



ARCO Submission to The Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence on The General Scheme of The Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023

The Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023 is currently going through the pre-legislative process in the Oireachtas. As part of this process the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (JCFAD), met with a wide range of stakeholders (DOD, RACO, PDFORRA, EUROMIL and ICTU) for example. The Committee also met with the External Oversight Body (EOB), currently working on a non-statutory basis.

ARCO, together with the Council of the Bar of Ireland and the Law Society of Ireland were invited to make written submissions to the Committee.

The intention of the Bill is to amend the Defence Acts 1954 – 2020 providing, inter alia, for the establishment of the External Oversight Body of the Defence Forces on a statutory basis and its membership; providing authorisation for the Defence Forces Representative Associations to associate with the ICTU; placing prohibitions on their membership and activities; as well as and making a number of miscellaneous amendments, including protecting the prescribed Irish title of Defence Forces - “Óglaigh na hÉireann”.

The following extracts are an abridged version of ARCO’s submission which was submitted to the Committee on the 05 Mar 2024 and is associated with the Report of the JCFAD as Appx 1.

The full submission with an accompanying covering letter can be viewed on ARCO’s website. <https://arcoireland.com/arcos-submission-to-the-joint-committee-on-foreign-affairs-and-defence/>

GENERAL COMMENTS

ARCO wishes to express its deep concern in respect of the dangerous effects that the Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023 will have on the State’s proper and appropriate exercise of Civil control over its armed forces and in maximising its military capabilities and professionalism.

A military capability is the fusion of a spectrum of components under the command, leadership, and management of the

legally appointed commander. Within this spectrum are the areas of human resource management, education, training, logistics, equipment, organisation, etc.

In ARCO’s view, the Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023, as set out in part, lacks objectivity, and prescribes subjectively with provisions in the crucial area of human resource management. This diminishes the military leadership in maximising capabilities.

Similarly, as the testimony provided by the Defence Forces Representative Associations, ICTU and EUROMIL on 20 Feb 2024, expressing concern over the prohibitions on membership and activities, as part of representation, may render representation for military personnel defunct and have wider industrial relations implications for many other sectors.

The exclusion of the Representative Associations and, apparently, the leadership of the Defence Forces from the elaboration process of drafting the provisions of the Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023, of which they have direct responsibilities and functions should of itself be a cause of considerable concern to the Joint Committee.

ARCO is concerned with Heads 6 and 8 in particular. These two Heads provide for the functions of the External Oversight Body (Head 6) and its membership (Head 8). Both provisions mark one of the most profound policy and policy effect changes since the foundation of the State.

HEAD 6: FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF EXTERNAL OVERSIGHT BODY

ARCO POSITION ON EXTERNAL OVERSIGHT.

ARCO has consistently stated that it welcomes the concept of an Oversight Body. The previous iteration of the External Oversight Body, namely the Independent Monitoring Group (IMG), adopted a collaborative endeavour involving a senior Defence Forces officer, a senior official of the Department of Defence, and the Defence Forces Representative Associations, with an independent Chair. Within the successful and



respected IMG, no one element held dominance over proceedings, deliberations, or outputs. The disbandment of the IMG was a serious policy error.

In comparison with the IMG, ARCO notes the complete removal from the External Oversight Body of professional military knowledge and expertise as well as stakeholder voices through the Representative Associations.

ARCO notes that in, providing for the establishment of an External Oversight Body, the Bill has relied on the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024. This Act provides for the establishment of a Board of An Garda Síochána and the functions of this Board. There is a broad similarity between these entities in respect of providing for external oversight. It is instructive to compare the functions assigned to both bodies and the difference in intent.

- The Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023, whilst recognising the provisions of Section 13 of the Defence Act 1954 which refers to the functions assigned to the Chief of Staff, provides that the External Oversight Body shall oversee, monitor, and advise the Minister on the implementation by the Defence Forces of human resource matters. These matters are included in the prescribed functions assigned by the Minister for Defence to the Chief of Staff and the Deputy Chiefs of Staff, Operations and Support,
 - › Recruitment, induction, training, other than military training exercises – whatever that means - education and performance management including equality matters.
 - › Selection criteria for promotion.
- By comparison the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024 assigns inter alia such functions such as
 - › To oversee and approve the development of corporate strategy.
 - › Promote high standard of corporate governance.
 - › To monitor the implementation of organisational performance.
 - › To ensure that human resource matters (as listed) comply with best practice.

