



newsletter

Association of Retired Commissioned Officers

Issue No: 20. Spring 2011

ARCO Web Site: www.iarco.info

16th Annual General Meeting

The 16th AGM was held on 9th October 2010 in the auditorium of the Defence Forces School of Catering in Mc Kee Bks. Forty-four members attended and forty-four sent their apologies. Lunch was held in the Officer's Mess at the conclusion of the meeting. We would like to express our appreciation to Comdt Pauline O' Connell, Mess President, and her staff for the excellent meal and service provided. Also we thank the OC of the Defence Forces Catering School for the use of the auditorium.

Opening the meeting, the Hon President Col Brian O' Connor, welcomed all those present and thanked them for their attendance. He requested all present to stand and observe a minute of silence in memory of former colleagues and members who had passed away since the last AGM. The meeting then continued as per the Agenda set out in the 2010 Autumn Newsletter with the President presenting his report followed by the other office holders.

The President noted the mailing of the minutes of the 15th AGM to members with the autumn newsletter and recorded his thanks to the DFPP for their printing services to ARCO. He invited comments on any matters arising from the minutes. There being no matters raised the minutes were adopted unanimously.

In continuance of an aspect of our strategy the annual meetings were held with the General Staff, Secretary-General DOD and RACO. A meeting with the Minister for Defence, Mr Tony Killeen T.D, was held in Dail Eireann in June. The committee has organised a field trip to Berlin to tour the city and study the last days of WW11. This will take place from 17th to 20th October 2011. The President thanked Col Dick Heaslip for his hard work and commitment in organising the trip. Work on a Veteran's Policy Document in conjunction with ONE and IUNVA, though progressing slowly, is still ongoing with a meeting scheduled for 10th November. Continuing the policy of increasing the Association's profile some of the EXCOM meetings in 2010 were held outside of Dublin, namely in the recently acquired office in the DFTC, Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnell, Dun Ui Mhaoliosa, Galway, and Sarsfield Bks., Limerick..This practice will continue. The plaque containing the names of those unit commanders who served in the Congo will be presented to UNTSI, The Military College, in a ceremony to be held on 10th December 2010. The Association was represented at various state and military ceremonies throughout the year. The President

outlined progress on the review of ARCO strategy. He said the strategy sub-committees had submitted a detailed report of their work to date. The EXCOM are now engaged in carrying the work of the sub-committees forward and will present a finalised report to an EGM in 2011 with proposals for a restructured and revitalised Association.

The Hon Treasurer, Hon Secretary and Hon Membership Secretary presented their respective reports. The Hon Treasurer, Comdt Mick O' Byrne, is stepping down after serving six years on the Executive Committee. We thank Mick for his hard work and commitment to the Association and wish him well for the future. The Hon Membership Secretary reported that current membership stands at the mid-700s and 32 new members joined over the last twelve months. The audit report showed net assets of Euro 38,505.91 and an Excess Income/Expenditure of Euro 3,955.85. The President on behalf of ARCO thanked the Hon Auditor, Comdt Pat Casey, for his work in auditing the accounts and recommended that he be reappointed. The appointment was agreed unanimously.

The President thanked the outgoing committee for their work and support over the past year, in particular Comdt Mick O' Byrne, Hon Treasurer, and Col Kevin Hogan and Lt Col Mick Hipwell AC Branch Representatives who were not going forward for re-election. The incoming Executive Committee, duly elected, are as follows:

President	Col Brian O' Connor
Vice President	Brig Gen Liam Mac Namee
Hon Secretary	Lt Col Joe Ahern
Hon Treasurer	Lt Col Sean Scanlon
Hon Membership Secretary	Col Dick Heaslip
Eastern Branch	Col Mick Lucey
	Comdt Billy Campbell
Southern Branch	Col Fergus Bushell
	Lt Col Sean Scanlon
Western Branch	Brig Gen Gerry Mc Namara
	Col Senan Downes
Curragh Branch	Col Dick Heaslip
	Col Con Mc Namara
Air Corps Branch	Lt Col Dick Cummins
Naval Service Branch	Capt (NS) Charlie O' Donnell
	Lt Cdr Peter Dunne.

