf Bn)	Male O/45	Winner Sgt Devlin (USAC)
Runner-up LS O'Brien (Naval Service)	Runner-up Pte M Bilman (1 LSB)	Runner-up Pte M Bilman (1 LSB)	Runner-up Pte M Bilman (1 LSB)
Third Place Lt Collins (5 Inf Bn)	Third Place Pte Brien (2 Fd Eng Coy)	Male O/50	Winner Pte Burns (3 Inf Bn)
Senior Female	Winner Pte Masterson (6 Inf Bn)	Runner-up Sgt Grogan (USAC)	Male O/55
Runner-up OS Cronin (Naval Service)	Third Place Cpl Robinson (DFHQ)	Winner Coy Sgt O'Riordan (HQ 1 S Bde)	Team
Third Place Cpl Robinson (DFHQ)	Male O/35	Winner 4W Bde (Sgt Madden, Ptes Buckley, Crawford and Greene)	Guests Male
Winner Cpl Byrne (DFTC)	Runner-up Sgt Rickard (4W BTC)	Winner Gda Hartnett	Winner Gda Hartnett
Third Place Pte Dunbar (28 Inf Bn)	Third Place Pte Dunbar (28 Inf Bn)	Runner-up Mr Boyce	Runner-up Mr Boyce
Male O/40	Winner Sgt Madden (6 Inf Bn)	Third Place Gda Gannon	Third Place Gda Gannon
Runner-up Comdt Campion (1 Cn Cois)	Runner-up Comdt Campion (1 Cn Cois)	Guest Female	Winner Gda O'Halloran
Third Place Gnr Curry (1 Fd Arty Regt)	Third Place Gnr Curry (1 Fd Arty Regt)	Winner Gda O'Halloran	



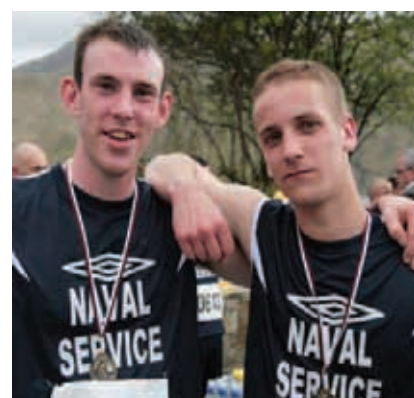
Armn Patrick McKeown
(Air Corps)
'It was very hard but I enjoyed it and I'll be back next year.'



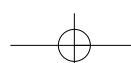
Sgt John Devlin
(USAC)
'The numbers were up on last year, which is great. It's a good challenge for runners and walkers at all levels and I think people should be afforded the time to come down and compete.'



Armn Andrew O'Neill
(Air Corps)
'The first half of the race was very hard but once we got that out of the way the wind was on our backs and it was down hill all the way to the finish.'



Cdts Mark Harman and Glen Andy
(Naval Service)
'We are competing in a full marathon in Edinburgh at the end of May for the Aware charity, so this was great preparation.'



Gaisce's Mission Statement: 'To contribute to the development of all young people through the achievement of personal challenges.'



Gaisce, the President's Award, is regarded as Ireland's most prestigious and respected individual award programme. Gaisce works on the basis of a personal challenge set by the participant, with each individual's challenge being supervised and mentored by a President's Award leader. The idea is that participants compete against themselves and not with each other.

There are gold, silver, and bronze awards. The overall upper age limit is 25 and each category has its own minimum age limits and guidelines. The minimum age for eligibility for a bronze award is 15 and the award is earned over a period of six months. Participant must be 16 to apply for the silver award, which is earned over 12 months. For the gold award the minimum age is 18 and the award is achieved over 18 months.

To gain any of the three awards, the applicant must participate in each of four different challenge areas: community involvement, personal skill, physical recreation, and adventure journey

Cpl Rob Gallagher has nine years service and is currently with CIS Base Workshops, Logs Base Curragh. Originally from Limerick, Rob completed his recruit training in 12 Inf Bn and after a short time with that unit he completed the Trainee Technician Scheme which led to his current appointment.

Rob was aware of Gaisce but it was only when the topic came up for discussion among other technicians that he decided to find out what were the requirements to achieve the award. As he was bordering on the upper age limit of 25, Rob decided to go straight for the gold award. He began his mission in January 2007 and had 18 months to complete his chosen tasks.

