



Cumann na nIarl - Oifigeach Coimisiúnta

newsletter

Association of Retired Commissioned Officers

Issue No: 38. Summer 2020

ARCO Web Site: www.iarco.info

ARCO's Relevance in 2020 *Camaraderie Through Service*

Introduction: *ARCO's relevance to retiring officers in 2020 is somewhat different than in June 1994, when the Association was formally launched. In recent years, we have observed a significant change in the retirement profile of commissioned officers, with a movement towards early retirement, and, in some cases, retirement without pensions. Membership of ARCO enables those officers to promote their interests and needs, to retain the capacity to advocate for the Defence Forces and the families of serving and retired personnel, and to participate in a range of activities such as business networking opportunities.*

In July 2019, we successfully hosted a Workshop in The Military College, titled *ARCO's Future Relevance in the Evolving Environment*. Comprehensive presentations were provided by RACO's General Secretary Comdt Conor King and by Capt Paul Conlon SO COMO. Wide ranging contributions were made by all attendees, including serving officers Lt Col Derek Priestley and Capt Deirdre Carbery (now retired), and retired officers Lt Col Pat Ryan (Retd), Comdt Ciara Prendergast (Retd), Comdt Cathal Berry (Retd) and Lt Niall Mc Carthy NS (Retd).

Point of Departure

Operating on a voluntary basis since 1994, and with three decades of steadfast service to the Defence Community, our membership sees ARCO as a vibrant, inclusive, diverse, mutually supportive, evolving and flourishing Representative Association, recognised by both the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces. As a distinctive group of retired officers, ARCO encourages and fosters the unique fellowship and comradeship, which derives from our extensive military service in Óglaigh na hÉireann. We also provide a strong, collective and authoritative voice, representing and supporting Permanent Defence Force officers who retire or who transition to civilian life, and eligible spouses or civil partners.

Our membership is identified as a valuable asset in enhancing the credibility, influence and integrity of the Association. When officers retire from the Permanent Defence Force, we see a natural membership transition from RACO to ARCO, retaining

an affiliation with the Defence Community and transferring a range of knowledge and experiences. For example, Col Con McNamara (Retd) and Lt Col Michael Baston, former RACO Presidents, actively serve on ARCO's Executive Committee, representing the Curragh and Southern regions respectively.

Posture

Readers will be interested to note that our Objectives have been substantially revised and were formally adopted during our 2019 AGM. Building on our ethos, values and accomplishments, and with a willingness to change, ARCO is now fully committed to being a more diverse and inclusive organisation, and intends to remain representative, relevant, and viable, in order to safeguard our future.

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 actively engages with the Minister of Defence, which includes formal meetings on an annual basis. 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, ONE and IUNVA hold quarterly meetings with officials from the Department of Defence and officers from Defence Forces Headquarters. As is generally known throughout the Defence Community, ARCO remains fully engaged with ONE, IUNVA, RACO and PDFORRA.

Of significant relevance to serving and retired officers, we are represented on the Executive Committee of the Defence Forces Benevolent Fund, on CAOGA's Board of Management, and on the Council of the Alliance of Retired Public Servants. In areas of mutual interest, we also interface with the Irish Defence Forces Officers Club (IDFOC).

ARCO has promoted the absolute requirement to articulate and institutionalise an inclusive and comprehensive Government Veterans' Policy. In the interim, we are actively advancing the Combined Veteran's Strategy, collectively submitted by ARCO,

(continued over . . .)



Comdt Miriam McCann (Retd).
IT Manager Aviva stadium.

ONE and IUNVA. This Strategy includes the establishment of a Joint Office for Veterans' Affairs, consisting of personnel drawn from the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces.

Pensions

Pensions, and pension related issues, remain a major focus of our endeavours, which are informed by the Association's Pension Strategy. The value of our members' military pensions into the future, is dependent on the successful implementation of ARCO's Pension Strategy. The strategy, which is available on our website, focuses on:

- The restoration of FEMPI pension reductions,
- Pension parity,
- The value of military pensions which must be maintained into the future,
- The establishment of a statutory, independent third-party mechanism for the negotiation of public service pensions, and
- Repealing abatement anomalies.

Within our competencies, we continue to provide advice to retired officers employed in the public sector on issues associated with pension abatement.

