



Cumann na nIar Oifigeach Coimisiúnta

Association of Retired Commissioned Officers

Newsletter

Issue No. 5

Autumn 2003

9th Annual General Meeting

11th October 2003.

We are again at that special time of the year in the life of ARCO – annual general meeting time, our 9th AGM.

Once again, your Executive Committee looks forward to a good turn-out and to meeting its members. We are always very appreciative of those who go out of their way to attend, particularly those who travel from the provinces. Coffee will be available from 10.30 hrs in the Officers' Mess and a light lunch will be provided, at no charge, after the meeting. (This proves, in ARCO's case anyway, that there is such a thing as a free lunch!) Saturday is a quiet day in the Officers' Mess and we must book lunch in advance. Members who wish to partake of the lunch are asked to contact the **Hon. Secretary, Lt. Col. John Rigney** Tel: 01/4593704, not later than Monday, 6 October 03.

Elections to the Executive Committee are an important item on the agenda. At present 10 of the 14 members are from the Dublin/Newbridge area but, as we are a national organisation,

we appeal to those from other areas to come forward to ensure a better spread.

Editor's Note: It's high Summer as I write, and the Irish Open Golf Championship is in full swing at Portmarnock. It's difficult to focus on the real issues right now, but soon enough one real issue will be our 9th AGM, details as enclosed. Your Newsletter will attempt to keep you in touch with such issues and informed on current events within the Association and as affecting retired members of the public service generally. We have appreciated a generally favourable feedback in respect of our previous edition. We hope you will find this copy of interest and we express our appreciation to all of you for your sustained encouragement and your support of the Association's programme.

78th Cadet Class Graduation



Mr. Michael Smith TD with 2/Lt. Maeve O'Grady, Col. John Ryan and Lt. Col. Shay Gillen.

This is in two parts with the award of the National Diploma in Military Studies from the Higher Education and Training Awards Council to each of the Cadets of the 78th Class on the morning of the 8th July, followed by the Commissioning Ceremony in the afternoon. 50 Cadets received their

commissions from the Minister for Defence, Mr. Michael Smith, TD. The highlight of the occasion was the presentation of the ARCO perpetual award to the Cadet who achieves first place in the Class – An Claoimh Gaisciochta (Sword of Achievement). The recipient this year was 2nd Lieutenant Maeve O'Grady and the presentation was made by the President of ARCO, Colonel John Ryan. She also received a replica of the Sword in its own presentation box, as a personal memento of the occasion.

2/Lt Maeve O'Grady is from Ballyclough, County Cork and holds a degree in Law and European Studies from the University of Limerick. Her many interests include horse racing, Tae Kwan Do, hockey and hill-walking. Her first appointment is to Pl. Comdr, Weapons Platoon, B Company, 3rd. Infantry Battalion, 1st Southern Brigade.

We wish her every success in her career in the Defence Forces.

ARCO Annual General Meeting

Notice to Members.

The 9th Annual General Meeting of the Association of Retired Commissioned Officers will be held in the

Auditorium, 2nd Eastern Brigade Headquarters, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Rathmines, Dublin 6

On

Saturday, 11th October 2003 at 1130 hrs.

Agenda.

- 1 Opening Address by President, ARCO.
- 2 Minutes of 8th Annual General Meeting – 12/10/02.
- 3 President's Report.
- 4 Report of Hon Treasurer, to include audited A/Cs.
- 5 Report of Hon Membership Secretary.
- 6 Elections to Executive Committee.
- 7 Appointment of Auditors.
- 8 Open Forum.

*John Rigney, Lt. Colonel,
Hon. Secretary, ARCO.
11/9/03.*

*15 Monastery Park,
Clondalkin,
Dublin 22.
Tel: (01)4593704.*

Personal Column

Lt-Col John P. Duggan, to those of us who knew him in the Army, is a formidable personality, and he has brought aspects of such personality to bear on his interests and studies in civilian life, since he retired (from the Defence Forces only, I emphasise). His contributions, latterly to Dear Madam in the Irish Times Readers Letters section, bear witness to his scholarship, wit, insight and incisiveness of expression. Such features are further, significantly I suggest, exemplified in a number of publications of which JP is author.

Previous publications include 'Neutral Ireland and the Third Reich' and 'A History of the Irish Army', but the most recent publication is titled '**Herr Hempel at the German Legation in Dublin 1937-1945**'. The publication was launched at a distinguished, venerable almost, gathering by Lt-General Colm Mangan, Chief-of-Staff at McKee Barracks Officers' Mess on 15 May 2003. Lt-Col Duggan has co-authored 'Memoirs of a Wild Goose', and is currently working on a biography of General Dan McKenna.