By any measure it is clear that the functions assigned to the External Oversight Body by comparison to those assigned to the Board of An Garda Síochána are more subjectively based rather than objectively based.

In addition, the terms of the proposed Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023 cannot be divorced from the Independent Review Group – Defence Forces (IRG – DF) Report which recommended, inter alia, that of the External Oversight Body **“holding the leadership of the Defence Forces to account for progress on the culture change programme”** and cited by officials of the Department of Defence in their witness testimony to the Joint Committee in their opening statement on 30 Jan 2024. In ARCO’s opinion this intent, albeit stating that it being ‘without prejudice to,’ does not sit well with Section 13 of the Defence Act 1954.

Therefore, ARCO posits that the functions assigned to the External Oversight Body go far beyond ‘oversight.’ They provide for a function in the process and implementation of the programme of change. These should properly remain within the professional competence of the relevant military leadership, namely the Chief of Staff and Deputy Chiefs of Staff Operations and Support, subject of course to policy imprimatur, legislative compliance, and best practice in the Defence Forces, as is provided for in the Board of An Garda Síochána.

These should be deleted from this Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023 and properly embraced by secondary legislation. These proposed provisions are a gross interference and an impediment to the Chief of Staff in his/her primary function of maximising military capability.

With regard to Head 6, sub-para (4), *“referring to promotion to the rank of Brig Gen”* as the rank level encompassed by the provision is in the main for a command level appointment, critical to the delivery of military efficiency and effectiveness, the Chief of Staff must have a statutory role in advising on the selection process and criteria relating to the knowledge, ability, and suitability of the officer for promotion.

With regard to Head 6, sub-para (5), *“referring to the appointment of a civil servant or civilian employee to work directly with the Defence Forces”* as the civilian appointed to work directly with the Defence Forces will report to a military officer, the Chief of Staff or an officer appointed by him/her must have a statutory role in advising on the selection process and criteria relating to the knowledge, ability, and suitability of the civilian for such appointment.

Head 8: Membership of the External Oversight Body

ARCO has previously and repeatedly indicated its concerns on the inclusion of the Secretary General, Department of Defence on the External Oversight Body, and the exclusion of the Chief of Staff. In ARCO’s view, neither should be on this Body if it was to be truly external and independent. ARCO’s position has not changed.

In ARCO’s experience the holder of the appointment of Secretary General as the ex-officio member, will heavily influence the thinking and deliberations of the External Oversight Body. Consequently, in ARCO’s view the Secretary General will effectively control the entire Human Resource functions within the Defence Forces. Recalling that civilians have also been appointed to the Defence Forces as the Head of Strategic Human Resources and to drive Transformation adds to these concerns.

Furthermore, ARCO submits that the Joint Committee should give very careful consideration to another effect that may not be so apparent from the provisions of the Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023. This is to do with the quality, independence and diversity of advice being delivered to the Minister and by extension to the Government and Oireachtas. ARCO notes that from previous testimony given to the Joint Committee that the External Oversight Body sees its line of reporting through the Department of Defence to the Minister. In effect this means that the considered advice of the Oversight Body will go through the filter of the Department of Defence to the Minister, in the first instance without any professional



military input, but also through the lens of an official, namely the Secretary General, with a significant level of influence at two of the levels of oversight.

ARCO submits that when the provisions relating to:

- › the level of subjective oversight,
- › the negative impact on military effectiveness and capabilities,
- › the sidelining of the military leadership, namely the General Staff, from crucial areas of their statutory roles and functions,

are fully considered, they present dangers to the democratic function of Government with the apparent undermining and move from civil control, however subjective it is at present, to one of allowing an unelected official exercise this function. This will, of course, exacerbate the historical dysfunctionality that has long existed in the relationship between the Civil Side of the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces. It will also serve to remove the leadership function from the military leadership of the Defence Forces, reducing it to the status of a subordinate reporting body. This, critically and ominously, is all to be put in place before the introduction of the long overdue legislative provisions that seek to give effect to the recommendations of the Commission on the Defence Forces.

