



Cumann na nIar - Oifigeach Coimisiúnta

newsletter

Association of Retired Commissioned Officers

Issue No: 23. Autumn 2012.

ARCO Web Site: www.iarco.info

ARCO 18th Annual General Meeting – McKee Barracks

Saturday 27th October 2012

The 2012 Annual General Meeting of The Association (See Notice and Agenda opposite) will be held on Saturday 27th October 2012. Members are encouraged to attend and avail of the opportunity to meet the Executive Committee and renew old friendships. A lunch with wine (gratis) will be provided in the Officers Mess after the meeting.



A copy of the minutes of the 2011 AGM are enclosed.



The Government has decided, through the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, to bring about major changes in the structures of Public Service Pensions. To this end the Government has enacted the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 which became law on 28 July 2012. On pages 6 and 7 you can find some information of the effects on retired Defence Forces personnel. www.iarco.info



The Minister has announced a review of the Defence Forces Organisation within the current strength. The meeting will be briefed on the present proposals as we know them.

www.iarco.info



An Claoimh Gaisciochta the ARCO sword for the best Cadet (Army) was presented by Col Brian O'Connor, Retd, President of ARCO, to Lt Shane Walsh at his Commissioning ceremony.

Due to changes in private health costs members should access the website;

<http://www.hia.ie/ci/health-insurance-comparison/search-result/47-111-68>

to assess the relative value of each scheme on offer.

Access your rejuvenated website for up to date information at www.iarco.info

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

The 18th Annual General Meeting of the Association of Retired Commissioned Officers (ARCO) will be held in the Auditorium, Defence Forces School of Catering, McKee Barracks, Blackhorse Avenue, Dublin 7, on Saturday 27th October 2012 at 11.30 hrs.

AGENDA

1. Opening Address by President, ARCO
2. Minutes of 17th AGM – 1st October 2011.
3. President's Report
4. Report of the Hon. Secretary
5. Report of the Hon. Treasurer to include audited A/Cs
6. Report of the Hon. Membership Secretary
7. Appointment of Auditor
8. Elections to Executive Committee
(A new President will be proposed)
9. A brief on the Pension Reform
10. Defence Forces Reorganisation
11. ARCO Strategic Review update
12. Effect of the increase in Annual Subscription
13. Future Amendment of Rules
14. Any other business.

Joe Ahern, Lt Col 15 Hermitage Close,
Hon. Secretary Rathfarnham, Dublin 16
ARCO Tel: 086 806 4251
Email: joepahern@gmail.com

Attending the AGM? Need lunch?

Coffee will be available in the Officer's Mess from 10.30hrs. A light lunch with wine (gratis) will be served after the meeting. Those wishing to partake of lunch are requested to notify the Hon. Secretary on or before 14th October 2012.

• **Don't forget to bring your I.D card to facilitate your entry into Bks•**

Not attending? Apologies from those unable to attend will be read out on the day. These can be conveyed to the Hon. Secretary, contact details above.

Air Corps aircraft deployed to assist in evacuation of Irish citizens from Libya

By Lt Col Richard Cummins (Retd)

As Libya spiralled into civil war at the beginning of 2011 governments around the world became very concerned for the safety of their citizens working in that country. Various countries put in place plans to extract their people as the security situation deteriorated. The Irish Government was equally concerned for its citizens on the ground in Libya and on the 21st February 2011 took the decision to deploy air assets to assist the Dept of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in organising their evacuation.

Late on the 21st of February two Air Corps aircraft, a Learjet 45 and a Casa CN235 with eight crew departed Casement Aerodrome for Luqa Airport in Malta. This was the start of a nine day humanitarian operation under the control of the DFA. The DFA had a team deployed in Malta to provide consular assistance to Irish citizens evacuating from Libya based at the Irish Embassy in Malta. The Learjet is one of the two aircraft that's provides the Ministerial Air Transport Service to the Government. It has a capacity for a crew of three and seven passengers. The Casa is a maritime patrol aircraft which was configured to take a crew of four and twenty one passengers for its role in Malta.

