



“Camaraderie Through Service”



OVERVIEW

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

JANUARY 2020



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OVERVIEW of ARCO

1. Introduction

With over 25 years of continuous service to the Defence Community, the Association of Retired Commissioned Officers (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.

ARCO's membership is drawn from retired commissioned officers of the Permanent Defence Force.

As a distinctive group of retired officers, ARCO encourages and fosters the unique fellowship and comradeship which derived from military service in Óglaigh na hÉireann.

ARCO's motto is *“Camaraderie Through Service”*

Through its efforts, ARCO was formally recognised by the Department of Defence and by Defence Forces Headquarters as the veterans' association which represents retired commissioned officers of Óglaigh na hÉireann.

In advancing pension related issues, ARCO is a proactive member of the Alliance of Retired Public Servants, and is formally represented on its Council. ARCO further advances the needs and interests of its members, in areas such as insurance and benevolent needs, through its appointed representatives on the Board of Management of Cumann Árachais Oifigeach an Ghnáth-Airm (CAOGA), and on the Executive Committee of the Defence Forces Benevolent Fund (DFBF).

2. Establishment

ARCO was established initially to put in place a structure that would formally represent the interests of retired officers, including eligible spouses or civil partners, and children, and, in particular, to protect the value of military pensions.

The main rationale for the establishment of the Association arose from a ruling by the Department of Defence, which limited the pensionability of Military Service Allowance to those serving on, or after, 1st August 1990. This ruling excluded from eligibility a large number of retired officers who, in service, had endured the same hardships and conditions, for which the allowance was introduced, as their serving counterparts. The issue highlighted the need for an association to represent the views of retired officers



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Unlike serving officers who had access to the Representative Association for Commissioned Officers (RACO), retired officers had no recourse to representation. In this context, during 1992 and 1993, a series of meetings were convened to address the requirement for an association which would represent the concerns of retired officers.

Most prominent among the Founding Fathers were: Col Kevin Hanley, Col Jim Fagan, Lt Col Frank Neill, Lt Col Jackie Deveraux and Capt Ray Tumulty. ARCO's inaugural meeting was held on 9th November 1993 at the Ashling Hotel, Dublin. The following retired officers were elected to the Executive Committee:

- President Capt Ray Tumulty
- Vice President Col Kevin Hanley
- Hon Secretary Comdt Leo Quinlan
- Hon Treasurer Col Jim Fagan
- Regional Representatives
 - East Col John Ryan, Lt Col Jim Coyle
 - Curragh Col Roger McCorley, Col Pat Jordan
 - Cork Col Tommy Dunne, Comdt Eoin Allen
 - Limerick Col Mick Gill, Capt Dermot McKeown
 - Athlone Lt Col Jack Donoghoe, Comdt John Keily
 - Galway Lt Col Ned Cusack, Capt Ray Buckley

At subsequent meetings, the Executive Committee finalised the Association's Rules. These rules were adopted by an Extraordinary General Meeting held at Cathal Brugha Barracks on 9th April 1994. On the 24th June 1994, ARCO was formally launched in the Constitution Room of the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin, followed by a reception at the Mansion House.

3. **Aim.** Representing retired commissioned officers of the Permanent Defence Force, ARCO encourages and fosters the unique fellowship and comradeship established during military service, and promotes and protects the interests and needs of members, and eligible spouses or civil partners, within its competencies.
4. **Objectives.** While maintaining a positive image of the Association, and reflecting retired officers' values and ethos which derive from service in the Permanent Defence Force, the following internal and external objectives will be implemented:
 - a. **Internal Objectives**
 - (1) Promotes, defends and protects the rights, interests, quality of life, services, and welfare of retired officers and eligible spouses or civil partners.



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- (2) Supports the protection, relevance and improvement of members’ and eligible spouses’ or partners’ pensions and secondary benefits.
- (3) Advises and assists, within its competencies, members, and eligible spouses or partners, on pensions and pension related matters.
- (4) Monitors change, coordinates advice and provides general support thus enabling members to benefit fully from opportunities following early or age-related retirement.
- (5) Provides a forum for analysis and debate, and the formulation of responses to anticipated developments that may impinge on the lives of retired officers, and eligible spouses or partners.
- (6) Facilitates mutual support, networking opportunities and social occasions, for both retired officers and for those who remain active in the workplace, thus maintaining a fruitful bond with colleagues, in sharing talents and interests for their common benefit.
- (7) Ensures that the particular needs of officers retiring without a pension entitlement are catered for in a meaningful way, and that such officers enjoy parity of esteem within the Association with all other members.
- (8) Conducts an effective internal and external communication strategy by means of regional meetings, social media, website, biannual newsletter and text-a-message service.
- (9) Organises events and activities supporting ARCO’s objectives and members’ interests.

