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# AN COSANTOIR

The Defence Forces Magazine

April 1990 £1



## TOUR DE FORCE

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editor:  
Capt. P. B. Brennan

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Sgt T. Hudson

editorial:  
Defence Forces HQ,  
Parkgate,  
Dublin 8, Ireland.  
(Tel: 771881).

advertising:  
The Manager,  
An Cosantoir,  
Defence Forces HQ,  
Parkgate, Dublin.

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Our cover caption this month features a fine action shot of Apprentices from AAS Naas under tactical instruction from Sgt John Loughran (pointing). The photograph was taken by Lt Shane Fahy and submitted with a query 'when does An Cosantoir intend running a photographic competition again'. Hopefully, before the end of 1990 is our intention and we are investigating the possibility of acquiring sponsorship for such a competition at the moment. More later. Incidentally the Steyr Rifle is now in use at Devoy Bks, Naas.

The Editor

## INFORMATION - INFORMATION

An Cosantoir often receives requests from overseas and home subscribers, researchers and authors for back issues of certain magazines and photocopies of particular articles published over the years. Due to the very limited staff available here, it is not possible to meet these demands with any degree of efficiency or proper response. We wish to point out that 16mm microfilm, 35mm microfilm, 105mm microfiche and article copies are available through University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. Other closer avenues for acquiring material previously published in An Cosantoir are Cork City Library, who have copies of all issues of our magazine since its inception on 27 Dec 1940; Military Archives, Cathal Brugha Bks; and the Military College Library. If all else fails then contact Sgt T. Hudson and we will do our best to meet your demand.

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## Fresh from the Sea



Our next issue of An Cosantoir should be different. The feature article will be written by Ms Arlene Carr, pictured above, a final year student at Dublin City University, placed with An Cosantoir for a four week work experience programme as part of her studies for a Communications degree.

With the permission of Commodore J. A. Deasy, FOCNS, Arlene joined LE Deirdre for a seven day off-shore patrol off the West coast. The Captain of LE Deirdre, Lt Cdr G. O'Donoghue, welcomed this additional member to the Ship's Company. Arlene proved to be a *super sailor*. Of course there is more to work experience with An Cosantoir than patrolling off the West coast!

Arlene's final assignment will be to design and lay out the May 1990 issue of our magazine. Our experience, so far, leads us to believe that this task will be well within her capabilities.

The Editor



Members of the unit pictured practising assault & covering techniques.

All photos: Armin J. Daly

## Army Ranger Wing - 10 Years in Existence

*In the early to mid seventies the increase in International Terrorism was such that many of our European Partners established special units to deal with Terrorist Acts. The Munich Massacre of 1972 had highlighted the need for such units in Europe. The kidnapping in 1976 of Dutch industrialist Dr. Tiede Herrema indicated that the problem had also arrived on our own doorstep. The general experience had been, both here and in Europe, that you cannot deal with kidnapping or hostage situations using normal police or military resources. There was a need for special skills and a higher degree of expertise in weapons and marksmanship. The Military Authorities responded by recommending to the Minister that a special unit should be formed. This recommendation was accepted and the Army Ranger Wing was activated on the 16th March 1980.*

### Mission

The Army Ranger Wing organises, trains and remains on call to perform tasks of a specialised nature in aid to the civil power, in assistance to the community and in conventional operations. As can be seen from this Mission the unit's role is diverse and broad and is designed to cater for all eventualities.

### Organisation/Command

The normal military chain of command applies with administrative, disciplinary and operational control

being exercised by the Commanding Officer of the unit in the normal way. The unit comes directly under the control of the Chief of Staff and is organised into a Wing HQ, an Administrative Detachment, a number of Operational Platoons and a Support Detachment.

### Training

ARW training is continuously geared towards the Mission with a particular emphasis on physical fitness and shooting skills. The unit recruits its members from volunteers from any

Corps or Service within the Permanent Defence Force. The selection process takes three months. The volunteers initially undergo a four week selection course; thereafter they join a training platoon. Less than 20% of all candidates succeed in making the grade.

Initial training concentrates on individual skills, such as fitness, unarmed combat, weapons and navigation. Thereafter a wide range of specialist skills are taught. The wide range of military skills thus developed ensures that the Army Ranger Wing is capable of being highly flexible and indepen-



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ARW use a wide range of training facilities. Our unique photograph depicts members of the Unit assaulting one such purpose built facility. Live ammunition was used.

dent when required to respond to any developing situation in conventional warfare or in aid to the civil power.

### Equipment

Since its inception the unit has purchased small quantities of specialist equipment and weapons necessary to facilitate the accomplishment of any mission it might be assigned. This equipment is designed to provide the ARW with the most effective means of dealing with terrorists in any of the likely situations in which they might become involved. Personnel are armed from an array of weaponry, which includes the H&K family of weapons. Equipment in service worldwide is monitored and the ARW, apart from developing new tactical ideas, keep weapon developments under constant observation. New equipment, weapons, and means developed for an increasing military market worldwide, are tested by the unit as they appear.

The unit trains and operates in relative secrecy in order to protect the identities of personnel and also to conceal the tactics and techniques that may be employed to counter terrorism. The very knowledge that a highly trained and motivated unit exists should be a deterrent in itself. The question is often asked "how do you calculate its deterrent value?" which may be answered as follows: "it is better to have and not need than to need and not have".

### ARW MOTTO

"GLAINE AR GCROI  
NEART AR NGÉAG  
BEART DE REIR AR  
MBRIATHAR.

April 1990

## Amphibious Capability

The ARW enjoys a close relationship with the Naval Service and all Rangers are trained Marines. Initial Seamanship, including Diver training is conducted at the Naval Base, Haulbowline. Seamanship training is designed to provide Rangers with the knowledge and skills to integrate smoothly with life on board NS vessels. This is followed by further tactical training in the application of these skills. These Marine trained personnel, along with Rangers specially trained as Combat Divers and Small Boat Specialists, frequently undergo exercises such as:

- ★ Ship to Shore Raids.
- ★ Infiltration/Exfiltration in a water environment.
- ★ Assaults.
- ★ Underwater Demolitions.

ARW Divers have performed many operations in aid to the civil power and have also provided assistance to the community. A close relationship has been developed with the Garda Sub-Aqua Unit.

## Parachuting

Since the formation of the ARW, parachuting has been recognised as one of the core elements of the unit training syllabus. It is seen by new members as an initiation rite of acceptance into the unit, whereby all new personnel must complete a minimum of five static line jumps. The parachute course provides the unit with a valuable rapid deployment capability and enables personnel who show an aptitude to progress to Free-Fall status and further specialise in parachuting.

Progress made by parachutists within the ARW in the past two to three years has been substantial.

## Sniping

Sniping within the Army Ranger Wing lies extremely high on the extensive list of specialist requirements. The sniper's training, combined with the inherent accuracy of his rifle, firmly establishes him as a valuable addition to the means available to the unit to achieve its mission. The sniper must be an expert marksman, possessing comprehensive training in marksmanship techniques and a high degree of weapon handling skill. A high level of motivation; allied to patience, determination, self-confidence and control are his hallmarks. He must be self-reliant and able to work as part of a small team for long periods of time in both conventional warfare and counter-terrorist roles.



Pte Terry Wearen, dressed for shooting with his Anschütz 2001 Target Air Rifle, pictured at practice in the NWA Gym at Blackheath Rd., Clontarf.

## Focus on Pte Terry Wearen and Small Bore Shooting

Report & photographs by Sgt T. Hudson

Small Bore shooting is an Olympic Sport in which there are three disciplines.

- Target Air Rifle - Standing. Fired at 10m range at a target with a 5mm bull, a hit on which scores 10 pts.
- 22 Target Rifle - Prone. Fired at 50m at a ten ring target, each ring measuring 10.5mm. (Both the above practices are scored on sixty shots.)
- 22 Target Rifle - 3 Position, i.e. Standing, Kneeling & Prone. Fired at 50m over a 3 by 40 shot course.

Special target rifles, which must conform to regulations laid down by the International Shooting Union, are used. The Air Rifle is of .177 calibre and fires a single wad cutter pellet. The 22 prone rifle is a bolt action, single shot and fires standard velocity ammunition. Of course, there are various grades of ammunition available, of which the best quality is the most expensive - approx £10.00 per 100 rounds. Choice of ammunition is determined by testing various types under controlled conditions to see which variety produces the tightest groups. The ideal test is to send the

rifle to an ammunition manufacturing plant where it is 'bench tested'. Each batch of amn contains about 25,000 rounds. Production batches vary in quality, etc., and several sample rounds are fired to determine the best batch and match for the rifle's unique characteristics. Three position shoot-



A close up photograph shows the concentration needed and gives some idea of the rear sight on the air rifle.

ing takes place with a .22 Free Rifle. This is a single shot bolt action and is less restricted by regulations than a prone rifle. All rifles used in small bore shooting have a standard sighting system. The front sight has a circular element and the rear sight is an aperture sight which is adjustable for windage and elevation. The targets are all circular with scoring rings from one to ten and thus the bull when viewed through the sights appears as a black dot inside a circle within another circle.

Specialist clothing and equipment is required - the most basic being a glove, jacket, trousers, boots, cap, glasses, sling, hand stop, spotting scope and stand and a shooting mat. The Air Rifle discipline requires the least amount of equipment as it is shot in the standing position and the target is returned to the shooter, after each shot, by means of an automatic target changer.

There are four Air Rifle Clubs in Dublin and two in the South of the country. Of the Dublin Clubs, only two are open to members of the general public; the other two clubs are for University Students, and these are Fassaro's Shooting Club, which is based in Dalkey and the Phoenix Target Air Rifle Club which is located

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More usual employment for Pte Wearen in the Workshops of 2 Grn S&T Coy.

at the National Wheelchair Association Gymnasium in Clontarf. Fassaro's Shooting Club has a permanent air rifle range and the Phoenix manages by setting up their temporary range each Monday night in the NWA Gym. The situation is much more satisfactory in the South and is of direct military interest in that the S Comd Target Shooting Society, which has PDF and FCA members, is located at Sarsfield Bks. The members here have several military range facilities available to them and consequently some of the best shots in the country can be found down South, in Mitchelstown and Limerick.

Pte Terry Wearen's interest, or passion, in small bore shooting developed gradually. He enlisted in Nov 1979 at Casement Aerodrome and following initial training was employed on general duties. He later applied for, and was successful in being placed on, a Basic MT Fitters Course to be run at Clancy Bks. At the end of this three year Course he graduated as a Pte Fitter and was posted to 4 Fd S&T Coy at Columb Bks, Mullingar in 1983. In 1985 he joined the W Comd Target Shooting Society based in the barracks. His initial interest was in the Webley Super-Match Air Rifle and he became actively involved in internal competition at Novice level.

Overseas service with 57 Inf Bn (UNIFIL) beckoned but by the time he had rotated back to Mullingar the W Comd Club was defunct. In Jan 1986 he read an article in 'Shooting News' on the Phoenix Club and decided to get involved in the sport again. He joined the Club as a Class D Shooter and soon after purchased his own proper Match Rifle, an Original 75HV. Competing in Club competitions with Phoenix in Dublin, Limerick and Mitchelstown brought initial success. He was regularly placed and soon broke the 500 point barrier for the first time - the max score is of course 600 points. Club involvement necessitated regular travel from Mullingar and the obvious solution was to apply for a posting to 2 Grn S&T Coy in McKee Bks. The posting came through in Sep 1986 and by this time April 1990

Terry had been upgraded from a Class D to a Class C shot. The next month saw him selected to compete in the British Open Championships to be held in Cardiff. This first taste of international competition, with over 2,000 entrants from all over the world involved, saw him finishing just outside the top twenty in the Class C category - a very creditable first attempt. Over the next two years or so his life changed considerably in that he married Genia, became a father, was upgraded from Class C to Class B in the Air Rifle discipline, became a Class A shot in the .22 Rifle Three Position discipline and travelled to Cardiff again - where he and his wife Genia both competed, a month after the birth of their son. Terry was placed in the top fifteen in Class B at the British Open Championship. In 1989 Terry had achieved a degree of consistency with the 22 rifle that merited his inclusion in the National Squad. His involvement in the British Open Championships in Cardiff that year was limited to two events - 6 yds and 10 metres. In the former he took second place in the Individual Shot and fifth overall on aggregate. In the latter discipline he reached sixth position on aggregate. This showing

meant that he had reached the qualifying score for inclusion in the Irish Olympic Elite panel squad.

Training for and involvement at that level demands the best equipment and utter dedication to the sport. As a first step Terry traded in his old air rifle and purchased at a cost of £740.00 an Anschütz 2001 Rifle. It was also necessary to make a further outlay of £1500.00 approx on additional equipment such as clothing, attachments and training aids. At this time he is a member of two of the three National Squads in existence i.e. - Air Rifle and .22 Three Position. Just last month he travelled to Manchester to compete, for the first time with his new rifle, in the British Air Weapons Championships. He came 15th overall out of 40 entrants but took a silver medal qualification in the sports grading system.

And what of his long term ambition? When I asked him, he replied, forthright and determined "to make the Olympic Games in 1996 and to win". To do so requires practice and competition at International events to ensure qualification. Qualification means consistent minimum scores of at least 570 points at recognised shoots. Terry is presently shooting on average 540 but he hopes to close the gap considerable in the near future with his new rifle. If he is successful he will then move into an Elite group - Class X - a group which has no member in this country at the moment. He does have problems with practice, one night a week is not sufficient, obviously, particularly when one has to set up the range and then dismantle it afterwards. It struck me when researching this article that the indoor range at McKee Bks would be ideal for Terry to practice in, but then, of course, that's just my opinion.

*Note: The author acknowledges the assistance of Lt Aiden O'Leary of 2 Grn S&T Coy in the preparation of this article.*



Pte Terry Wearen, on right, and his wife Genia De Souza being coached by Mrs Debbie Wilson, centre. Genia serves on the National Target Shooting Association as the Air Rifle Co-ordinator for this country. Mrs Wilson is Director of Coaching of the National Coaching Association and is the top international coach in Ireland. She has also coached in England and the USA.

# The 1989/1990 Irish Times Debating Competition

A Report by Comdt W. P. Freyne

(All photos by Capt D. Killian)

The Cadet School has participated in the Irish Times Debating Competition over the years with varying degrees of success. The 1989/90 Competition which culminated in O'Flaherty Theatre, Science Building, UCC on Friday 16 Feb 90 was to be the Cadet School's most successful year yet.

The Competition, which commenced in November last, had two Cadet School teams entered.

The Cadet A team fielded Cadets Ronan McGrath and Richard Brennan. The Cadet B team fielded Cadets Tadhg Murray and Tom Clonan. Both teams were successful in the early rounds, debating such motions as 'That charity should have no place in a just society' and 'That libel laws threaten democracy'.

Success in these early rounds brought a renewed interest and emphasis to in-house debates in the School and under the excellent stewardship of Capt Denis Killian - himself a finalist in 1980 - the teams went on to a well co-ordinated assault on the semi-finals, one of which was hosted by the Cadet School in the Military College.

On 25 Jan last Cadets McGrath and Brennan debated for the motion 'That this house fears for the stability of Europe' in the Arts Building, UCD. Despite a spirited performance, they failed to make it through to the final.

However, on 27 Jan, at the home venue, Cadets Murray and Clonan, debating for the motion 'That this house would discontinue the National Lottery' gave an excellent team performance to make it through to the final.

That final, in O'Flaherty Theatre, UCC, on Friday 16 Feb 90, was chaired by Professor Brian Farrell. Ms Christina Murphy, Duty Editor, The Irish Times, presided over a heavyweight team of adjudicators. The motion before the house was 'That this house would be European first and Irish second'.



The Cadet School B Team, finalists in the 1989/90 Irish Times Debating Competition. L/R: Cadet Tadhg Murray and Cadet Tom Clonan.

The debate, before a capacity audience, was lively and humorous and of a particularly high standard. The team prize went to Mr. Don Sullivan and Mr. Brendan Lenihan of UCC Philosophical Society. Cadet Tom Clonan took the Gold Medal for Best Individual Speaker.

Great credit is due to Cadets Murray and Clonan for their fine performances and it must be said that they were close to taking the team prize.

Cadet Clonan is a Dubliner. He holds a Bachelor in Education degree from Trinity College and worked as a Primary School teacher in Lucan before joining the Army. While he was a student at Colaiste Mhuire, Marino, he was an active participant in debating and took part in the World University Service Debating Competition in 1986.



Cadet Tom Clonan pictured with the Gold Medal awarded for Best Individual Speaker.

For the Cadet School to be able to produce debaters of the calibre of Cadets McGrath, Murray, Brennan and Clonan from such a relatively small group who can participate at the top level, is no small achievement.