Afghanistan

By Comdt Brian Hughes

***The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)** is a NATO-led security mission in Afghanistan established by the United Nations Security Council on 20 December 2001 by Resolution 1386 as envisaged by the Bonn Agreement. It is engaged in a Counter Insurgency (COIN) conflict in Afghanistan from 2001 to the present.*

ISAF was initially charged with securing Kabul and the surrounding areas from the Taliban, 'Al Qaeda' and factional warlords, so as to allow for the establishment of the Afghan Transitional Administration headed by President Hamid Karzai. In October 2003, the UN Security Council authorized the expansion of the ISAF mission throughout Afghanistan, and ISAF subsequently expanded the mission over the whole of the country. Since 2006, ISAF has been involved in all regions of the country. In the West, North and Capital areas the intensity of conflict varies with more intensive combat operations in Southern and Eastern Afghanistan.

Ireland contributes seven personnel including four Officers and three NCOs. Troop contributing nations include: the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, Poland, Portugal, (most members of the European Union) and NATO, also including Australia, New Zealand, Azerbaijan and Singapore. The intensity of the combat faced by contributing nations varies greatly, with the United States, United Kingdom and Canada sustaining substantial casualties in intensive combat operations.



IRCON XX1: Front Row L-R Comdt B. Norton, Lt Col B. Hughes, CS A. Grehan, Comdt B. Cleary Back Row L-R CS M. Mc Namara, CS G. Setright, Comdt D. Clarke

As Afghanistan and ISAF struggle to protect the population in this difficult conflict there has been one constant in the Headquarters of ISAF (HQ ISAF) that is the seven Irish Defence Forces (DF) Personnel. The seven person contingent is led by a senior Ordnance Officer with three Commandants and three senior NCOs working in various key appointments. The tour is six months long. DF personnel have received great praise from many of the international General Officers including the current commander of ISAF (COMISAF), General Petraeus, for their contribution.

All Irish military personnel are located in General Petraeus' four star HQ in Kabul and work in functional areas such as Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED), Force Protection, Strategic Communications and Current Operations Planning for the Force. The Staff Officers work in a multifunctional international environment to support the combined-joint operations of ISAF. They are involved in the military decision making process that provides advice to both COMISAF and his Generals.

The main focus of the ISAF Campaign Strategy is to develop Afghan capabilities, reduce the insurgent threat and enable transition of security from ISAF to the Government of Afghanistan. Operational



Shaura (Meeting) with Afghan Army and Police Personnel.



Lt Col B. Hughes signing handover of C-IED equipment to MOD, Afghan Army, 203rd Corps, Kabul

security forces are the main pillars of this effort, but more detailed plans for the Ministries of Interior and Defence that integrated over 10 other Afghan ministries and achieved results have also been staffed by Irish personnel. Our unique Irish experience is well recognised by international military officers and Afghan security forces. Afghan senior officers appreciate this Irish experience and Irish Officers gain Afghan's trust

quickly, which is vital to working with them. Afghan's use the Dari term 'Shohna ba shohna' (shoulder to shoulder) when referring to working with us, to describe our mutual friendship and trust.

Life in ISAF is constant work. ISAF works on command briefs that ensure all stakeholders are informed and involved in all aspects of ISAF operations and plans. Preparing briefs requires many hours of analysis and planning for the co-ordinated efforts of ISAF and Afghan security forces and ministries. ISAF Chief of Staff's try to ensure that information exchange to the highest level is expedited but lead with a strong hand if the information is not fully qualified and quantified for General Officers – in other words don't waste the General's time. ISAF insist that you provide the 'Bottom Line Up Front' or the BLUF supported by the details. Many of these briefs are delivered by Irish Officers informally and formally to COMISAF and his Operations and Intelligence Generals.

The constant presence of seven DF personnel in ISAF hopefully will continue for some time to come.

ARCO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Distributed with this Newsletter is material in respect of a **range of home support services offered by a commercial company** which will deliver its services at a discount to ARCO members.