b. **External Objectives**

- (1) Establishes and maintains pro-active involvement with kindred organisations and agencies, in order to collectively engage in public advocacy and political lobbying, on issues relevant to retired officers.
- (2) Engages with Government Representatives, Government Departments and Agencies on pensions, pension related issues, and enhanced services for retired officers, and eligible spouses or civil partners.
- (3) Presents, within its competencies, presentations, submissions and statements on appropriate issues including Defence, Foreign Affairs,



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Veteran’s Policy, Remuneration, Pensions and Welfare.

- (4) Advocates, using appropriate means on behalf of the Defence Forces, its personnel, its veterans and the families of serving personnel.
- (5) Conducts meetings on an annual basis with both the Minister for Defence, and the General Staff, and on a quarterly basis with both the Department of Defence and RACO.
- (6) Fosters professional excellence within the Defence Forces through the sponsorship of an award for the Best Student on Army, Naval Service and Air Corps Cadet Courses, and by supporting Defence Forces Mentoring Programmes.
- (7) Promotes effective and efficient liaison, coupled with mutual support and unity of effort, with ONE, IUNVA, RACO and PDFORRA, on matters of mutual interest.
- (8) Provides a member of the Executive Committee to the Defence Forces Benevolent Fund’s Executive Committee, to CAOGA’s Board of Management, and to the Council of the Alliance of Retired Public Servants.
- (9) Participates in, or represents retired officers at State and Defence Forces ceremonial events, both at National, Regional and Local levels.

5. **Current Focus.** In the short to medium term, ARCO will focus on:

- a. Addressing the implementation of the aim and objectives adopted during its 2019 Annual General Meeting, as listed in paragraph 4 above,
- b. Actively engaged with the Alliance of Retired Public Servants in addressing the repeal of FEMPI legislation, pension parity and negotiation rights for public servants,
- c. Extending its membership base,
- d. Advancing the Combined Veterans’ Strategy along with ONE and IUNVA,
- e. Enhancing its interface with RACO, CAOGA, the Defence Forces Benevolent Fund, and the Irish Defence Forces Officers Club (IDFOC),
- f. Reviewing its existing Rules which were adopted in 2013, and



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- g. Preparing a framework for the elaboration of a Veterans’ Policy.

6. **Governance**

The Association’s Rules form the basis of ARCO’s effective governance, transparency and accountability. Link to Rules: [ARCO’s Rules incorporating Aim and revised Objectives as adopted at the 2019 Annual General Meeting](#)

Under the direction of the President, the management of the Association is exercised by the Executive Committee consisting of retired officers, on a voluntary basis.

The President, Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer and Hon Membership Secretary present reports to the Annual General Meeting, which takes place during the month of October. ARCO is a non-profit organisation. Financial accounts are audited on a yearly basis and presented by the Hon Treasurer for approval at the Annual General Meeting.

The Department of Defence provides ARCO with the usage of an office in the Curragh, on an annual rental basis.

7. **Data Protection and Privacy Policy**

ARCO’s Data Protection and Privacy Policy was promulgated in July 2018 and is available on the Website. The purpose of the Policy is to protect the rights, privacy and personal information of individuals in accordance with the Data Protection Acts, 1988 – 2003, and the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which became effective from 25th of May 2018.

In addition to routine governance, the Association’s Data Protection and Privacy Policy also covers ARCO’s website, emails and texting service.

All personal information voluntarily provided by members to ARCO will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality.

ARCO collects and or uses personal information for the following purposes:

- a. Membership of the Association,
- b. Governance of the Association, and
- c. Communications to the Association’s membership.

8. **Executive Committee**

The structure of the Executive Committee provides for two representatives from the Eastern, Southern, Western and DFTC regional areas, coupled with two representatives from both the Naval Service and Air Corps. Members of the Executive Committee are



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elected by the Association’s Annual General Meeting. The Executive Committee’s regional representatives ensure efficient communications and accurate expression of members’ needs. Convening on a monthly basis, the Executive Committee’s tenure of office is for one year. In order to maintain its profile and to inform its membership, Regional Meetings are held during a year and are rotated in major Defence Forces barracks.