To Lt Maurice Dowling who took an active part in organising 'in-house' debates and arrangements for participation in The Irish Times Debating series, a special word of thanks.

Capt Denis Killian, a finalist from 1980, gave unselfishly of his time and experience to prepare for these debates. Without his expertise and advice I doubt if we could have achieved what was achieved.



Cadet Ronan McGrath and Cadet Richard Brennan, who made it to the Semi-finals.

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EASTERN COMMAND



Brig Gen P. F. Monahan, GOC E Comd, pictured with Senior NCOs of the Comd on 9 Mar 90 prior to presenting them with the UN Peacekeepers Medal. Rear Row L/R: BSM Seamus McKenna, 27 Inf Bn; BQMS Patrick Weiser, 2 Inf Bn; BQMS John Barnes, CTD(E); A/Sgt Major P. J. O'Toole, 2 Grn MP Coy; Staff QMS Martin Roche, 2 Grn Ord Coy. Middle Row L/R: BSM Pat Guerin, 2 Inf Bn; BQMS Oliver Brady, ASOC; BSM Sean McPhillips, 5 Inf Bn; BSM Patrick Durney, St. Brigid's Hosp; BSM John Keating, McKee Bks Coy; BQMS Anthony Woodcock, Clancy Bks; BSM Jack Donovan, Clancy Bks; BQMS John Lennon, Bk Soc's Wkshps. Front Row L/R: BQMS Sean Hensey, 5 Inf Bn; BQMS Michael O'Shea, McKee Bks Coy; BQMS Thomas Daly, 29 Inf Bn; A/RSM Seamus Mullins, 2 Fd Arty Regt; Brig Gen P. F. Monahan, GOC E Comd; BSM Christopher McClean, CTD(E); BSM Joseph O'Sullivan, 29 Inf Bn; BSM Fred Murray, Gormanston; BQMS Stephen Conroy, 27 Inf Bn.

(Photo: P. Drennan)

UN Veteran Members of McKee Bks Coy paraded recently for presentation of the UN Peacekeepers Medal by Lt Col L. Kiely, OC and Camp Comdt. Sgt T. Hudson attended and the following photographs give a flavour of the day.

1. Pte Brendan Davidson receiving his Medal; 2. CQMS Patrick Doherty, Observer Corps HQ; 3. Sgt Bernard Lindsey and Lt Col L. Kiely in happy mood; 4. Capt D. Molloy, Bk Adj, congratulates Pte Tommy Dolan - a well known member of the Barrack Chain Gang; 5. Sgt Harry McDonald of P & R Section receiving his Medal from Capt D. Molloy.



2 Fd Arty Regt are busy as usual. Besides providing personnel to An Cosantoir and the Defence Forces Press Office, to help out during busy periods there, they are training a Recruit Pl, providing Guards of Honour for Arus, troops in atp etc., and making sure that Glen of Imual gets its usual hammering - accurately. We haven't the space to do justice to all the photographs submitted this month - unfortunately! Left: Future Gunners. Recruits of 2 Fd Arty Regt pictured on Day One of training - still a bit 'shell shocked' as the photograph by Comdt F. C. Reidy demonstrates.



The Engineer Specialist Search Team of 66 Inf Bn UNIFIL, pictured with Capt John O'Dea, Engineer Search Advisor. L/R: Cpl J. Browne, Aslt Pioneer Pl; Sgt F. O'Reilly, Pte J. Carr, Cpl P. O'Reilly, Pte P. Storey, Capt J. O'Dea, Cpl J. O'Dwyer, Pte T. Maloney, Pte P. Howe, Pte J. Costelloe of the Aslt Pioneer Pl.

(Photo: Capt R. McCann)

## ESST - The UNIFIL Experience

By Capt John O'Dea

After almost one year of operation in South Lebanon, the Engineer Specialist Search Team (ESST) has established itself as an indispensable part of IRISHBATT's response to the continuing threat posed by Roadside Bombs (RSB) and other Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). Invaluable experience has been gained in handling and servicing of search equipment in a harsh environment, on a daily basis. The interaction of the ESST and the mine clearing platoons of other contingents in UNIFIL has served to broaden the expertise of the individual searchers.

The ESST is an integral part of the Assault Pioneer Platoon of IRISHBATT. The current team serving with 66 Inf Bn is drawn entirely from personnel of Depot Engineers, Curragh Command. The policy of selecting volunteers from just one unit for the ESST is based on the importance of teamwork and understanding in search operations.

THAT DEFENCE FORCES personnel benefit professionally from service overseas with the UN is an established fact; nowhere is this more true than for the searchers of the ESST. Since the deployment of the first ESST in IRISHBATT in May 1989, the winding roads and rocky terrain of South Lebanon have proved a valuable training ground for searchers as well as a rigorous testing ground for equipment.

One of the major tasks of the Engineer Search Advisor (ESA) and his ESST is the training of the Specialist Route Clearance Teams (SRCT). A high proportion of Infantry Company personnel undergo such courses during their tour in the Area of Operations (AO). The most obvious benefits accruing from this instruction are that the Companies can carry out their own daily route clearance and that a high level of search awareness is engendered in students. A less obvious, but nonethe-



Cpl J. O'Dwyer and Capt J. O'Dea demonstrate the VALLON Metal Detector to Lt Gen L. E. Wahlgren, Force Commander, UNIFIL.

less valuable, result is that all members of the ESST are called on to instruct on equipment and techniques at regular intervals thus raising their own expertise. Nowhere is your understanding of equipment or concepts more severely tested than by the questions of the enthusiastic student.

The familiarity gained by searchers through daily handling of search equipment in difficult conditions has led to a marked increase in their confidence in the search instruments, which have proven to be suitable for the task.

However, the use of this equipment on a daily basis has proven to be a stern test of its durability. Weaknesses in design become apparent either in the form of simple breakages or failures in internal circuitry. Because of a limited amount of search equipment available to IRISHBATT, repairs must be effected rapidly to ensure that adequate levels of equipment are maintained. While many

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minor repairs are carried out by the ESST personnel themselves the co-operation of the Signals Platoon has been invaluable, particularly in relation to the diagnosis of problems in circuit boards. The experience gained in this area has led to some local modifications in equipment and already one such improvement has been incorporated by the Manufacturers into their latest model. This feedback from the end-user to the designers is leading to improved versions of proven equipment being procured by the Defence Forces for use in aid to the civil power operations at home.

CONTACTS HAVE BEEN MADE by the ESST with other Contingents, particularly with the Swedish Mine Clearing Platoon. A two day Course was held at Camp Shamrock, for personnel of this unit, concentrating on route clearance and incident search. The Course served to illustrate the differences between



Sgt F. O'Reilly of the ESST tries on a pair of mine shoes - designed to protect the searcher against pressure operated mines, by spreading his weight, thus reducing the pressure exerted on the ground.

engineers trained in conventional minefield clearing and those with a search background.

The training for mine clearing naturally revolves around the neutralisation of mines and booby traps in a conventional warfare situation. Search, on the other hand, is largely geared towards an irregular warfare scenario.

While a certain amount of conventional mine clearing is carried out in the UNIFIL AO (particularly in NOR-BATT) the main threat to UN personnel is posed by RSBs and other IEDs. Here the expertise of Defence Forces personnel serving with UNIFIL is far in advance of other UNIFIL Contingents. Furthermore the ESST and SCRTs are equipped specifically to counter such devices. The IRISH-  
April 1990



Photo from LITANI of MINTROESKA mine-thrashing machine.

(Courtesy of LITANI)

BATT 'search kit' has been the envy of other nationalities and already UNIFIL has been requested to procure buried wire detectors and metal detectors with variable sensitivity as presently operated by the Irish searchers.

NOT ALL OF THE transfer of information is one way and search personnel of the ESST recently visited the HQ of SWE-DENCCOY at Jwayya. There they were briefed on mine clearing equipment and techniques. Perhaps the most interesting element of the day was a demonstration by the Swedes of their mine-dogs. These dogs are trained to react to the vapours given off by the explosives in the mines. The dogs are most useful when searching along barbed wire or metal fencing when a conventional mine detector would be useless. They are also used for clearing paths to casualties stranded in a minefield. As well as the mine dogs, a Norwegian explosives dog and his handler gave an interesting demonstration of vehicle search. Are dogs a searcher's best friend?

SWEDENCCOY are also equipped with a MINTROESKA mine-thrashing machine. Using the flail principle, it is employed in the clearing of large areas of ground. The MINTROESKA is equipped with a rotating shaft that has numerous iron chains connected to it. Lead weights at the end of the chains crush the mines or cause them to detonate as the shaft is rotated. The crew operate the machine from a heavily protected, rear mounted cockpit. The mine thrashing machine has been used extensively in NORBATT area for the clearing of sites prior to the construction of UN Posts.

Considering that the concept of Search, as we practice it now, was only introduced to the Defence Forces in 1987, the rapid growth in this area has been quite breathtaking. The experience gained by Engineer and Infantry personnel in South Lebanon will undoubtedly prove valuable in future search operations in atep tasks as well as raising the general level of search awareness among all ranks in the Defence Forces.



Norwegian Explosives 'Sniffer' dog and handler, search a UN vehicle.

## PERSONAL LOAN?



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Lack of ready money needn't put a halt to your plans for a new car, home improvements, new furniture, holidays or any project which may require a fairly large outlay.

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## Specialist Engineer Group Training

A Report by Capt Kieran Heffernan

On Monday 12 February 1990, a very wet, cold, and stormy day when most sensible people would not even contemplate venturing outdoors, eleven staunch members of 1 Field Engineer Company from Collins Bks, Cork, inaugurated Day One of the first Specialist Engineer Group (SEG) Course administered by the Defence Forces.

This Course was designed specifically for the Corps of Engineers and in particular for Engineer Specialist Search Teams (ESSTs).

ALTHOUGH boasting of one of the best trained ESSTs in the Defence Forces, 1 Fd Eng Coy encountered two unprecedented requests for aid to the civil power which constituted an abnormally high degree of danger to personnel in 1989. The first involved the presence of an ESST in searching an old disused underground mine. This operation was severely limited due to the lack of training and experience in abseiling, ropework, and moving with safety over steep and dangerous ground.

The second incident comprised of an Engineer Team executing a rescue in order to prepare for the collapsing of a sea cliff-face using explosives in an attempt to retrieve two bodies from a whirlpool at the end of a deep ravine. This operation had to be aborted for the same reasons as the former.

As a result of both incidents and due to the existence of a high proportion of mountains, dangerous sea coasts and disused mines etc., in the Southern Command area, and, therefore, a high probability of a similar incident occurring, 1 Fd Engr Coy identified a need to have at least one ESST/Engineer Work Party qualified and competent to gain safe access to and work in such hazardous environments. In addition to this, the self esteem of the unit was bruised - (Motto: "No Task Too Great") - because of its inability to complete the aforementioned missions successfully, due to lack of training in this particular field.

To this end, research was undertaken and Capt Peadar Duffy, (the Army Association of Mountaineering [AAM] and Army Council of Adventure Training [ARCAT] representative of S Comd), was approached. Throughout the following months it was only through the tireless and trojan efforts of Capt Duffy that our concept became a reality. A comprehensive Syllabus of Training for the first SEG Course was drawn up, which was based on two other documents; The Syllabus for Confidence Training Instructors Course and The Syllabus of Training for Specialist Search Teams.

The Course was planned for 11 February 1990 to 2 March 1990 and a total of 15 students from 1 Fd Engr Coy were nominated. For five weeks April 1990



The first Specialist Engineer Group. Rear L/R: Pte P. O'Connor, Cpl P. Maloney, A/Cpl T. Mahon, Capt K. Heffernan, A/Sgt G. Walsh. Front L/R: Pte J. Harinett, A/Cpl H. Aherne, Pte M. Walsh. Cpls D. O'Neill, P. Lee and Pte D. McSweeney are not pictured.

prior to commencement, this group of committed Engineers could be seen training before lunch every day, raising many eyebrows in Collins Bks! The training consisted of road running and weights circuit training designed specifically to improve upper body strength.

### Nerves, Weather and Hollywood Conquered

Test Four of IT 1/80 proved easy when the Course finally commenced. Unfortunately four students were dropped at this stage for medical reasons. The first week was spent in Fort



An SEG search pair go 'over the top' with Specialist Search Equipment.

Davis. On entry into the Fort and on viewing some of the proposed abseil points the remaining eleven students were suddenly also in danger of being dropped for medical reasons. However, there were no casualties at this stage. The terrifying ordeal of 'going over the top' on the first abseil was soon to be forgotten as each new abseil was longer and more dangerous than the former; to such an extent that at the end of the Course any abseil in Fort Davis was considered extremely short and very simple.

A typical day saw members of the Course departing Collins Bks at 0730 hrs sharp. After four periods of instruction, lunch, and a welcome, but short rest for a half hour from 1230 hrs, was followed by another four periods of instruction until return to Collins Bks at 1800 hrs.

Most people can clearly recall the recent heavy rains, very severe gales and widespread flooding, having witnessed it all on TV or read about it in the newspapers, however, members of this Course will never forget it - having worked through it. In fact the Course was extremely fortunate to have just two dry days during the entire three weeks. Conditions were further worsened due to the fact that most training was carried out along the Atlantic Coast. Regardless of the weather, the instructors were very pleased at the high standards attained before the end of the first week.

The second week was spent in Kerry, accommodated in Ballymullen Bks in Tralee. Each day was spent rockclimbing and multi-pitch abseiling along the cliffs of Doonsheane and in the Gap of Dunloe. Confidence was beginning to manifest itself as each skill was guided to mastery. A powerful esprit de corps was also in evidence within the group as they supported and encouraged each other in ever constant life threatening situations. They were to be heard singing and dancing jigs on mountain peaks in the Gap of Dunloe to entertaining a group of American tourists in Kate Kearney's Cottage who were so impressed that they wanted to buy Paddy 'Donkey' O'Connor, Hughie Aherne & Co., and take them back home to Hollywood! The instructors looked on in amazement.

The Old Head of Kinsale was the venue for the final week. This week was designated for Engineer Specialist Search Training and in preparing for an exercise and demonstration of SEG skills. The demonstration involved an ESST team abseiling down a 200ft sea cliff to a cave and carrying out a search using specialised equipment. A large 'find' was made and having recorded the necessary evidence it was hoisted to the top. As the ESST returned to the top another two Engineers abseiled down

An SEG pair drilling boreholes for explosive charges with a heavy duty Kango Hammer.



The shortest way down!

about 100ft with a large heavy duty Kango Hammer and drilled four bore-holes in which the Engineer Officer placed explosive charges in order to blow the cliff face to block the cave. A simple firing circuit was set up and initiated electrically from the top of the cliff. All spectators were highly impressed by the effectiveness of the demonstration.

The Course concluded with a series of tests on the Old Head of Kinsale, one of which involved a 200ft multi-pitch abseil. In this case the student abseiled down to the end of his rope, which was only long enough to extend half way down the cliff. Therefore, at a height of 100ft he tied himself on to his rope with a prussik loop and in free suspension joined on a new length of rope which he carried on his back. At this point much manoeuvring was done, to get over the knot, before he could continue his abseil to the bottom. This was all carried out without any safety rope.

Having successfully completed these tests SEG badges were presented to the students at the end of the Course Dinner in Collins Bks. Though everybody thoroughly enjoyed the Course a feeling of great relief prevailed when it was finally over, as the three weeks were very physically demanding.

This first SEG Course was deemed to be an outstanding success. However, in order to maintain these skills it is imperative that training is continued on a regular basis at realistic and varied locations.

Certificates of Competency must be re-issued on a one yearly basis after the individual has successfully passed the required tests.



Officers of the W Comd who received their UN Peacekeepers Medal from Col P. O'Farrell, Comd EO & ZIC, at Custume Bks recently. Seated L/R: Comdts N. Kelly, P. J. Delaney, F. Marshall, Lt Col J. McGreal (who retired from the Defence Forces on the 21st of this month after 41 years service), Lt Col M. Collins, Comdt M. Coughlan. Rear Row L/R: Capts P. O'Maolain, M. Reidy, Comdt J. Griffin, Lt Col D. O'Neill, Comdts G. McCafferty, E. O'Brien, R. Healy, T. Rigney, J. J. Curley, D. Johnson and J. Cox.

(Photo: P. J. Murray)



W Comd take Australia. About that Defence Forces GAA Australian Tour 1990 - pictured are members of W Comd currently on tour. Rear Row L/R: 2/Lt D. McKevitt, Pte J. J. Rouine, Sgt Colm Naughton, Cpl Gerry McShane, Sgt Mick Winters, Capt Pat Ryan. Seated L/R: Capt Jim Byrne, Capt John Maughan, Capt Michael Brennan, Comdt T. Rigney and Capt Paudie O'Riordan (Photo: P. J. Murray)



Best Student. Sgt Pat (Sammy) Shields pictured after receiving the Best Day Release Student Award in the City & Guilds of London Institute Cookery for the Catering Industry Course No 706 Part II, at Athlone RTC recently. Well done 4 Hosp Coy.