ARCO Executive Committee has agreed to facilitate the distribution of information on this service as it may be of interest to some members of ARCO. By doing so ARCO Executive Committee does NOT endorse the services or the company, **above or to the exclusion of** any other service provider.

Members wishing to obtain further information on the company and the services it provides should do so directly with the company itself using the contact information provided in the enclosure with this newsletter.

Nursing Home Support Scheme (Fair Deal Scheme)

The possibility that a time might arise when they may no longer be able to live independently in their own homes because of the onset of infirmity or long-term illness is something that must occupy the minds of many people as they approach older age. In an effort to clarify the position in respect of access to nursing home care, the Government introduced the Nursing Home Support Scheme (Fair Deal Scheme) in October 2009 with a view to providing financial support for people assessed as needing long-term nursing home care. The scheme is founded on the core principle that long-term care should be affordable and that a person should receive the same level of State support whether they choose a public, voluntary or private nursing home.

In outline, the scheme requires that older people contribute to the cost of their care at a level related to their income and assets with the State paying the balance.

One of the objectives of the scheme is to avoid the necessity for anyone to sell their home in order to pay for care. The assets and incomes of adult children are not within the scope of the scheme's financial assessment. While there is no upper income threshold in relation to eligibility for the scheme, the amount, which an applicant contributes to his or her care, is determined on the basis of income and accumulated assets.

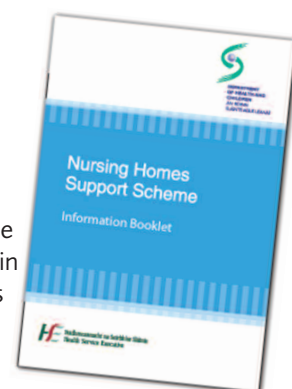
An applicant undergoes two forms of assessment. The first is a 'care and needs' assessment to decide whether nursing home care is necessary. This is normally carried out by a HSE appointed nurse and considers ability to carry out everyday tasks such as dressing, bathing and mobility, as well as the wishes of the applicant and the supports available to him or her. The second is a financial assessment to establish the patient's rate of contribution. This can range to a maximum of 80% of the applicant's income and 5% of the applicant's assets, both contributions arising on an annual basis. However, the 5% asset contribution only arises in the first three years of care (ie. it is capped at 15% of the applicant's assets). The first €36,000 of an applicant's assets is exempted from the financial assessment (€72,000 in the case of a couple).

The HSE loan will most commonly be used where the applicant's main or only asset is the principal private residence.

Obviously, the Scheme should not require the applicant's home to be sold to contribute the annual 5% contribution, so that element of the contribution is deferred and recouped from the sale of that property or from the applicant's estate after death. Whatever the rate of contribution by the applicant, it will never exceed the actual cost of care and applicants will retain at least 20% of their income.

Nursing home charges vary widely throughout the country, but all those participating in the scheme, public and private must publish a weekly bed price. Information etc. is available on the HSE's website www.hse.ie / www.citizensinformation.ie

While the scheme provides for the basic accommodation costs in a nursing home, critics point to the fact that it does not make provision for additional costs such as social programmes, physiotherapy, incontinence wear, transport and specialised wheelchairs.



Autumn in Berlin

By Lt Col (Retd) R. Cummins

This year ARCO offered members the opportunity to take a four day trip to Berlin with a particular emphasis on the defence of Berlin in the final days of World War 2 in Europe. The trip was organised by Cols Richard Heaslip and Brian O'Connor through Group Travel International (GTI). Seventeen people reported to Dublin Airport and set off to Berlin on Sunday 17th October led by Col Brian O'Connor.



ARCO Visiting Group outside the Reichstag.

We landed at Schonefeld Airport in the early afternoon. Schonefeld is Berlin's second airport and was the main airport for East Berlin before German re-unification. We were met by our guide, an Englishman, who has lived in Berlin for the past number of years. We were taken on a whistle-stop tour of the major sights on the way to our hotel. The sights included the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag, The Holocaust Memorial and Potsdamer Platz. Those of us who had never been to Berlin got our first look at the remains of the infamous Berlin Wall. We also took a swing through the main shopping area of the city, where the shops were closed as it was Sunday. That was as close as we got to shops for the remainder of the tour except for a concerted assault on the duty free shop at the airport on the way home where there was value to be had in certain Irish alcoholic products.