Appointments October 2019 – September 2020	
Officers	
President	Brig Gen Paul Pakenham
Vice President	Col George Kerton
Honorary Secretary	Lt Col Joe Ahern
Honorary Treasurer	Lt Col Richard Cummins
Honorary Membership Secretary	Col Richard Heaslip
Immediate Past President	Cmdr Gerry O’Flynn (NS)
Regional Representatives	
Eastern Region	Col George Kerton & Comdt Billy Campbell
Southern Region	Col William Harrington & Lt Col Michael Baston
Western Region	Brig Gen Gerry McNamara & Col Senan Downes
Curragh Region	Col Con McNamara & Lt Col Seamus Rouine
Naval Service Region	Cmdr Gerry Flynn (NS) & Capt David Berry (NS)
Air Corps Region	Brig Gen Paul Fry & Capt Ray Bonar
Co-opted	
CAOGA	Col Sean Scanlon
Defence Forces Benevolent Fund	Brig Gen Liam MacNamee
Newsletter	Col Declan Carbery
Trustees	
Col Bill Nott	
Comdt Pat Godfrey	
Capt Ray Murphy	
Auditor	
Comdt Pat Casey	

9. **Membership**

ARCO’s membership is drawn from retired commissioned officers of the Permanent Defence Force. Members subscribe to adhering to the Association’s Rules, and supporting the Association’s aim and objectives. Individuals are formally elected to membership by the Executive Committee. The direction of ARCO’s policy and affairs, subject to the provisions of the Association’s Rules, is vested in the membership of the Association, as expressed in motions adopted at the Association’s Annual General Meeting.

The current membership represents a modest percentage of retired commissioned officers. 70% of the membership is fully retired, and 30% continue to work following retirement from the Defence Forces.



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Membership encourages and fosters the unique fellowship and comradeship established during military service, whilst retaining the values and ethos of the Defence Forces. It also provides continuity of formal representation for officers on retirement from Óglaigh na hÉireann, and a strong collective voice to advocate on behalf of all members. Membership also provides the opportunity of supporting the Association’s aim and objectives, and actively participating in the Association’s activities and projects.

An annual subscription is charged to cover administration costs, and activities and projects approved by the Executive Committee. Currently, the membership subscription is €25, but will increase to €30 with effect from 01 October 2020. ARCO’s membership subscriptions are deducted, on an annual basis, from the March payment of military pensions.

All commissioned officers on retirement from Óglaigh na hÉireann, or those who have changed careers, are invited to apply for membership of ARCO. The application form, which incorporates an authorisation for the payment of the annual subscription from respective military pensions can be downloaded on the Association’s Website.

10. **Pension Related Issues**

ARCO’s strategy on pensions is posted on the Association’s website. The strategy focuses on the following key issues: Restoration of Pensions, Determination of Pensions, Pension Negotiation, and Abatement.

ARCO has advanced these issues by means of comprehensive submissions to the Public Service Pay Commission, to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, and to the Minister of State with Responsibility for Defence.

Arising from its prescribed objectives, ARCO advocates:

- a. The complete and timely restoration of FEMPI pension reductions,
- b. The value of veterans’ pensions, and those of eligible spouses or civil partners, must be maintained into the future,
- c. A statutory independent third party mechanism must be established for the negotiation of public service pensions, and
- d. Abatement anomalies must be addressed.

ARCO’s overarching contention is that, as a minimum, legislation should provide for the protection of the value of pensions into the future, by appropriate means. These means could include but are not confined to parity, or statutory inflation linked



increases coupled with increases that are commensurate with overall government pay policy.

ARCO acknowledges the inclusion on the Department’s redesigned website of an expanded Pension Section which includes the limited appeals process for the Contributory Pension Schemes for Spouses and Children, and the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure.

11. **Communications**

ARCO’s communication strategy is supported by its Annual General Meetings, Regional Meetings, its Website, its Bi-annual Newsletters, and the Text-A-Message Service. These assets are extensively used to communicate information of interest to retired officers. Currently, the Executive Committee is exploring social media platforms as a further means of communications.

12. **Activities**

The Executive Committee advances projects and activities as it deems appropriate to achieve the Association’s objectives.

