



ARCO's President's Welcome Address - Reception 16 October 2019

Greetings

Lord Mayor of Dublin - Councillor Paul McAuliffe,

Senator Michael McDowell SC,

Distinguished Guests,

Good Evening One and All.

Introduction

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to formally welcome everyone, to the Stephenø Green Club, established in 1840, for the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the foundation of the Association of Retired Commissioned Officers, thus marking our Silver Jubilee.

In addition to the Lord Mayor, and Senator Michael McDowell, our valued guests hail from:

- The Oireachtas,
- The Defence Forces,
- The Department of Defence,
- VeteransøAssociations,
- Representative Associations,
- Retired Public Servants Associations, and The Media.

Unfortunately, due to the exigencies of governance, both An Taoiseach and An Tanáiste are unable to join us, but have sent their best wishes to all attendees.

Likewise, the Minister with Responsibility for Defence, the Chief of Staff, and the Secretary-General are accompanying An tUachtarán on his visit to Defence Forces personnel deployed with the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Lebanon.

You might like to note that in the context of our Silver Jubilee, prior to his departure for the Middle East, Minister Paul Kehoe TD formally wrote to the President of ARCO, and his letter can be viewed on the Associationø website.



Lord Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a distinctive group of retired commissioned officers, ARCO encourages and fosters, our members' unique fellowship and comradeship, which derives from extensive military service in Óglaigh na hÉireann, both at home and overseas, serving our Nation, its Government and its citizens.

Establishment

On 24 June, 1994, ARCO was launched in the Constitution Room of the Shelbourne Hotel, followed by a formal reception in Dublin's Mansion House.

As such, 2019 marks the Association's 25 years of steadfast service within the Defence Community.

Tonight, let us salute the initiative, foresight and determination, of those retired officers, involved in the establishment of our Association including, but not confined to:

- Cols Kevin Hanley and Jim Fagan,
- Lt Cols Frank Neil and Jackie Deveraux,
- The Association's first President, Capt Ray Tumulty,
- The Association's first Vice President, Col Kevin Hanley,
- The Association's first Hon Secretary, Comdt Leo Quinlan and
- The Association's first Hon Treasurer, Col Jim Fagan.

We also acknowledge the selfless service provided by former Presidents, Officers and Regional Representatives, in shaping the Association, some of whom have graced us with their presence this evening:

- Colonel Michael Lucy and Colonel Brian O'Connor, and
- Our immediate Past President Commander Gerry O'Flynn (NS).

The Executive Committee remains grateful to Commander Gerry O'Flynn and his Working Group for planning and coordinating this event.

Let us all benefit from the substantial outputs of Gerry's Working Group, and enjoy ourselves.



The Association

Operating on a voluntary basis, ARCO is a vibrant, evolving and flourishing Representative Association, providing a strong collective voice, advocating on behalf of commissioned officers, who are either fully retired, or who remain active in the workplace.

Regarding the recent Public Sector Pay Commission's Report,

- In solidarity with our serving colleagues, and their respective families, and acknowledging the endeavours of the General Staff, along with the Representative Associations,
- ARCO has called on the Minister for Defence, to present formal proposals to Government, for the establishment of a statutory based, permanent and independent Defence Forces Commission,
- In order to address remuneration (including pensions), service and retention conditions, and the conciliation and arbitration architecture.

ARCO's recommendation requires the total support of the wider political and defence community.

Lord Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

With a willingness to change, and building on its significant accomplishments, in order to safeguard its future, during this year's Annual General Meeting, ARCO has substantially revised its objectives, whilst remaining representative, relevant, and viable.

Regarding the future, let us protect our legacy, ethos and values, whilst advancing reality, with the evolving membership cohort.

Reception

In conclusion, recalling ARCO's Motto: "*Camaraderie Through Service*", I am sure that all attendees are availing of the Anniversary Reception, as an occasion to renew and intensify friendships, enhance an understanding of Veterans' and



affairs, and to advance the ethos, values and the revised objectives of our Association.

Before introducing Senator McDowell, may I place on record our sincere appreciation to the Chairman of the Stephen's Green Club, Mr David Flanagan, and the Club's Manager Mr Ray Mooney, of their renowned hospitality, and for putting the Club's excellent facilities at our disposal.

Guest Speaker

Senator Michael McDowell is the youngest grandson of Eoin Mac Neill, who was a co-founder of Conradh na Gaeilge, the founding President, and later Chief of Staff, of the Irish Volunteers.

Graduating from the King's Inns in 1974, Senator McDowell is a Senior Counsel and an Adjunct Professor in UCD's Sutherland School of Law.

Michael has been in active politics since the mid-1980's, when he served as Director of Elections for Dr. Garret Fitzgerald.

He was elected as a TD for Dublin South East in 1987, 1992 and 2002.

You will recall that he served as Attorney-General, as Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and as Tánaiste.

Senator McDowell was elected to Seanad Éireann in 2016, as an Independent member on the NUI panel, and has a weekly column in the Business Post.

With commendable service in the 6th Field Military Police Company and as an active member of the Defence Forces Legal Service Club, I am sure that Senator McDowell is maintaining a Listening Watch on the prevailing challenges facing Óglaigh na hÉireann.

I now invite Senator Michael McDowell, Senior Council, to come to the podium, and to share some thoughts with us.

Beir Bua agus Beannacht.

END