We stayed at a Novotel hotel on the west side of Berlin's biggest park, Tiergarten. It was a busy hotel with excellent rooms and breakfast and pleasant staff, all of whom seemed to speak English. The railway station was conveniently located across the road from the hotel. On our first night in Berlin the majority of the party dined in a pub/restaurant located in the railway arches adjacent to the railway station and hotel. The beer and food found general approval and was reasonably priced. Monday dawned cold and sunny and ideal as a lot of walking and use of public transport was part of the plan for the day. We went initially to the location of the famous "Check Point Charlie" on Friedrichstrasse. These days there is still a hut on the site but not the original. Students dressed as American and USSR soldiers are happy to pose with people on the site at €2 a time. The most poignant thing that was pointed out to us on this street was name plates on the footpath of German Jews who had lived in certain houses and had been arrested by the Nazi's never to return. Apparently over five thousand of these name plates have

been put down all over Berlin by one artist. We then moved on to the Landwehr Canal which along with the river Spree creates an island of the centre of Berlin. This canal formed the last major obstacle to the advance of the Soviet Army from the south. In this area we saw the building that housed Goring's Air Ministry, used these days by the Revenue Office. We also saw the site of Hitler's bunker, now a car park, Gestapo HQ, now a flat open space covered in sand. Beside the Gestapo HQ site is a still intact stretch of the Berlin wall. In this area we also visited the Bendler Block where von Stauffenberg and his fellow plotters in the attempt to kill Hitler were executed. There is an interesting German Resistance museum located in part of the building and the German Defence Ministry still use the remainder.

After lunch we headed to the northwest of the Reichstag for the final assault on it. We marshalled our forces at the Moltke Bridge and crossed over. As we made our way down by the offices of the German Chancellor who did we see coming towards us only a group of Russian military officers accompanied by a group of German military officers. They seemed to be getting along just fine. We crossed to the Reichstag and then took the train back to our hotel. After a quick turn-around we were back on the train again heading to a traditional Berlin pub, more than a hundred years old, for a typical German working man's meal. The one course meal of "Eisbein" traditional Berlin pork knuckle, potatoes, sauerkraut and pureed peas and washed down with local beer.

Tuesday, wet and cold, saw us headed by coach for the German/Russian museum in the suburb of Karlshorst. The building housing the museum was erected as an Officer's Club for the German Army's Pioneer School. It was used by the Fifth Soviet Army as a headquarters during its assault on Berlin. Most importantly it was the site of the formal signing of the German



Job Opportunities in Overseas Consultancy

By Comdt (Retd) L. Quinlan

My Terms of Reference in writing this article is to outline some of the opportunities that exist for ARCO members, specifically in the area of overseas consultancy.

I have been doing this exclusively for the past 15 years as a freelance consultant – mostly for the European Commission (EC) in 45 countries ranging from the Baltics to Palestine and South Africa and from the Balkans to Russia and Kyrgyzstan.

Currently there are five retired Officers working in this field and we assist each other quite effectively in sourcing contracts.

ARCO members are ideally suited for this type of work as invariably they possess leadership experience and skills, overseas experience and the natural Irish ability to relate to, and work with, other nationalities. In addition the fact that we are English speakers is a great asset as most projects involved in this consulting business is implemented through the medium of English.

In this brief article I would like to give the reader an overview of the type of projects available to ARCO members, how these projects operate and finally how to get into the consulting loop.

There are many donor agencies (and countries) involved in funding consulting projects and they include the EC, UN, UNDP, World Bank, European Training Foundation, USAID etc. They mostly work to the same formula, i.e. they agree financial assistance to various countries in the form of funded projects and then they look for consulting companies to implement these projects. These companies in turn look for consultants to carry out the work and this is where the job opportunities are for ARCO members.

unconditional surrender that ended the war in Europe. The room where this event occurred is still set out as it was in May 1945. Subsequently it was used by the Soviet Military administration and as a museum of the Soviet Armed Forces. Today the museum is run by a German-Russian Association and attempts to show in a reasonably fair way the relationship between Germany and the USSR from 1917 through to the present day. The exhibition is by way of text (German and Russian), some equipment, photographs and film. A summarised English text is provided.

