



Cumann na nIar Oifigeach Coimisiúnta

Association of Retired Commissioned Officers

ARCO NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2002.

Issue No 2.

Enclosed with this Newsletter is the Report on our 7th AGM held in Cathal Brugha Bks on 13/10/01; the audited accounts for year ending 28/2/01, and copy of an article by Comdt Terry McNulty on An Claoimh Gaisciochta, published recently in An Cosantoir.

To our members.

Our membership stands at 550, which for a voluntary organisation of pensioners is an achievement with which one can be proud. Your Executive Committee wishes to take this opportunity to express its appreciation and thanks to you, our members, for your loyal and steadfast support.

Newsletters are sent to members only. The figure of 550 represents about 50% plus, of the potential membership. Your Executive Committee is appealing therefore to our members to encourage non members, whom they might know, to join. A steady intake of new members is very important for the long term viability of the Association. The main object of ARCO is to promote, safeguard and to protect the interests of retired officers and is the only organisation there is for them for that purpose. The Hon Membership Secretary: **Col Neil O'Brien, (former Director ASM), 18 Braemor Road, Dublin 14. (Tel: 01/2983284),** who will send on the Application Form on request. Annual sub €12.70.

The Hon Treasurer has reported that a number of members who pay their subscriptions by cash/cheque were in arrears at year end. Please contact Col Jim Fagan, The Manse, Ballymore, Co Westmeath.

Pension increases due.

Arising from the pay increases agreed under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, including the 'adjustment' of December 2000:-

- * A non pensionable once-off lump sum payment will be paid on 1/4/02 equal to a 1% of basic pay on that date. Pensioners will benefit from this 1% under the 'Parity' principle.
- * Phase 3 of the PPF:- 4% increase in basic pay from 1/10/02. The position of pensioners in relation to this is not yet clarified.
- * The Public Service Benchmarking Body is due to report by 30/6/02. The Government agreed in advance that one quarter of any increase in pay arising from that Report will be implemented w.e.f. 1/12/01, and the balance on a phased basis. The implications for pensioners are not known at this stage. Hopefully, they will benefit under the 'Parity' principle.

Long Service Increments pensionability.

Long Service Increments were introduced for serving Captains and Commandants on 1/10/94 and for Lt Colonels on 1/1/98. Unfortunately, their pensionability was confined to those in receipt of them for at least one year on retirement. This meant that those officers who had retired prior to introduction did not benefit in their pensions on the 'Parity' principle. ARCO held that these increments were part of the incremental salary scale for officers, in spite of the contrary view held by RAO and the Department that they were 'off the pay scale'. After many years, much correspondence, recourse to 'Freedom of Information', support from other public service pensioner groups, etc, the case was conceded last November, backdated to 1/4/00. Those eligible should by now be benefiting in their pensions.

Extracts from a Memo on the subject is enclosed, so that members can check their own position.

Military Service Allowance pensionability.

Unfortunately, there is no good news on the MSA pensionability front for those who retired before the 'cut-off' date of 1/8/90. As reported in our September 2001 Newsletter, the Commission on Public Service Pensions in their Final Report stated that they could not recommend any increase in pension. That finding is being appealed by your Executive Committee.

. . . over:-

The Report of the Review Body on Higher Remuneration in the Public Sector (Buckley Report), was published at the same time. To quote from that Report:- 'we do accept that the MSA is relevant in considering the appropriate differential between the rank of Brigadier General/Commodore and Colonel and we have had regard to this in our recommendation'. Based on the 'Parity' principle all retired Brigadier Generals/Commodores, irrespective of the date they retired and in particular those who retired prior to 1/8/90, are benefiting in their pensions from the MSA because it is taken into account in arriving at the salary for that rank. ARCO considers that this is particularly relevant for all those other pensioners from private soldier rank to colonel who also retired before 1/8/90 and who are not benefiting. This point will be part of the appeal being made.

This MSA pensionability is a core issue for ARCO. Your Executive Committee will continue with its campaign as new information comes to light and as opportunities arise. The opportunity may arise on the doorstep during the coming General Election, and members are encouraged to raise this long standing pension grievance with election candidates, as appropriate.

Proposed change in pension increase policy.

As reported in our September 2001 Newsletter, the Commission on Public Service Pensions recommended a change in the way pensions are increased from 'Parity' to a 'Public Service Earnings Index'. The Index would represent the total % increase in pensionable remuneration of serving personnel in the Public Service from one six month period to the next, and pensions would be increased six monthly by that percentage, on a flat, across the board basis, common to all pensioners.

The Government has now accepted the broad thrust of that recommendation and is in the process of setting up an implementation Working Group on which pensioners will have a representation. In addition, a process of consultation with pensioners is also being planned. Pensioner groups hold mixed views on the proposal because it will lead to a change from the traditional 'Parity' principle in relation to pension increases to a new and untested increase method. Your Executive Committee is monitoring the matter, consulting with the Departments of Finance and Defence, and with other pensioner bodies, and will make submissions to the Working Group in due course. The views of our members would be appreciated.