The following day, the 22nd of February, the Casa aircraft was tasked with transporting DFA officials to Tripoli airport in an effort to co-ordinate the evacuation of Irish citizens. This mission proved to be problematic and despite intense negotiations with the Libyan authorities the aircraft and officials returned to Malta without managing to extract anyone. On subsequent days DFA officials commuted to and from Tripoli using commercial flights in a continuing effort to extract Irish citizens.

A decision was taken in Dublin on the 24th of February to deploy the Gulfstream GIV aircraft to Rome to collect the Irish Ambassador to Italy, Mr Pat Hennessey, who also had ambassadorial responsibility for Libya, and bring him to Malta. Mr Hennessey was in overall charge of the Irish operation. Additionally an Emergency Civilian Assistance Team (ECAT) consisting of Dept of Foreign Affairs officials and a member of the Garda Síochána deployed on this flight. Members of the Army also travelled to provide assistance in the area of command, control and communications. The Air Corps sent a detachment commander to assume responsibility for all Air Corps assets on the ground in Malta. The Gulfstream GIV is the other MATS aircraft and operates with a crew of four and can carry fourteen passengers.

On the same day the Learjet was tasked with an air ambulance flight to Tripoli at the request of the British Government. The aircraft successfully evacuated a British family of five consisting of a mother who had just given birth by Caesarean section, her baby, husband and two other children to Malta for urgent medical treatment.



The 25th of February began with extensive briefings at the Irish Embassy in Valetta followed later by a multi-national meeting where a general consensus was reached that this was a European –wide effort by all nations to assist EU citizens. There were extensive air assets from other European countries on the ground in Malta at this stage including C 130 aircraft from Italy, The Netherlands and Sweden and a C17 from Canada. The Air Corps aircraft continued on standby but were not called on.

On the 26th of February the Learjet departed Malta for Casement Aerodrome with seven Irish evacuees on board. These people had been evacuated from Benghazi by the British Navy ship HMS Cumberland and arrived in Malta early on the morning of the 26th February.

On the 27th of February the Gulfstream GIV transported three multi-national diplomatic teams consisting of Irish, British and Maltese diplomats from Malta to Tripoli with a view to assisting any EU citizens who presented themselves at the airport. This was necessary as most of the embassies were not now functioning in Tripoli as their staff had been extracted.



The Gulfstream GIV was used as a command, control and communications centre for the teams operating on the ground in Tripoli airport. These teams assisted in extracting evacuees onto an Italian C130. They continued on the ground in Tripoli for the remainder of the day eventually returning to Malta that night with one British national who had subsequently presented himself for evacuation.

On the 28th of February the aircraft remained on standby. As the day developed it was decided that the Gulfstream GIV would return to Ireland later in the day with a further seven Irish evacuees. It departed Malta that night for Casement Aerodrome. The mission was formally stood down by Ambassador Hennessey after the departure of the Gulfstream GIV. The Casa aircraft and all remaining military personnel departed Malta on the 1st of March.

During the period of the operation Defence Force personnel operated effectively at the Irish HQ in the Irish Embassy and in the multi national Non Executive Operations Co-ordination Centre (NEOCC) and the Air Corps successfully carried out all tasks assigned to them by the DFA. This included three flights into Tripoli airport, one of which was an air ambulance flight. The two other flights were for the transportation of DFA officials and multi-national diplomatic teams to Tripoli airport to co-ordinate evacuation efforts on the ground. The Air Corps repatriated fourteen Irish citizens from Malta to Ireland on two flights in the final days of the operation. The operation represented a new departure for the Air Corps in the aid to civil power (ATCP) role but a challenge that they met successfully.