We publish a brief outline review of his recent publication (Herr Hempel), but space does not permit an adequate presentation of the complex and intriguing subject. Nevertheless we wholeheartedly commend the publication to you and trust you will enjoy the read as much as did your reviewer.

ARCO wishes to congratulate Colonel Gerard McNamara on his imminent promotion to Brigadier-General, and appointment as GOC Eastern Brigade, and to congratulate also **Colonel Pat O'Sullivan** on his promotion to Brigadier-General and appointment as GOC DFTC.

ARCO extends its best wishes to Brigadier-Generals Eddie Heskin and Jim Saunderson on their retirement from the Defence Forces and thanks them for the assistance and facilities provided to ARCO during their tenure of office.

Notice Board

The Military Heritage of Ireland Trust.

We are pleased to enclose a copy of the Trust's brochure with each Newsletter for the information of our members. The Trust is newly established, with Maj. General Paddy Nowlan (an ARCO member) as its Chairman. ARCO wishes the Trust every success.

European health card. Watch out for a health card to be launched on 1/6/04. It is designed to replace the existing EI 11 Form and some other forms as the means of establishing entitlement to emergency health services when visiting another EU member state. There will be no change in your entitlement but this should make it easier to establish your rights.

Bereavement. The new booklet published jointly by Comhairle and the Department of Social and Family Affairs, covering information for those affected by bereavement, is available from Citizens' Information Centres and Comhairle offices.

Drugs Payment Scheme – Refunds. This is to remind members who may have overlooked a notice in the newspapers in July on refunds which may be due in respect of the Drugs Payment Scheme (DPS) where persons did not obtain their full entitlement under the Scheme between 1st July 1999 and 28 February 2001. If your expenditure, or your family's expenditure, under the DPS exceeded £32.00 (€40.63) for any month from July 1999 to February 2001, you may be eligible for a refund of up to £10 (€12.69) for that month(s). The problem only came to light recently when it was found that the entitlement was not ratified due to an oversight. Claim forms and further information available from DPS Refunds, PO Box 9 2 63, Dublin 11, or at 1 8 9 0 5 6 4 0 2 5. The deadline for return of completed forms is 5 pm on 30th September 2003.

Dental Treatment Benefit Scheme. New arrangements have been agreed with dentists who are providing services under the Treatment Benefit Scheme. Broadly, if you are entitled to dental benefit under the scheme, you will have to pay an extra 10%, the Department is also paying an extra 10%.
In summary:

*Oral examinations, scale and polish treatments are free of charge.

*An extraction will be €11.75, up from €10.67.

*Fillings are subsidised, but there is no fixed charge. The cost to the patient will be the dentist's private fee, less 15%, less the Department's contribution of €29.20.

*Dentures and other treatments will cost you 10% more than they used to. Dentists in the scheme have agreed to display a price list of treatments, showing the private fee and the fee payable to those entitled to dental benefit.

Medical card holders (Dental Benefits) are entitled to the following free of charge:

*Oral examinations, scale and polish treatments.

*Fillings and Extractions.

*Partial dentures every 18 months, and full dentures every 5 years.

*Root canal treatment for six teeth only.

List of dentists on the medical card scheme can be had from your Health Board.

McKee Officers' Club

Colonel Jim Mortell currently Club-President. He has undertaken to demystify the ethos of the group in the following 'thumbnail sketch',-- his own disarming terminology!

Genesis: The McKee Officers' Club was the brainchild of the former Adjutant General, Colonel H.W. Byrne. His concept of a club for retired officers who were Honorary or Associate members of McKee Officers' Mess evoked an immediate response among potential members circulated in June 1975, with the result that 32 officers attended the inaugural meeting on 4th July 1975. This meeting unanimously voted "that The McKee Officers' Club, either under that name or one similar to it, stressing the association between the Club and the Mess, be and is formally established, and that a Rules Committee be elected to draft Rules for the Club". It also laid down the Club's general ethos and objectives, which can best be summed up as "a friendly assembly of good and decent people, united by a common bond of service in their countries Defence Forces" with the object of "fostering fellowship and camaraderie among its members." At the first General Meeting on 31st July 1975, the draft Rules of the Club, with minor amendments, were unanimously adopted. The main amendments limited membership to officers "who were full members of McKee Officers' Mess at any time during their service with the Defence Forces."

Foundation. Colonel Harry Byrne was elected President by acclamation at this first General Meeting. On 4th September 1975, at the second General Meeting on the Club, the Rules of the Club were formally ratified and the Club was up and running.

Club Rules: As befits officers and gentlemen, the Rules are governed by an innate sense of common sense, flexibility and humanity. The Rules cannot be changed "except with the approval of two-thirds of those present and voting at a General Meeting".