Back on the bus, we headed to Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp with the intention of initially having lunch in the camp restaurant. However, when we arrived, the restaurant was closed and obviously had been for some time. This set the mood perfectly for visiting a concentration camp as it was also now raining much heavier than it had been earlier. This camp, built in 1936, was the first purpose built concentration camp in Germany. Because it had various other uses after the war, there are now just a few buildings left. However, what is there depicts very clearly how the camp operated and what it was used for. In the area of the camp where Jews were imprisoned two huts have been set out as they would have been when the camp was in operation. More than 200,000 people were imprisoned in the camp during its operation. Tens of thousands died of disease, starvation, forced labour and maltreatment or were murdered systematically by the SS. The material on display show that the SS were constantly attempting to come up with more efficient methods of executing people. A very sobering place that demonstrates eloquently the lengths that humans are prepared to go to in their depravity. This trip ended on a lighter note when the guide, who was feeling a bit fraught over an allegedly missing audio guide, gave out to certain members of the party for returning late to the bus. The incident provided entertainment under the railway arches that night over beer and grub.

Wednesday, going home day, wet and cold again, took us to Treptower Park to visit a Soviet War Memorial where 7,000 Soviet soldiers are buried. It is one of the few places left, I imagine, where sayings of Joseph Stalin are depicted on the memorials with his name underneath.

And so to Dublin, where our flight arrived on time without a fanfare. A good trip in pleasant company.

Most projects are designed to develop the capacity of beneficiary countries and institutions within these countries (government ministries and agencies) in the area of: Strategy, Policy, Planning, Institutional Development (Organisational Restructuring), Human Resource Development, Skills Development, Development of Internal Procedures (SOP's) etc.

Taking the EC funded projects as an example ARCO members are ideally suited for roles such as Team Leader, Strategic Adviser, Human Resources Adviser, Training Adviser, Evaluation Expert, Capacity Building Adviser, Project Manager, etc etc

How do you get into this consulting activity? There are various websites that announce forthcoming projects and the good ones are the EC website (www.ec.europa.eu), (www.assortis.com) & (www.docon.info). These websites will provide a significant amount of detail on forthcoming projects as well as contact details of hundreds of consulting companies who are bidding to implement the projects being funded by the EC and other donor agencies.

You need to send your CV to these companies expressing your general interest in working with them or your specific interest

in any project that you have identified from your research. Projects come in many forms but basically they are either long term assignments (220 working days per year for 1,2 or 3 years) which equals 10 months work per year with fees paid for each working day or short term assignments ranging from 40 working days – 100 working days per year.

For long term assignments consultants get a lump sum package for each working day and they look after their own travel and accommodation arrangements. For short term assignments consultants usually get a daily fee plus per diem allowances at UN rates plus travel costs reimbursed. Generally the net profit to the consultant can be a bit better in the short term assignments and this has the added advantage of the consultant not being away from home for too many days in any given year (probably ideal for retired persons).

Working conditions are generally good and the work is indeed interesting and exciting at times.

The above is just a brief overview of the consulting business from my experience and if any ARCO member requires more information on this (how to make out CV etc) feel free to contact me (Leo Quinlan) at 086-2505046 or at leoq@eircom.net

Information on Free Travel Scheme 66 or over

If you are 66 or over the Free Travel Scheme allows you to travel for free on most CIE public transport services (Iarnrod Eireann, Bus Eireann, Dublin Bus) and the public transport services offered by a large number of private operators in various parts of the country. There are other categories of persons who can also qualify for free travel.

To apply for a Free Travel Pass you must complete the application form FT1 which can be obtained from:

- On the internet at www.welfare.ie
- From your local Social Welfare Office or
- By telephoning the Department's LoCall Leaflet Request Line at 1890 20 23 25

Send the completed form with any required documents to:

Free Travel Section

FREEPOST

Social Welfare Services, College Road, Sligo.