(Photo: Capt J. Durnin)



USAC Staff presented with Peacekeepers Medal. The hardworking, diligent and discrete staff of USAC paraded recently for the presentation of the UN Medal to those members who have served overseas, by Comdt M. Coughlan. Our photograph by Comdt S. O'Flachain of 1 Inf Bn features: Rear Row L/R: Ptes Pat Mullins, Ray Jordan, Sgt Colm Naughton, Ptes Frank Kinnern, Bernard Worley, Mike Connolly, Cpl Tom Nee, Sgt Dave Kelly. Front Row L/R: Sgts Oliver Brennan and Mike Connolly, Capt Michael Bourke, Comdt M. Coughlan, OC USAC, Ptes Martin Brady, Martin Connaughton and Colman Greene.



B Coy 6 Inf Bn On Parade. Comdt M. Flanagan, OC B Coy, assisted by Cpl B. Malone, pictured presenting the UN Peacekeepers Medal to members of the Coy.

(Photo: P. J. Murray)



Brig Gen P. Dixon, GOC W Comd, pictured presenting a Wig and Gown to Capt Gerry Humphries on the occasion of Capt Humphries' retirement from the Defence Forces to pursue a career as a Barrister. Also pictured is Lt Col K. Murphy, Mess President, Offrs Mess, Custume Bks.

(Photo: P. J. Murray)

# Trad Concert for Ethiopia Famine Relief

Organised by the Men's Club Committee of 1 Inf Bn

A Report by Sgt Brendan Forde

On Fri 9 Feb last at Dun Ui Mhaoliosa, Galway, a traditional Irish Concert was held by the Men's Club. All funds raised would be donated to Famine Relief Ethiopia. All talent for the Concert was from the Barracks or had served in the Barracks.

The Concert started at 2030 hrs when Pte Barney Kinlavy introduced the guest M.C. for the night - Ex Coy Sgt Eamonn Carr, who is indeed an old hand at these concerts. The first act was from the Broderick Brothers, Pat & Val, who provided a selection of tunes on their Uilleann Pipes, followed by some lively Set Dancers who danced 'The South Galway Reel Set'. Pte Dermot Keigher from the Bn Sigs Pl then rendered two lovely numbers on guitar.

Ptes Dick Waldron and Gerry Broderick provided a very unusual duet of Bagpipes and Banjo with some jigs and reels.

Pte Joe Flaherty captivated the audience with his 'Sean Nos' singing in Irish & English. He was followed by Ptes Mickey Burke and Frank Coleman who gave a great rendering of some of our most popular ballads. Pte Kevin McDonald closed the first half of the show with some lively accordion music.

A break for refreshments was now had, with a beautiful Chicken Curry being provided by a very able catering staff who fed 200 people in less than half an hour. A most appetising meal, congrats and many thanks to the Bn Cooks.

The second half of the show was kicked off by CQMS Johnny Durkin, ex 5 Inf Bn, ex 1 Inf Bn and now serving with 18 Inf Bn (FCA) Ballina. His stand-up comedy act had the place in roars of laughter. Nobody was safe from Johnny's wit, Chaplains, Officers Commanding at all levels, Ministers, etc., all got a 'slagging' in a humorous vein.

Sgt Gerry King came on next to provide some brilliant music on the accordion and to swing us back to the Trad scene again. Pte Michael Carr from the Tpt Pl provided some more airs on the Uilleann Pipes.

Cpl Gerry Burns, who up until now had been doing 'sound' for the show then took the stage and got the audience in a real party mood and singing along.

Sgt Tony Doyle and Cpl Joe Dempsey rendered a selection of bal-



Most Rev Eamonn Casey, Bishop of Galway pictured with the Men's Club Committee and the cheque for £1,400.00 L/R: Ptes Paddy Cronin, Jimmy Beattie, Liam Joyce, Johnny Diviney, Barney Kineavey and Sean Folan.

(Photo: CQMS C. Loughnane)

lads and guitar music to keep the party spirit going. The show was brought to a close with a selection of jigs and reels by all the musicians involved.

Tribute must be paid to all who organised and participated in this enjoyable, morale boosting and very worthwhile Concert. Incidentally the

bicycle donated by 'Harry's Cycles' raised over £200.00 in the raffle on the night. Most Rev Eamonn Casey, Bishop of Galway - who for a change sat back and was highly entertained - was presented with just over £1,400.00 for the Ethiopian Famine Relief Fund. Well Done the NCOs and Men of 1 Inf Bn.



Talent by the Score. Entertainers Val Broderick, Dick Waldron, Gerry King, Gerry Burns and Pat Broderick in full flight.

(Photo: Sgt. P. Coppinger)

## New Golfing Society

A new Golfing Society has been established in the Western Command. Membership of the Society is open to all serving and retired NCOs and Men of the Command. Full details are available from Sgt Colm Shine, the Hon Sec. Sgt Shine can be contacted at 4 Grn MP Coy (Ext 185) during duty hours or at his home telephone number thereafter - 0902-37289.



Air Traffic Control Staff at Casement Aerodrome came together, socially, recently, to mark the retirement of three former Controllers. Flight Sgt Alan Byrne (Retd) now 'controls' at Knock International Airport and former Flight Sgts Tony Gibson and Derek Douglas are operating at Galway Airport. Our photograph by Capt K. Byrne records the event - Derek Douglas was unable to attend due to his controller duties. Front L/R: Comdt P. Sexton, Fl Sgt Alan Byrne (Retd); Lt Col G. Kerwin, Chief ATC Offr; Fl Sgt A. Gibson (Retd); Comdt P. Tormey. Rear L/R: Capt S. Quigley, Capt J. McMahon, Capt R. Cummins, Fl Sgt S. Hendrick, Fl Sgt B. McCourt, RSM P. Nolan.



Last Maritime Patrol for 232. Super King Air Beechcraft 232 of Maritime Squadron pictured with crew L/R: Armn J. Cotter, Photographer; Comdt D. McCarthy, Pilot; and Lt J. Bagnall, Co-Pilot after the Beechcraft had carried out its last Maritime Patrol. 232 will now be used for training and shuttle purposes.

(Photo: Armn D. Parke)



New ATC Staff. Col K. Hogan, OC Air Corps Gp, presents half-wings to the two successful students who graduated from the 22nd Basic ATC Course recently - L/R: Cpl D. Smith and Cpl D. Delaney.

## New Flash



Recently the Adjutant General gave approval for personnel of No 1 Sp Wing, Air Corps Gp to wear a Unit Flash. It is of shield shape and measures 60mm by 75mm. The background colour is mid-blue with yellow trimmings.

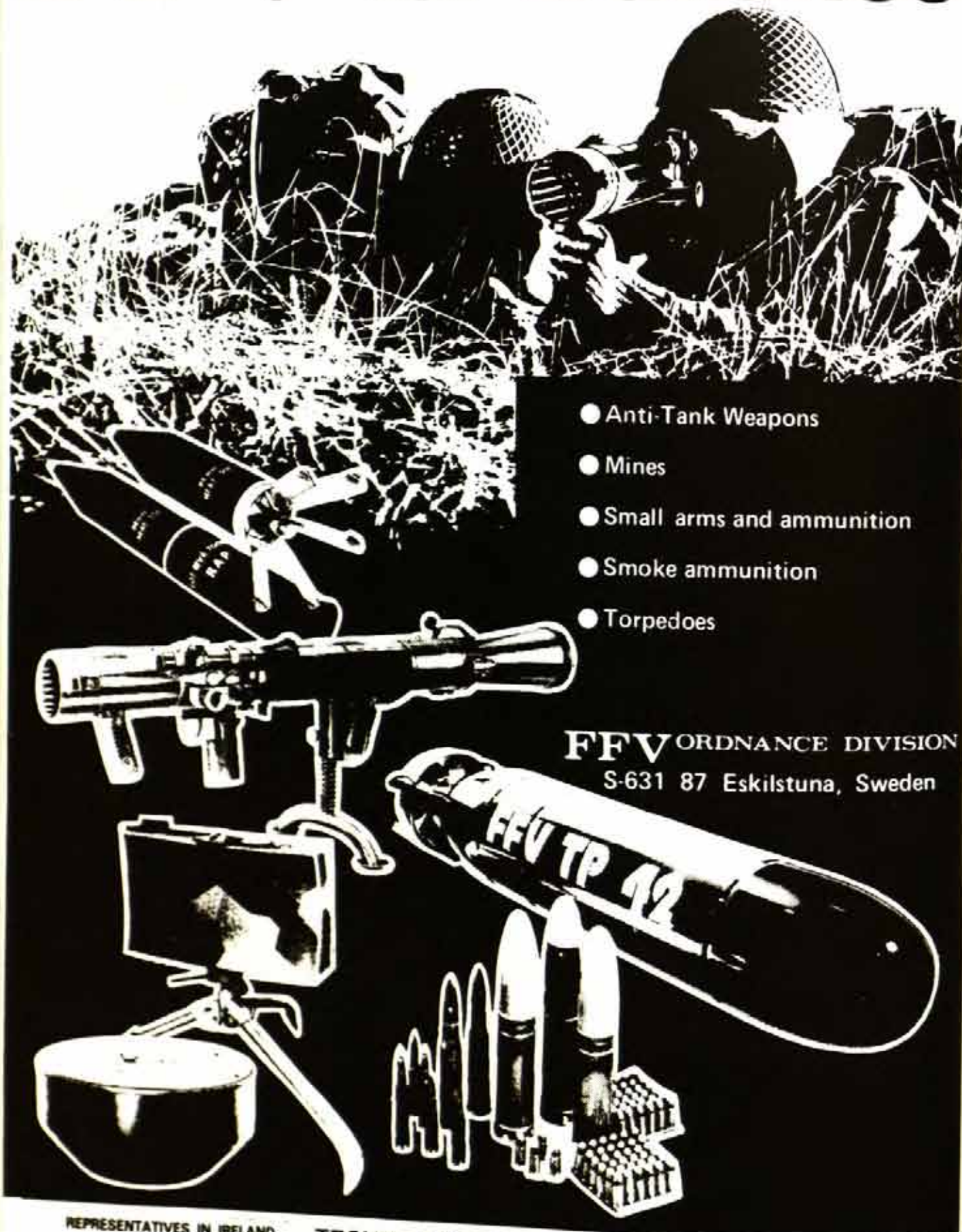
The crossing red aircraft through the central white cross symbolizes both the accuracy required in disciplined flying, especially formation work, and the air support nature of Light Strike Squadron.

The wave feature at the bottom recalls the special skills of Maritime Squadron and the trans-oceanic nature of Transport and Training Squadron, which provides the Ministerial Air Transport Service (MATS).

The red figure '1' gives the Unit identity and this pleasing Flash was the exclusive design of Comdt Dermot McCarthy, OC Maritime Squadron.

Capt Kevin Byrne

# FFV - for ordnance



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An Cosantoir



*Irish Management Institute - Presentation of Certificates. The first Department of Defence Materials Management Course pictured with Maj Gen F. N. O'Connell, QMG and Mr. Maurice O'Grady, Director General, IMI on 27 Feb 1990. Personnel pictured Rear L/R: Capt D. Scully, Comdt K. Croke, Comdt E. Field, Capt T. Heskin, Comdt T. Doyle, Lt Col U. Lyons, Mr. B. Coughlan, Comdt R. Kelleher, Comdt M. Kennedy, Lt Cdr (NS) J. Hanley, Lt Col J. F. O'Connor. Centre Row L/R: Capt G. King, Comdt C. Ryan, Mr. J. Power, Comdt C. Cunningham, Comdt P. Lyndsay, Lt (NS) S. O. Keefe and Comdt R. Hoffler. Seated L/R: Comdt M. O'Connor, Ms Judith Howard, Mr. M. O'Grady, Director General IMI; Maj Gen F. N. O'Connell, QMG; Ms Nora Cronin, Mr. D. Gannon of IMI.*

(Photo: Sgt T. Hudson)

## Materials Management for the Department of Defence

**A Report by Comdt Michael O'Connor\***

*On 28 September 1988 a proposal for financial sanction to run a Materials Management programme was forwarded by the QMG to the Director of Training. This proposal outlined the benefits which were achievable if such a Course were undertaken. Having considered the implications and benefits of such a Course, sanction was given. The Course was planned to take effect from September 1989 to February 1990 in the Irish Management Institute. The broad aim of this Materials Management programme was to improve the organisation's materials productivity from the effective purchase of materials through to the control of these materials and the planning of their utilisation.*

**T**HE COURSE UNDERTAKEN by the Department of Defence (18 Military and 6 Civilian) in the Irish Management Institute was a 'milestone' in the history of the Department and it has laid the 'foundation stone' for new logistical management techniques in the future. In today's business world the cost of holding inventories is very high and in the absence of an effective materials management system these costs cannot be controlled effectively. In business terms the logistic process in the Defence Forces could be compared to the following businesses:

- A chain of garages and workshops, which maintains fleets of trucks, tanks, ships and aircraft.
- A distribution company which selects, buys, maintains and distributes 250,000 items; including weapons, ammunition, many types of vehicles, food, clothing, medical supplies, fuel and domestic equipment.
- An electronics company which buys, maintains and distributes sophisticated communications equipment, and manages a countrywide radio network.
- A range of educational establishments including a military college, apprentice schools and several specialised technical schools.
- A construction and property management company.
- A number of small hospitals and pharmacies.
- A high volume information gathering agency.
- A chain of catering and lodging facilities.

With this in mind the first Department of Defence Materials Management Course set about analysing the Materials Management needs of the Defence Forces for the '90s'. The duration of the Course was twelve days, that is, two day modules each month for five months from

*Continued at bottom of next page*

\* Comdt M. O'Connor is Planning Officer in the QMG's Branch.  
April 1990

## Western Command Success

The Defence Forces Badminton Championships 1990 were held in Athlone on 6, 7 and 8 Mar 1990. The competition results are as follows. The winners are in bold type.

Event	Finalists
Senior Singles	Capt T. Sheehy (Curragh) Lt J. O'Sullivan (West)
Junior Singles	Cpl T. Mulvaney (West) Cpl J. McGarr (East)
Senior Doubles	Cpt T. Sheehy & Pte J. Harkin (Curragh) Lt J. O'Sullivan & Cpl M. Mulvaney (West)
Junior Doubles	Cpl J. Mulvaney & Pte J. Larkin (West) Cpl F. Coyne & Grt J. Kelly (West)
Veterans	Comdt R. Kelleher & Sgt Major J. Hughes (East) Sgt P. Wynne & Sgt P. Minogue (West)
Winners Team Final	Western Command
Runners-up	Curragh Command

The Lt Col Tim O'Connell Memorial Trophy was presented by Mrs. Betty O'Connell to Cpl Mick Mulvaney, Captain of the Western Comd Team which defeated the Curragh Comd (winners of the last three years) in a closely contested final.



Col P. O'Farrell, Comd EO & 2IC, W Comd, pictured holding the Lt Col O'Connell Memorial Trophy and with the W Comd Squad involved in the 1990 Defence Forces Badminton Championship. Personnel pictured are Front Row L/R: Lt J. O'Sullivan, Sgt P. Minogue, Cpl T. Mulvaney, Grt J. Kelly, Pte J. Larkin, Pte G. Cassidy, Cpl F. Coyne. Rear Row L/R: Pte J. Percinille, Sgt P. Minogue, Cpl E. Collins, Col P. O'Farrell, Comdt B. Healy, Cpl M. Mulvaney, Sgt P. Wynne.



The Senior Singles Finalists shake before the match - Lt J. O'Sullivan (left) and Capt. T. Sheehy.



The Veterans - L/R: Sgt. P. Wynne, Sgt. J. Minogue, Sgt. Major J. Hughes and Comdt R. Kelleher.



Mr. Fergus Long of Ronan, Daly and Gernyn, Solicitors, pictured presenting Col N. Fitzgerald with a contribution from his firm towards the Defence Forces GAA Australian Tour. Comdt S. Coughlan is pictured on left.

## MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

continued  
September 1989 to February 1990 (excluding December). The Course was introduced by a two-day Pre-Course which took place in the conference room, McKee Bks. The Pre-Course was designed to give a better insight into all areas of the supply/logistic functions of the Department and was structured so that military and civilian participants could outline the pressures and constraints they each had to work under. The programme itself was based on modern action learning concepts and practicality was its hallmark. The sessions themselves included lectures, case studies, hands-on computer

experience, demonstrations and exercises.