1 In the community involvement category Rob chose a project close to his home and one his family have been involved with over a number of years, the Milford Hospice in Limerick City, where he volunteered as a nurse's aid for a minimum of an hour a week.

His duties included wheeling patients to morning Mass and then to the dining complex for lunch. He says the work was very rewarding and that the patients were hugely interesting and entertaining even though they were dealing with pain and terminal illness on a daily basis.

Normally, the community project aspect of the gold award requires 60 weeks with one hour per week dedicated to the chosen task. However, as Rob was travelling overseas to Kosovo in the summer of 2007 he knew he wouldn't be able to complete the necessary time with the hospice so on form-up with his overseas unit he immediately contacted the CIMIC Cell personnel and volunteered as an 'extra pair of hands' for CIMIC

projects in the Irish Area of Operations. As a result, while in Kosovo Rob helped out on projects assisting the Serbian and Albanian communities, such as building a village playground, school toilets and homeless shelter. He was also able to dedicate more than the requisite hour per week to his activities, which he found helpful on a personal level as he says 'it was good to keep busy because the time went by quickly'.

Rob is keen to emphasise Gaisce's flexibility when it comes to completing the challenges, which he says is demonstrated by the way he was able to continue his challenge while serving overseas.

2 In the personal skill category of the award Rob turned to the guitar he had watched gathering dust in his room ever since his good intentions from a few years before had fallen by the wayside. Rob signed up for one guitar lesson a month and practiced at home for at least an hour a week.



Sgt Rena Kennedy profiles one soldier who was recently presented his Gold Gaisce Award and outlines the scheme that enables young people to challenge themselves and at the same time make a contribution to society.

**going for
GOLD**



Top: Helping out in Kosovo.
 Above: On the Pilgrim's Trail in Spain.
 Bottom right: At the Awards ceremony (l-r): Maj Gen Dave Ashe (DCos Sp), Dr Martin McAleese, President Mary McAleese, Cpl Rob Gallagher and Cpl Alan Leahy.

Gaisce's Vision:
 'To contribute to the social fabric by encouraging young people to realise their potential as individuals, active citizens and future leaders. To become the programme of choice for young people and volunteers.'

He also took the instrument to Kosovo, where again it came in handy for passing the time when his day's work in the Comcen (Communication Centre) was over. From his basic ability to strum one or two chords he progressed to knowing how to play a number of songs 'without having to look down at my fingers ALL the time' as he says himself. He can now pick up the guitar and play away and as he also takes it with him on his travels he is constantly improving and learning new tunes.

3 In the area of physical recreation Rob decided that because he wasn't a confident swimmer and because he thought it was a basic skill that everyone, especially soldiers, should have, he would choose that for his challenge.

As a result Rob contacted the staff in the DFTC swimming pool and under the guidance of Cpl Domnican he started a course of swimming lessons, attending twice a week. From initially being able to just manage a length of the pool when he began his

quest, at the end of the requisite 18 weeks of physical training specified by Gaisce, Rob was swimming 1,500m twice a week.

Since he completed his training Rob entered and completed his first triathlon in Carrick-on-Suir, Co Tipperary and he still swims on a regular basis.

The adventure journey requirement for the Gaisce gold award requires the participant to plan, prepare and undertake a four day/three night journey, and the committee further recommends that gold participants travel to another country for their task.

4 Rob chose to hike 120kms of the Camino de Santiago, a pilgrimage trail in Northern Spain. This trek saw Rob's military skills being put to fine use, with 'admin in the field', map reading and physical fitness being very important throughout the route, which varied from long open stretches, vineyards, medieval paths and 'a few hills'.

With all four challenges complete Rob submitted his logbook and photographic diary to the awards committee who checked its authenticity and verified his references.

Rob was thrilled to get a call in early 2009 confirming that his efforts were to be rewarded with the Gold Gaisce Award, which he received from President McAleese at a ceremony in Dublin Castle on March 31st.

Rob certainly recommends undertaking the challenge. 'Speak to other recipients,' he advises, 'get a feel for the activities involved. After that a small bit of organisation and determination will get you through.'

As for Rob's future, he hopes to complete the Standard NCO course, finish his third-level studies and complete the next available Gaisce Awards Leaders course, which will enable him to become a Gaisce mentor.