By comparison, the membership of the Board of An Garda Síochána, does not include the Secretary-General of the Department of Justice. It furthermore makes provision that whilst the Garda Commissioner shall not be a member of the Board or a committee of the Board, but may, in accordance with procedures specified by the Board or such a committee, attend meetings of the Board or the committee concerned, and may speak, and give advice, at such meetings. This Act also provides for the Board of An Garda Síochána to advise the Minister on appropriate criteria by which the performance of the Commissioner can be appraised. It does NOT hold the Commissioner to account for his/her performance, as is clearly the case recommended by the IRG-DF and clearly codified in the Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023.

ARCO posits that, notwithstanding the recommendations in the IRG-DF Report on the composition of the External Oversight Body, that the Secretary General of the Department of Defence should NOT be a member. It would then be truly external, independent, and transparent.

RESPECT is at the heart of the matters at issue here, respect for the professional competence and integrity of the leadership of the Defence Forces, and such respect needs to emanate from Government in the first instance. The professional competence of the Garda Commissioner to lead An Garda Síochána is clearly recognised in the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024, whereas, in the case of the Chief of Staff it is denied and undermined by the provisions of the Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023.

SUMMARY

ARCO submits to the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence that the introduction of the two Heads relating to the External Oversight Body in the Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023, at this time, will have the effect to further weaken the position of the Office of the Chief of Staff in the exercise of his/her functions, duties, and responsibilities as well as in delivering military advice and accountability to Government. It will allow a potentially dangerous transfer of diverse influence and advice, to a singular unelected civil servant. Your consideration of Heads 6 and 8 of the Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023 must include the intent and effects of the Bill from the perspective of whether it strengthens or weakens the State's ability to protect and defend its citizens. In ARCO's view these proposed provisions will further weaken our national defence and the State's capability and in meeting its international obligations. One cannot but help wondering if there has been a paradigm shift where the cultural issues highlighted in the Independent Review Group Report are now seen as being the cause of the demise and near collapse of the Defence Forces and NOT the decades of neglect and underinvestment by successive governments, together with an overly subjective civil control of all matters affecting DF strategic development, military capabilities, readiness, and viability.

DATE	UPCOMING EVENTS 2024
28 June 2024	ARCO Lunch, Collins Bks., Cork
14 July 2024	National Day of Commemoration. Royal Hospital Kilmainham, at 13.30hrs
29 Sept 2024	DF Veterans Day, McKee Bks., Dublin
11 Oct 2024	ARCO AGM, Cathal Brugha Bks., Dublin at 11.30hrs
19 Oct 2024	Annual Gala Concert, National Concert Hall, Dublin at 20.00 hrs
09 Nov 2024	Niamba Ambush Anniversary Mass, Cathal Brugha Bks., at 11.00hrs





Visit to Zambia 2023

The Military College and its contribution to the Zambian Army.

*Comdt Rory de Bruir (Retd)
Barrister at Law, 42nd Cadet Class*

Col Ray Quinn (Retd), Lt Col Paul Allen (Retd) and Comdt Rory deBruir (Retd) were members of the 42nd Cadet Class and were joined, during their training by the 1st Zambian Cadet class in 1967. Ray and Paul had visited Lt Gen Solomon Mumbi (a member of that 1st Zambian Class and former Commander of the Zambian Army from 1997 to 1999). Ray, Paul and Rory had planned to visit Zambia, as guests of Lt Gen Mumbi in 2020, but were unable to travel due to Covid restrictions. They remained in contact and rearranged their visit for 2023. Rory submitted the following report of their visit.



Comdt de Bruir, Lt Gen Mumbi, Lt. Gen Alibuzwi, Col Quinn, Lt Col Allen

The Irish Ambassador to Zambia became aware of our planned visit and I had a phone call with Her Excellency Bronagh Carr, who was very interested in details of the Zambian Irish military connection. I outlined the history of Zambian cadets coming for training to Ireland and the fact that I had subsequently trained the 3rd and 4th Zambian Cadet Classes as a Class Officer. She asked if I could provide more details and I initiated research into the matter, and contacted the Commandant of the Military College, the Cadet School and was also referred to Military Archives.