**The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of Comdt Jimmy Quinn in the preparation of this article.*



Friends of the Curragh Museum

The Curragh Local History Group (CLHG) (vide <http://www.curragh.info/home.htm>) was founded in the 1990s by some people, both Military & Civilian including Reggie Darling, in the Curragh and since then has done an enormous amount of work on the history of not only the Camp but also on the Social and Local history of the greater Curragh Area. In the Autumn of 2010 the Mil Authorities, after a long period of agitation by both Mil Personnel and people incl. CLHG members, opened a State of the Art Museum dedicated principally to the Camp (<http://www.curragh.info/museum.htm>)

As Official funding was short the General Officer Commanding the Curragh could not provide Military personnel to open it on Sundays and asked the retired Officers who lived locally if they would help out with this task. They were more than happy to do so as many of them were members of the CLHG.

Arising from their involvement and the need for continuing funding to develop the Museum as well as the need for the CLHG to obtain suitable display cabinets and other necessary back up for their collection a joint body called the Friends of the Curragh Museum was established at the end of 2011 with the following Objectives:-



- To foster and promote the study of the history of the Curragh
- To acquire, insofar as it is possible, items of historical interest concerning the Curragh so that they can be put on Public Display.
- To assist in the provision of suitable means of display for such items.
- To raise funds for these objectives.

A number of fund raising projects are being initiated but there is a need for members of the Friends and anyone who is interested in joining should contact either

Col Joe O'Sullivan (Retd.), Tipper Rd., Naas,
Co.Kildare, Mob 087 6799409
Email joeosullivan@eircom.net

Or

Hon Treas: Lt.Ray Bonar, 28, Cherrygrove, Sallins
Rd., Naas, Co.Kildare
raybonarwhb@gmail.com

Membership costs €15 Single or €20 Family



ISTAR

(Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance)

Knowing where you are and where all, or most of, the other elements in an operation are assists the Commander in his/her appreciation of the current situation on a battlefield or in a peace support operation.

After WWII computers and other devices were developed, that took into account climatic conditions and ground shape. At the same time advances in radar technology brought locating radar, initially to locate mortars but as the technology advanced gunfire, vehicle and personnel movement could also be detected. A strategic change in the management of the battlefield was necessary. The advent of Laser rangefinders (LRF) and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) aided this management change.

The Defence Forces bought into these changes in the 1960's by purchasing FACE Artillery fire control computers and Laser rangefinders. The Artillery in conjunction with the Cavalry Corps reconnaissance units and Infantry mortar units sourced the most up to date equipment, within the then budgetary constraints for use by the Defence Forces.

The use of these equipments in combat situations is the primary mission, however these equipments can also be used to aid commanders by producing intelligence of the battlefield. The Defence Forces have adapted the fixing and finding methods to assist units on overseas service.

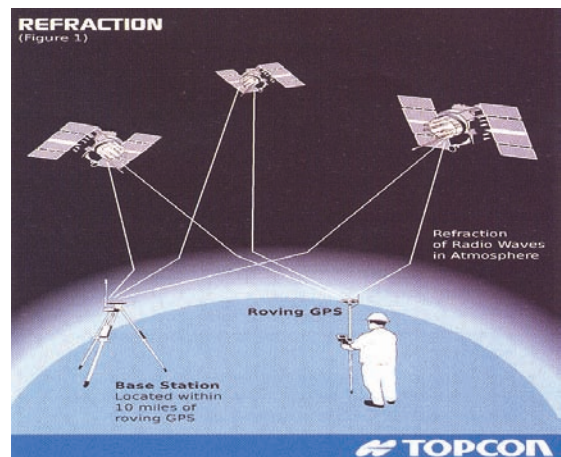
Fixing will show the location of your own troops either static or mobile, when on check point or patrol duty. The finding equipment will be used to locate friendly or hostile positions and movements. As the equipment is Day/Night, all weather and climate tested it can be used in many overseas operations. Defence Forces overseas units in Somalia, Liberia, tChad and Kosovo have deployed these equipments to good effect.

What follows are a selection of the equipment currently in service in the Defence Forces to facilitate ISTAR operations.



Survey orientation and fixing your own position

Fixation and orientation is an essential facet of all military operations. Positioning your assets and those of your neighbouring forces increases your safety and information. Artillery surveyors have over the years used Astro survey to accurately fix their firing positions. The advent of Global Positioning Satellites has provided a system that is more accurate accurate and neither time or weather dependant



ACOTS is a system procured in 2005 it uses up to 9 globally positioned satellites to determine its position. It can determine all locations to within 5 meters.