Analysis - Debate - Action

We provide a valuable forum for analysis and debate, which enables the Association to address a range of issues that impinge on the interests and quality of lives of retired officers, including those who have transitioned to civilian employment, and eligible spouses or civil partners. For example, prior to the enactment of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012, ARCO successfully lobbied Ministers, politicians and Government Departments, which resulted in the protection of military pensions of retired officers already employed in the public service.

Recently, we have achieved reasonable success in raising awareness of some problems associated with the Registration of Foreign Births and Deaths arising from overseas service, and the interpretation of the Contributory Pension Schemes for Spouses and Children (Revised Pension Scheme 1985). We have provided appropriate advice to dependent spouses who were identified as falling outside of the remit of the Revised Pension Scheme 1985, including advice on the appeal process. For its part, ARCO remains engaged in ensuring that appropriate legislation is enacted regarding the Registration of Foreign Births and Deaths. (See separate article 'ARCO Information Brief').

Networking

Networking is a new direction for ARCO, providing communications means to a wider audience. One of our revised objectives *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.* Of significant interest to our younger membership cohort and to serving officers, we are examining the provision of networking opportunities for both our members and the wider Defence Community, with due cognizance to geographical and timing parameters.

Under the leadership of the Representative of the Eastern Region, Capt Phil Quinlan (Retd) supported by Capt Paul Amoroso (Retd), ARCO will be organising events based on relevant defence, security, leadership and management themes. These networking events will provide our members with opportunities for connecting, for sharing knowledge, and for cultivating business and social relationships.

Whereas our inaugural networking event was deferred on account of the pandemic, assuming that social distancing restrictions are eased, it is likely that the theme of our first panel discussion event in quarter 4 of 2020, could focus on the economic, political and security implications of Covid-19.

The first event will be a golden opportunity for ARCO to communicate to a new cohort of retired officers why the organisation has relevance, what role we can play, and what real impact we can have for retired officers and the defence and security of the State.

ARCO's social media platforms such as LinkedIn also provide a valuable means of networking for those members with common professional interests, and increasing their awareness of trends in the marketplace, and in the wider Defence and Security domain.

Advocate for the Defence Force



ARCO members in the Curragh / Kildare area supported veterans living in Kildare, the Curragh, Rathangan, Ballyfermot and Clondalkin, as well as widows of veterans and families living in the Curragh Camp who use the services of the Curragh Family Resource Centre.

As retired commissioned officers, in solidarity with serving personnel and their respective families, and acknowledging the endeavours of the General Staff along with RACO and PDFORRA, in the recent past, ARCO released three *Statements of Concern*. The statements derived from the deterioration of service conditions, and the depletion of strategic defence capabilities arising from early retirements. The statements reflected the views of our members and are posted on our website: '<https://iarco.info/>'

Following the publication of the Public Sector Pay Commission's Report, ARCO called on the Minister for Defence to present formal proposals to Government establishing without delay, 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 welcomes the publication of the Government's High-Level Implementation Plan *Strengthening the Defence Forces*. Whereas some of the Implementation Plan's projects are completed, we remain concerned with the high turnover rate of 10% in 2019, with the alarming strength on 31 July 2020 of 8,412, and with the limited progress in addressing key areas such as recruitment processes, review of pay structures, and non-pay retention issues.

Likewise, we continue to take every opportunity to highlight the deteriorating living and welfare standards endured by families of serving personnel, dependent spouses and children, and, in some cases, retired single personnel.

This assessment was reinforced by ARCO's members providing social and material support during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lobbying and Submissions

In the prevailing environment, we maintain a pro-active involvement with kindred organisations and agencies, and we continue to engage in public advocacy and appropriate lobbying, on pertinent issues relative to the Association's objectives.

Our membership reflects a considerable reservoir of experience and expertise within the realm of Defence. Consequently, ARCO is very well positioned to contribute to discussions on Defence related issues. As such, we have made wide-ranging submissions on the White Paper on Defence, the White Paper on Foreign Policy and External Relations, and recently on the National Security Strategy.

Regarding pension related issues, serving and retired personnel may wish to recall that we have made comprehensive submissions to the Public Service Pay Commission, the Department of Defence, and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Elections to the Oireachtas, provide ARCO with ample opportunities to inform election candidates of the absolute need to promote the needs of retired officers, and eligible spouses or civil partners, and to advocate for the Defence Forces, including its personnel, its veterans, and the families of serving and retired personnel.