In conducting research in Military Archives, I was provided with material for the period 1960 to 1970 and therein viewed letters, which had been forwarded by President Kaunda to Mr. Jack Lynch when he was Minister for Industry and Commerce. These letters requested that Irish officers might consider joining the Zambian police force and/or army. Several officers retired from the Defence Forces and joined the new Zambian Army and Police following Zambian Independence. A request was subsequently made to Mr. Lynch, when Taoiseach, that Zambian Officer Cadets would be trained in Ireland. This led to the first Zambian Cadet Class coming to Ireland in 1967 and joining the 42nd Cadet Class in training. They were commissioned in 1969 and thereafter the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Zambian Cadet Classes passed through the Military College in the 1970s.

A further Zambian Cadet Class, namely the 5th Class, attended the Military College as members of the 72nd Cadet Class. Included among these Zambian cadets was the son of Lt Gen Solomon Mumbi, Erwin Mumbi who is now a Colonel. Thus, there is now this unique aspect whereby we have had two generations of Zambian Officers who have been trained in the Irish Military College. In all, 43 Zambian Officer Cadets graduated from the Military College. It is understood that Zambian Cadets attended other Military Colleges, as individual cadets, rather than in sufficient numbers to form complete classes, which is a reflection of the regard accorded to The Military College, Ireland.

The records in Military Archives for the period 1960 to 1970 also show that Zambian Civil Servants spent time with the Department of Defence for training purposes. The Records from 1970 onwards are not yet released for public viewing.

Zambian Officers also attended the Infantry School of the Military College as students on the course that is now entitled the Junior Command & Staff Course. Zambian Officers have also attended the United Nations Training School, Military College.

It also transpires that prior to Zambian Independence in 1964, approaches had also been made to the Irish Government by a Rev. Thompson, an Irish Jesuit in Zambia, in relation to assistance in the training of the future Zambian Army. Reference was made to Mr. James Skinner who was a friend of the future President Kaunda and a member of the Pro-Independence Party. This gentleman was then to become a separate topic of interest for me on the visit to Zambia. Mr. James Skinner was called to the Bar of Ireland in 1949. He had then gone to Northern Rhodesia to practice law. He became involved in the Independence movement and was involved in seeking support from Ireland in the training of civil servants and future army personnel.



*Col Ray Quinn and Lt Gen Alibuzwi,
Army Commander*

Mr. Skinner had been appointed to the Ministry of Justice under President Kaunda, on Independence, and then subsequently became the first Chief Justice of an independent Zambia.

We flew to Zambia on the 23 May 2023 and were met at the airport by Lt Gen Solomon Mumbi and several officers from the

Zambian Army PR Department. Our visit involved a very warm welcome from the Zambian Army and in particular the Army Commander Lt Gen Alibuzwi whom we were brought to meet at Arakan Barracks, Army Headquarters, Lusaka on the afternoon of the 24th of May.

In Lusaka, we visited a cemetery where cousins of Lt Col Allen are buried. These were Jesuit missionaries one of whom, Michael Kelly had become Vice Chancellor of the University of Zambia in Lusaka, where a lecture hall has been named in his honour. We were brought to meet the present Vice Chancellor of the University and shared in the pride and honour for Paul, when briefed on the highly significant role played by his relation in Third Level education in Zambia.



On the evening of the 30th of May, we were invited to dinner with the Irish Ambassador, Her Excellency Bronagh Carr, and presented her with an album of photographs of the Zambian Cadets who had passed through the Military College.

Her Excellency expressed great interest in the history of the Zambian - Irish Army involvement and was very proud of the Defence Forces contribution to the education of Zambian Officer cadets. She expressed a hope of seeing further strong ties develop between Zambia and Ireland, especially in the context of training Zambian officers.

Indeed, on our first evening at Gen. Mumbi's home he had invited a few retired generals, one of whom had attended the UN School, Military College, Curragh. Another of the Generals had attended the Royal Military College at Sandhurst and had visited Ireland as a tourist during his Cadetship.

A wonderful evening was held at the embassy and by further coincidence it transpired that the Third Secretary, Andrea Wickham Maloney, was a cousin of Col Quinn's late wife, Joyce Wickham.



Lt Col Allen, Comdt.de Bruir, Lt Gen Mumbi, Her Excellency Bronagh Carr, Col Quinn

During our various visits we gained the impression that we afforded the Irish Embassy in Lusaka the opportunity to highlight the Irish Defence Forces involvement in the training of the Zambian Officer Cadets following Independence and thereafter. The Army Commander and other Senior Zambian Officers had also referenced this sentiment or desire.