An Gaisce's website (gaisce.ie) gives further details on how to achieve each award and has examples of how recipients divided their time according to the respective challenge areas. ■





DEFENCE FORCES BENEVOLENT FUND

Ciste Daoncharadais Óglaigh na hÉireann

OBJECTS & PURPOSES OF THE FUND

- **To Provide relief in cases of necessity or distress for former members of the Defence Forces and their dependants.**
- **Generally to render assistance to former members of the Defence Forces and their dependants because of hardship, difficult circumstances or any other cause which to the Council may seem sufficient.**

ORGANISATION

1. **The President:**
The Minister for Defence
2. **The Council:**
Former members of the Executive Committee, Ladies Committee, Nominees of the Minister for Defence, GOCs and FOCNS.
3. **The Executive Committee:**
The Chief of Staff; Chairman, Head Chaplain; Vice Chairman, Two Joint Honorary Secretaries, Two Joint Honorary Treasurers, Four members elected at the AGM, Two Nominees of the Minister for Defence, GOCs and FOCNS.
4. **Branch Committees:**
Each Brigade, DFTC, Air Corps and Naval Service have committees comprising nominated Officers and NCOs whose function it is to deal with all Benevolent Fund matters for Other Ranks in their area.
5. **Trustees:**
Three Trustees of the Fund are elected at the AGM and approved by the Minister for Defence to look after the investment of Funds.

SUBSCRIBERS

Voluntary subscriptions, by way of deduction at source, commenced in April 1985 from serving members of the Defence Forces due to the increasing demand on the Fund. Subscriptions are collected into two separate accounts, one for officers and one for other ranks personnel. Officers' deductions are €1.27 per month and Other Ranks Personnel deductions are €0.13 cent per week. Each year over 800 deserving cases receive assistance from all branches.

The shortfall between income and expenditure has to be made up from Dividends on Investments, a small number of voluntary donations and Fund Raising events such as Band Concerts run by the Branches.

“Each year almost 1000 deserving cases receive assistance from all branches”

When and where exactly was Ireland's first orienteering event held?



This article, first published a number of years ago in the Irish Orienteer Magazine, was written by Comdt Aonghus Ó Cléirigh (Retd). In it the author outlines the origins of the sport of orienteering in Ireland.

When and where exactly was Ireland's first orienteering event held? A half-page article discovered by Comdt Pat Healy (Retd) in the *Clonmel Nationalist* newspaper dated April 19th 1969 describes in detail the newly found sport and reports on the first recorded event organised in this country - a competition planned and run for members of the 3rd Motor Squadron (FCÁ) based in Clonmel, Co Tipperary. The newspaper reports that on Sunday, April 13th 1969 at Harney's Cross near Clonmel, 44 members of the 3rd Motor Squadron took part in the first orienteering event for FCÁ personnel over a 7-mile cross-country course from Boola Bridge to the Raven's Rock and back through the forest to Harney's Cross. (The current orienteering map of Kilsheelan covers some of the terrain used for that event.) The squadron was divided into district teams for the competition - Clonmel, Rathgormack, Carrick, Kilcash, Fethard, Lismolin and Mullinahone. Competitors ran in pairs; the three winning pairs in the various categories were Corporal Harty and Tpr Byrne, Tpr McGee and Tpr Devine, and Sergeant Fahey and Tpr Dargan. Clonmel took the district team prize. The Clerk of the Course was Cpl Tom Hannon, one of those whose photograph appears in the newspaper article.

Comdt William Augustine 'Gus' Mulligan, commanding officer of the 3rd Motor Squadron in Clonmel, had encountered the sport while serving in Cyprus with the United Nations Peacekeeping Force. He was introduced to orienteering by a Capt Engrist of the Swedish Battalion and on his return in 1968 he passed on the sport to his unit in December 1968.

In an article published in the March 1969 edition of *An Cosantóir* - the Defence Forces' in-house publication - Gus Mulligan describes orienteering as

'excellent military training, combining practical use of the map, compass work, physical fitness and intelligence.' He adds that 'the fastest does not always win, as one may defeat a faster runner by skilful planning'. There is 'nothing new in orienteering, as it is practised in all armies of the world with the aid of a protractor, map and compass'. He attributes the advent of the Silva compass (which combined protractor and compass in one unit) as greatly simplifying and demystifying navigation.

The early maps used for military orienteering in Ireland were of scale 6-inches-to-one-mile. Since there were few photocopiers in those days, copies were produced by first tracing the main features of the map on to a foil and then reproducing the traced image using the Gestetner printing apparatus (a mainstay of every Defence Forces orderly room of that time).