A full library of notes and books was also provided with most time being spent on group work, discussion and experience sharing. Projects relevant to the organisation were undertaken and proved to be of immense value. The projects ranged from:

- Improving the Materials Management system within the Defence Forces.
- Review of the procurement process within the Defence Forces.
- Improving or implementing effective inventory management within the Defence Forces.

The continuing policy for computer purchase and the advanced stage of the logistic computerisation project will require further Courses like Materials Management to assist the Department bring procurement and technical stores administration into the '90s'. This strategy will only be achieved if we have personnel trained in the operation of these new systems. The development of new logistic techniques to achieve change will have to be undertaken if the Defence Forces are to be brought into the twenty-first century. Materials Management is the first step.



Ciaran Tiernan Transplant Fund. Personnel from Dublin Units of E Comd recently took to the streets of the Capital City to assist 2 Fd Arty Regt in a 'gun push' to raise funds so that Ciaran Tiernan, the young son of a serving NCO, may have a liver transplant abroad, when the occasion arises. The funds raised will ensure that Ciaran's parents can stay with him at hospital in Birmingham. Our photograph shows the cavalcade, led by Brig Gen P. F. Monahan preparing to depart from McKee Bks. Any reader wishing to make a donation to this special cause should contact the Comdt Adj, Collins Bks, Dublin, or An Cosantoir office.

(Photo: Sgt T. Hudson)



Senior NCOs of 2 Grn MP Coy Retire. At a special function recently, Comdt M. O'Brien, APM E Comd, presented Coy Sgts B. Gordon (left) and Paul Dalton (right) with mementoes to mark their retirement after 21 years service.



Mons Ted Dunne, HCF, was 'caught' at the Main Gate and paid up generously and cheerfully. (Photo: Sgt T. Hudson)



DFBF (Eastern Command) in Action: Ptes Fullerton and Griffiths, A Coy 29 Inf Bn, pictured delivering a bed, funded by DFBF (E Comd), to Mrs M. McConnell, Clones, Co. Monaghan.

Mrs McConnell's husband, Michael, who at 92 years of age is confined to bed was delighted to receive the unexpected presentation. Michael, father of nineteen children, served in the Army in the early years of its formation. Though confined to bed he has a lively personality and a quick wit. He asked that his thanks be forwarded to the necessary section responsible for providing the bed. DFBF Eastern Command take a bow!

(Photo: Sgt D. Barry)

## 'All Change' at AXTRADE Ireland Ltd.

In a restructuring process of Axtrade Ireland Limited it has been agreed that all representation in relation to military and related products be transferred to a newly formed Irish controlled company **TECNINTER IRELAND LIMITED**.

Tecninter will, with immediate effect take over all agencies presently held by Axtrade, to mention just a few: AB Bofors, FFV Ordnance, Hagglund Vehicle AB, Crypto AG, Saab Training Systems AB and Air Target AB.

In conjunction with these changes Ragnar Janson, formerly Managing Director of Axtrade responsible for the contacts with the Defence Forces and the Department of Defence has left Axtrade and will shortly move to Spain. He will, however, be a Director of Tecninter and will thus keep in touch with the Defence Forces.

Mr. Vincent Fahy, an Engineer and former Executive of the E.S.B. will succeed Mr. Janson, taking full responsibility

for the contracts with the Department of Defence, assisted by Ms. Margaret Dowling.

Says Mr. Janson, "I have lived in Ireland for five years, which has been a great experience. I have spent a lot of time with the Defence Forces and have specifically appreciated the friendship that has developed over the years. I hope that my successor will experience the same, which helps to carry on, even when the business is slow. Let me take this opportunity to thank all who have made my stay in Ireland a most memorable one and wish you the best of luck in the future".

The new address, telephone Nos. etc., are as follows:

Tecninter Ireland Limited,  
7/8 Mount Crescent,  
Dublin 2.

Tel: 762056, 789217  
Fax: 766793  
Telex: 92237

# Defence Forces Volleyball 1990

A Report by Sgt Pete Ward

The Senior Section of the above Tournament took place in the Gymnasium, Cathal Brugha Bks on 20/21 Feb last.

The Team Reps met at 10.00 hrs for the Draw. It was at this meeting that it was proposed by the Naval Service Rep Lt (NS) P. O'Donnell, that the format be changed for this year.

It was decided that the new format would be a full 'Round Robin' of three full sets. This would give each team the opportunity to play all the other teams. At the end of this, the top four teams would qualify for the semi-finals, with first playing fourth and second playing third.

**A**FTER ALL THE PRELIMS had been played, the first semi was to be E Comd v S Comd. This match was expected to be close, as S Comd had already taken a set off E Comd in the prelims. E Comd took the first set 15-10, S Comd took the next set 15-6 and E Comd finally took the deciding set 15-11. The second semi was between W Comd and C Comd. W Comd were decisive in taking the first set 15-2 but C Comd woke up and took the second set 15-3. In the third set C Comd were dominant again, winning it 15-8.

The final was set. E Comd (Captained by Coy Sgt Christy Murphy) v C Comd (Captained by Cpl 'Mono' Goff). This was a long awaited match between these two teams. Last year S Comd had robbed E Comd of the chance to play C Comd in the final by beating them in the semi-final. E Comd wanted revenge for their defeats at the hands of C Comd in about seven of the last nine years.

The first set started and was very exciting, with one of the new rules coming into effect, that of the 17 point limit on scores. E Comd lost a 13-6 advantage but just managed to take the set by 17-16. C Comd took the second set by the narrow margin of 16-14. The third set was all C Comd, winning decisively 15-7. E Comd had to do something at this stage. They got their act together and took the fourth set by 15-11. So it was a fifth set decider. Another new rule was to come into effect here. That of a rally point system, this means, every rally scores a point regardless of which team served. This was a very quick and exciting set with no margin for error, as every error gave a score to the opponents. The set only lasted 15 minutes with E Comd just gaining the Liam Devlin Trophy by 15-13, winning on a C Comd service.

A 'classic' match which lasted for 1 hour and 54 mins and will remain in the memory of both participants and spectators alike for a long time to come.

The Novice Section of the tournament took place in the Gymnasium, Cathal Brugha Bks on 22 Feb 90.

As this was the inaugural Novice



Col Joseph Flanagan, OC 2 Bde, pictured presenting the Liam Devlin Trophy to Coy Sgt Christy Murphy, Captain of the victorious E Comd Team. BSM Pat Guerin is pictured on left.

(Photo: Sgt P. Ward)

competition and only introduced at a late stage, only three teams were represented. These were E Comd, C Comd and Air Corps.

The competition started with E Comd against Air Corps which the E Comd took quite easily by 2 sets to nil. Next, Air Corps played C Comd, but again failed to be dominant and C Comd won by 2 sets to nil. It was decided to play the final at this stage as it seemed unnecessary to play the last prelim just to see who topped the poll.

So the final was set, E Comd (Captained by Coy Sgt Larry McGrath) v C Comd (Captained by Pte John Byrne). The best of 5 sets. E Comd got off to a shaky start and just never got it together, losing the first set by 15-10 and the second set by 15-7. E Comd started the third set well, building on a 8-3 lead, only to see C Comd turn on the style and win out by 15-11. So a decisive win by 3 sets to nil for C Comd. Maybe next year, all Commands will be represented. Then we will see just who is the best Novice team in the Defence Forces.



CQMS Tom Lander pictured receiving a special presentation from Col J. Flanagan to mark his imminent retirement from the Defence Forces after 23 years service - and of course his immense contribution to Volleyball over the years.

(Photo: Sgt P. Ward)

An Cosantoir



An Cosantoir could not feature the Stand-down Ceremony held at NRAD, Haulbowline on 18 Feb last, to honour Commodore W. J. Brett's retirement from Service, until this issue. The photo montage published now was compiled by PO G. Thompson and L/S T. Smyth. Starting at the top left and reading left to right, the montage features Comdt W. J. Brett and his son, Cadet Martin Brett; Capt (NS) new Commodore J. Deasy making a presentation; Lt (NS) D. McMyler, Lt J. Clarke and Lt T. Griffin; Commodore Brett addressing the parade; Cdr E. McNamara, OC Naval Depot hands over the Parade and COH; CPO M. McMahon, DSM; Lt Eithne; Bidding farewell to Lt Cdr R. Ryan; Lt Cdr P. Dunne, PSO/FOCNS for many years; Capt (NS) M. R. Murphy, Commodore Brett and Commodore Deasy; Sigs Division Inspection accompanied by CPO M. Cummins; Receiving a presentation from WO J. Murphy on behalf of the NS NCOs; Mrs Eileen Brett and daughters Denise and Brid; A/Sec K. Morrissey; Cdr Kevin Foster, Chairman Cobh UDC making a presentation on behalf of Cobh UDC.

# Annual Rockhill 10k Charity Road Race

IN AID OF DONEGAL HOSPICE

Saturday, May 12th 1990

## The Defence Forces and the Community Rockhill to the Fore



Plans are being made up in Donegal to ensure that the 7th Annual Rockhill 10k Charity Race scheduled for Sat 12 May 1990, will be the biggest and best event so far. The aim, of course, is to raise funds, through sponsorship, for the Donegal Hospice and to continue the very active involvement of B Coy, 28 Inf Bn personnel in the local community - in another role so to speak. The Rockhill Charity Fund was established in 1983 with the theme of 'Charity through Athletics'. To date a total of £14,000.00 has been raised by this Annual 10k Event and distributed by the Organisers, all members of B Coy based in Rockhill, to charities in the North West Donegal area. This is the second year that the Donegal Hospice will benefit from the 10k Event. The

Hospice Movement has captured the hearts of the generous people of the County who deeply appreciate the services being rendered to those suffering from cancer. Last year, through a little bit of publicity for the Event in An Cosantoir, Defence Forces members from all over the country made their way to Donegal to support the Rockhill members. Once again, this year, an invitation to partake has been extended by the 28 Inf Bn. We understand that accommodation etc can be arranged so why not plan on spending an enjoyable break in lovely Donegal. All you need is a 'full' sponsorship card! Details from Pte Michael McCormack at Rockhill - 074-21933/21235, or members of the Organising Committee.

## Rockhill Utd FC Re-Union

Report & photographs by  
Cpl R. Brennan

Rockhill Utd were formed in 1972. Most players were members of B Coy 28 Inf Bn. They competed in the Donegal League from 1972 - 1986. During that time they were very successful, winning the League on four occasions. They also won the W Comd Championship twice, competing as a Coy Team, which in itself was a great achievement considering the duties and strength of the Coy. A number of players also won All-Army medals with W Comd.

On the 3rd March last, a re-union was held, to bring together all personnel who had played for Rockhill Utd over the years. On this day a 'Past' Eleven took on a 'Present' Eleven in a challenge match and showed their younger comrades 'a thing or two' in

a convincing 3-0 victory. After the game all retired to the 'House' where a presentation function took place to honour ex Pte 'Bunty' Flanagan, who recently retired after 21 years service. Bunty had the distinction of having played the greatest number of games for Rockhill Utd. During the function

a letter was read out from Comdt D. O'Carroll (now serving with UNTSO in Damascus) outlining the history of the Club.

A minute's silence was then observed for two deceased former players, Cpl J. Houston and Cpl D. Caldwell, who have departed for a better life.



Veterans with Steam: The 'Past Eleven' pictured before the game. Front L/R: Cpl P. Gaffey, ex Sgt D. McLaughlin, Sgt J. Crawford, ex Cpl J. McLaughlin, CQMS J. Porter, Sgt B. Gavigan, ex Pte 'Bunty' Flanagan. Rear L/R: Cpl R. Brennan, Sgt H. Walters, Sgt J. O'Neill, Cpl E. McClean, ex Ptes L. Crossan, J. Purthill, S. Catterson, T. Owens, H. Lennon, B. Galvin, H. McCormack. The young mascot is not identified.



The 'Present' Eleven - worn out from duty! Front L/R: Ptes N. McBride, K. Harlin, H. McGill, P. Downey, P. McLaughlin, S. O'Donnell, Cpl. L. Porter, Pte. T. McNamee. Rear L/R: Ptes F. Martin, H. Allan, J. Gallagher, Comdt T. Cox, Ptes E. Crawford, P. Dunworth, E. Boyce.

An Cosantoir



Comdt T. Cox, OC B Coy, 28 Inf Bn, pictured after making a presentation to ex Pte B. Flanagan, on behalf of the Company.

# Shades of Empire - A Visit to Baluchistan

By Lt Col H. Quirke

The United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP) was established after the signing of the Geneva Accords on 14 April 1988. As a result fifty military officers drawn from ten countries were deployed in both Afghanistan and Pakistan in May 1988, including five from Ireland. Lt Col H. Quirke, Comdt S. Quilty and Comdt M. Verling served in Afghanistan and Lt Col P. J. MacHale and Comdt J. Martin served in Pakistan. One of the first tasks of UNGOMAP was to confirm the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan by 15 Feb 1989 and this historic event was completed on schedule. The main military task of UNGOMAP up to the beginning of March this year was to confirm non-interference and non-intervention by either party, i.e. Afghanistan and Pakistan, in the internal affairs of the other and teams of officers were permanently posted at the three main road crossing points between both countries. These are at Torkham at the entry to the Khyber Pass in North West Frontier Province, Teri Mangal also in North West Frontier Province and at Chaman in Baluchistan. Lt Col H. Quirke, Comdt M. Verling and Comdt T. Stapleton served in Pakistan while Lt Col J. Rigney and Comdt A. Gilleran served in Afghanistan. A change in status of UNGOMAP took place last month. Lt Col J. Rigney is now the sole Defence Forces Officer serving in this theatre with the United Nations. The Mission has been redesignated as OSGAP and Lt Col Rigney is now a Military Adviser to the Permanent Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Pakistan (OSGAP). The Geneva Accords also provide for voluntary return of an estimated five million Afghan refugees and this has still to be implemented.

In this article the author describes a visit to Baluchistan and traces briefly the history of the large garrison city of Quetta. It is expected that a further article on aspects of the Soviet Forces withdrawal from Afghanistan will be published in a future issue of An Cosantoir

I FLEW INTO QUETTA the capital of Baluchistan to visit the UNGOMAP Outstation in the city and the two UNMOs whose lot it was to monitor the flow of traffic between Pakistan and Afghanistan at Chaman Border Post. One of the largest garrison towns in Pakistan with a population of about a million people, Quetta is strategically situated on a plateau at 5,500 ft elevation at the mouth of the Bolan Pass which leads down towards the Indus River as it flows through Sind and on into the Indian Ocean, South of Karachi. More importantly to the North-West it faces the Khojak Pass which commands the Western route from Afghanistan into Pakistan. Like many cities in this country there is the old and the new, but Quetta is mainly new because it was almost totally destroyed in the devastating earthquake of 1935. There are many fine new buildings but strangely the very large and bustling bazaar area with its rows of narrow inter-linking streets is similar to many an old market or souk in this sub-continent or in the Middle East. But it is the very large Cantonment on the South side of the city which is most interesting from the military viewpoint, and miraculously this area was little affected by the 1935 earthquake. Here military type sign posting directs one to the Staff College, Infantry School, Electrical, Mechanical and Engineering College and to many other military installations. The very

large manpower of the Pakistan Army is very evident, with smartly dressed Quarter Guards parading in front of the many regimental guardrooms. Military Police with their distinctive red cravats are at all the major road inter-sections and one wonders when and why this remote city gained such military significance.

QUETTA would not have been on the route of invading Afghans and Moguls down into India because the mainly barren mountainous area between here and

the Indus would not have sustained armies living off the land. They, like Alexander the Great before them, passed further to the North using the Khyber and Nawa Passes which lead directly into the fertile regions of the North West Frontier Province and Punjab. It was the first Afghan War of 1839/42 which first identified the military strategic importance of Quetta. In the 1830s the British in India became alarmed with Russian expansion South to the Oxus River and Afghanistan could not be allowed to fall under Czarist control. A treaty



Political Agents Escort in North West Frontier Province tribal area pictured with Lt Col H. Quirke



Baluch schoolboys in a fruit producing valley, South of Quetta.

was signed at Lahore with the great Sikh leader Ranjeet Singh and a strategic plan was agreed. The Sikhs would advance on Kabul by way of the Khyber Pass and a British Force by way of the Bolan and Khojak Passes through Kandahar to the West. It was the Irish born General Sir John Keane who first commanded the British-Indian troops in this region when he led the Bombay Army up through the Bolan Pass from Karachi to enter Quetta in the Spring of 1839. While Quetta is now called the orchard of Pakistan, on account of its many well watered fruit producing valleys, it was described by one of Keane's Officers as a "most miserable mud town". However, the half starved Bombay Army and also the Bengal Army which had marched overland from Lahore in what was then Sikh Punjab, were able to purchase meat and wheat from the surrounding plains before Keane who assumed overall command, marched both armies up through the Khojak Pass to Kandahar in April 1839 and, from there, on to capture Ghazni and enter Kabul in August that same year. From there Keane returned to India and the reward of a Barony in Ireland and thus escaped the catastrophe which befell that army in the treacherous Passes between Kabul and Jalalabad in the cold January of 1842. But then, maybe, the experienced and decisive Keane would never have allowed that situation to develop in the first place?