Running of the Club: The day-to-day running of the Club is carried out by a Council consisting of a President, Vice President, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary auditor and five members. The Council is elected at the AGM.

Membership: whilst there is no upper limit, the membership of the Club in recent years has stood at an annual average of about 150. The current Honorary Secretary is Comdt. Brendan O' Tighearnaigh who can be contacted at 01 - 2 88 0 8 7 5.

Annual Subscription: the current subscription is €19.05.

Club Tie: the Club has its own tie which displays a sword with its blade going through flames which are enclosed in a yellow/gold circle. Underneath the sword there is an series of narrow red and yellow/gold diagonal stripes. At the base of the tie is the Club motto: "Alter ego est amicus". The tie comes in three colours -- blue, green and red.

Annual programme: A typical annual programme includes:-

- lectures of a military nature -- recent examples include: Chief of Staff's annual talk on Developments in the Defence Forces, lectures by specialist officers on Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Defence Forces' 12 year involvement in the Balkans, the first Irish Contingent in UNMEE (Eritrea), Afghanistan, The Horn of Africa,

- Outings to places of interest- in recent years these have included trips to Belvedere House (Mullingar), Farmleigh House (Phoenix Park), Tullyally Cattle, Lock's Distillery, Kilbeggan, boat cruise on Shannon, Defence Forces Training Centre (Curragh Camp), Kilkenny city, etc.. Each outing usually ends with dinner at an Officers' Mess.

Social events: Annual Members' luncheon, Annual Ladies' Dinner Evening.

-AGM and Annual Mass- normally in October.

Pension increases in the Pipe Line

Members may be wondering why they have not yet received any pension increases arising from the pay increases recommended by the Benchmarking Body over twelve months ago and which were published in our last Newsletter as follows:

Rate 1 (Line): Lt & Capt 6.5%, Comdt. 13%, Lt.Col, Col 11%.

Rate 2 (SSO's NS,etc) : 15% all ranks.

Rate 3 (Doctors, Dentists) : 3% to 14.5% to be agreed.

There are many reasons for this. The implementation procedure for Benchmarking was brought within the domain of the social partnership system by agreement in the "Programme for Prosperity and Fairness" (PPF), in 2000 and to be continued in any successor thereto. At the time, the partners agreed that 25 % of any increase arising from Benchmarking will be implemented with effect from 1/12/01 and the balance implemented on a phased basis to be agreed.

In the successor to the PPF -ie "Sustaining Progress" - the social partners agreed that this 25 % instalment would be paid on the ratification of the new Agreement and the balance as follows:

50% from 1/4/04 and 25% from 1/6/05.

In addition to the implementation of the Benchmarking recommendations as agreed above, "Sustaining Progress" also agreed separate pay increases as follows:

3% from 1/1/04, 2% from 1/7/04 and 2% from 1/12/04.

The pay increases would also be paid on the ratification of the Agreement. Our problem is that RACO has not yet ratified "Sustaining Progress"; hence pensions cannot be increased pro rata. Talks have been underway between RACO and the Department for many months, on many issues, not least on medical services, benchmarking of allowances, etc, but also on a Modernisation Agenda for the Defence Forces, produced by the Department. It is expected that these talks will be concluded in September 2003 and the outcome will then be put to ballot of RACO members. Those on pension must therefore continue to wait as pension increases are linked to pay increases under the parity principle.

This Newsletter must go to print before the outcome of the RACO ballot because of our own AGM notification requirements, but hopefully, all going well, those on pension can look forward to the percentage increases mentioned above over the next two years.

Please note that officers of General rank were not benchmarked, but are eligible for the "Sustaining Progress" increases.

Defence Forces Benevolent Fund

The annual concert in aid of the DFBF will be held in the National Concert Hall, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin, on Sunday 19th October '03.

Stated quite simply, it's not to be missed! This is the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the Army School of Music, and the significance of this will be reflected in the standard of performance and presentation on that Sunday in October. The concert will feature personnel from the bands of the 4th Western Brigade, the 1st Southern Brigade and the Army Number One Band. The Pipe Band of 2nd Eastern Brigade will be performing also.

The programme will be conducted under the baton of Col Brendan Power and Comdt. Mark Armstrong, and a major contributor will be the noted tenor, Emmanuel Lawler, with the music of Johan Strauss (Emperor Waltz), Mendelssohn, Sousa, Wagner (Lohengrein), Elgar, and a Trombone solo. A particular feature will be the rendition of marches in tribute to Colonel Sauerzweig and Colonel Fritzbrase, who were so crucially and centrally involved in the founding and development of the Army School of Music and the constituent bands.

Be there to savour the very special occasion, to meet old friends and to make new ones.