Where does Gus Mulligan's event fit within the currently accepted history of Irish orienteering? The rediscovered newspaper article places the Kilsheelan event as the first organised orienteering event in this country.

(Aonghus continues "The second orienteering event held here was the competition organised by Michael Lunt in autumn 1969 in The Devil's Glen. A following event was run in the Glen of the Downs by Paddy O'Leary." However, Eoin Rothery's records have the Glen of the Downs event run by Paddy O'Leary on 1st October 1969, Niall Rice's event at Blessington on 1st November 1969, and Mike Lunt's Devil's Glen event on December 26th 1969 - Ed).

Irish orienteers today are indebted to these, and many other pioneers of Irish orienteering - both civilian and military.

Orienteering within the Defence Forces is a thriving sport, with competitors participating at club, Defence Forces, CISM, national and international levels. Anyone interested in taking up the sport should check out dfo.military.ie ■

ORIENTEERING at 40

Comdt William Augustine Mulligan:
The (almost forgotten)
Father of Irish Orienteering



The seven Giraffe Mk4 Radars (five operational and two spare) will provide the primary Low Level Air Defence (LLAD) radar for the RBS70 Missile System currently in service.

The Bandvagn Bv206 at an initial glance is a somewhat small, ugly box-type vehicle, but with some 11,000 units produced (in many variants) and operated by more than 35 armed forces and industry worldwide, it has over the last 30 years proven itself as a versatile and reliable workhorse. Irish soldiers who have served in Liberia, Chad and during the Nordic Battlegroup Exercise would have seen the Bv206 (infantry variant) in operation with other Armed Forces.

In 2008, for just over €3million the Defence Forces purchased an Air Defence equipment package from the Norwegian Defence Logistics Organisation (NDLO) that included: seven Giraffe Mk4 Radars (mounted in the Bv206s); six RBS70 Firing Systems, five RBS70 Clip On Night Devices; 40 RBS70 Mk2 Missiles; 16 Kongsberg Multi-role Radios; 20 Weapon Terminals and a RBS70 Simulator. The associated Ordnance, CIS, Transports and conversion training courses, plus manuals were also included.

The new vehicles, now painted in the Defence Forces livery are designated the 'Giraffe Mk4 Radar', as the radar is housed in the rear compartment of the Bv206.

The seven Giraffe Mk4 Radars (five operational and two spare) will provide the primary Low Level Air Defence (LLAD) radar for the RBS70 Missile System currently in service.

The Giraffe Mk4 Radar will replace the sole Giraffe Mk2 Radar, which was mounted on a truck and

was in service since the mid-80s.

The Giraffe Mk4 Radar has a three-man crew: a Combat Leader, a Radar Operator and a Driver. When in operation, the vehicle is stationary and the rear compartment has four extendable legs that give the crew a stable platform to raise the radar mast to a height of 6.7m.

Currently, 1 Air Def Regt has one Missile Troop as part of 1 Air Def Bty located in the DFTC and it trains the majority of PDF personnel on the RBS70 System. Though the structure of the Missile Troop will not change, the unit now has the operational capability to deploy a number of Giraffe Mk4 Radars at any one time and at different locations.

This will enhance the unit in carrying out its main operational tasks in providing Aid to the Civil Power Air Defence cover at our main airports and vital installations as required.

The Giraffe Mk4 Radar is a more sophisticated system than its Mk2 predecessor. Made by Ericsson, it was first integrated into the Bv206 as part of the Norwegian Army Low Level Air Defence (LLAD) System.



TRACK-ABLE

Last year, 1 Air Def Regt added an all-terrain, tracked Air Defence Radar vehicle to its inventory, which will enhance the unit's capabilities in guarding vital Irish installations from Air attack. Sgt David Nagle reports...





The NDLO has also provided Estonia and Brazil with similar Giraffe Mk4 Radars.

The unit's current Giraffe Mk2 Radar Combat leaders and RBS70 Missile Detachment Commanders are now undergoing training on the new radars and vehicles with ten drivers already qualified on the Bv206. Instruction and testing has taken place in the Curragh Camp and in the specially designed all-terrain driving course in Coolmoney Camp, Glen of Imaal.