The British were again back in Quetta in 1846 to control warring Baluch, Marri and Bugti tribes who were raiding into now British Punjab, and finally in 1876 a treaty was signed with the leading Baluch leader, the Khan of Kalat, whereby the British were allowed to station troops in the Province for defence against Afghanistan. Quetta became the biggest garrison, and the Cantonment dates from this time, just about twenty years after the start of the first permanent buildings at the Curragh.

The importance of this decision

was vindicated only two years later at the time of the Second Afghan War in 1878 when the Russian threat again saw British armies marching from Quetta on their way to Kandahar and Kabul. Then at the beginning of this century, Field Marshall Lord Roberts again identifying Afghanistan as the major external threat to the British Raj, re-organised the British Indian Army. As the Khyber and Khojak Passes were the two main entry points opposite Peshawar in the Frontier Province, and Quetta in Baluchistan respectively, both these garrison towns grew in size in order to accommodate the new field army of nine divisions. The decision to site the new Indian Army Staff College at Quetta, on similar lines to Camberley was also taken by Kitchener and it dates from 1905. After Pakistan's Independence in 1947, this College became the Pakistan Army Staff College and today they remain very proud of this internationally renowned military academy. Field Marshals Auchinleck and Montgomery served here as Colonel Instructors in the early 1930s and the present Foreign Minister, Yaqub Khan was School Commandant from 1963 to 1965 with the rank of Major-General.

Today it is a mixture of old and new. Most of the old mud bricked long bungalow type buildings survive, but many new ones, including the new Staff College, are appearing as the more derelict ones are being replaced. One of the few buildings to be destroyed in this Cantonment area, in the earthquake of 1935, was the fine Catholic Church which cracked and had to be taken down in 1936. It was rebuilt in 1971 on the same site, but unfortunately the new building is not near as fine a structure as the old one. The old officers' lines with their fenced in bungalows are very reminiscent of 'K' lines in the Curragh. British Indian Army other ranks were discouraged from leaving barracks and so Cantonments had to supply shops, canteens and recreational facilities.

Many of these old canteens and shops are still intact and there are many open playing areas, with cricket obviously the most favoured game. And again like the Curragh there is an eighteen hole golf course nearby.

**P**AKISTAN MAINTAINS a very large garrison here, a Corps Headquarters and perhaps three divisions, but in some ways it is like an Army of Occupation. The Baluch are reluctant Pakistanis, only joining the new State at Independence when the, mainly Punjabi, Pakistan Army occupied the Province in force in 1948. Baluchistan provides Pakistan with most of its oil, natural gas and coal, and this siphoning off of the Province's riches is a source of great annoyance to the fiercely nationalistic Baluch. This caused the insurgency of the Baluch Peoples Liberation Front in 1973 when almost 80,000 of Pakistan's Army were tied down for almost five years before the revolt came to an end. Baluchistan has also been described as the soft underbelly of Pakistan because of its vulnerability to Soviet penetration through Western Afghanistan, and because of its long border with Iran. Now, in addition since the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in December 1979, the Province has absorbed an estimated one million Afghan refugees, the majority of whom live in camps between Quetta and Chaman.

To drive this journey today is to be constantly reminded of the tragedy of this war. Almost the last building one passes on leaving Quetta is the large Red Cross Hospital for Afghan wounded. Further on, after passing through the very fertile fruit farming area at Kuchalak the road passes through the large refugee camps at Saranan and Piralezai. Here there are smaller hospitals and dressing stations and also two International Labour Organization (ILO) vocational training centres run by retired Cavalry Corps Captain Michael Mulcahy. These are just two of twelve such centres organised by the ILO and Mick Mulcahy in the refugee areas of Baluchistan. They provide the younger refugees the opportunity to learn many of the skills which will be required to re-build their war-torn country when they return. It is a very dedicated and professional service which involves very long journeys in difficult climate and very often in very dangerous conditions. Unlike the North West Frontier Province there are no tribal areas in Baluchistan but all UN personnel travelling in Border Areas close to Afghanistan are provided with armed escorts by either the Frontier Corps (Military) or by the Frontier Constabulary (Police levies). Of Irish interest also in this area, in nearby Pishin, lives

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Baluchistan's first female Member of Pakistan's National Assembly (MNA) - one Jennifer Qazi Musa (nee Wren) from Tarbert, Co. Kerry.

**I**T IS DIFFICULT to travel this area and not reflect on what the conditions of soldiering were like for the other ranks of the Bombay Army who first came here with Keane in 1839. Many of them like subsequent Bombay, Madras and Bengal Armies were Irish. While Keane and his officers rode on horseback and were attended by a retinue of grooms, cooks, bearers and batmen, the soldiers had to march across desert and up through rough mountain passes in extremes of temperature. Down through the Bolan Pass in Sind and across the Indus at Multan where the 2nd Battalion, the Dublin Fusiliers were disbanded in 1922, the temperature rises to 50C (120F) in the heat of the Summer. The normal tour of duty in India was four long years and unlike the officers who would spend short leave periods with their families in the hill stations at Simla and Murree and longer leave every two years back in England, the other ranks remained in barracks down in the very hot plains. Diseases like cholera, dysentery and malaria were big killers and the Christian graveyards in Quetta, Peshawar and many other garrison towns bear testimony to the many young men, women and children who died in these parts.

There are many Irish names to be found because all the Irish Regiments in the British Army served long periods in India. There is a fine stone monument in the grounds of St. John's Cathedral in Peshawar commemorating forty-one NCOs and men of the 1st Battalion Munster Fusiliers who died of cholera at Shakadda, about twenty miles North of that city, during the Mohmand Expedition of 1908. Irish names are also to be seen on the gravestones of British Regiments, especially those from Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire. Some last lines from a poem by the old Fenian O'Donovan Rossa come to mind. It is a poem written by Rossa from an English jail in which he describes how as a young boy in famine stricken West Cork, he helped two boyhood friends, Charlie and Thady, bury their widowed mother.

'And Charlie died a soldiering in Bombay  
and Thady died in Ross the other day'

While Charlie would not have been to Quetta and Kabul with Keane and the Bombay Army of 1839/42 he could very well have been to these parts with later Bombay Armies, like many of his generation forced by economic conditions at home, to fight other people's wars in far away unfriendly places.

And, finally a word about the

small Christian Community in Quetta. There are more than twelve thousand Christians, mostly Catholics in the city and some thousands more scattered around this largest of Pakistan's Provinces. Pakistani Christians are generally very poor, many came here with the British from further South in India, and many are low caste Hindu converts. There are only two priests in Quetta to administer all Baluchistan - an area more than twice the size of Ireland. Like Fr Tom Rafferty, an Irish Mill Hill priest in Nowshera in North West Frontier Province and Fr Theogenes an OMI from Sri Lanka and his Pakistani Assistant. They travel very long journeys to administer to those living in outlying towns and villages, but then, long journeys were always an accepted part of life in these parts.

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## Who? Where? Why?



Two people have submitted information in connection with the picture in our February issue.

The location is of course, Athlone Barracks and the year was 1923.

Both submissions agree that the Officer on the left is Brigadier George Adamson and that Col A. T. Lawlor is on the right.

Although wearing a Sam Browne Belt, the soldier lean-

ing on the barrel, one says, is Sgt Sean Lennon. The other claims it is Capt Kit McKeown (no relation to Sean or Jimmy MacEoin).

The man beside Col Lawlor (note the spurs) could be Lt Mick Robinson, says one entrant. Not so, says the other - who has the names of the group written on a similar photograph but is still trying to decipher it.

Can anyone settle the argument?



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## Letters

91, Grange Park Rd  
Raheny  
Dublin 5

### Go Anywhere, Do Anything

Sir,

It is a fact that Irishmen have soldiering in their blood and it is because of our history that Crown forces, and now our own sovereign forces are so closely related when put into chronological sequence of military service.

My late father was a Trooper in WW I. He served in the South Irish Horse and was based at Gough Bks in the Curragh. My son, Keith, enlisted as an apprentice in the Army Apprentice School and where should he end up on posting as a trained soldier technician, but at the same barracks, now of course Plunkett Bks. This coincidence set me thinking and what is now a military trend in our family apparently started with my maternal Grandfather, one Samuel Pickering who appears to have been from Sligo. Born in 1867 he joined the East Lancashire Regiment (The Buffs) and later on the Australian Imperial Forces (The ANZACS) and served with the Pioneers in WW I. He saw service in India, Afghanistan, South Africa, Australia and France. He took part in the Chitral Campaign in Afghanistan and served in the Khyber Pass. He then took part in the Boer War in South Africa in 1899/1901 and later with the ANZACS Pioneers in France. He became a Sergeant sometime during the course of the foregoing. He had the Indian General Services Medal, the Chitral Campaign Medal, the South African Medal with Bars and the Service Medals of WW I - the Mons Star 1914/18 and War Medal. How he came to be in the Australian Forces I do not know but it would seem to be typically Irish, i.e. go anywhere and do anything.



Now my Dad (Freddie Leeson) came into the picture. He was born in 1898 and his mate was a Woodus Whittaker Johnson - Uncle Willie, (born about the same time). My Dad was courting my mother Charlotte Pickering and Uncle Willie was courting my mother's sister Isabelle Pickering. They both subsequently married their fiancées and became Samuel Pickering's sons-in-law. Apparently with the onset of WW I they both joined up as Troopers in the South Irish Horse (see photo). You can see the shamrock on his cap. They were based in Gough Bks (Plunkett) at the Curragh where they did their basic training and learned their soldiering and horsemanship before being sent to France. Uncle

Willie was transferred to the Royal Irish Lancers (The Dandy 5th) and later the Machine Gun Corps. He was decorated with the Military Medal and 1914/18 War Medal. My Dad was also transferred to the 5th Lancers then to the Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) and then the Glasgow Highlanders (HLI) and then back to the South Irish Horse. Why all this transferring was done I have no idea save to say that the ways of armies were always somewhat of a mystery. Dad was a signaller 1st Class and also a noted marksman. He served in the first and second battles of the Somme and Ancre. Also at Deuville Wood, Beaumont Hamel and Grandcourt Poziers Corselette. He served in the ARP in Dublin during WW II.



Tpr Keith Leeson, Depot Cav and 66 Inf Bn (UNIFIL) pictured before departure to Lebanon last year.

Our Keith joined the Army with the 29th Platoon of the AAS in 1984. We always felt he got the taste of Army life from his scout master in Raheny - one Sgt Harry Higgins of the Air Corps. On graduation Keith was posted to the Cavalry Corps (see photo), Depot Cavalry at Plunkett Bks, Curragh. The feeling that he was posted to the hardskin workshops was that of being somewhat short in length he could be inserted into the exhaust of a '90' or APC, the better to repair the innards! He toured with 64 IRISHBATT UNIFIL and naturally we were very proud when all the lads of the Peacekeeping Forces of the UN were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. He is currently on tour with 66 IRISHBATT and we are very proud he is serving in the cause of peace, and he is of course very proud of his Glengarry.

Yours sincerely,  
George E. Leeson

◆◆◆◆◆

Sir,

15 Feb 1990

### More Bang for the Punt

I was amazed to learn that 82% of the entire Defence Budget goes to wages and salaries. As was pointed out in the article in the January issue of *An Cosantoir*, the remaining 18% leaves the entire Defence Forces capital equipment budget terribly under-funded, considering the cost in 1990 terms of a single aircraft or ship or indeed of a relatively expensive item like an APC.

Of course three or five year capital expense budgets would help, as items could be ordered, but delivery and payment could be spread over the three or five year period.

An idea has occurred to me which may be worth considering by the 'Powers That Be'. Every Corps of the Defence Forces has an equivalent FCA Unit, e.g., Signals, Naval Service, Cavalry, S&T, etc., with the notable exception of the Air Corps.

I am sure that there is a sizeable body of commercial pilots, both fixed wing and rotary wing, and technicians living and working in the Dublin area that could be formed into an Air Corps FCA Unit. The conversion to Air Corps equipment for both pilots and mechanics would be fairly

easily achieved and this would surely help out with the shortage of those professions in the Air Corps.

The problem of trained pilots and mechanics leaving Air Forces for better paying positions with civil airlines is a world wide problem. Australia recently passed a law prohibiting Quantas, the national airline, from hiring R.A.A.F. pilots and mechanics.

The idea of using civilians in a FCA situation, as suggested above, works very well in this country. In Air National Guard units that makes up nearly 50% of the USAF personnel.

Air Corps equipment seems to have finally caught up to the Twentieth Century which makes the case for my suggestion even more germane

Peter J. Browne  
Resource One, Incorporated  
Seven Pointe Circle  
Greenville, SC 29615  
USA



25, Suir Road,  
Kilmainham

8 Mar 90

Sir,

In Vol 50 No 2, which pays deserved tribute to the Army Jumping Team and the Equitation School, I detect a slight error on page 16. The photograph caption at the bottom of the page should read L/R: Capt D. Corry, Comdt J. G. O'Dwyer, Capt F. A. Aherne, Lt. J. F. Neylon.

Yours sincerely,  
Michael O'Shea.

**Editors Note:** This is quite correct and has been pointed out by quite a few of our subscribers. We have placed a note in our office copy of the August 1976 issue of *An Cosantoir*, from which the photograph and caption referred to was extracted.

## Artillery Corps Day 1990

The 1990 Artillery Corps Day will be held in Murphy Bks, Ballincollig, on Saturday 25 August 1990. This event will have a distinctly 'Ballincollig flavour' and it is hoped that all Gunners and friends of the Artillery Corps will be able to attend.  
A detailed programme will issue later.



Col G. Murphy, D Arty, invites readers of *An Cosantoir* - of a certain vintage mind you - to identify the group pictured in the photograph, which was given to him by Col Shorthall (Retd). Details of the winning hand are not necessary but if the correct year and names of the four officers pictured are supplied then a small prize will be forthcoming from the Sec of the Arty Club. Replies to D Arty in *An Cosantoir* office.

## A Tale with a Twist



Editor,

This group is definitely Irish Army, 'Emergency' era. I had a BSA M20 500cc motorcycle as District Officer, Coastwatch Sligo - Reg No ZD 23. The Capt on right reminds me strongly of Harry Flood. He was a Staff Officer to Maj Gen Hugo MacNeill at 2 Division HQ. The 'head' in the middle looks like Capt Gus Mulligan, who served in 4 Motor Squadron. Neither paid a visit to Kent in 1940, of that I'm pretty sure.

Yours sincerely,  
Comdt Owen Quinn (Retd)



171, Kimmage Road West,  
Dublin 12.

Editor,

Regarding your 'Tale with a Twist' on page 23 of Vol 50 No 2. Enclosed photo was taken near Drewstown, Co. Meath in May 1941, en route to Virginia, Co Cavan for Summer exercises.



Those in the photo are L/R: Sgt Pat Corcoran, Lt Michael T. Duggan, CQMS Don Donovan and Gunner O'Loughlin, all of 10 Fd Bty, 2 Fd Arty Bn attached to 2 Inf Bn commanded by the then Major J. D. McGrath.

The motorcycle, of which I was the rider, was a BSA 350cc Reg No ZD 206, Gunner O'Loughlin rode ZD 208. ZD 258 definitely was Irish Army property and the photo is NOT 'somewhere in England' and not 'Kent to be precise'. Oh what fun!

Yours,  
Michael T. Duggan  
Lt Col (Retd)



Maj Gen F. N. O'Connell, QMG, escorted by Capt S. O'Sullivan, inspects a Guard of Honour drawn from 3 Inf Bn, on the occasion of his recent Inspectional Visit to C Comd.

(Photo: Sgt A. O'Brien)



Pictured at the prize-giving for the Best Decorated Bks Competition which was held over the Christmas period. Brig Gen P. Grennan, GOC made the presentation. Coy Sgt Phil Grant, McDermott Bks; Coy Sgt Christy Flynn, Connolly Bks; Coy Sgt Donie Molloy, McDonagh Bks, Col T. Dunne, Comd EO & 2IC.

(Photo: Sgt A. O'Brien)



Personnel from the C Comd who competed in the Defence Forces Badminton Championships held at Custume Bks, Athlone, recently. C Comd were Runners-up for 1990.