Telephone: **LoCall 1890 500 000**

Free Travel in N. Ireland

Persons as above are also entitled to free travel in N. Ireland using a Senior SmartPass Card which can be obtained as follows:

Completion of an application form FTNI 1

- Application Form available from LoCall Leaflet Line 1890 20 23 25
- From your local Social Welfare Office
- From your local Citizens Information Centre

Free Travel Booklet SW 40 outlining the Free Travel Scheme can be had from your local Social Welfare Office or Citizens Advice Centre





Hail and Farewell

ARCO would like to congratulate Col Paul Fry on his promotion to Brig-Gen and appointment as GOC AC. We would also like to congratulate Capt (NS) Mark Mellett on his promotion to Cdre and appointment as FOCNS. We wish his predecessor Cdre Frank Lynch all the best in his retirement.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-Anamacha Deceased Officers

Our condolences to the families and friends of those comrades who passed away since our last Newsletter went to print:

Lt Col Jack O' Leary	13 October 2010
Lt J. P. O'Neill Smyth	14 October 2010
Col Kevin Doyle	18 October 2010
Brig Gen Barney Mc Mahon DSM	25 October 2010
Capt Patrick Sweeney	02 November 2010
Capt Tom Mc Mackin	22 November 2010
Comdt John Byrne	06 December 2010
Lt Col Ronnie Mc Mahon	11 December 2010
Lt Col Dan Crowley	13 December 2010
Comdt John Kiely	14 December 2010
Capt John Dalton	28 December 2010
Col Joe Clune	06 January 2011
Maj Gen Fergus O' Connell	16 January 2011
Comdt Seamus Ward	16 January 2011
Comdt Pat Reidy	4 February 2011

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Newsletter is issued in Spring and Autumn. Articles or items of interest are always welcome. If you have something to contribute please send it to the Editor at melucey@hotmail.com or by post to Col M.E Lucey (Retd) 228 Grange Rd., Rathfarnham, D16.

2010 Meeting with General Staff and Presentation of Cheque for DFBF



Front: Lt Gen S. Mc Cann, COS, Col B. O' Connor, President ARCO
Back: Brig Gen M. Finn, ACOS(SP), Comdt W. Campbell, Col C. Mc Namara, Maj Gen D. Ashe, DCOS(SP)

Naval Service Commissioning 2010

Capt (NS) C. O'Donnell presenting the ARCO Miniature Fleet Telescope to Ens Mark Harman in the presence of Mr Tony Killeen T.D. Minister for Defence and Cdre F. Lynch



Welcome to ARCO's New Members:

Maj Gen Anthony Wall
Brig Gen Patrick Hayes
Brig Gen Chris Moore
Col Bernard Donagh
Col William Fitzgearld
Col George Kerton
Col Patrick A. Mc Court
Col Thomas Moloney
Lt Col Vincent Blighe
Lt Col John Costello
Lt Col Anthony Daly
Lt Col John Dunne
Lt Col Patrick Fingelton
Lt Col John Gahan
Lt Col Robert Nugent
Lt Col William O' Flaherty
Lt Col Seamus Rouine
Cdr Kevin Daly
Cdr Richie Ryan
Cdr Thomas Tuohy
Lt Cdr Brendan O' Shea
Lt Cdr Adrian Sheedy
Comdt John Curley

Comdt Ciaran Leonard
Comdt Noel Mc Cann
Comdt Padraic Mc Dunphy
Comdt Christopher Mc Namee
Comdt Paddy Murphy
Comdt Eoin O' Curry
Comdt Brendan O' Dea
Comdt Tony O' Sullivan
Comdt Paul Prendergast
Comdt Kieran Reid
Capt John Brophy
Capt Niall Duffy
Capt Ronan Egan
Capt Sean Fitzpatrick
Capt Liam Flynn
Capt Padraig Higgins
Capt Michael Kiernan
Capt Garry Mannering
Capt Ray Murphy
Capt Patrick Power
Capt Stephen Quigley
Capt Michael Ryan
Capt William Sweeney



Thyroid disease in later life

The thyroid gland is located in the neck below the Adam's apple. It produces a hormone called thyroxin which controls the body's metabolism, that is, its efficiency in utilizing food to produce growth, heat and energy. This in turn may affect processes such as body weight, temperature and heart rate.

