



Cumann na nIar - Oifigeach Coimisiúnta

# newsletter

Association of Retired Commissioned Officers

Issue No: 37. Spring 2020

ARCO Web Site: [www.iarco.info](http://www.iarco.info)

## Department of Defence's refusal to pay Military Service Allowance (MSA) increase to Pensioners, who were in receipt of Pensions on 03 July 2019.

**Background:** The Public Service Pay Commission (PSPC) was established in late 2016 to advise Government on Public Service remuneration policy. The Commission's first Report was issued in 2017 and its second Report was issued in August 2018. The third Report, which dealt with Recruitment and Retention in the Permanent Defence Force, was finalised in May 2019. On 04 July 2019, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, Minister with Responsibility for Defence, Paul Kehoe, and the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe welcomed the PSPC report examining recruitment and retention issues in the Defence Forces.

The report was accepted in full at the weekly Cabinet meeting, at which an extensive implementation plan was also agreed. They reported that the PSPC report represented a €10 million package that would result in immediate and future benefits for members of the Permanent Defence Force (PDF).



Among the proposals contained in the report was a **10% increase in Military Service Allowance (MSA)**, which applies to all Defence Force personnel and is a unique payment taking account the obligations of military life.

These obligations include:

- Long and unsocial working hours,
- Liability for duty 24 hours / 7 days a week,
- Requirement to serve a fixed period of engagement,
- Restrictions on personal liberty as a result of the code of military discipline,
- Risk of personal danger / loss of life,
- Bad and uncomfortable conditions,
- Personal responsibility for the use of lethal force,
- Disruption of family life as result of frequent absence from home.
- Restriction on right to engage in industrial action; and
- Act as a backup force for the Government.

After the Cabinet meeting the Taoiseach said: The men and women of our Defence Forces serve this country with pride and distinction, ensuring the security of our State, protecting our democracy, asserting our sovereignty and participating in peacekeeping missions for the UN and the EU. They also provide essential aid to the civil power, including helping to deal with organised crime. The Minister of State at the Department of Defence with responsibility for Defence, Deputy Paul Kehoe, said: The Commission has now reported with a range of recommendations that will be quickly actioned. In addition, he also said A High Level Implementation Plan has been approved and work will commence on this immediately.

The Representative Associations representing Officers (RACO) and Other Ranks (PDFORRA) subsequently accepted the terms of the PSPC in September and October 2019.

**Application of MSA to Military Pensions.** The Gleeson Commission's Report (1990) identified MSA as an integral part of basic salary, and regarded the combination of regimental (line) pay and MSA as standard pay for personnel of the Permanent Defence Force. The Gleeson Commission, whose

recommendations were approved by Government, also concluded that MSA is a pensionable allowance, and was to be factored within military pensions as an element of basic pay. **Defence Force pensioners are not aware of any Government decision to change this position.** As an element of core pay, MSA is taxable, and is subject to PSRI, USC and FEMPI Reductions in Public Servants Pensions. Arising from Government decisions on public sector and Defence Forces remuneration, all MSA increases and reductions were subsequently applied to all military pensions in payment.

**Current Situation:** On the 31st October 2019, ARCO (Association of Retired Commissioned Officers) wrote to the Minister with Responsibility for Defence, Mr. Paul Kehoe T.D. requesting that, as an allowance in the nature of pay, 50% of the new rate of MSA be reflected in the pensions of retired personnel and in the pensions of eligible spouses or civil partners. It was also requested that it be retrospectively applied from 04 July 2019. On 10 December, in its response to ARCO, the Department stated that it would only index link the recent increase in MSA to retirement benefits for eligible military personnel retiring **on or after 04 July, 2019.** They also stated that the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA) "makes no provision for increases in allowances for public servants: the increases apply only to basic pay". Yet, in its 2012 submission to the Public Accounts Committee, the Department of Defence stated that MSA **"is in the nature of pay; it is pensionable and has been subject to pay increases and decreases. It is a form of additional pay in recognition of the unique requirements of military life. It is taxable, subject to PRSI and USC."**