Three Combat Leaders have already completed a conversion course on the Giraffe Mk4 Radar with

the Norwegian Army in February/March 2009 and recently a number of RBS70 Detachment Commanders completed a conversion/refresher course. It is envisaged that by the end of 2009, the majority of the unit personnel will be retrained and the Giraffe Mk4 Radars will be fully integrated into the unit.

This new radar has an identify Friend or Foe (IFF) capability, which allows the gunner to distinguish, between Air Corps and Civilian Aircraft once the relevant IFF codes are input. The Command, Control and Communications (C3) functions with this system are also more advanced and this allows the Combat Leader greater flexibility, control and management of the fire units (RBS70 Missiles) under his/her control. Radar training is ongoing with a series of air defence exercise already conducted around the Curragh Camp and Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel.

The radar can detect up to 20 targets out to 50km range and the crew can control 20 RBS70 fire units in engaging the incoming targets.

The feedback from everyone who has trained on the new radar has been very positive. The arrival of the new equipment has given the unit gunners a lift and all are eager to train with the system. Training will be key as the equipment is sophisticated and this will require skill sets that are regularly honed.

Equally important is the Bv206, a tracked-articulated vehicle, which drivers have found easy to operate. The Bv206 was first developed by Hägglunds (now part of BAE Land Systems) for the Swedish Army and it entered service in the early-80s.

It was initially designed to carry troops and equipment through snow and boglands and the vehicles low ground pressure enables it to cope with a wide range of difficult conditions, tackling steep inclines/declines and it is fully amphibious.

The RBS70 Missile System, which is controlled by the Giraffe Mk4 Radar crew, is a short range, portable, laser-guided Surface to Air Missile. The gunner receives instructions on the position of the target from a local combat control terminal and when the target is acquired, he turns off the safety, which switches on the main laser and sends out an IFF signal. After the missile is fired, it flies in the beam of the laser to the target, adjusting its position constantly to stay within the beam. To hit the target, the gunner must keep the laser beam on target. The missile can engage targets out to 5,000m (horizontal) and up to an altitude of 4,000m.

This recent investment in vehicles, radars, missiles and training will certainly keep the gunners of the 1 Air Def Regt busy over the coming months and will allow them to continue to carry out their primary mission in protecting the skies over vital military/civilian installations around Ireland. ■

Giraffe Mk4 Radar

Radar Type	Pulsed doppler surveillance radar with digital signal processing
Range	1.2 to 50km
Power supply	3x115/200V 400Hz 24vDC
Freq Band	G Band
Automatic Capture	up to 20 targets
Automatic designation	up to 20 targets
Can control	up to 20 RBS70 fire units at any one time
IFF capability	Yes
Communications	SINCGAR (Voice) and Kongsberg MRR (data)

BV206 Vehicle

Length	7m
Width	1.9m
Weight	6210kg
Height (mast lowered)	2.9m
Height (mast extended)	6.7m
Fuel Tanks	2x80litres

When in operation, the vehicle is stationary and the rear compartment has four extendable legs that give the crew a stable platform to raise the radar mast to a height of 6.7m.



Inscribed on the plinth is the Commandos' motto 'United We Conquer' and the words: 'In Memory of the Officers and men of the Commandos who died in the Second World War 1939-1945. This Country was their Training Ground.'

On March 7th, a 10-man team (eight from 62 Res Cav Sqn and two from 65 Res Inf Bn) travelled to Scotland to take part in a renowned seven-mile endurance speed march. This annual event, organised by the Association of British Military Parachutists (ABMP) since 1996, commemorates the famous march that potential WWII Royal Marine Commandos had to complete from the Spean Bridge Railway Station to their training centre, located seven-miles away at Achnacarry House. This year saw 301 participants and their support staff from many units of the British armed forces, the London Metropolitan Police, teams from the Danish and German armed forces and our own RDF team.

During WWII the Scottish Highlands was selected as a training area because of its harsh terrain and even less forgiving weather. Back then anyone who wished to become a commando first had to undergo a speed march carrying 36lbs (16kg) of kit in combat fatigues over the seven-mile route. Those who didn't pass through the gate of the training centre within an hour were 'RTU-d' (returned to unit) and put on the next train back. Today, it is just as tough to attain that time!