The following day we were invited as guests of the Commandant of the Zambia Command and Staff College. There we were presented to a hundred and twenty Staff College students of Captain, Major, and Lieutenant Colonel rank, a considerable number of the said officers were from other countries in Africa.

It was noted and mentioned by Lt Gen Mumbi that Col Ray Quinn had lectured as a visitor with Col Oliver McDonald to the Staff College in 1997. Subsequently Lt Col Pat Muldoon joined the lecturing staff of the Staff College for a year.

It was remarked upon at the Staff College that there was an interest in fostering and restoring the link between the Irish Defence Forces and the Staff College. Indeed, when standing before one hundred and twenty African officers as guests, it became readily apparent how beneficial it would be, from an Irish viewpoint, both for military comradeship and foreign relations to have Irish officers on staff lecturing to officers of various African countries.

We speak with pride about our missionaries, teachers, doctors, nurses and NGOs who gave selflessly of their time on the missions in Africa. We may have overlooked, or failed to highlight, the important contribution our Military College has made to the Officer Corps of Zambia.

It was a common theme running through our meetings with the various army personnel from Army Commander through College Commandant, Staff College, that further Irish involvement would be welcomed.

As a country currently discussing its neutrality, Irish Defence Force Officers would, we believe, be ideal prospective lecturers, with a wide experience of UN Service, English speaking and neutral, who are best equipped to contribute and participate in an involvement with the Zambian Army Staff College, either as visiting lecturers or on secondment. An Irish Officer following in the footsteps of Lt Col Pat Muldoon would also be presented as a lecturer to Officers of many African Countries attending the Zambia Staff College and could project a very positive image of Ireland to a receptive audience of future military leaders, diplomats, and prospective businesspersons.

Following our visit to the Staff College, I had a meeting with the Deputy Chief Justice of Zambia, Justice Michael Musonda SC. having separately met with the Solicitor General Mr. Marshal Muchende SC and Mr. Mulilo Kabesha SC the Attorney General of Zambia. This was a very pleasant meeting and we spoke of the role of Mr. James Skinner, an Irishman, in the Independence Movement and as first Chief Justice of Zambia.

On our final evening in Lusaka, we were guests of Army Commander Lt Gen Alibuzwi and Lt Gen Solomon Mumbi at Arakan Barracks, Army Headquarters.

There were various officers of the Zambian Army present, in particular officers of the 5th Zambian Cadet Class/ 72nd Irish Cadet Class. One of the officers, a Colonel, had also attended the UN School, Military College. I had the honour of presenting the officers of the 5th Zambia Cadet Class with medallions of the Cadet School. I was particularly honoured to present Lt Gen Solomon Mumbi and Col Erwin Mumbi with the Cadet School Medallions.



Comdt Rory de Bruir and Lt Gen Solomon Mumbi



Lt. Gen. Mumbi greeting members of the 5th Zambian Cadet Class who were part of 72nd Cadet Class

Lt Gen Alibuzwi and Lt Gen Mumbi in their speeches highlighted the proud history of the connection between the Irish Military College and the Zambian Army. They spoke of the friendship accorded to the forty Zambian officers who attended and graduated from The Cadet School, Military College and expressed the strong desire to renew and foster that friendship into the future.

As a retired army officer, I was very honoured to be a visitor to Zambia as a guest of Lt Gen Mumbi and to have been received in such a welcoming fashion by the Zambian army. As a Barrister I was also deeply honoured to meet the Solicitor General, the Attorney General and the Deputy Chief Justice who all highlighted the very important role played by Mr. James Skinner, Barrister of Kings Inns and Chief Justice of Zambia.

Given that more than fifty years have elapsed since the 1st Zambian Cadet Class entered the Military College, memories can fade, and a unique aspect of our military history could have been forgotten.