The letter dated 10 December, also advised that *"as things stand, there is no specific authorised mechanism for Public Service Bodies to pass on the benefit of any increases in allowances, such as MSA, to pensions that are already in payment on 03 July 2019 before the operative date of that increased allowance"*. **The Department further stated that it was seeking clarification from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on this issue.**

On 18th Feb 2020, the Private Secretary to the Minister with Responsibility for Defence responded to further submissions from ARCO on 16 Dec 2019 and 15 Jan 2020, where she stated *"I can confirm that, as previously outlined, this is clearly a broader public service policy matter which also affects certain other retired groups and so falls to be decided centrally by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER), and not unilaterally by the Department of Defence. As you know, this Department has already sought clarification and guidance from DPER on the matter, and this is awaited. I can confirm that as yet no decision has been made by DPER in that regard and if any pension increase is authorised in the MSA context, the Department of Defence will act as quickly as possible to pass the benefit on to those involved"*.

If the decision by the Department of Defence, NOT to apply the increase in MSA to pensions in payment prior to 04 July 2019,



is as clear cut as they claim, it brings into question why DPER has not already made a decision on this matter, especially as DOD stated in their response to ARCO on 10/12/2019 that they were seeking clarification from DPER on the matter.

At a time when overseas service, recruitment and retention is being encouraged, a refusal to reflect the recent MSA increase in military pensions in payment could be seen as casting doubt on the Government's commitment to supporting the Defence Forces.

All of this has occurred following comments from President Michael D Higgins when he was speaking at the Defence Forces Values Awards at Áras an Uachtaráin on 11 September last. He spoke in support of the personnel of the Defence Forces when he said **"it is not too much to expect that serving men and women should have conditions, including an income and prospects, that are sufficient to provide for themselves and their families"**. He also stated that he had **"heard and read with anxiety of the distress that is being experienced by some of those who are giving their all to serve the State"**.

Speaking at the ceremony, President Higgins said the awards gave him an opportunity to personally honour and acknowledge the integral role that the Defence Forces occupies in Irish society. **"It is something that I have always been aware of,"** he said.

Arising from the letter from the Minister's Private Secretary on 18 February, ARCO responded to the Minister of State with Responsibility for Defence on 05 March.

At the outset, ARCO reiterated its strongly held conviction that the MSA increase must retrospectively apply to all military pensions in payment on 03 July 2019, including pensions of dependents of deceased personnel who died in service, or when in retirement.

A decision not to apply the MSA increase to military pensions in payment on 03 July 2019 would be **inconsistent with the Government's stated policy to "Support our veterans for the public service and outstanding contribution they have made to the State"**.

On the same date (05 March) ARCO also made a substantial 10 page submission to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, where it was emphasised that no grounds exist, for not applying the MSA increase to military pensions which are "in payment" on 03 July, 2019.



# ARCO: Silver Jubilee Reception



*ARCO held a reception on 16th October 2019 in the Stephen's Green Club, established in 1840, to celebrate the 25th Anniversary (Silver Jubilee) of the foundation of the Association' The Guest List included the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr Paul McAuliffe, Senator Michael McDowell, the Guest Speaker as well as members of The Oireachtas, serving and retired members of The Defence Forces, officials from The Department of Defence, members of Veterans' and Representative Associations, officials from Retired Public Servants Associations, and The Media. Due to the exigencies of governance, both An Taoiseach and An Tánaiste were unable to attend, but sent their apologies and best wishes to all attendees. Also, the Minister with Responsibility for Defence, the Chief of Staff, and the Secretary-General of the Department of Defence were unable to attend because they were accompanying An tUachtarán on his visit to Defence Forces personnel deployed with the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Lebanon.*

## Establishment

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

The President of the Association, Brig Gen Paul Pakenham (Retd), highlighted the initiative, foresight and determination, of those retired officers, involved in the establishment of our Association including:

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



He also acknowledged the selfless service provided by former Presidents, Officers and Regional Representatives, in shaping the Association, some of whom were present at the reception, including:

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

Before introducing Senator McDowell, Brig Gen Pakenham (Retd) placed on record ARCO's sincere appreciation to the Chairman of the Stephen's Green Club, Mr David Flanagan, and the Club's Manager Mr Ray Mooney, for their renowned hospitality, and for putting the Club's excellent facilities at ARCO's disposal.