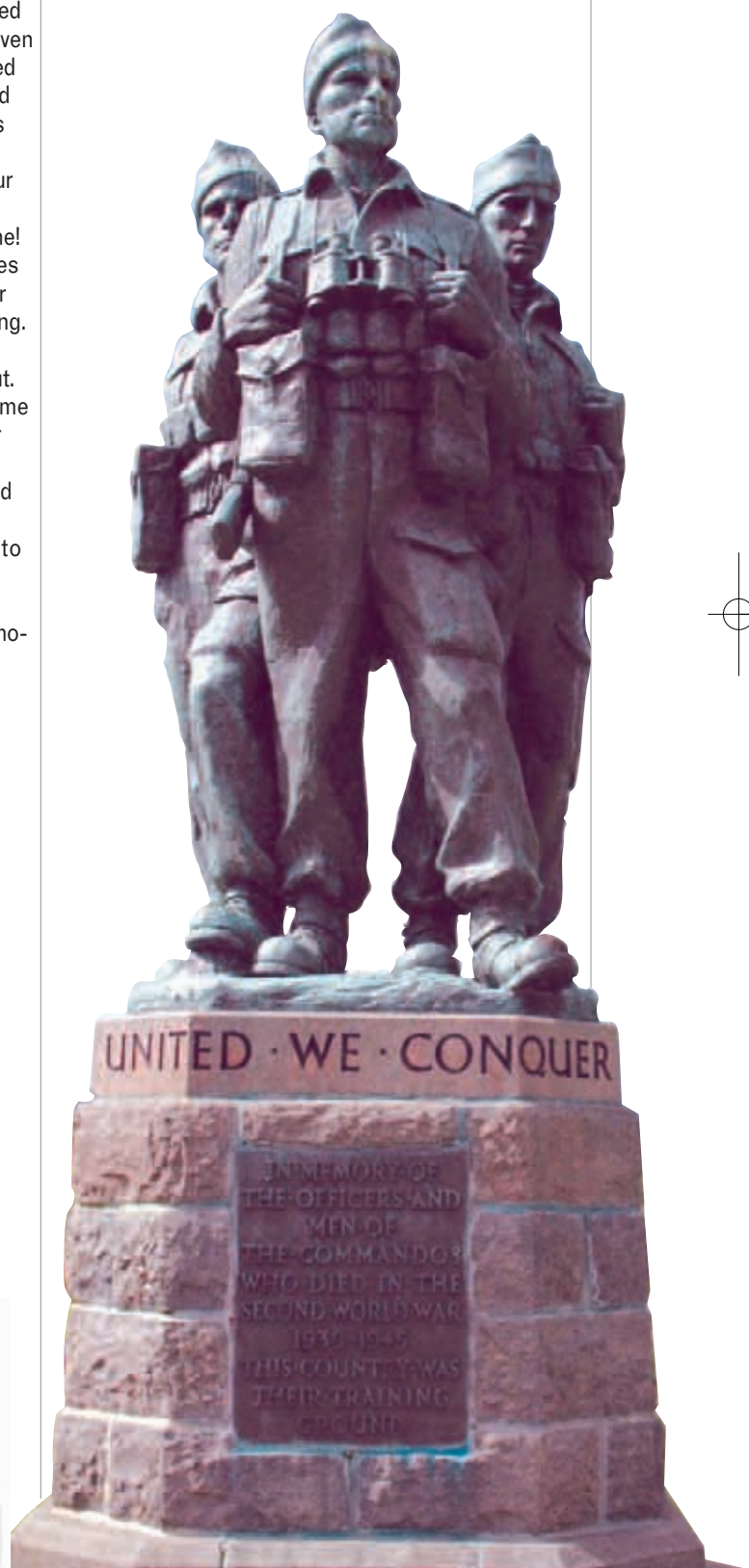
Our trip to Scotland came about through a 62 Res Cav Sqn NCO meeting towards the end of last year about sporting events outside of regular unit training. After that meeting, I remembered the Commando speed march that someone had spoken to me about. Thinking of organising a team to take part, I did some research on the event and contacted the ABMP for information.

At our unit's 2008 Christmas dinner I approached some members of my unit to see if they would be interested in entering the race. I also mentioned it to some members of 65 Res Inf Bn. The response was encouraging and by the end of January all issues regarding the team, permission, travel and accommodation were organised.

In March, a group of reservists took part in the famous Spean Bridge Commando Speed March in the Scottish Highlands. Cpl Patrick Hughes (62 Res Cav Sqn) reports...