As a former Defence Forces colleague, and as a member of ARCO, we welcomed Comdt Cathal Berry's (Retd) decision to put himself before the electorate in February. In solidarity with serving and retired personnel, coupled with their respective families, our membership actively supported Cathal's candidacy as an Independent candidate for Dáil Éireann, and subsequently congratulated him on his election as a TD for Kildare South.

Lobbying by Alliance of Retired Public Servants

Established in 2013, the main objective of the Alliance of Retired Public Servants is to protect and advance the interests of public service pensioners, including ARCO members, by representing the collective views of such pensioners, to the Government and other relevant bodies.

The Alliance, which now has in the region of 148,000 affiliated members, from 21 Associations, is recognised by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, and the Congress of Trade Unions. The Alliance's outputs include meetings with Government Ministers, Politicians, Political Parties, Government Departments, and Public Service Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, and submissions to An Taoiseach, the Minister of Public Expenditure and Reform, and the Public Service Pay Commission. In advancing pension related issues on behalf of its membership, ARCO is a proactive member of the Alliance, and, as already stated is formally represented on its Council.

Mentoring

Harnessing our members' diverse skillsets, energy and vast range of expertise and experiences, derived from military service both at home and overseas, ARCO is currently engaged with DFHQ in developing modalities for participation in the Defence Forces Mentoring Programme.

We envisage that such engagement will reciprocate investment and experiences accruing from military service, reinforce ARCO's motto, enhance our outreach programme with serving officers, and provide objective perspectives beyond the scope of the chain of command relationship.



Lt Col Mark Prendergast (Retd)

The EXCOM will shortly request expressions of interest from members who may wish to participate as mentors in the Defence Forces Mentoring Programme. Training will be provided before the commencement of any programme, and appropriate guidance will be available throughout.

Future

Finally, in these challenging times, whilst advancing the Association's relevance with its evolving membership cohort, ARCO's focus for the short to medium term, is to

- Protect our legacy, ethos and values,
- Implement our revised objectives as adopted at the 2019 AGM,
- Develop our members' networking capacity,
- Expand our membership base,
- Engagement in Defence Forces mentoring and coaching programmes,
- Advocate for the Defence Forces, including its personnel, its veterans, and the families of serving and retired personnel, and
- Prepare a framework for the elaboration of a Veterans' Policy.



UPDATE on DOD's refusal to pay MSA increase to Pensioners who were in receipt of pensions on 03 July 2019

It is over 12 months since the, then, Taoiseach, Mr. Leo Varadkar welcomed the Public Service Pay Commission (PSPC) report, which dealt with Recruitment and Retention in the Permanent Defence Force. Among the proposals contained in the report was a 10% increase in Military Service Allowance (MSA), with effect from 04 July 2019, which applies to Defence Force personnel and is a unique payment taking account of the obligations of military life. The last ARCO Newsletter (Issue No. 37) outlined the details contained in the four submissions to the Minister of State with Responsibility for Defence, (31 October, 16 December, 15 January and 05 March), where ARCO advanced its strongly held opinion that the MSA increase must retrospectively apply to all military pensions that were already in payment on 03 July, 2019. Earlier, on 10 December 2019, DOD stated that it would only index link the MSA increase to retirement benefits for eligible military personnel retiring on or after 04 July 2019.

On 05 March, a substantial submission was made 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 in payment on 03 July 2019. ARCO has not identified any determination from the Public Service Pay Commission to give rise to this adverse situation. ARCO is still awaiting a response to this submission from the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

ARCO's Officers, Executive Committee and Membership are alarmed with the possibility that the MSA increase may not apply to military pensions in payment on 03 July 2019. The entitlements, expectations and standard of living of Defence Force Veterans, eligible spouses or civil partners, and children will be adversely affected should the Government decide not to apply the 2019 MSA increase to military pensions in payment. Regrettably, 27 ARCO members have died since 04 July 2019, none of whom benefited from the 2019 MSA increase, and the majority of whom died before accruing the full restoration of their military pensions resulting from the adverse provisions of the Public Service Pension Reduction. Hopefully, their respective spouses will benefit from a favourable decision to apply the 2019 MSA increase in their military pensions.

Following discussions with the newly appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence, Mr. Simon Coveney TD, on the margins of the National Day of Commemoration Ceremony, ARCO submitted an additional case on 17 July 2020.