## Guest Speaker

Brig Gen Pakenham (Retd) introduced Senator Michael McDowell and said that he was 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. Senator McDowell graduated from the King's Inns in 1974, is a Senior Counsel and an Adjunct Professor in UCD's Sutherland School of Law. He 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 He also served as Attorney-General, as Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and as Tánaiste. Most recently, 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.





The audience was then reminded that Senator McDowell had commendable service in the 6th Field Military Police Company, that he successfully prosecuted the McAllevey case, and was an active member of the Defence Forces Legal Service Club. With this background, it was stressed that Senator McDowell was maintaining a Listening Watch on the prevailing challenges facing Óglaigh na hÉireann.

## Nobody Volunteers to Become a Homeless Veteran

*By Colm Campbell, Chairperson  
Board of Directors ONE*

*The role of Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann / Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel (ONE) can be summarised in four words: support, comradeship, advocacy, remembrance. Examining these words will help in understanding how ONE derives its aims of funding hostels for homeless veterans; putting in place preventative measures to avert homelessness; and providing other support services for Defence Forces' veterans.*



ARCO made a contribution of €1000.00 to the ONE Fuchsia appeal. Col George Kerton, (Retd) Vice President, ARCO, is pictured presenting the cheque to Mr Ollie O'Connor, CEO, ONE

### Support

Support takes many forms, ranging from a warm greeting to a former comrade to a bed for a homeless veteran, and everything in between. With 35 branches and three area councils, ONE is well positioned to provide this support. We currently have hostels for homeless veterans in Athlone, Dublin and Letterkenny, and we are in the process of developing a small hostel and veteran support centre (VSC) in Cobh. We are also developing 15 VSCs nationwide with the support of the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces.

VSCs, which can be described as a cross between advice centres and men's/women's sheds, are now located in Athlone, Casement Aerodrome, Cavan, the Curragh, Dundalk, Galway, Kilkenny, and Limerick, with a temporary facility in Collins Bks, Cork. Further VSCs will be established in Athy, Collins Bks and Cobh (Cork), Cathal Brugha Bks and McKee Bks (Dublin), Finner Camp (Donegal), and Wexford Town.

We provide over 16,000 bed nights every year in our hostels and approximately 900 homeless veterans have availed of our services to date, with the majority of these moving on to permanent housing.



*Pictured at the opening of the Veteran Support Centre (VSC) in the Curragh Camp is GOC DFTC Brig Gen Joe Mulligan (now retired), ONE's National President Tom James, National Chairman Brig Gen Colm Campbell (Retd) along with members of St Conleth's Branch ONE and other veterans associations.*

These people are fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, who volunteered to serve their country. Nobody volunteers to become a homeless veteran.

### Comradeship:

We use the term 'comradeship' deliberately because it evokes a sense of shared experience, a shared culture, a shared set of values, and a willingness to serve. Being part of a veterans association (I include all associations) helps preserve a sense of identity and a sense of belonging. It should also evoke a sense of shared responsibility for those less fortunate than us. The Defence family, like any true community, is not just an organisation; rather it is an organism made up of smaller parts working together. Homeless veterans are part of that family and they cannot be left behind.

There can be a tendency to blame the victim when things go wrong or to say that caring for veterans is the responsibility of other agencies. However, when a former soldier, sailor, or airman or women is involved, we believe that it is our responsibility to help.