For our older members.

By now all our members over 70 years should be benefiting from the Medical Card, Free Schemes (TV licence, ESB/Gas, Telephone rental, etc), be exempt from paying the 2% Health Contribution Levy. (Providing that the application forms were sent off!)

Budget 2002 did not give much in the way of age related benefit increases, except:-

- * Limits under which all income is exempt from tax for the over 65's increased:-

- single/widowed: from €10,793 to €13,000.

- married: from €21,586 to €26,000.

- * Free electricity allowance increased from 1500 units per annum to 1800 units.

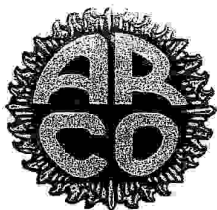
- * Free driving licences for the over 70's. From 1/2/02, driving licences can be renewed free of charge. (Unfortunately, the medical reports are not covered by the Medical Card).

Members are reminded that benefits or other improvements do not come about except through constant lobbying. Many pensioner organisations submit pre-budget submissions to various Ministers, either directly or through umbrella organisations, on matters of concern to their members. ARCO is also prepared to do this, but must first get in material for submission from its members.

Personal column.

Capt Pat Meany, retired 1956, who served in the 12th Bn, Army HQ and Southern Command HQ, would like to hear from former colleagues - 3667 Broomhill Crescent, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, L4Y 3N5. Tel 905-804-0512, Email mbooks@interlog.com

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Cumann na nIar Oifigeach Coimisiúnta

Association of Retired Commissioned Officers

REPORT ON THE 7th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 13/10/01.

The 7th AGM was held on 13/10/01 in the Auditorium, 2nd Eastern Brigade, Cathal Brugha Bks, in accordance with the Notice and Agenda issued to all members. The President, Brig Gen P. Monahan presided and thirty three members attended, with nineteen apologies. A minutes silence was observed for all deceased members.

REPORT OF THE HON SECRETARY.

Col John Ryan in his Report, covered the work of the Executive Committee during the past year, in particular communication with ARCO members and new members, the Newsletter, Arco sympathy card, award to the Cadet School, DF Personnel Sp Services, CAOGA, pensionability of the LSI's and MSA, Final Report of the Commission on Public Service Pensions and pension increases in the pipeline.

REPORT OF THE HON TREASURER AND AUDITED A/Cs.

Col Jim Fagan distributed copies of the audited accounts for year end 28/2/01.

The surplus of income over expenditure was £3707.00, leaving a balance in bank (incl EBS Bond), as on 28/2/01, of £21,792.00, compared with £17,938.00 for the previous year end.

REPORT OF THE HON MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY.

Owing to the untimely death of Lt Col Martin Bates, The Hon Secretary gave a brief report on membership. 520 members were notified of the AGM. Breakdown:- Eastern area-241, Cork-83, Limerick/Clare-17, Athlone-28, Galway+West-36, Curragh-97, Overseas-18. There are 15 against whom no addresses are recorded.

INCOMING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

President.	Col John Ryan	01/8313731.
Vice President.	Col Harry Crowley	045/431415.
Hon Secretary.	Capt Chris McQuaid	01/4516958.
Hon Treasurer.	Col Jim Fagan	044/56315.
Hon Membership Sec.	Col Neil O'Brien	01/2983284.
Eastern Branch Reps.	Maj Gen Fergus O'Connell	01/2834271.
	Capt Patrick Goddard	01/8378354.
Curragh Branch Reps.	Col Donal O'Carroll	045/432541.
	Comdt Gerry Ryan	045/431450.
Galway Branch Rep.	Lt Col Ned Cusack	091/555257.
Naval Service Rep.	Cdre Liam Brett	021/353448.

No one came forward to represent the Cork, Limerick, Athlone or other areas. Three members agreed to be co-opted on to the Executive Committee at its next meeting:- Lt Col Danny Flood (056/61758), Comdt Terry McNulty (01/4903846), Brig Gen Pat Monahan (01/8211117).

CONCLUSION.

The outgoing President brought the meeting to a close and thanked all present for their attendance and contribution to a successful meeting. Members were requested to keep in touch with ARCO, particularly by attending the Annual General Meeting and were assured that the Executive Committee would appreciate comments and/or suggestions to help maintain an effective Association.

Copy to:-
Each member of ARCO.

Col J. Ryan,
President, ARCO,
28 Maywood Ave,
Raheny,
Dublin 5.

SINCE ARCO's inauguration in 1993, members of the association have frequently expressed their wish to be more closely identified with serving personnel in the maintenance of the traditions of the Defence Forces. Following contacts with the Cadet School the association committed itself to the provision of a perpetual trophy to be awarded to the best cadet at each year's commissioning ceremony. In this way a link could be established between the youngest and the more mature elements of the military hierarchy, thereby generating interaction and reciprocal awareness between the two groups.