Application of MSA to Military Pensions. In its most recent submission (17 July) to Minister Coveney, ARCO highlighted the following points;

- MSA was initially introduced in 1979 to compensate for the discipline, hazards and arduous duties required by military life. From 1979 through August 1990, MSA was classified as a non-pay element of the total remuneration package of Defence Forces personnel, and was not reckonable for military pensions. The Gleeson Commission's Report (1990), identified MSA as an integral part of basic salary, where they stated: *"While the Commission would, in general, caution against making comparisons between remuneration in the Defence Forces and other employments (because of the uniqueness of military duties), regimental pay and MSA must together be seen as the standard weekly or monthly pay"*.
- The Gleeson Commission, whose recommendations were approved by Government, determined that MSA was an integral part of military pay. In essence, the Commission identified MSA as a pensionable allowance, to be factored within military pensions as an element of basic pay. ARCO is not aware of any Government decision in the last 30 years to change this position whereby increases (and reductions) in MSA were reflected in military pensions in payment.
- It is interesting to note that the Gleeson Commission's review of allowances in Chapter 4 (titled Allowances) of its report did not include MSA, as MSA was reviewed in Chapter 3, (titled Pay).
- No other public service body, including HSE personnel, teachers, An Garda Síochána, and the Prison Service has a remuneration provision similar to MSA. .
- **Public Service Stability Agreement 2018 - 2020.** The Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA) formally adopted by Government, prescribes the policy on pension increases for the duration of the Agreement. ARCO fully understands that the Agreement makes no provision for increases in allowances for public servants: the increases apply only to basic pay. However, the 2019 increase in MSA, (officially defined as an element of core pay, and sometimes officially defined as additional pay), was subsequently approved by Government.
- Section 6.2 of the PSSA provides specific guidance on public service pensions in payment. This particular guidance includes the principle that pay increases will continue to benefit pensions in payment for the duration of the Agreement. ARCO contends that the 2019 MSA increase, as an element of core pay, should be reflected in military pensions in payment on 03 July 2019.

- **DOD's Observations.** On 22 May 2020, in its response to ARCO's submission dated 05 March, the Department of Defence stated, inter alia, that *"there is nothing in the Pay Commission Report, or in public service pension policy as set out in the Public Service Stability Agreement, or in the associated D PER Circulars that authorises any increased allowance, such as MSA, to be reflected in pensions in payment before the operative date of increase"*. ARCO contends that, since 1990, established procedures exist in the Department of Defence to reflect increases (and decreases) in MSA allowance for military pensions in payment. In addition, ARCO notes that the Pay Commission Report on the Defence Forces Pay was published after the Public Service Stability Agreement, and the associated D PER Circulars
- The Department's stated position is that *"MSA has always been (and remains) a separate, distinct allowance in the military remuneration structure as prescribed in DFR S3, and continues to be designated or classified as an allowance"*.
- Nevertheless, ARCO notes that the Government endorsed the Gleeson Report, which identified MSA as part of core pay. According to the Gleeson Commission, *"Regimental Pay and MSA combined would be seen as the standard weekly pay. The Commission decided, therefore, that it would be wrong to deal separately with Regimental Pay and MSA"*.
- The interpretation in the Committee of Public Accounts Committee's Report (November 2012) on Public Sector Allowances is of interest: *"The Committee accepts that there must be recognition for the unique status of those subject to military life and therefore accepts the logic for the MSA. The reason it is called an allowance is to differentiate the pay of soldiers from other public sector workers"*.
- ARCO notes that in submissions such as for the Public Accounts Committee (31 January 2012), the Department stated, *"MSA is an allowance in the nature of pay. It represents value for money and is cost effective, because, unlike other areas of the Public Service and due to the nature of the duties performed, overtime, shift allowance or other such premium payments are not available to members of the Defence Forces. This allowance 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 PSRI and USC."*
- ARCO noted that in the Department of Defence's Ministerial Brief (June 2020), the examples of pay scales for both officers and enlisted personnel are inclusive of MSA.

The EXCOM continues to engage with DOD and DPER in relation to this matter and will keep members informed through text messages and website announcements.

ARCO INFORMATION BRIEF: Citizenship of children born abroad to officers serving on Official Duty overseas.