This spirit of comradeship is exemplified in the outstanding support received from the Defence Forces, other veterans associations, and individual serving and retired members of the DF. The Swanbatt Gala Ball and the Gala Concert organised by 6

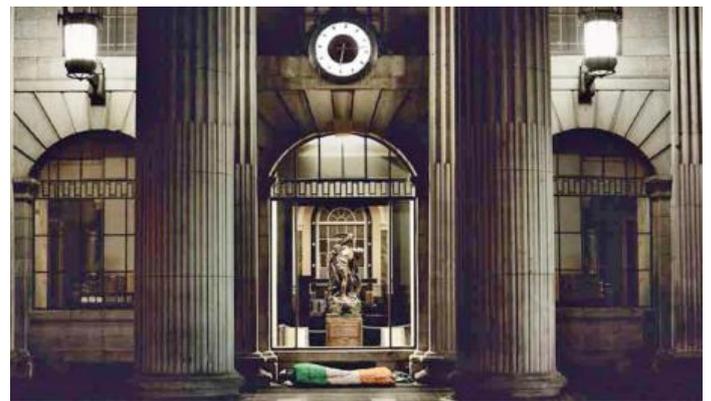


*Pictured at the Veterans' Day parade in McKee Bks are L/R: ONE member Patrick Flavin, St Conleth's Branch (Newbridge), IUNVA member Tony Grant, Post 24 (Clonmel) and Vice President of ARCO Col George Kerton (Retd).*

Inf Bn in Athlone are recent examples of that support. Units of the Defence Forces and students on courses routinely fundraise on behalf of their less fortunate comrades and ONE also acknowledges the voluntary contributions made by serving personnel and veterans, and the donations received from other associations and groups.

### Advocacy:

ONE unashamedly advocates in support of veterans, particularly on behalf of those who are less fortunate. The majority of veterans, irrespective of length of service, are very successful in new careers or happy in retirement. However, there are quite a number who need help from time to time. There is a dual challenge in providing this help: ignorance of the issue and ignoring the issue. Both of these have to be addressed. The Sleeping Flags Awareness Campaign, launched in February 2019, was aimed at those who were ignorant of the plight of some of our veterans and we are also working very hard on ensuring that those who now know about it don't just ignore it. Advocacy on veterans' issues must remain constant.



**Sleeping Flags Campaign:** *Pictured is the specially created Tricolour sleeping bags that were situated on the streets of Dublin with veterans in them.*

### Remembrance:

Remembrance is the fourth pillar of ONE and it is therefore appropriate that the annual Fuchsia Appeal is launched at the Defence Forces National Memorial in Merrion Square. Remembrance serves to bring to mind, and keep in mind, those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and who we must always honour. We must also remember those veterans who for some reason or another become homeless or others that need our support.

The current level of service provision costs ONE in the region of €800,000 annually and our future annual funding requirement is estimated at €1,000,000. Our Dublin hostel, Brú na bhFiann, receives support from the Dublin Region Homeless Executive, and the Department of Defence contributes annually towards the administrative overheads of the charity. The balance of our income, approximately €650,000 for future planned services, comes through various fundraising activities. These include members' subscriptions, donations, revenue from meals and accommodation, and our national collection through the Fuchsia



Appeal. Corporate bodies can fulfil their social responsibility by sponsoring rooms in our homes, sponsoring their local VSC or ONE branch, or by donating their expertise. ONE is increasingly benefitting from support from businesses and other charity partners, and we gratefully acknowledge the great support received from: Cygnus Consulting, who have become the first company to sponsor a room in one of our facilities; ROTHCO/Accenture, one of our close neighbours in Smithfield, who spearheaded the Sleeping Flags Awareness Campaign, which as well as winning a host of media awards, more importantly, helped ONE identify and support a number of homeless veterans that would otherwise not have come to our attention; Harte Communications for media advice; Dublin Bus, for continuing our Sleeping Flags Awareness Campaign in July; the Leopardstown Park Hospital Trust, who sponsor the training of our staff and volunteers; and the ESB's Energy for Generations Fund, for their support in upgrading the lighting systems in Brú na bhFiann.



*Pictured at the 2019 Veterans' Day parade in Collins Barracks is the ONE National President Jim Fay, laying a wreath in memory of those Defence Forces members who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the service to the State, along with representatives from veterans associations IUNVA and ARCO.*

It is important to know what you are supporting, so what follows is a flavour of our future plans. In Brú na bhFiann, in partnership with the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive and the HSE, we are increasing the number of bedrooms for homeless veterans from 30 to 35, providing an ante room (day room) for residents, and developing a veterans counselling service.

We are co-operating with hospitals to create a pathway for those who need long-term care.