The A COTS System allows all friendly locations, bases, patrol sites, checkpoints and local villages to be placed with extreme accuracy on a mission operations map.



Ground Surveillance Radar (AMSTAR)

Man-portable Surveillance and Target Acquisition Radar (MSTAR) is a light weight all-weather battlefield Doppler radar. It is used by Artillery observers to acquire and engage targets in bad visibility or at night. It is capable of detecting, recognizing and tracking helicopters, slow moving fixed-wing aircraft tracked and wheeled vehicles and troops, as well as observing and adjusting the fall of shot.

The system uses six autonomous flight modes. The Orbiter is launched from a bungee operated launching rail and lands in a preplanned area using a parachute and an airbag to protect the payload and airframe.



The radar display is an electro-luminescent screen that can be overlaid with the map grid. It also shows the areas of ground visible to the radar and those that are masked by terrain. Target location can be presented as either map coordinates or bearing and distance (polar coordinates) from the radar. The complete radar weighs 30 kg. It can detect targets out to 30 km, with a maximum range of 42 km. All reported non friendly observations are plotted on the map overlay.



Orbiter Mini Unmanned Aerial System (MUAS)

The Orbiter MUAV is a compact lightweight system designed for Military Operations, Overseas Peace security missions and Law Enforcement activity. The system provides real-time information and enables "over-the-hill" observation and intelligence gathering. The Orbiter has been designed for use by Army personnel. The design has been planned so that there is no need for traditional pilot skills of take-off and landing.

The flight path of the M-UAS is directed using touch screen technology from the PGCS, which is uploaded to the M-UAS, by navigating to designated points and by CAMERA MODE, where the operator controls the payload camera from the PGCS allowing a target to be viewed.



Preparing to Launch



Team deployed overseas

These modern equipments have increased the range of options that the Defence Forces can offer the United Nations and the European Union in peace support, civil unrest and rule of law operations in the future.



Pension Reform 2012

The Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 became law on 28 July 2012. The Act provides for a Single Public Service Pension Scheme (the "Single Scheme") for new public servants. It also makes certain other changes affecting existing public service pension arrangements. The Bill, as proposed in 2011, contained some elements which if enacted could have seriously affected the pensions of retired members of the Defence Forces, their spouses and those entitled to a Defence pension. The Bill was circulated in Spring 2012 and on reading a number of main issues appeared to affect Defence pensioners.

Abatement of Pensions

The Bill provided that if an individual was in receipt of a public service pension and is then re-employed in the Public Sector the pension would be abated (reduced) to a point where the new salary and the pension together are no greater than the salary in the original job. This section caused the most reaction from Defence pensioners with individuals on modest pensions. It would, it appeared, reduce the pay/salary of those who had left the Defence Forces early to better themselves and reduce the income of Defence widows/widowers who received State assistance or salaries, ie nurses or carers.

The indexation of post-retirement pension increases to the CPI instead of pay.

The Bill proposed that future rises in pensions would be linked to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) instead of pay rises of the equivalent rank or grade. This was accepted by the majority of the Public Sector. What disturbed ARCO was the final clause of the paragraph,

"The Minister shall decide when any increase in pensions under this section is to be paid having regard to movements in the consumer price index, including the timing and the means by which any increase is paid"



This might allow the minister to delay increases to pensions, as he saw fit, thus reducing increases to once every 4/5 years.

The 40 year limit

This provision restricted the amount on the total service that can be counted towards the pension. This is the current position for those remaining in a single occupation in the Public Service, the Defence Forces included.

ARCO Reaction

On reading the Bill and receiving queries from members, the ARCO EXCOM met, on a number of occasions, to discuss the issue and determine a course of action. In the meantime there had been approaches from other groups as to what was happening.