GENERAL OVERVIEW A person is an Irish citizen where they were born abroad to an Irish citizen parent. This is the situation that gives Irish citizenship to those children born abroad to Irish Defence Forces officers on duty overseas.

In circumstances where the parent is also born outside the island of Ireland (e.g. a child born abroad to an officer on duty overseas), then as a consequence of various changes to and revision of legislation, a range of administrative issues arise when an Irish passport is being sought for that parent's children (i.e. officers' grandchildren).

ARCO is aware that 49 children were born abroad to officers serving on official overseas duty.

In the light of the recent experience of an ARCO member, ARCO strongly recommends that officers (with children born abroad while the officer served on official duty overseas) make themselves aware of the prevailing legislative administrative procedures regarding overseas births. Officers falling within this category should also advise their affected child/children regarding the new requirements.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION

Children born abroad of Defence Forces officers serving overseas on official duties were registered in compliance with the legal

requirements prescribed in section 6 of the Defence (Amdt) Act (No 2)(1960). This section of the Defence Act was repealed in 2005.

The legal background to the information contained in this brief is based on the current provisions laid down by Irish law with particular reference to the Passports Act 2008 (as amended) and the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956 (as amended). Of particular relevance, is the 2005 amendment to the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956.

All passport applications are subject to the Passports Act, 2008 ("the Act"). Under the Act, before a passport can be issued, the Passport Service must be satisfied as to the identity of the applicant and that he/she is an Irish citizen.

Irish citizenship is in turn determined by the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act, 1956 ("the 1956 Act"). Under the amended 1956 Act, Irish citizenship may be obtained by birth in the island of Ireland prior to 1 January 2005, or by birth in the island of Ireland after that date where certain conditions are met: by descent, or by naturalisation.

Section 7 of the 1956 Act makes provision for citizenship by descent. Section 7(1) and (3) are relevant in the cases of children born to a parent where he or she was born abroad when their father was serving on official duties overseas.



Section 7(1) states "A person is an Irish citizen from birth if at the time of his or her birth either parent was an Irish citizen or would if alive have been an Irish citizen".

This means that a person is an Irish citizen where they were born abroad to an Irish citizen parent.

Section 7(3) adds an exception to this where that parent was also born abroad. It states, "subsection (1) shall not confer Irish citizenship on a person born outside the island of Ireland if the parent through whom he or she derives citizenship was also born outside the island of Ireland unless (a) that person's birth is registered under section 27, (of the 1956 Act) or (b) the parent through whom that person derives citizenship was at the time of that person's birth abroad in the public service."

Of major importance is the fact that the 2005 amendment to the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956 repealed section 6 of the Defence (Amdt) Act (No 2)1960. This is a significant alteration to the situation which prevailed before 2005.

The net effect of repealing section 6 of the Defence (Amdt) Act (No 2) 1960 is that, in some circumstances, children born of a child born abroad when his or her father was serving overseas on official duties, will be required to be registered under section 27 of the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956 (as amended), to be entered on the Foreign Birth Register.

The first case coming to the attention of ARCO, which implemented the provisions of the 2005 amendment to the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956 (as amended), occurred in 2018, when two grandchildren, born abroad of an officer serving overseas on official duties, applied for renewal of Irish passports in 2018.

Applications for Foreign Birth Registration can take up to six months to process from the date of receipt of a complete application with all the required supporting documentation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Links to information on Foreign Birth Registration:

<https://www.dfa.ie/passports-citizenship/citizenship/born-abroad/registering-a-foreign-birth/>

<https://www.dfa.ie/about-us/contact-us/contact-foreign-birth-registration-citizenship/>

WAY AHEAD

ARCO remains proactive with Defence Forces Headquarters in endeavouring to redress the adverse implications of the 2005 amendment to the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956 (as amended).

Defence Forces Benevolent Fund

Lt Col John Martin

The origins of the DFBF

The Defence Forces Benevolent Fund (DFBF) is established to provide financial support to veterans of the Defence Forces and it has had a long and worthwhile career to date. Since it was set up in January 1930, it has continuously provided veterans with much needed assistance and support at various stages of their retirement and for a myriad reasons and purposes.