We are also continuing to develop our facilities in Beechwood House and Custume House; opening a small hostel in Cobh in

tandem with the VSC; and examining the provision of further hostel facilities in the Munster area.

In conclusion, our members, staff and volunteers give excellent service to ONE through their commitment to helping veterans in their time of need. Other veterans associations and individuals also provide outstanding support to their less fortunate comrades. Throughout this article we do not quantify the terms 'service' or 'veteran' as it is our view that the duration, type of service, and rank achieved are not important; rather it is that veterans served their country at home and overseas. Some of those veterans now need others to help them.

## Upcoming Events 2020

Date	Event
16 - 20 March 2020	Ministerial Review; 61 Inf Gp, UNDOF. 12 Inf Bn, Sarsfield Bks, Limerick. Date: TBC
17 March 2020	DF involvement in selected St Patrick's Day Parades
12 April 2020	Easter Sunday Commemoration, GPO, Dublin
27 Apr – 01 May 2020	Ministerial Review; 106 Bn UNIFIL. 7 Inf Bn, Cathal Brugha Bks. Dublin. Date: TBC
06 May 2020	1916 Leaders Commemoration Ceremony, Arbour Hill, Dublin
09 May 2020	DF Veterans Day, Collins Barracks, Dublin, at 1200hrs. Congo themed
16/17 May 2020	National Famine Commemoration, Location: Co. Donegal. Exact Date/Location TBC
?? 14 – 19 May 2020	61st Annual International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Bookings: through Joe Walsh Tours
12 July 2020	National Day of Commemoration. Collins Barracks, Dublin



## 44th Cadet Class Golden Anniversary

*The 44th Cadet Class, including their Air Corps colleagues, held their 50th (Golden) Anniversary on the 14th October 2019 with a Gala Dinner in the Keadeen Hotel, Newbridge, Co. Kildare.*



### **Front Row L to R**

Frank Burns, Ciaran Fitzgerald, Thos O'Brien, Joe Minogue, Kenny Worn (Guest), Des Travers (Guest), Wally Young, Paddy Murphy, Eamonn Kelly, Plunkett Hayes

### **Middle Row L to R**

Mick O'Shea, Mick Nolan, Pat Muldoon, Michel J Baynes, Norman Farragher, Eoin O'Curry, Brian Dowling, Billy O'Hara, Martin Gibson, John Duggan, John Burke, Donal Loughnane

### **Back Row L to R**

Gerard Fitzpatrick, Declan Hayes, John McKeown, Mick Kiely, Barry Quinn, Hugh O'Neill, Kevin Humphreys, Paul Pakenham, Sean O'Meara

## 51st Cadet Class Reunion



*The 51st Cadet Class held their 45th Reunion in the Keadeen Hotel Newbridge.*

*Photo kindly supplied by Brig Gen Paul Fry (Retd).*

### **Front Row L to R**

Mick O'Farrell; Gus Warner; Rory Neary; Kevin Cotter; Eamonn Fogarty; Paul Fry; John Spierin; Lar Foley.

### **Second Row L to R**

Gus Pender; (Nick McHugh / Hidden); Michael Smith; Adrian McKeown; John Molloy; Mick Delaney; Paul Hanafin; Frank Holohan; Frank O'Reilly

(Hidden); Mick Kelly; Brian Fitzsimmons; John Walsh; Dave Connolly; Jim Byrne; Billy Harrington; Paddy MacDaniel; (Hidden Jim Maguire); Mick Rowan; Eddie Scanlan; Mick Meehan; Tony O'Doherty; Mick Carroll; Rod McAuliffe (Hidden); Richie McCann (Hidden); Frank O'Leary; Ian Hanna; Ciaran Herbert; John Flaherty; Willie Dwyer; Kevin Byrne; John Tolan; Mick Baston; Joe Gaffney.

**Standing Back L to R** Martin O'Dwyer; Conor Fitzsimmons; Mick O'Carroll.



*The President and Executive Committee of ARCO wish all of their members a Happy and Healthy 2020*

### Correction

I wish to make a correction to information in the article on the 6th Infantry Battalion Association, which appeared in Issue No.36 of the Newsletter. The President of the Association, Col Éibhear Ó h-Anluain (Retd) was listed with the wrong rank.