It was decided that;

- **The matter should be represented by ARCO.**
- **That approaches should be made to Minister Howlin.**
- **That a meeting be sought with the minister**
- **That other organisations be approached.**

In the period from February to July 2012 ARCO EXCOM submitted, in conjunction with other interested parties, letters containing cases to the Minister and approached various TDs. In June Minister Howlin agreed to meet a delegation led by ARCO (BG McNamee, Comdt W. Campbell) and sponsored by Mr Wall TD. (Kildare South). The delegation was received by the Minister and submitted the case.

In July members attended the committee stages of the Bill in the dail and reported that some action had been proposed regarding the cases submitted. The Bill was enacted in the Dail on 28th July 2012. Certain provisions of the Act, including the Single Scheme itself, will not take effect until the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform signs a relevant commencement order, whereas other provisions take effect immediately on enactment, i.e. with effect from 28 July 2012. Section 1(2) of the Act can be referred to for full information as to which provisions are immediately effective and which require a commencement order.

To follow is an outline of the position in this respect for the provisions which may affect Defence pensioners.

Single Public Service Pension Scheme:

The start date ("operative date") of the Single Scheme will be set by a commencement order of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. New recruits to the public service on or after that date will join the new scheme, while already-serving staff will remain in their existing schemes. (See Part 2, Chapter 2 of the Act.)

Provision which came into effect on 28 July 2012

40-year limit on pensionable service:

The Act imposes a 40-year limit on the total service which can be counted towards pension where a person has been a member of more than one existing public service pension scheme; such a limit already applies to service in any one scheme. **This extended 40-year limit came into effect on 28 July 2012,**

though persons exceeding the limit on that date will not lose any service accrued up to that point. (See section 52, subsections (6) and (7), of the Act.)

Provisions which will not take effect until the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform signs a relevant commencement order.

Extension of pension abatement:

The Act enables the extension of pension abatement so that a retiree's public service pension is liable to abatement on re-entering public service employment,

even where the new employment is in a different area of the public service. This extension of abatement will come into effect when the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform signs a commencement order. The change will apply in those cases where a person with a public service pension in payment takes up a public service post from the date of the commencement; a person in public service employment on the date the order is made will not be affected by the change while he or she remains in that employment. (See section 52, excluding subsections (6) and (7), of the Act.)

Aggregation of pensions for imposition of the Public Service Pension Reduction (PSPR): The PSPR reduces certain public service pensions by reference to a set of money bands and rates. It is currently imposed separately on each public service pension, but the Act provides for it to be imposed on the aggregated value of all public service pensions held by a person who has more than one such pension. This change will come into effect when the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform signs a commencement order. (See sections 68 to 71 of the Act.)



The Bureau of Military History

The Bureau of Military History was established in January 1947 by Oscar Traynor TD., Minister for Defence and former Captain in the Irish Volunteers. The objective of the Bureau was "to assemble and co-ordinate material to form the basis for the compilation of the history of the movement for Independence from the formation of the Irish Volunteers on 25th November 1913, to the 11th July 1921.

Over the following ten years 1773 witness statements, 334 sets of contemporary documents, 42 photographs, 12 voice recordings, 210 photographs of action sites Easter Week (ASEW) and a collection of press cuttings (pc) were assembled by the Bureau from a variety of individuals involved in activities of the time. The contemporary documents consist of a variety of material gathered by individuals at the time (1913 - 1921). Scrapbooks of press cuttings,

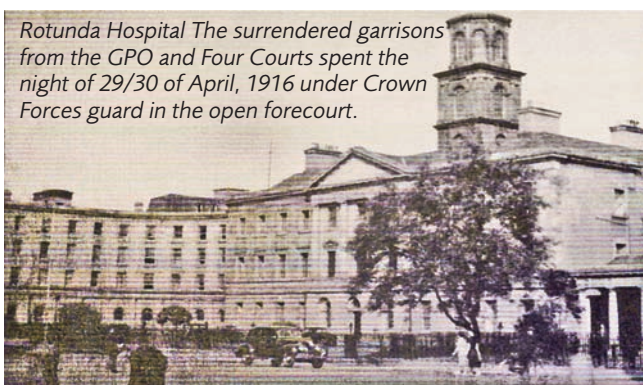
memorabilia, correspondence, drawings and photographs are just some of the many items contained in the collection. Twelve voice recordings were made for the Bureau adding texture to the collection and giving researchers an opportunity to hear the stories of individuals in their own words.