(Photo: Air Corps Photo Sec)

## CURRAGH COMMAND



Col D. A. Swan and Mrs Rosaleen Swan pictured with Brig Gen P. Grennan, GOC C Comd and Lt Col M. O'Shea, Mess President, Comd HQ Officers Mess, on the occasion of a presentation made to Col Swan to mark his retirement from the Defence Forces. On behalf of all our readers we wish Col Swan a peaceful and happy retirement.

(Photo: Sgt A. O'Brien)



Pictured at a function in Clarke Bks NCOs Mess to mark their receiving 'An Bonn Dea Iompair', Lt Col N. Callanan, OC Clarke Bks; Pte Larry Geraghty and Coy Sgt John Baldwin (Medal recipients) and Brig Gen P. Grennan, GOC C Comd.

(Photo: Sgt A. O'Brien)



A Presentation from students of 4 Morlar Instructors Course to the Infantry Weapons School, at a function held recently in McDonagh Bks NCOs Mess, on the completion of the Course. L/R: Capt J. O'Shea, CTD S Comd; Sgt J. Doyle, 21 Inf Bn (FCA); Sgt M. Corry, 4 Inf Bn; Capt H. Berney, IWS; Capt M. Mullagh, 30 Inf Bn.

(Photo: Sgt A. O'Brien)

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## Official Opening of Canteen at Kilbride Military Camp

Brig Gen P. F. Monahan, GOC E Comd, presided at the official opening ceremonies and reception to mark the opening of the new canteen at Kilbride Military Camp on 29 Mar 90.

This further upgrades Kilbride Military Camp training facilities for E Comd. The new canteen provides light snacks, hot pies, drinks and bar facilities, with a TV, Pool Table & Dart Board available. It is hoped this service will be availed of by units conducting range practices, who can eat their own rations at lunch time in the comfort of the canteen, augmented with hot pies and appropriate drinks. This will be ideally suitable for FCA Units conducting overnight weekend training camps who can use the full bar facilities for social events, get together and so on - an important part of training too.

The canteen itself is located in the main accommodation block with seating for 70 pers. The furniture is ex-Griffith Bks Officers Mess. Full bar facilities include draught beers, stout, lager, spirits, soft drinks, sweets, chocolate, cigarettes etc. Normal opening hours are 1230 to 1400 hrs daily during weekdays when no unit is in occupation of Camp.

During occupation, opening hours will include 1800 to 2200 hrs and other times at the request of the OC occupying unit. Bar extensions are provided for special social events with the permission of GOC E Comd. Cpl Burke, Kilbride Mil Camp Staff is the Canteen Manager under the supervision of DFCB.

Kilbride Military Camp comprises an area of 1500 acres, providing 3 rifle ranges for conducting normal small arms training, range practices, a Saab Scania range, overnight accommodation and catering facilities for 200 all ranks. In the immediate area are ideal forests and mountains for tactical and adventure training. A new 5 year afforestation plan will eventually result in 1500 acres being landscaped with copses of trees to provide better tactical training areas and environmentally improve the open landscape. Effective heating and a large drying room are gas operated. Further storage heating is now being provided in the HQ Block.

In the long term it is envisaged that Kilbride Camp will be the main training area for E Comd, particularly with its proximity to the City Bks.



Former Camp Comdt, Comdt J. Moriarty and Comdt D. Collins pictured advertising the facilities available at Kilbride. (Photos: P. Drennan)



Brig Gen P. F. Monahan and Comdt D. Collins, Camp Comdt Kilbride Military Camp, availing of the canteen facilities at the official opening ceremony.



Three Senior NCOs waiting to be served?



The Army Spoilt Everything! Troops from W Comd were actively involved in providing aid to the community during the widespread flooding of the Shannon River area in late February last. According to reliable reports received at Defence Forces HQ, things, notably children of school going age, got carried a bit too far! Cpls Derek Liddy and Thomas McCallon are the culprits in this particular case as they were photographed in the act of ensuring that Clare and Michael Dunning didn't miss out on their schooling. Shame on you lads - were you never caught looking for a really good excuse when you were young?

(Photo: P. J. Murray)  
An Cosantoir

## At Tiri Remembered - 6 Apr to 13 Apr 80

At Tiri village is located at the forward edge of the Irish Battalion's Area of Operations (AO) in the UNIFIL AO. It is situated in a valley running East to West and dominated to the North by a range of hills, the highest being Hill 880, and by a smaller range to the South. In 1980 the population of the village was some 2,000 persons, exclusively Moslem.

At Tiri was important because:

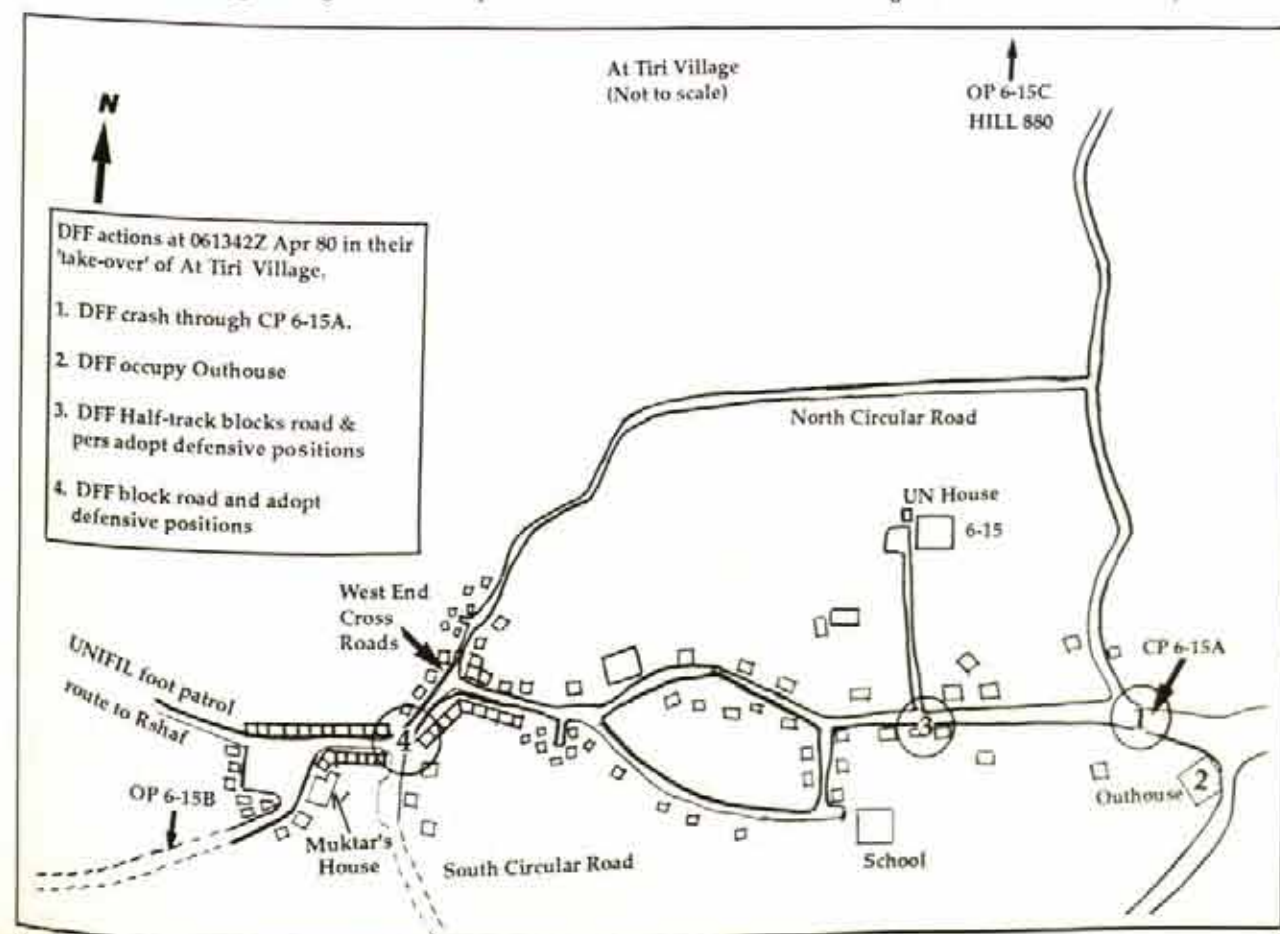
- By local standards it had a fairly large population.
- It controlled the only road leading North onto Hill 880. From this hill the towns of Haddathah, Tibnin, Haris and the fertile Tibnin Valley could be easily dominated by direct fire.
- The village was under UNIFIL control and jutted Southwards into the area controlled by the Israeli backed and supported De Facto Forces (DFF) of Major Saad Haddad - the so called 'Christian Enclave'. This is an area of South Lebanon between the Israeli Border and the limit to which UNIFIL was allowed to deploy. The Irish Battalion had four UN Posts established in that enclave. By reason of their isolation and vulnerability within the DFF controlled enclave these Posts became commonly known as 'Hostage Posts'. They were of little strategic value to UNIFIL but were considered to be politically important. Requests to have them closed down had been denied.

In the October 1988 issue of *An Cosantoir* Capt Ray Murphy in his article, 'Background to the 1980 Battle of At Tiri - a personal assessment', placed the attempt by the DFF to take over the village of At Tiri, and other closely related incidents, into the broader framework of what was happening in the Middle East and on the wider political front at that time. The following article has been compiled by a number of personnel who were 'on the ground' in At Tiri from 6 to 13 April 1980 and is dedicated to the memory of Pte Stephen Griffin of 46 IRISHBATT, Pte S. Soronaivalu of FIJIBATT and those members of UNIFIL wounded or injured during the 'Battle of At Tiri'.

SUNDAY THE 6th OF APRIL, dawned clear over South Lebanon. Having celebrated the religious rites of Easter, off-duty personnel of the Battalion (Bn) settled down for an entertaining afternoon at the Bn Sports. With the last notable calendar highlight before rotation passed, morale was very high. At the Total pitch the competition, as well as the heat, was intense. The 10,000m runners were back after their gruelling ordeal. The sprint finals were

completed and the novelty events had brought light relief from the seriousness of competition. The Inter-Company (Coy) tug-o-war was just beginning. HQ Coy had pulled Recce Coy and both teams were 'on the rope' for the second pull. A familiar cry, 'Recce turn out', rang across the pitch. Immediately the rope was dropped and all ran to the waiting AFVs of the Coy. The time was 1545 hrs.

At the Bn briefing the situation was made crystal clear -





Confrontation at the CP leading to the village of At Tiri, out of picture to the right, early in the morning of 7 Apr 1980. The 'outhouse' position manned by DFF pers is in the top right of the frame. A Super Sherman tank of the DFF is positioned at the crossroads, supported by jeep loads of DFF personnel. A UN IRISHBATT AML 90 and Panhard M3 APC block further access to the village area. (See next page for the same place 10 years later)

(Photo: Capt T. Ahern)

the De Facto Forces (DFF) of Major Haddad had broken into the village of At Tiri and the Bn Reserve (Recce Coy +) was to move immediately to the village by way of Hill 880 in order to assist C Coy. By 1550 hrs all vehicles were once again mobile and heading for the Hill, even before many at Total fully realised what was happening.

The DFF had approached At Tiri from the direction of Kunin. With the physical assistance of a half-track and despite the best efforts of the Checkpoint (CP) personnel they had forced their way through the CP. Once through, they took up position at the end of the avenue leading to the UN position and having commandeered local houses, they set up defensive positions.

Having crossed Hill 880, Recce Coy deployed in the vicinity of the CP. Recce were completed and all available information was gathered from the CP personnel. At 1632 hrs the DFF and some local villagers approached the CP in order to discuss the situation. They were not permitted to pass the tank stops and after some pushing and shoving, a deputation of unarmed personnel was allowed to come forward. The UN position from the outset was simply that the DFF would have to withdraw from the village. The DFF argued that they had been invited into the village by the inhabitants, which from the attitude of the locals was patently untrue. A simple solution was not readily apparent and a prolonged stay was expected.

In the meantime an APC from C Coy was sent to the West End of the village in order to pick up a standing patrol which had been stationed there. The DFF sent personnel there also and they managed to isolate and cut off the APC after it had picked up the patrol. The tactic at this time was to try to resolve situations through discussion and negotiation.

At 1725 hrs an APC from Recce Coy was ordered to move to the West End and to help extricate the stranded APC and its crew. The APC moved by a ring route to the North of the village, later to be known as the North Circular. The DFF, meanwhile, were reinforcing their positions by infiltrating personnel across country from the South into the village. As the rescuing APC made its way into the West End, it encountered a DFF position at a location to be subsequently called 'The Junction'. The time was 1735 hrs and the attitude of the DFF was decidedly hostile and aggressive and rather than aggravate a delicate situation the APC was ordered to hold its ground.

Back at the UN CP at the East End, more DFF personnel were arriving from Saff al Hawa in civilian cars and with another half-track. This half-track attempted to ram a UN APC blocking the road but at the last moment it backed off and switched off its engine. The DFF, now with a strength of approx 150 in the village, set up two mortar positions near an outhouse. A large crowd of anxious villagers gathered near the CP. As the tension increased the DFF fired approx twenty rounds of small arms (SA) fire in the vicinity of the CP. Hearing the shooting at the CP, the DFF personnel at the West End also joined in and opened fire. As it was now dark, the rescuing APC began to inch forward by blinding the DFF with its searchlight. There was now a danger of this APC being cut off, reinforcements were called for and another APC arrived at 1908 hrs. The DFF also reinforced their position and after further scuffling, it was agreed to make no further moves by either side. The situations in both locations then stabilised for the night.

That night a wedding reception was taking place in the Muktar's house at the West End. A blue Datsun car from the village tried to get through the UN position at the Junction

with a UN fist. After some further discussion, the tension eased and the status quo was restored. To show good faith to all, the UN personnel were invited to the reception. Despite many cups of shi (tea) and the multitude of cigarettes, the most welcome event was the opportunity to have a wash. To the vast amusement of the local ladies, the soldiers gleefully washed in their helmets and then danced and sang in the courtyard. The reception itself, was a sombre affair, despite the best efforts of the Irish to enliven the proceedings.

#### Threats & Negotiation, Patient Effort and a Casualty for IRISHBATT

Meanwhile, plans were being prepared to rescue the stranded APC. It was first necessary to recce the area and to do this the DFF were engaged in conversation whilst a foot patrol slipped quietly into the dark to carry out the recce. It was also time to try to get some sleep in the APCs. With changes of sentry, intermittent DFF calls for more shi drinking and the slight apprehension of what the morrow would bring, sleep was difficult to come by.

The plan was that one APC would move forward at dawn to make contact with the stranded APC whilst the second APC held the Junction. A diversion would be created at the East End by all the vehicles starting and revving their engines. At the West End, however, there was a small problem - a DFF jeep was blocking the narrow alley routes to the stranded APC. At approx 0500 hrs the UN personnel asked the DFF for coffee. The DFF readily agreed and one of their members was detailed to go back into the village to get some. Once he had passed through the Junction in his jeep he was not allowed back until the rescue operation was completed.

At 0525 hrs the rescuing APC moved forward and immediately the DFF came onto the alley-way and stood in front of the APC. The driver was instructed to continue driving slowly. The DFF were brushed to either side of the vehicle and immediately they opened fire on the APC with SA fire. The APC arrived in a small square and immediately came under more fire from another DFF patrol. Directions were passed to the stranded APC as it negotiated its way back along a twisty lane. The DFF attempted to immobilise the rescuing APC, but the driver kept the vehicle moving forward and back in the confined space, whilst the vehicle commander threatened to return fire. After what seemed an eter-

but was blocked by a UN APC. Some very angry personnel in militia uniform got out and one in particular was most upset. He was later identified by the villagers as Maj (Sgt) Haim - a DFF leader. A scuffle broke out and his spectacles were accidentally broken when his chin came into contact



The same scene ten years later

(Photo: Courtesy of OC B Coy 66 IRISHBATT)

nity, but in reality was only a few minutes, the rescued APC was on its way back to the Junction. From there it was sent via the North Circular to the UN CP at the East End. The Junction was then blocked, using both APCs. Concertina wire was requisitioned, which was delivered and in position by 06.15 hrs. By 06.20 hrs, however, the DFF, in an extremely angry mood, arrived in force at the Junction. While the UN personnel were diverted by negotiations and scuffles, the DFF attached a Jeep to a strand of concertina and pulled it away.

During the ensuing negotiations the DFF claimed that one of their men had been seriously injured by the APC moving down the narrow alley. UN personnel countered, however, by describing how the 'injured' man had run after the APC firing his rifle from the shoulder and on return complaining of the dirt on his uniform. On advice from another DFF man, he suddenly lay on the ground and complained that he was unable to walk or move his shoulder. The DFF carried him away on a stretcher and subsequently claimed that he had suffered a fracture of the thigh and shoulder. Later still they were to claim that he had died from a loss of blood.