## PAYE Modernisation

Since 01 January 2019 employers are obliged to report their payees' pay and statutory deductions (PAYE, PRSI, USC, LPT where appropriate) to Revenue on or before each pay date. The Department of Defence has been making a monthly return to Revenue in respect of payments made to you which will show your pay (pension) and statutory deductions. These new reporting obligations involve the most significant changes to the PAYE system since its introduction in the 1960s.

The benefits for you, as an employee, include:

- the ability to maximise the use of your entitlements
- the availability of real time accurate data through the Revenue online systems (myAccount)
- clear information about the deductions being reported to Revenue on your behalf.

### P60s/P45s/Statement of Earnings

From 2019, DOD will no longer be printing P60s/P45s/statements of Earnings. Should you need a statement of earnings for 2019 you should register with Revenue's online service – myAccount.

### Salary Statement of Earnings for Banking purposes

Should you need a statement of earnings to support a banking application such as a mortgage application you should register with the online service – myAccount. Banks and lending institutions are now accepting a salary statement printout from the Revenue online service. This statement can be used in lieu of a salary statement issued by DOD.

### Expenses

If you wish to claim expenses eg medical expenses, the quickest and easiest way is using Revenue's online service – myAccount. If you are unable to use the myAccount service, you should contact your local Revenue office. Further information on the PAYE Modernisation and what it means for you can be found on the Revenue website, [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie)

## EDITOR'S NOTE

This Newsletter is issued in Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter. The editor welcomes articles or items of interest, or suggestions as to what should be included. If you have any contribution or suggestion please send them to the Editor, [declancarbery@hotmail.com](mailto:declancarbery@hotmail.com) or post to Col Declan Carbery (Retd), 61, The Paddocks, Naas, Co. Kildare.

## Welcome to ARCO's New Members:

Capt Michael O'Farrell	Lt Col Anne Ryan
Comdt Cathal Berry	Lt Col Mark Prendergast
Comdt John Picard	Maj Gen Kieran Brennan
Brig Gen Joe Mulligan	Comdt Michael O'Shea
Comdt Ciara Ware	Lt Col Oliver Barbour
Brig Gen Howard Berney	Comdt Philip Quinlan
Comdt Arthur Hunter-Nolan	Comdt John Flaherty
Lt Col Michael McCarthy	Col Brendan McAndrew
Capt Gerry Waldron	Capt Fintan McGovern
Capt Denis Connell	Col John Spierin
Capt Mark Prendergast	Capt Shane Rouine
Comdt Mark Hegarty	Lt Col Fergus Hannon
Capt Eoin Rochford	Col Michael Murray
Comdt Paul Deevy	

## 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 Noel Langan	17 Aug 2019
Comdt Douglas (Dougie) McManus	18 Sept 2019
Col Maurice Walsh	14 Oct 2019
Col Aidan Lernihan	25 Oct 2019
Col Phelim Connolly	30 Oct 2019
Lt Col Martin O'Donnell	22 Nov 2019
Col Pat Begley	12 Dec 2019
Lt Col Frank Egan	31 Dec 2019
Comdt Noel O'Brien	26 Jan 2020
Brig Gen Stephen (Steve) Murphy	26 Jan 2020
Comdt Joseph (Joe) Casey	01 Mar 2020

## Dr Cathal Berry, TD. Kildare South

ARCO member, Comdt Cathal Berry (Retd), who ran as an Independent candidate in the recent Dáil election, was elected as a TD for Kildare South. A member of the 72 Cadet Class, who on commissioning in 1997 was appointed to the Infantry Corps. His service included postings in the 5th Inf Bn, Cadet School, ARW and in the Medical Corps. Overseas Service included Tours of Duty in the Balkans, Lebanon and Chad.



Cathal thanked ARCO members for the assistance and support provided throughout the election campaign. He also thanked retired personnel, of all ranks, who came from across the country to support the effort, in what Cathal referred to as "the ultimate team performance and an historic day for the Defence Forces"