Before we left Ireland permission was sought and granted to wear our DPM uniforms for the competition, as the rules stated that each competitor had to wear combat boots, combat trousers, green t-shirt and backpack, or 'Bergen' as it is more commonly known, during the march. The directing staff from 2 Bn Ghurka Rifles, who did a great admin job on the day, ensured that all the participants were carrying the required 16kg in their Bergens before and after the march.

The route is all on road and the first hill, which is a mile-and-a-half of a climb will test the fittest and most determined athlete. Afterwards it was agreed by



**quick
March**

Team members

62 Res Cav Sqn

Sgt Dave Graham
Sgt Stephan Conron
Cpl Paddy Hughes
(Team captain)
Cpl Daniel Heaslip
Tpr Simon Coyne
Tpr Barry Kiloran

65 Res Inf Bn

Sgt Colm Kirby
Cpl Anthony Duffy

Support

Sgt James Roche
Cpl Gary Pendred



all that this was the toughest part of the race. At the end of this hill we passed the WWII Commando memorial. (In the distance, beyond the memorial, you can see Ben Nevis on a clear day.) After that, it was a steady descent to an undulating road and onto the canal bridge at Gairloch, which marks the halfway point.

From there an incline brought us into woodland with more stunning Highland scenery on your right. Another mile-and-a-half brought us to the gates of Achnacarry House. The last mile or so is on the grounds of the house and soon enough the finish line came into view.

Once over the finish line there were refreshments laid on for everyone. There was even some Scotch whiskey available, much to the amusement of a PTI staff sergeant, called 'MD' from 29 Commando Regt, who kindly offered our team a lift back to the start area.

On the way back we stopped off at the Commando memorial to get a few photos.

It is located in moor land along the A82 road, north-west of Spean Bridge. Designed by Scott Sutherland, the memorial, which is 5.1m high and consists of three soldiers on a plinth looking over Leanachan Forest to the peaks of Aonach Mor and Ben Nevis. It was unveiled by the Queen Mother in 1952 and it commemorates the first Commando unit, established in 1940 on the orders of Prime Minister Winston Churchill. This WWII force trained in the immediate area surrounding their training centre at Achnacarry.

Inscribed on the plinth is the Commandos' motto 'United We Conquer' and the words: 'In Memory of the Officers and men of the Commandos who died in the Second World War 1939-1945. This Country was their Training Ground.'

Another plaque was added in 1993 after the Commando Association was conferred with the freedom of Lochaber.

I would highly recommend the Commando speed march, whether entering as a team or as an individual. It's a challenging race but well worth the effort. Everyone of us enjoyed the event and the banter at the presentation dinner in The Alexander Hotel, Fort William, just down the road from Spean Bridge, on the evening of the race. We received the Best International Team trophy for our efforts, a prize which was sponsored by Lt Gen Gerry McMahon (Retd) DSM. Hopefully, all going well, more members of the Defence Forces will travel over to the event next year. ■

Left:
The Commando Memorial west of Spean Bridge in the Scottish Highlands.

Below:
Some of the competitors who took part in this year's march.

I would highly recommend the Commando speed march, whether entering as a team or as an individual.





Mission Readiness

100 Inf Bn bound

Photographs by Armns Billy Gall

In April, the troops of the 100 Inf Bn MINURCAT conducted a series of live fire and realistic 'battlefield' scenarios as part of their Mission Readiness Exercise (MRE). It was an opportunity to hone personal/team weapon and tactical skills prior to their deployment to Chad in May. Commanders at all level (from section to battalion) had their assigned tasks to complete during exercises conducted in the Glen of Imaal and Kilpeddar, Co Wicklow. Also, key battalion and company headquarter Officers and NCOs completed a series of 'battlefield' computer generated

exercis
The ma
and ne
Mowag
The 40
der the
include
Recce





Readiness Exercise

Bound for Chad

Commanded by Billy Galligan and Paddy Reilly

series of live
Readiness
weapon and

assigned
maal and Kil-
quarter Officers
ated

exercises in the simulator at the Military College, Curragh Camp. The main photograph here is a 84mm Anti-Tank team in action. This and nearly every weapon from the pistol to the Javelin Missile, including Mowag-mounted weapons were fired during the MRE. The 400 plus battalion are drawn mainly from the 4 W Bde and is under the command of Lt Col Ian Hanna. The battalion activated in March includes a: Battalion Headquarters, Battalion Support Group, APC and Recce Companies, a National Support Element and a Intelligence Cell.



Photo by: Lt Quigley