Human Rights Commission Report- "Older People in Long Stay Care"

This Report, commissioned by the Human Rights Commission and published on 30/04/03, is characterised as a preliminary interdisciplinary research project and was conducted by Ita Mangan, Barrister, who specialises in Welfare Law and citizens' rights. The Report will be of interest to our older members and those of our younger members caring for older people.

Whilst it will not add to one extra place being provided in nursing homes, it nevertheless, will add to the corpus of knowledge on the subject and will be of use to those campaigning to improve the situation.

In its mission statement, the Human Rights Commission has asserted its endeavours to ensure that the human rights of all people in the State are fully realised and protected, in law, in policy and in practice. It also indicated its determination to take particular interest in the rights of vulnerable groups among which it includes the rights of older people. Based on that it has undertaken this research into the admission and treatment of older people in nursing homes and other places of stay, both public and private.

The following are some of the findings in brief:

***Community care is the preferred policy option for older people** but it is not adequate and is not being delivered as envisaged. 'Community care' is where an older person is living at home or with a relative and is receiving some public services from the health board or a voluntary organisation or from a carer who is receiving an income maintenance payment. The stated policy is based on the view that older people should be enabled to live in their own homes for as long as possible and that services should be in place to enable them to do so. However, this policy is not underpinned by appropriate legislation and is not being implemented in the intended manner.

***Long stay care** - in practice, private provision is the favoured policy. While the policy of home-based care accords with the wishes of older people themselves, it is recognised that the provision of Long stay care

facilities is an essential part of the continuum of care. There is no clearly stated policy on the public private mix. However, in practice, most of the recent growth is in the private sector and official policy favours private provision.

***The Law and practice on Long stay care** are unclear. There is an absence of clarity in the admission procedures and the rules about the residents liability to contribute to cost are unclear. There are problems in relation to the means test required under the health board subvention rules.

***There is no legislation on quality of care.** The health boards, as providers, are not subject to any external assessment while they are the inspector of the private sector providers. Commitments made to establish an independent inspectorate have not been implemented.

***Entitlement to community care is not clear** and there is no specific payment for caring. Health boards are not legally obliged to provide certain services, notably a home-help service. Whilst carers may be entitled to one of two specific social welfare payments for carers, each is contingent on specific conditions. There is no payment for carers, per se.

***There are not enough long stay care beds available.**

***There is very little up to date published information** available on the quality of care in either public or long stay care.

***The complaints and appeals procedure is inadequate.** There is no statutory independent complaints and appeals procedure within their health services, nor is there an organised advocacy service for vulnerable older people in care.

It is hoped that publishing this item in our Newsletter will be of benefit. Further information may be sought from the Human Rights Commission, 17/19 Lower Hatch St., Dublin 2, Tel:01/6472562. We highlighted another report - 'Implementing Equality for Older People' published by the Equality Authority in our Summer/Autumn 2002 Newsletter as part of our effort to keep our members advised on topical issues.

On The One Hand - Terry McNulty

Herr Hempel at the German Legation in Dublin 1937-1945

By John P. Duggan

Irish Academic Press, 328 pp

Euro 45 hbk, 33.50 pbk.

It is helpful and relevant towards the review that I have lived through the period and can identify personally -- I was a school child on a train that passed the scene of destruction on the morning after a Luftwaffe air raid caused the deaths of three young women at Campile Creamery in County Wexford -- with many of the events and political personalities of the period.

Alright, so it was wartime, but not in Ireland, so in a personal way I have never forgiven the German nation the wanton killing of those three girls. I was a child then and had not yet appreciated the cynical concept of collateral damage.

The book is mainly concerned with issues of neutrality for the emergent Irish nation, and the tightrope nature of the intrigues and the espionage conducted within the framework of

fraught diplomatic detente, during the period leading up to and throughout the Second World War. The author's awareness of the events and of the period, and his clinical observation of performance by the personalities involved make for an impressive narrative -- for me personally compulsive reading right to the appendices.

The range of personality commences with Herr Edward Hempel, the devious, disingenuous main tenant of the Legation. He is of course the main subject, as German Minister at the Legation in Dublin. The other principal protagonists were most notably De Valera, formidable and necessarily devious, given all the circumstance, diplomats Joe Walshe and Freddie Boland in Dublin and Willie Warnock in Berlin, Colonel Dan Bryant, head of Irish Army intelligence, the peripheral players Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty (the Vatican Pimpernel), Helmut Clissman --- all-in-all a fascinating *dramatis personae*! The machinations and the intrigues just flowed and developed in a sequence of gripping scenarios, during which Ireland's neutrality so frequently teetered on the brink of extinction.

As Edward Hempel might rationalise our status -- On the one hand we ran the risk of direct German intervention, and on the other hand - Well, who knows?!