Reinforcements were sent to the Junction. At 07.15 hrs a DFF man put a round up the breech of his rifle and aimed it at a UN sentry. The ensuing escalation of tension eased when the DFF realised that the Irish were serious about returning fire if fired upon.

At 07.25 hrs the DFF said that they would bring up a tank to the village at 08.00 hrs that morning. At the East End, the second half-track moved behind an outhouse and the DFF proceeded to sandbag the position. At 07.35 hrs a tank was observed on the move from Saff al Hawa, followed by five Mercedes cars. Single rounds of SA fire were being discharged indiscriminately by the DFF from all positions.

At 08.20 hrs the tank arrived at the CP from Kunin. Permission to engage it was sought by the commander of an AML 90 but this was refused. The rate of indiscriminate fire was increasing and all UN vehicles in the area were hit. At 08.38 hrs an Irish UN soldier was hit by rifle fire. He was immediately evacuated, under cover, to Haddathah and from there moved by helicopter to the UN Hospital at Naqura. Fire and movement by the DFF continued and at 08.46 hrs a number of Irish UN personnel were captured by the DFF.

#### A Ceasefire Negotiated - Threat to Captured IRISHBATT Soldiers

At 09.25 hrs a ceasefire was negotiated and the UN reinforcements were held at Haddathah. Talks continued with the DFF as the villagers began to leave the village. At 10.30 hrs DFF personnel were observed at the half-track in the village wearing Irish combat and flak jackets. At the same time reports were coming in of the captured Irish being moved to the Brown Mound area. Major Haddad arrived at this time and was allowed to enter the village in order to conduct negotiations.

At approx 11.15 hrs a number of DFF personnel approached the Junction from the village and engaged in a heated discussion with the troops. They attempted to drag further coils of concertina from the position but were prevented from doing so. Rifle butts were freely used to convince them that they had no authority to have freedom of movement. A number of personnel forced an entry into an APC and threatened to destroy it if the other APC did not move back off the road. Amidst heightened tension, discussions took place on the spot. Shortly after, the APC was handed back to the UN and the DFF were given limited freedom to pass the Junction. By 11.40 hrs the situation had calmed somewhat. Following a meeting between the UNIFIL Deputy Commander, the IRISHBATT Officer Commanding, Major Haddad and Abu Amile at Bayt Yahun, the UNIFIL Deputy Commander arrived at the Junction around this time. Efforts continued, to defuse the situation, and also to retrieve the articles and equipment taken from the APC and from the soldiers. At 12.14 hrs the



Above: Reinforcing APCs from DUTCHBATT under fire and moving tactically within the smoke discharged for that purpose. IRISHBATT had an OP on Hill 880 to the rear. (Photo: Capt T. Aherne)

Below: The same general area in 1990. Note the IDF/DFF Compound located on the crest. This compound was established after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. (Photo: Courtesy of OC B Coy 66 IRISHBATT)



DFF once again opened fire at the Junction, but on the spot negotiations quickly brought the situation back to reasonable normality. At 12.27 hrs, an APC coming over Hill 880 was fired on by the half-track and at 12.25 hrs a message was received from the DFF to the effect that they would kill an Irish soldier every fifteen minutes, and they had nine of them, if any more vehicles came over the Hill.

At 12.00 hrs the Irish at the Junction were withdrawn via the North Circular to the rear of the UN House in order to rest and recuperate. At the same time as the meeting at Bayt Yahun was taking place Platoons (Pls) from FIJIBATT and DUTCHBATT were being deployed. A PI from FIJIBATT took over the Junction position. At 14.00 hrs Dutch APCs were seen coming over the Hill. Immediately they came under .5 HMG fire from the half-track. One Dutch APC reached the CP and at approx 14.10 hrs it took up a position facing the tank. The DFF then set up another mortar position near the half-track but after discussion this was later dismantled.

All that afternoon the DFF used the forward slopes of Hill 880 for target practice, possibly in the hope of deterring other vehicles from coming over. At 16.45 hrs the Dutch APC left the CP and returned to the rear slope of Hill 880. As the APC climbed the slope it came under .5 HMG fire and at 17.10 hrs it was forced to return to the CP under cover of a smoke screen. At 17.25 hrs three more Dutch APCs were seen manoeuvring slowly down the slope of the Hill. The three APCs came under fire and all were hit. The tank aimed its gun on the AML 90 as did the gunner of the AML 90 on the tank. Once again the tension heightened and at 17.52 hrs the Dutch APCs arrived at the CP. Shortly afterwards, information was received that the UNIFIL Force Reserve had deployed TOW missiles on Hill 880 to protect the UN Forces in the area. The ration car came down shortly afterwards and at 18.20 hrs it too was fired on and hit. Thereafter an APC was used to bring in the supplies and thus the famous 'Gravy Train' began its twice daily run, at midnight and at mid-day. The DFF cleared this ration APC to come over the Hill but they said that landmines had been laid on the track.

#### Release of IRISHBATT Hostages

Early on D+2 (Thu 8 Apr) the Irish were ordered to re-

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take the Junction. At 06.30 hrs three APCs of Recce Coy once again moved back and re-established control over the Junction. The FIJIBATT PI remained on as part of this now reinforced unit. The unit deployed in all round defence with the roof tops being utilised to give observation and better fields of fire. Others took up position on the roads leading to the Junction and at the CP itself. These positions were to be held without relief until the operation ended on the following Saturday.

As a gesture of goodwill, three of the captured Irish were returned that morning by the DFF. Intermittent HMG fire came from the direction of the Brown Mound as well as from all the half-tracks in the area.

At 12.40 hrs Major Abu Amile arrived at the Junction from the South. He was accompanied by four jeep loads of personnel and also some Israelis. They demanded to be allowed to pass through the Junction and into the village. This was denied them. An RPG 7 was loaded and aimed at the rear door of an APC blocking the road. Threats and counter-threats were passed. An 84mm anti-tank gun was deployed by UN personnel from a roof-top and aimed at the DFF. Discussion continued and eventually Amile and his party withdrew and the UN troops breathed a sigh of relief. Shortly after, fire broke out at the East End CP and continued for about an hour. At 14.14 hrs a Landrover taking an injured UN soldier (sprained ankle) from the Junction was fired on near a crossroads at the East End. First reports indicated that two personnel were injured in this burst of firing. One soldier in fact received a shrapnel wound and both were evacuated out of the area to Haddathah. All afternoon the situation remained extremely tense as rumours spread throughout the area. The DFF brought media people from the Israeli side and gave interviews and posed for photographs at the East End CP.

At 17.35 hrs the DFF attempted to resupply their positions and personnel with ammunition through the West End. They were denied entry. Immediately they took up firing positions and threatened to throw hand grenades. One in fact, withdrew the pin and threw the pin at the APC. After negotiations, the situation once again calmed. The DFF man with the hand grenade and no pin, put a nail into it and tossed it harmlessly into the wadi. The DFF then retreated and entered the village across country from the South. At 19.30 hrs UNTSO Observers were brought on a conducted tour of the area and shortly after this the remainder of the captured Irish were released.

That night was peaceful, apart from the tank moving back to Kunin. To the delight of all the 'Gravy Train' arrived shortly after midnight. Sleeping bags were distributed, although only 50% could sleep at any one time while the remainder were on alert. The only place to sleep was 'on the job', either on a roof-top, the roadway or in an APC.

#### IRISHBATT Return Fire - amidst Apprehension as to IDF Intentions

Next morning, Wed 9 Apr, there was considerable movement by the DFF. The hillside opposite the village (South) was being reced by a number of personnel in uniform and it appeared that positions were being selected. A number of tanks and half-tracks were observed digging in, whilst an armoured bulldozer was observed preparing positions South of Bayt Yahun. With no confrontations, the day was spent in observing and reporting. In the afternoon Major Haddad arrived at Bayt Yahun accompanied by four IDF Landrovers. The UNIFIL Reserve, represented by GHAN-BATT were dispatched as reinforcement to the area. In their enthusiasm and zealotry, they sped into the area and nearly overshot the CP there. With the sudden braking of the first driver, an unfortunate AFV commander was unceremoniously dispatched from the turret of his vehicle and landed in a heap at the CP. Apart from the normal routine of sentries and rations the evening and night passed very quietly with no activity to be reported by either side.

Early next morning (Thu 10 Apr) Israeli Defence Forces APCs were observed on the move from Saff al Hawa to Kunin and there was general apprehension as to the IDF

intentions. The APCs, identified as M113s, however, did not come forward of the village of Kunin and instead took up position in the prepared sites.

At 08.20 hrs a UN convoy was observed coming over the Hill. Immediately the DFF opened fire on it. The personnel in the convoy were observed to 'hit the dirt' rather rapidly. The convoy included amongst the VIPs, an oversize ABC reporter who immediately equipped himself with an undersize flak jacket and attempted to take cover behind a medium sized rock. Negotiations eventually allowed the convoy to continue and they were brought on a conducted tour of the area without further incident.

Around midday information was received that Major Haddad had entered the village across country from the South. Shortly afterwards he exited the village via the CP and made his way to Saff al Hawa. By now there were thirteen M113s in the general area. A patrol of sixteen DFF persons made a foot incursion into A Coy area but after being confronted by A Coy personnel they withdrew. At 15.25 hrs Major Haddad once again arrived at the East End CP and was refused entry. Having tried all avenues of negotiation and discussion, the UN were to adopt a tougher line in dealing with the DFF incursion. As a result of the refusal to allow Major Haddad to enter the village, retaliation was expected. Two tanks from Saff al Hawa were observed manoeuvring forward of the Brown Mound. All that afternoon the tanks were heard manoeuvring behind the ridge South of the village and eventually they adopted hull down positions from where they could engage UN positions.

At 17.00 hrs mortar fire from Saff al Hawa landed in the area, with one round exploding five metres from an OP. Fortunately there were no casualties. At 17.15 hrs a helicopter was heard manoeuvring in the direction of Ayn Ibil. At 18.20 hrs the DFF used a loudspeaker system from the local mosque to harangue the villagers into non-cooperation with the UN.

At 20.15 hrs a civilian from the village passed through the Junction CP with a can of fuel. The DFF stopped him and took the can off him. They emptied the contents and when the liquid (petrol) was under the UN APC the DFF tried to ignite it with a hand flare. The troops on the ground were quick to spread sand over the flame, thus preventing a major incident. The DFF retreated behind cover and opened fire on the Junction. For the first time, and after much aggravation, the UN troops returned fire. The DFF disappeared into the night, probably back into the village. The relief of having at long last met fire with fire was immense and raised morale very high. With retaliation expected, the situation remained tense but the night passed without further incident.

#### Round for Round Fire

Friday (11 Apr) began with the usual pattern of the DFF firing at any movement. The UN now adopted a policy of returning round for round fire. A UN convoy was observed coming over the Hill, it consisted of one Cherokee with OC IRISHBATT and Chief Logs Officer on board, a second Cherokee with Team Zulu and ADC to DCOS driving, a Dutch APC with DFC, Ops Oftr, Political Oftr plus others, and a truck with a 500 gallon water trailer on tow. That was the order of march. When the party/convoy came under fire, the second Cherokee went behind the APC for cover, the driver of the water-truck applied his hand brake and also dived for cover. Unfortunately the hand brake did not hold and the truck and trailer continued and squashed the Cherokee into the back of the APC, converting it into something like a Mini Minor. The convoy then proceeded and arrived at the East End CP safely. There was now considerable DFF activity on the road between Kunin and Saff al Hawa. In the early afternoon the locals reported that there was going to be shelling and that they were going undercover. The shelling did not take place. Around 15.00 hrs villagers were led by the DFF to the outhouse position and there at 15.30 hrs Major Haddad gave an interview to the Israeli controlled media outside the UN area. The ages of the villagers in attendance ranged from six to about sixteen years of age.

In the meantime foot-patrolling of the West End and

Junction had commenced. This was a further development in the UN re-asserting its influence on the village. On the first patrol there was no contact with the DFF and the reaction of the villagers was one of delight. The DFF were not happy when they heard of this occurrence and the village Muktar was assaulted by them for allowing the UN to patrol. The DFF, however, did not attempt to encounter the UN patrols at this stage.

From first light on Friday morning 11 Apr, the DFF manoeuvred their tanks. One of the tanks appeared to be giving trouble and a recovery vehicle was called up to the tank position. At the West End, the village dominating patrols continued. At 1100 hrs the inevitable confrontation took place. Both sides immediately took up firing positions and after much discussion and negotiation the DFF withdrew threatening revenge. Shortly afterwards the DFF tank in the Cuckoo's Nest opened fire and the rounds landed in the vicinity of Caltex in Tibnin village, the home of Recce Coy.

#### Threat to Safety of Enclave Troops and a Fijian Casualty

Around 1443 hrs the DFF brought a truck load of youths and women from the village to the outhouse position. These people were equipped with tyres and a can of petrol. They filled the tyres with the petrol and lit them. Once lit, they rolled the tyres down the hill at the AFV blocking the road at the UN CP. The DFF, meanwhile, continued with their sporadic firing all during this incident. They also warned that they 'would hold the UN enclave personnel hostage if any of the children were hurt'. (The enclave personnel manned UN positions in the Israeli controlled DFF area.) The DFF also warned that they would fire for effect if their warnings were not heeded.

More civilians were observed approaching the East End CP from the Kunin direction. The DFF were behind them firing shots into the road on either side in order to keep the civilians moving. A sniper at the Junction opened fire and the UN troops returned fire. At the East End, stones were being thrown by the civilians, who still appeared hesitant despite the 'encouragement' of the DFF. At 1520 hrs the half-track in the village opened fire and immediately fire was returned by a UN AFV. In this burst of fire by the DFF a UN Fijian soldier was mortally wounded. He was immediately evacuated, under cover of UN fire, to Haddathah. A tank, on the Southern Ridge, then opened fire. One tank round hit the UN house, penetrating through the walls and landing in a room where a number of UN troops were. Luckily the round was solid shot and not high explosive.

#### Enough is Enough

At 1525 hrs an AML 90 AFV was instructed to put the half-track out of action. Personnel at the West End were warned to take cover as they were directly in line with the AML 90 and the half-track. At 1530 hrs the AML returned to its position behind cover having immobilised the half-track. Meanwhile the UNIFIL Reserve from the Hill fired a TOW missile at one of the tanks as a warning. The AML 90 was again instructed to go forward and take out the HMG of the half-track, which had been immobilised. Under covering fire from UN troops he did so and at 1543 hrs the famous statement was heard on the radio 'I'm finished firing and he's finished'.

Immediately troops at the West End were ordered to move into the village and to secure it. At 1545 hrs they arrived at the half-track position with two APCs. In the eerie silence the UN troops, both Dutch and Irish dismounted and deployed on all sides. The DFF were seen retreating down the wadi carrying their wounded. A house search was immediately undertaken and after a number of rifle rounds were fired two DFF men were captured and were sent to the UN house under escort. By 1610 hrs the village was in UN hands and consolidation was well advanced.

Mortar rounds began to land and explode in the village area. Although morale was exuberant, there was a consider-



A scene of destruction. Inside the UN House at At Tiri - Post 6-15 after it was hit by a solid shot 75mm Atk round fired by a DFF Sherman Tank.

(Photo: Capt T. Ahern)

able degree of concern as to where the next round would land. All necessary precautions were taken. Around 1830 hrs a tank came forward and opened fire, but a TOW missile landing in his front soon changed his mind and he retreated behind cover again. By 1900 hrs a search of the entire village had been completed and positions prepared for an all night vigil of tension.

At 0147 hrs on the Saturday morning, word was received that an agreement had been reached between UNIFIL and the DFF. Part of the agreement was that At Tiri would remain in UN hands and the situation was to revert to the status quo of the previous week. All extra UN troops were to be withdrawn to the North of Hill 880. At 0500 hrs the convoys started to make their way back up the Hill to join the remainder of the UNIFIL Force Reserve. A long day was spent in catching up on some much needed sleep, swapping souvenirs with the other nationalities of the Force Reserve and hoping there would be no reason to go back over the top again.

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Historic handover of lands for the new IRISHBATT HQ, Tibnin. Mr. Abbas Fawaz, Muktar of Tibnin recently signed over Government lands at Al Yatun and Gallows Green for the new site of IRISHBATT HQ. Lt Col Vincent Blighe is pictured receiving the authority from the Muktar on the site of the new headquarters. The design and layout of the new HQ has already been completed by 66 IRISHBATT, but the work will fall to 67 IRISHBATT.



Over 300 children from Tibnin Public and Private Schools marched in the Parade, wearing Irish badges and waving Jacob's Ireland shamrocks.