The Bureau of Military History papers are a valuable source for historians, students and those with an interest in Irish history, addressing as they do a time of upheaval in Ireland and Europe. The Irish Nationalist and Republican movements developed against a backdrop of domestic labour agitation and the fight of other European nations for independence. The material collected by the Bureau illustrates this complexity. For example a number of Volunteers had served with the British Army and subsequently became active in the Nationalist movement, whilst some Royal Irish Constabulary officers assisted the Crown's enemies.

This material will be of particular interest to local historians as well as those studying the broader historical picture. In addition the collection reflects in some detail the variety of supporting activities of local Volunteers throughout



Ireland. The establishment of the Bureau gave individuals involved with events of the time a chance to record their own stories. Members of groups such as the Irish Volunteers and subsequently the IRA, Cumann na mBan, the IRB, Sinn Féin, the Irish Citizen Army, relatives of deceased individuals and people not associated with any organisation were sought out to give as broad a range as possible to the collection. Despite its name the Bureau of Military History was not solely interested in the military activities relating to the struggle for Independence. "The Bureau was interested in every contributory factor or development, reaching back in many cases to the beginning of the twentieth century." In addition to allowing inferences to be drawn about everyday life the papers also give an insight into the leaders of the time. One witness William O'Brien T.D. (1927; 1937 - 1938) recounts a conversation he had with James Connolly in the GPO during the Rising where Connolly said "If we succeed all our sins will be forgiven; If we fail all our virtues won't save us from the gallows."



Rotunda Hospital The surrendered garrisons from the GPO and Four Courts spent the night of 29/30 of April, 1916 under Crown Forces guard in the open forecourt.



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 brianandsheila@eircom.net or post to Col B. O'Connor (Retd) 92 The Paddocks, Naas, Co. Kildare.

ENTERTAINMENT

The Defence Forces will hold a concert in aid of the Curragh Military Museum on Sunday 4th November 2012 at 8pm (20.00hrs) in St Brigid's Church, Curragh Camp.

You will be entertained by the Baldonnell Singers, **The No.1 Army Band and the ONE Pipers.**

Put this date in your diary
Booking through the museum at 045 445342 From 1st October 2012



Naval Service Commissioning 6 September 2012



Comdr C. O'Donnell NS Retd presents the ARCO Perpetual Telescope to Ensign Marcus Ryan NS at the Commissioning in the Naval Base on Thursday 6th September 2012.
(Photograph by A/Sea David Jones NS)

An Cliaomh Gaisciochta



Lt Shane Walsh is pictured with his Father, Mother and sister after receiving An Cliaomh Gaisciochta from Col Brian O'Connor (Retd), President, ARCO. The award took place at the Commissioning Ceremony in the Curragh on the 8th March 2012. Shane from Templeglantine, Co. Limerick, received 1st place in his class. He has a degree in Architecture from University of Limerick. He has been posted to 2 Fd Arty Regt.

Welcome to ARCO's New Members:

Comdt Sean Murphy	Comdt Bernard Daly
Comdt Lawrence Rooney	Col Harvey O'Keeffe
Comdt Matthew McCormack	Comdt John Guinane
Comdt Fintan Dunne	Lt(NS) Kenneth McNamara
Brig Gen Dennis Murphy	Lt David Gannon
Capt Kieran Healy	Comdt Tony O'Doherty
Lt Col Kevin Byrne	B.G. Paul Pakenham

Deceased Officers *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-Anamacha*

Our condolences to the families and friends of those comrades who passed away since our last newsletter.

Comdt Garreth Evans	10 March 2012
Col Colm Cox	15 April 2012
Lt Col Larry Conran	16 April 2012
Comdt Morgan Sparrow	06 April 2012
Col Dermot (Clar) Coffey	13 August 2012
M.G. Patrick J. Carroll	15 August 2012