After much consideration into the form of the award a ceremonial sword,

An Claidheamh Gaiscíochta, was decided on. Each recipient will receive a replica of the sword to keep as a memento.

And so, in Biblical terms, 'it came to pass'. The Sword was ready, but only just, in time for the commissioning of the 76th Cadet Class, and we in ARCO were understandably interested as to who would be the first recipient. Speaking personally as one who served his entire army career in an exclusively male environment, I was intrigued, though not necessarily surprised, when one of the females, Cadet McDonagh, won the accolade. Being selected as best cadet is a great honour as the assessment is based on a long course that encompasses rigorous physical, mental, and academic dimensions. When I met Denise I began to appreciate how well she deserved her honour and how much she values it.

Denise has an elder sister and two significantly younger brothers, one of whom, aged seven, already aspires to an army career – and we can reasonably surmise why.

Secondary education at St Nathy's College, Ballaghderreen, gave Denise a high grade

An Claidheamh Gaiscíochta

Newly commissioned 2/Lt Denise McDonagh made a small piece of history when she became the first recipient of An Claidheamh Gaiscíochta. This new award, which will be presented to the best cadet in each cadet class, is sponsored by the Association of Retired Commissioned Officers (ARCO). Comdt Terry McNulty (retd), gives us the background to both the award and its first recipient.



Inset: 2/Lt Denise McDonagh receives An Claidheamh Gaiscíochta from Brig Gen P Monaghan (retd), President of ARCO.

Leaving Cert, which led on to university where she studied history, politics and mathematics. Perhaps more significantly, university also gave her the opportunity to participate, and excel, in many sporting and social activities. Chief among these was

Gaelic football, a sport Denise had already played at home in Ballaghderreen. Denise's continuing involvement with Gaelic football was timely with the Mayo ladies team becoming realistic challengers for national honours. Denise played her part in this challenge and was right-half forward on the team that brought the All-Ireland title to the county in 1999 and 2000.

I asked Denise why she decided to join the army and while admitting to being somewhat influenced by contemporaries she said she was mostly attracted by the challenge and by her belief that it is suited to 'a particular kind of girl'. Clearly by her success to date Denise is that particular kind of girl.

Outside the army Denise is actively involved with the President's Gaisce Award programme, and in her case is participating in the parachuting, sign language and the training of under-age teams. I personally wouldn't bet against a *bonn óir* for her in any of these activities.

Denise also has some well-informed views on the perception of the military in Ireland. She considers the Cadet School and the cadet career are somewhat underreported and under-profiled in our national media. This could be reduced she suggests by the concept of selective awards for achievement within the establishment. 2/Lt McDonagh is looking forward to her future in the Defence Forces and perhaps to contributing on overseas missions and humanitarian operations.

We in ARCO would like to congratulate Denise on becoming the first recipient of An Claidheamh Gaiscíochta and we extend our best wishes to her for a happy and successful life and career in the Defence Forces.■

Qualifying Conditions for payment of Long Service Increments (LSIs)

Captain

The first and second LSIs are payable on completion of 3 years and 6 years' service, respectively, on the maximum of the pay scale. Captains commissioned from the ranks receive both LSIs on completion of 3 years' service on the maximum of the pay scale.

Commandant

The first LSI is payable on completion of 25 years' reckonable service with 1 year on the maximum of the pay scale, or on completion of 8 years * on the maximum. The second LSI is payable on completion of 28 years' reckonable service with 1 year on the maximum of the pay scale, or on completion of 11 years * on the maximum.

* In the case of Medical and Dental Officers (AMC) in the rank of Comdt., the period of service required on the maximum of the pay scale is 4 years (instead of 8 years) for the first LSI, while the corresponding period for the second LSI is 7 years on the maximum of the pay scale (instead of 11 years). Otherwise, the standard qualifying conditions for that rank apply.

Lieut-Colonel

The first LSI is payable on completion of 29 years' reckonable service with 1 year on the maximum of the pay scale, or on completion of 3 years on the maximum. The second LSI is payable on completion of 32 years' reckonable service with 1 year on the maximum of the pay scale, or on completion of 6 years on the maximum.

. . . .

the benefit of LSIs (which were introduced for serving officers in the ranks of Captain, Commandant and Lieutenant-Colonel under the PCW restructuring provisions) is now being extended with effect from 1st April, 2000, to qualified officer pensioners who retired prior to the commencement dates of the relevant PCW agreements.

In order to benefit under this arrangement, retired officers will have to satisfy the requisite conditions for the LSIs based on their actual service on retirement. The conditions are summarised in the enclosure. The benefit will also apply to the spouses and children of qualified deceased officers.

The maximum monetary benefit to individual retired officers varies depending on rank, service etc. and lower amounts apply as appropriate. At current rates, these maxima are :

	First LSI £ p.a.	Both LSIs £ p.a.
Captain	606.00	1,244.00
Commandant	723.00	1,476.00
Lieut-Colonel	319.50	641.00