Recent examples include, events marking the 20th and 25th Anniversaries of ARCO’s establishment, the 2010 Members’ Survey, a Ceremony in the Garden of Remembrance marking the 100th Anniversary of the Easter Rising, the 2018 Combined Veterans’ Strategy, the 2019 Workshop on ARCO’s Relevance, and the 2019 Review of its Bereavement Booklet.

13. **Submissions**

ARCO’s membership reflects a considerable reservoir of experience and expertise within the realm of Defence.

Such competencies facilitated the Association’s submissions on the Green Paper on Pensions, the Single Pension Act, the White Paper on Defence, the White Paper on Foreign Policy and External Relations, the National Security Strategy, and submissions to the Pay Commission, and to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Submissions, as appropriate are posted on the website.

ARCO also exploits this expertise in developing informed views on critical issues such as Pensions, Abatement, and the prevailing discussions on Defence Capabilities, Pay and Conditions in the Permanent Defence Force.



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For 25 years, ARCO has been part of the network of defence contributors, and is very well positioned to contribute to discussions on Defence issues, including the elaboration of a Veterans’ Policy.

14. **Veterans Policy**

In its 2013 submission for the White Paper on Defence, ARCO expressed the view that the new White Paper presented an ideal opportunity to outline a framework for the development of a veterans’ policy.

Accordingly, ARCO strongly recommended that such a framework be included in the White Paper. Regretfully, this recommendation was not reflected in the White Paper of 2015.

Despite its heading, the provisions of paragraph 7.7 of the White Paper do not reflect the international understanding of the contents of a Veterans’ Policy.

ARCO continues to advocate the absolute requirement to articulate and institutionalise an inclusive and comprehensive Governments Veterans’ Policy.

15. **Interface with Defence Community**

Of the 21 associations catering for retired public servants, ARCO is the only one with formal access to a member of Government. ARCO values this unique position, and participates in formal meetings with the Minister of Defence on an annual basis.

Since its establishment in 1994, in addition to formal meetings with the Chief of Staff, ARCO has benefitted from a mutually supportive interface with all members of the General Staff, the GOCs and FOCNS.

ARCO fully participates in Veterans’ Day, and is represented at State and Military Ceremonial such as the National Day of Commemoration, the Annual Mass in Arbour Hill, the Easter Sunday Ceremony, and Reviews of Overseas Units.

ARCO is also represented at Army, Naval Service and Air Corps Commissioning Ceremonies, and presents the Association’s Award, *An Cliaomh Gaisíochta*, to those officers achieving first-place first in their respective Cadet Classes. The recipients receive either a poniard or telescope as a keepsake.

The three recognised Associations, namely ARCO, ONE and IUNVA have quarterly meetings with officials from the Department of Defence and Defence Forces Headquarters.



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ARCO makes an annual grant to the Officer’s section of the DFBF and to ONE’s Fuchsia campaign.

Finally, ARCO retains a fruitful relationship with RACO on matters of mutual interest such as Pensions, Pay and Service Conditions of serving personnel and their respective families, Veterans’ Strategy, Veterans’ Policy, and ARCO’s Membership Campaign.

16. **Veterans’ Associations**

ARCO remains actively engaged with the other two recognised organisations, namely ONE and IUNVA, in advancing the interests of Defence Forces Veterans. Meeting frequently, the three Associations enjoy an excellent working relationship, and are mutually supportive.

On 07 December, 2018 a Combined Veteran’s Strategy was submitted to the Minister for Defence, the Chief of Staff and the Secretary-General. The Combined Veterans’ Strategy addresses the following key issues relating to pensions namely: Restoration of Pensions, Determination of Pensions, Pension Negotiation, and Abatement.

ARCO views this strategy as a starting point for a formal Veterans’ Policy.

17. **Regimental Associations**

ARCO views Regimental Associations as valuable assets within the Defence Community, promoting professional excellence within the Defence Forces, supporting the preservation of their respective legacies and distinctive traditions, and providing focal points for remembrance and camaraderie.

18. **Past Presidents**

Captain Ray Tumulty	November 1993 – September 1995
Brigadier-General Patrick Monahan	September 1995 - October 2001
Colonel John Ryan	October 2001 – October 2006
Col Michael Lucey	October 2006 – October 2009
Col Brian O’Connor	October 2009 – October 2012
Brigadier-General Liam MacNamee	October 2012 – October 2015
Commander Gerry O’Flynn (NS)	October 2015 – October 2018

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

JANUARY 2020



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