The Philosophy of the Fund

The fund ticks many boxes. In the first instance it provides support directly to veterans. This in itself is reason enough for its existence. At the same time however, the Fund underlines that the military community in Ireland is a family, and that our members do not have to leave that family when they are no longer serving in uniform. In other words the DFBF demonstrates that the Defence Forces values our veterans, not simply for the service that they have given in the past, but for the hugely positive contribution that they make to the nation when they leave the profession of arms. The fund is an effective and important means through which we can care for and support our retired colleagues and their dependents. They have served the Defence Forces and the state with pride and with honour and it is good to know that we are there for them in case of need. The Defence Forces Benevolent Fund is a tangible link that demonstrates the caring attitude we hold towards those veterans of the Defence Forces who have temporarily fallen on hard times. They continue to be our comrades.

How does the Defence Forces Benevolent Fund operate on the ground?

So how does the fund operate on the ground. At the national level the activities of the fund are directed by the executive committee which consists of, inter alia, the honorary treasurers and the honorary secretaries, and representatives from each of the formations. ARCO, ONE and IUNVA also supply a representative on the executive committee. At the local level the business of the Fund is carried out by the formation committees, usually under the direction and guidance of the respective formation EO. It is here that the main business of the fund is done – The formation committees consider requests for assistance and arrange for the disbursement of funds in a timely and appropriate way. All requests for assistance are treated in a strictly confidential and respectful manner. It is our mantra that DF veterans have earned the right to access the Fund through their service and that it is the function of the committees to ensure that funds are disbursed in a responsible and sustainable manner.

It is important to note that retired officers who may require assistance from the Fund may make an application directly to the Honorary Secretary at the following address:

Lt Col John Martin
Defence Forces Benevolent Fund
McKee Barracks
Blackhorse Avenue
Dublin 7
01-8042752
John.martin@defenceforces.ie



All requests for information and for assistance are treated in confidence. Decisions regarding support are made in direct proportion to the needs of the individual veteran at that time. The fact that a veteran has accessed support from the Fund once does NOT preclude their requesting assistance at another time.

The critical importance of the Veterans' Associations.

No mention of the DFBF is complete without mentioning the work done by the veterans' associations. I would like to take the opportunity to recognise the critical and ongoing efforts of the associations in fundraising and in ensuring that the message of the Fund is spread far and wide. IUNVA, ARCO and ONE each have a particular and important part to play in ensuring that vulnerable veterans are aware of the Fund and have the means and confidence to get in touch when required.

The current issues facing the Defence Forces Benevolent Fund.

So what is in the pipeline for the Fund at the moment? The most significant issue which will be of interest to members of ARCO is the process of revising and updating the rules of the Fund. This

is in an effort firstly to make the running of the Fund simpler and more effective. In the second instance however it is to ensure that the Fund is wholly in compliance with charities legislation in Ireland, and that we are in a position to begin reporting to the Charities Regulator, as directed by law, during 2020. We will be engaging professional help in this regard. We have already begun the process of consulting with the veterans' associations, and this will continue as we go through 2020.

In summary

The Defence Forces Benevolent Fund has a proud history of supporting veterans that goes back almost to the formation of the state. I would like to acknowledge all of those people who have supported the fund since its inception, through fundraising, raising awareness and through serving in voluntary capacities as officers and members of our various committees. These dedicated and selfless persons include many members of ARCO, and I would like to extend our thanks to you as an organisation and as individuals. It is essential that we maintain the fund as a sustainable and effective resource that is well governed and responsibly managed, and that is available to our veterans when they most need it. With this in mind I hope that the Fund can rely on ARCO and its members to continue to spread the word, to fundraise and to offer your valuable support as we go into the future.

New Team at the helm in the Department of Defence

ARCO congratulates Mr. Simon Coveney TD on his appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence on 27 June 2020. He previously held the appointment of Minister for Defence from July 11th 2014 to 6 May 2016. ARCO looks forward to renewing its interface with him again, to further advance Veterans' interests, and to champion the goals of the Defence Forces, its personnel & families. Mr. Coveney said that he was "honoured to be appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs and also Minister for Defence" where he has "lots of work to do but optimistic for the future despite the challenges ahead"



First elected to the Dáil in 1998 as one of Fine Gael's youngest TD's, he has held numerous ministerial and shadow ministries throughout the following years.



A keen fan of all competitive sport, he played rugby for Garryowen, Cork Constitution and Crosshaven Rugby Club. In 1997/8 he led the "Sail Chernobyl Project" which involved sailing 30,000 miles around the world for charity.