By Col (Retd) M. Collins MICGP,FFOM

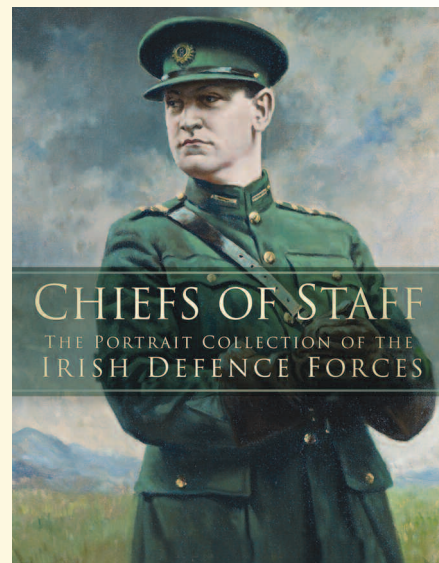
Abnormality of function of the thyroid gland can result in under-activity (hypothyroidism) or over-activity (hyperthyroidism). These changes are generally subtle in older people, often giving rise to sub-clinical or non-symptomatic disease which, if untreated, may progress over time to symptomatic illness or cause abnormalities of the heart rate or rhythm. For this reason, a blood thyroid function test (TFT) is generally performed as part of a routine medical examination and as part of the screening in patients with symptoms such as palpitations, unexplained weight change, anxiety states or loss of energy etc.

Hypothyroidism is most commonly caused by an autoimmune reaction to the thyroid gland. An autoimmune disease is one in which the body's immune system attacks some of its own tissue as though it were foreign material. Hypothyroidism can also be caused by medical or surgical treatment of an overactive thyroid or thyroid cancer. The condition occurs in about 1 in 1000 men and is 15 times more common in women. Symptoms may include increased weight, dry skin and brittle nails, lassitude, depression, muscle cramps and sensitivity to the cold. Treatment is simple and only requires the taking of a small dose of levothyroxin - but it is life-long and needs to be monitored occasionally by a blood test to ensure appropriate correction. Hyperthyroidism, or overproduction of thyroxin, is the reverse side of the coin. Symptoms of full-blown hyperthyroidism include increased appetite, weight loss, hyperactivity, poor sleep, irritability,



thinning of hair, bulging eyes, swelling of the thyroid (goitre), tremors and being excessively warm. The commonest cause of hyperthyroidism is an autoimmune disease, known as Grave's Disease, and it generally occurs in the 20-40 year age group. (Robert Grave, 1797-1853, was a prominent Dublin physician and linguist who was President of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and is credited by some with the development of the second hand on watches). Untreated, hyperthyroidism can result in abnormal heart rhythms, osteoporosis and exacerbation of diabetic symptoms. Onset in older persons is commonly associated with the development of thyroxin producing nodules in the thyroid gland (rarely it may develop from a thyroid cancer) and is usually subtle or sub-clinical in presentation. Detection by investigation of early symptoms or routine check of TFTs is important because of the potential to produce abnormal heart rhythms which, at best, will require the inconvenience of further medical management and, less favourably, may complicate pre-existing cardiac or blood vessel disease. Investigation and initial treatment are normally conducted by a specialist endocrinologist and treatment options include the use of anti-thyroid medications, oral radioiodine or surgery to remove part or all of the thyroid gland.

Cover to Chiefs of Staff Portrait Collection



Contributing Essayists: James Hanley RHA, Col T. Hodson (Retd), Lieut Gen Colm Mangan DSM (Retd), Donal Maguire, NGI, Dr Pat Murphy, ARHA and Professor Eunan O'Halpin, TCD.

The book can now be ordered through the Mess Secretary, McKee Officer's Mess.

Cost: €50 Availability: May 2011

Best Air Corps Cadet



Presentation of ARCO Sword by Lt Col R. Cummins to Lt Michael Barcoe in the presence of Lt Gen S. Mc Cann, Chief of Staff. (Photo: A/M Doyle)