St. Patrick's Day Parade in Tibnin. A Unit of the Lebanese Army heads the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Tibnin, South Lebanon. The Parade was reviewed by the Minister of State of the Dept of Defence, Mr. V. Brady T.D.; Chief of Staff, Lt Gen J. Parker; Col Joma, A/General Officer Commanding Lebanese Army, South Lebanon; Lt Col Vincent Blighe, OC 66 IRISHBATT and the Muktar of Tibnin Mr. Abbas Fawaz.



IRISHBATT recently hosted the Military Information Officers Conference at Camp Shamrock where MIOs from all Units attended. In the centre, Lt Col X. De Zuchowicz is pictured with Comdt C. McNamara, MIO IRISHBATT.

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# 'Pity the Nation' by Robert Fisk

A Review by Comdt F. McKevitt

## The Continuation of Politics by Other Means

In his book, *Pity the Nation*, Robert Fisk has given us a view from the eye of the storm that has been sweeping Lebanon for the past fifteen years. His narrative is linked throughout with insights into the history of Lebanon and its troublesome neighbours, but primarily it is a personal witness to harrowing events. The author is one of the most incisive (and persistent) writers on Lebanese affairs for western readers, and his latest book will undoubtedly be a primary source when the history of this calamitous time is finally written.

THE HEART OF THE BOOK is the story of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. His accounts of the siege of Beirut, the withdrawal of the PLO from the city, the massacres at Chatila and Sabra, the Israeli withdrawal, the hopeful arrival, and sad fate, of the Multinational Force - the MNF - and the slaughter of 10,000 fundamentalists by Syrian forces at Hama, are written with a cold, anger veiling, restraint. He certainly does not lack courage: again and again he and a select number of journalistic colleagues voyage through Lebanon to cover the latest 'story'. His reason for being there, he says, "because I believed, in a somewhat undefined way, that I was witnessing history - that I would see with my own eyes a small part of the epic events that have shaped the Middle East since the Second World War".

In this witness he spares no one, but is acutely aware that in the West, at least, he must be scrupulous in the justification of his beliefs about Israeli involvement in the events he records. In this regard the book helps to balance the account because the European and American perspectives have been heavily influenced in favour of the Jewish State. It seems that if Israel appears more condemned than others, it is because her influence on events has been greater and more importantly perhaps, because she has not lived up to the standards she has set for herself. "There are no good guys in Lebanon", Fisk says. Perhaps anticipating unfavourable reaction, he devotes considerable space to the mechanics of reporting in the Middle East. He considers the corruption of words, the invention of 'facts' and the accusations from all sides that he is partial in his reporting. He has cushioned himself particularly against the expected visceral pro-Israeli reaction, a caution which is not unwarranted it appears.

He quotes from a 'Confidential Irish Government Minute' on a visiting Israeli President, Dr. Chaim Herzog, as follows: "The President said that reporting from that country especially Beirut, was unreliable .... that no journalist who wished to stay objective could remain in that city - he would be killed. The Taoiseach asked about Robert Fisk .... in Beirut, President Herzog in an uncharacteristically vicious response, said that Fisk was a virulent hater of Israel and was totally biased".

*"President Herzog in an uncharacteristically vicious response, said that Fisk was a virulent hater of Israel and was totally biased".*

Yet this is the man who went to Hama and gave the world the story of the killing of 10,000, perhaps 20,000 opponents of the Syrian regime in 1982. The reaction from Damascus was such that it was suggested he might 'go on holiday'. He records, "we talked tough to the Syrians, stood our ground and kept on reporting without being intimidated".

Unlike his earlier book, on Ireland during 'The Emergency' (In Time of War), this is not a work of historical

analysis. Nor is it a military history. It certainly contains vivid pictures of armies in action and armies 'hurrying up to wait'. The awesome destructive power of the modern military machine fills page after page and he appears, at times, to be fixated on the violence and the horror he describes. He does not spare the reader, and as I began to wish he would stop, I realised that this was the reaction he sought through the pages of unrelenting gore. On the Israeli Air Force over Beirut:-

"The air raids were awesome. They inspired the most basic fear; of total, sudden, inescapable annihilation. Often we never saw the planes because they flew too fast. In the sweaty mornings, with the smell of burning garbage drifting over the city, we heard them coming in a crescendo of sound. Hardly ever did we see the bombs they dropped."

More quietly, certainly less frenetically, he witnessed the entry of the Syrian Army to Lebanon in June 1976, when President Assad feared a PLO victory over the Christians. Meeting Syrian armour, almost casually, West of Chatura, he writes, "and round the next corner was another tank, then a third, hull down in the long grass like old dogs sunning themselves on a lazy day". The lull before the storm indeed!

As I said, this is not a military history, for one thing the book lacks maps to show the ebb and flow of forces; there are no red or blue arrows indicating thrusts or withdrawals, so to get the best out of it a detailed map of Lebanon would be useful. The general reader may see this as an unwarranted complaint, but the military reader would have been grateful for the occasional campaign map.

According to Fisk, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) in 1982 tried to encompass two contradictory military and political aims; the destruction of the terrorist threat (the question of the pejorative use of the word 'terrorist' is considered at length and quite brilliantly in the book) and the creation of a Christian dominated Lebanon at peace with Israel. The second, political aim, was grafted into the first following the relatively easy push to the Awali River. Once immersed in the quagmire of Lebanese alliances things began to fall apart, not only for Israel, but also for the US and European participants in the MNF. The MNF had come to bring peace to the distracted country, were greeted like armies before, with rice and rose-water, only to be overwhelmed by events

and finally be forced to withdraw with unacceptable casualties. Fisk keeps his plaudits for the Italian contingent who unaffected by power politics "were humble men with none of the swagger and arrogance that American and French troops often unwittingly demonstrated towards the Lebanese". They remained impartial, refused to be drawn into battle and withdrew relatively unscathed.

Through Fisk's eye's we see the consequences of the Israeli invasion: the destruction of Beirut, the entrenchment

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of Christian power in the capital and the Chouf, the killings at Sabra and Chatila, the growth of the Islamic fundamentalism, the embroilment of the well meaning MNF and the growth of the peace movement in Israel. Then came the withdrawal of the IDF, throwing the Chouf into turmoil as the Druze fought to establish their traditional control in the mountains and the foundering of the MNF in shattered Beirut. Israel slowly and painfully extracted her army from the greater part of Lebanon amid a welter of recrimination

*"UN Security Resolution 425 was ...."a document that combined morality, naivety and folly in about equal proportions".*

and self doubt following what the author calls "one of the greatest military blunders in recent Middle East history". The resistance to Israeli power in the South was now emboldened by the ideals of Islam and the IDF "was experiencing the first defeat of its existence".

Fisk does not agree with the generally accepted view that Shia radicalism in South Lebanon is totally attributable to Iranian inspiration. He believes, if I read him correctly, that it was a two way street. The spiritual leader of Amal, Imam Mousa Sadr, who it is believed was kidnapped and killed by Libyan agents, was Iranian by birth. He had established a college outside Tyre and lived and worked among the Shia of the South, a number of whom traced their ancestry to Iran. In the days of the Shah, the future leaders of revolutionary Iran came to learn at Tyre and Mousa Sadr was a vital link between them and the Imam Khomeini, then in exile in Najaf. By this account the stony soil of South Lebanon was essential to the germination and early development of Islamic fundamentalism. The Israeli invasion and the brutality of her occupation created, according to Fisk, a volatile mixture with the Shia cult of martyrdom. The fuse was lit when the IDF raided the revered Imam's school and beat the students. One student filled his car with explosives and drove it into an IDF vehicle.

BUT WHAT OF THE UN? In the chapter "The Gentleman from Marjayoun" the story of UNIFIL's deployment in the South is told. UN Security Resolution 425 was, Fisk writes, "a document that combined morality, naivety and folly in about equal proportions". He is not easy on the UN. He continues: "the Mandate had been constructed on the arrogant assumption that the UN was so august a body that no one - least of all the militias of Lebanon or their regional superpower allies, would dare contradict it". He blames the Israelis for denying UNIFIL the opportunity of fulfilling its Mandate by presiding over the establishment of a 'security belt' in the South with the aid of Saad Haddad and his 'murderous collection of Phalangist gunmen', who with 'the full connivance of Israel proceeded to attack and on several occasions kill UN soldiers'. Nor does he excuse the actions of the Palestinians who were 'not unhappy with Israeli intransigence'. The PLO also obstructed the deployment of the Force and anti-Arafat factions are blamed for the deaths of several UN soldiers including Pte Joyce who was kidnapped at Dayr Nitar.

The erratic personality of Saad Haddad is examined, as is the role of the American funded 'Voice of Hope' radio station which facilitated the 'hobgoblin monarch', in his efforts to intimidate UN Forces. We get glimpses of Shin Bet and its shadowy operatives including 'Abu Shawki' who, it is suggested, may have been present at the murders of Ptes Smallhorne and Barrett in the Israeli controlled area. He recalls the hectoring outburst of the Israeli Ambassador to Ireland, on Christian 'sensibilities' and the campaign of vilification of Irish troops in the Israeli press.

Despite his reservations about the UN Mandate, Fisk concludes that UNIFIL performed a valuable service in offering protection to the Shia villages of the region from the predations of Haddad and his backers.

He does not directly compare the records of the two

International Forces, the MNF and UNIFIL - though such a comparison would be necessarily incomplete, because it should not be forgotten that Syria returned to Lebanon under the auspices of the Arab League sponsored Peace Force - but hints are scattered along the way.

An international reservoir of goodwill sustains UNIFIL operations in the South and would-be assailants must consider their international reputation before indulging in anti-UN acts. UNIFIL threatens no interest in the area. Here we

have a military force from culturally diverse backgrounds, without air or naval power, armed only with defensive weapons, which has maintained an effective operation over twelve years in a land that does not readily tolerate weakness. UNIFIL soldiers and positions are attacked on occasion, as we in Ireland well know, but the use of surrogates by opponents of the UN accompanied by pleas of inability to control the actions of their confederates, is a back-handed tribute to the international standing of the Force.

The MNF with the resources of a super-power at its disposal, with the domination of the air and the sea failed to survive in the city of Beirut, not through any lack of good intent but because finally and irredeemably it was seen to be partisan. As noted, the Italian contingent suffered least because of the ability of its soldiers to empathise with the people it protected. Fisk sees this quality in the work of the Norwegian Contingent among the people of Khiam and in his reflections on the similarities of countryside and way of life in the West of Ireland and South Lebanon. It is an essential ingredient in the success of UNIFIL.

For those who have and for those who will serve in Lebanon this book is required reading. His analysis of the Israeli withdrawal and his examination of the nature of Shia fundamentalism and its cult of martyrdom will give insights into the cultures of the people who inhabit (or merely visit) the UNIFIL area of operation. Robert Fisk has given us a picture of a chaotic Lebanon - in full colour. His 'almost elemental logic' that 'armies at war - like their governments - are best observed with a mighty degree of scepticism even cynicism', characterises and informs his attitude to the events he writes about. He offers no answers but lets his narrative speak for itself. Let us hope for the future that his scepticism is confounded - I'm sure he would wish to 'drink to that'.



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UNIFIL International Peacekeeping in Lebanon, 1978-1988 by Bjorn Skogmo. Published by Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 3 Henrietta Street, Convent Garden, London. WC RE 8LU. No price stated.

This recent publication by Bjorn Skogmo is an excellent study of UNIFIL from 1978 to 1988. As such it has made a valuable contribution to the study of all UN Peacekeeping Operations. However, the study deals with the nature and complexity of the Peacekeeping Operation in Lebanon. The book gives a comprehensive account of the problems and dilemmas which UNIFIL encountered since its deployment.

The study begins by outlining the background to the establishment of UNIFIL and the problems encountered by the Force in attempting to implement the Mandate and deploy down to the Israeli/Lebanon Armistice Line. The harassment and lack of cooperation by the Israeli backed forces of Major Haddad was experienced at first hand by Irish Battalions serving with UNIFIL at the time. The Israeli policy in Lebanon eventually led to the 1982 invasion and the establishment of the so called 'Security Zone'. The problems encountered by UNIFIL in dealing with the PLO and other Armed Elements are also dealt with. This was linked to the task of restoring international peace and security and was even more vaguely defined than confirming the Israeli withdrawal. The difficulties for UNIFIL of re-establishing the authority of the Lebanese Government are also dealt with in detail.

The chapter dealing with the 1982-1985 period gives a good overview of the options proposed for UNIFIL during one of the more difficult periods in its existence. Those readers who served with UNIFIL at the time will recall the plans made for 'Operation Cedar', the rumours of a redeployment and the general uncertainty surrounding the future of the Peacekeeping Force.

For this reader the chapters dealing with the role of the Security Council and the political constraints under which it operated were the most informative. UNIFIL was in many ways a hastily put together package deal. At the time, members of the Security Council and Secretariat expressed misgivings about its future and the ambiguities inherent in the Mandate. These fears turned out to be well founded. The study should set the record straight for those who still insist that the Mandate was not ambiguous or that it was operationally feasible when first adopted by the Security Council.

The study places the responsibility for the failure of UNIFIL to carry out its Mandate on its political masters. The Peacekeeping Force itself has per-

formed well in very adverse circumstances. The political promises and diplomatic support systems were weak from the start. Furthermore, it is evident that the lack of cooperation from all of the parties was a major handicap.

The analysis is based on United Nations records and a series of interviews with members of the Secretariat, representatives of the permanent mission, of parties to the conflict and members of the Security Council. The author informs the reader he has used the experience of the Norwegian UNIFIL Battalion to illustrate some of the problems of the Peacekeeping Force. However, it should be stressed that the study is based on the experience of UNIFIL as a whole and it does not place too much emphasis on the experience of any one contingent.

The study is part of a larger project on the future of International Peacekeeping carried out at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. As such it highlights the lack of any serious or comprehensive study of UNIFIL by the academic or military establishments in Ireland. At present the sole depository for official UN documents in Ireland is the National Library in Dublin. Years of neglect and lack of resources have caused problems for the overworked staff. One result is that many of the UN documents are missing and may never have been received in the first

place. This is one reason why research in this field is difficult and seldom undertaken in Ireland.

Bjorn Skogmo is presently Deputy Director-General of Policy Planning and Research in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His book reflects his more than five years of diplomatic service at the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations, during which time he participated in the consultations among the countries contributing troops to UNIFIL. The study was initiated during 1984-1985, when the author was a visiting research fellow of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA).

The study is a detailed and informative analysis of what went wrong and why. It is recommended to all readers who want to improve their understanding of the problems and dilemmas facing UNIFIL. It should be mandatory reading for members of the Defence Forces and officials in the Department of Defence and Foreign Affairs who are involved with UNIFIL. It is difficult to find fault with this study. It is based on detailed and scholarly research. The analysis is authoritative and expressed in a precise and simple style which contains none of the prejudice and rhetorical indulgences of other accounts of UNIFIL compiled by less professional writers.

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#### **Chariots of the Desert - The Story of the Israeli Armoured Corps by David Eshel and published by Brassey's.**

The Israeli Air Force and the Armoured Corps were the basic ingredients for the success of Israeli arms since 1967. This work by a founder member of the Armoured Corps and later its Chief of Signals tells the story from the foundation of the Corps, with a few armour-plated trucks and stolen armoured cars, to the powerful instrument that it has become today, with an inventory of nearly 4,000 tanks.

The big armour battles of the 1967 War and the Yom Kippur War 1973 were significant in the development of both armour doctrine and equipment on a global scale, not to speak of the Middle Eastern theatre. This book deals with this development in a very professional and interesting manner. It strives to be objective but considering the subject, the author and his background, it does not always succeed. Indeed, at times it takes on the style reminiscent of sectors of the Western media of twenty years ago when the Israelis were 'the good guys' and the Arabs 'the baddies'.

The treatment of the Yom Kippur War encompasses over one third of the book and shows how the huge tank battles both on the Golan and

the Sinai influenced the Israeli Armoured developments. It shows that most tank casualties were caused by other tanks and by the short range hand-held RPGs. There is no attempt to denigrate the effectiveness of the ATGWs used by both the Egyptians and Syrians but they are accorded their place in the hierarchy of weaponry. Furthermore, the myth that such weapons were a surprise to the Israelis as maintained by many commentators is dispelled. They were used from 1970 by the Egyptians on the canal and started a little later with the Syrians. This reviewer witnessed a tank battle on the Golan in January 1973, i.e. nine months before the Yom Kippur War in which the Syrians extensively used their Sagger missiles.

For anyone with an interest in the Arab-Israeli conflict in general and the use of armed forces in particular 'Chariots of the Desert' will prove a most worthwhile acquisition. It can be recommended at a time when the superficial propaganda component can be balanced by adequate knowledge of the politics of the situation. One of the sources for such knowledge would be Robert Fisk's recent excellent volume 'Pity the Nation' (Reviewed in this issue of *An Cosantoir*).

CM

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