The Government recently approved the appointment of Mrs Jacqui McCrum to the post of Secretary General of the

Department of Defence with effect from 24th August 2020, on the retirement of Mr. Maurice Quinn. ARCO congratulates Mrs McCrum on her appointment and looks forward to engaging with her in a constructive manner in advancing Veterans' Affairs, including the Veterans' Strategy as submitted by ARCO, ONE and IUNVA.



Prior to her appointment as Secretary General of the Department of Defence, Mrs McCrum was Deputy Secretary in the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. Prior to that she was the Director General and Accounting Officer in the Office of the Ombudsman, Offices of the Information Commissioner and Commissioner for Environmental Information, Standards in Public Office Commission, Referendum Commission and Commission for Public Service Appointments. She also held the position of Deputy Financial Services Ombudsman. The majority of her career was in financial services in London and Dublin.

In accordance with the Top Level Appointments Committee (TLAC) arrangements for Secretaries General, Mrs McCrum's appointment is for a 7-year term.

On the appointment of Mrs McCrum, the Minister for Defence Mr Simon Coveney T.D. stated: "I welcome the appointment of Jacqui as the new Secretary-General of the Department of Defence and indeed the first female Secretary General of the Department. I look forward to working closely with her in addressing key challenges facing the Defence Organisation".



ARCO AGM 2020

The 2020 AGM will be held on Friday 02 October 2020 at 11.30hrs. **In line with current Government and HSE advice on Covid-19, the AGM will take place on line by means of a virtual conference platform.** Please see calling notice included with this Newsletter. Any motions should be sent to Hon Sec by 01 Sept 2020

Commissioning Ceremony 95th Cadet Class An Cliaomh Gaisíochta



Lt Turlough Gallagher is 28 years of age and is from Tattyreach, Co. Tyrone. Prior to commencing his Cadetship, Turlough worked as a medical doctor for the NHS and his skills proved vital to most Cadets during their training. He achieved numerous accolades throughout his Cadetship - he was a member of the Cadet team to win the March and Shoot competition against their counterparts of the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, he was a member of the team that won the An Cosantóir Block race and also a member of the Cadet School Shooting and Gaelic Football teams. Lt Gallagher held the Appointment of Cadet Captain during his cadetship and received the ARCO Sword as Best student of the 95th Cadet Class. On commissioning, he was posted to the 27th Infantry Battalion in Dundalk.

Welcome to ARCO's New Members:

Lt Edward Cassidy	Comdt Greg Burns
Capt Sean Flynn	Comdt Tom Shaw
Capt John Flanagan	Comdt Ian Travers
Lt Col Michael O'Malley	Comdt Michael Moore
Brig Gen Peter O'Halloran	Comdt Larry MacEoin
Brig Gen Philip Brennan	Comdt Colman O'Keefe
Comdt Pdraig O'Suibhne	Capt Maria O'Donoghue
Lt Cdr Terence Ward	Comdt Patrick O'Connor

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.

Brig Gen Pearse Redmond	16 Mar 2020
Comdt John Lyons	24 Mar 2020
Comdt Sean Conlon	24 Mar 2020
Brig Gen Thomas (Tom) Mc Dunphy	05 Apr 2020
Lt Gen James (Jim) Parker	14 Apr 2020
Lt Col Noel Walsh	29 Apr 2020
Col William (Billy) Ringrose	29 Apr 2020
Lt Col Norman Leckey	30 Apr 2020
Lt Col Colm Madigan	02 May 2020
Col Bernard (Barny) Donough	10 May 2020
Comdt Daniel O'Donovan	20 May 2020
Maj Gen J.J. Barry	24 May 2020
Capt Ralph Gregan	31 May 2020
Lt Col Anthony (Tony) Carr	16 June 2020
Capt Niall McGarry	09 July 2020

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Mobile Phone Number

Members of ARCO who have NOT been receiving messages through the ARCO Texting Service should ensure that their current mobile phone number is recorded on our database. Please forward your mobile number to your Regional Representative or to declancarbery@hotmail.com.

For further information, please visit ARCO's Website: <https://iarco.info/> and follow us on LinkedIn under Association of Retired Commissioned Officers, or on Facebook and Twitter, via @ARCOIreland

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 or post to Col Declan Carbery (Retd), 61, The Paddocks, Naas, Co. Kildare.