23 May 2024 - Glen of Imaal marks 125 years in the firing line

By Liam Kenny, Naas Local History Group

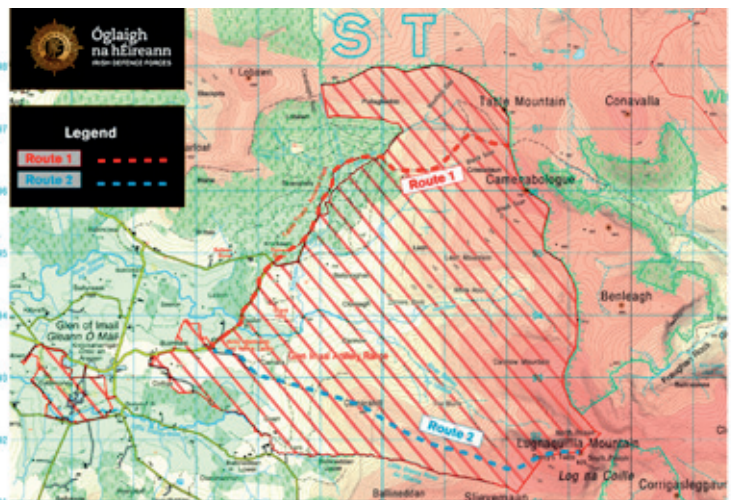
"The peace of the historic Glen of Imaal was much disturbed by the thundering of artillery" ... so ran the opening line from a report in a local newspaper 125 years ago which described the first salvos to be unleashed in the west Wicklow firing range. A century and a quarter later Imaal remains the primary training ground for the Defence Forces.

For generations of gunners and, indeed, most arms of the military the Glen has been a familiar environment with its place names such as Camara, Cannow and Coolmooney imprinted in the memory of all who have passed a summer camp or participated in United Nations pre-deployment exercise within the embrace of its granite crags.

How did this expansive corner of the Garden County become so associated with the arts of warfare? Its military origins date from the closing decades of the 19th century when armies were making the transition from short-range canons to the longer-range rifled barrels made possible by the precision engineering of the industrial revolution.

Such potent weapons demanded ranges with a safety margin greater than could be found on the Curragh plains of Kildare and, in a country which had a dispersed rural population, such clear expanses were difficult to come by. From the 1880s the Royal Artillery decamped to the distant location of Glenbeigh on the west Kerry coastline to complete its range practices - much to the consternation of the local cockle-pickers. However the sandy Glenbeigh peninsula was unsatisfactory as its flat terrain meant that the gunners were not challenged in finding the firing solution to hit the target.

As one commentator noted the artillery officers knew the elevation needed for the guns before they began their fortnight's practice. And there was further pressure to vacate when the dangers to the coastal population were raised in the House of Commons.



Faced with these limitations some artillery officers on their own initiative surveyed Ireland for suitable gunnery terrain. The specification was daunting: a valley five or six miles long, absolutely clear of houses, and into which far-ranging projectiles might be fired with impunity.

Scrutiny of the Ordnance maps pointed in the direction of Co Wicklow which had the advantage of being close to the military concentrations at the Curragh and Dublin. Initially, Aghavannagh on the east side of Lugnaquilla seemed promising and permission was secured from Earl Fitzwilliam and Charles Stuart Parnell, MP and landowner, to position two field pieces for experimental firing up the Owl river valley in the years 1888-89. The results were satisfactory in terms of the distance achievable for the trajectory of shells but the gunners' room for manoeuvre was limited because of the narrow profile of the valley. This led the artillery surveyors to look over the mountain at the horseshoe shaped Glen of Imaal with Lugnaquilla providing the butt for



on the western end of the valley. However the War Department's representatives had not reckoned with the negotiating skills of the Glen dwellers.

According to a report in the Kildare Observer they faced opposition from "landlords, tenants, priests and parsons who joined in strong protest against the occupation of the 'happy valley' by the artillery" Such defiance was nothing new in the Glen with columnists pointing out how an earlier generation of Imaal rebels had defied the redcoats in 1798.

Rebuffed in west Wicklow, the military surveyors looked farther north in the county and for a time had plans to add artillery to the training facilities of the new rifle range above Manor Kilbride. However, when the trajectories were calculated it was found that the shells would fly over the ridge line of Seefin and impact a hunting lodge belonging to a Mrs Cobb who owned heathland prized for its grouse shooting sport.

The army authorities were obliged to return to the Glen of Imaal but this time they were armed with the threat of compulsory powers. After further tense negotiations and an expenditure of the then huge sum of £14,000 from the Treasury, the tenants' interest was purchased across fourteen townlands from the Glen floor and up the steep slopes of its embracing crescent of mountains. The compensatory offering did not stop at money – the War Department also provided what were described as "tin houses with nice boarded floors" as an alternative for those whose dwellings were in the firing line. The deal, twelve years in the making, was not without its critics from across the Irish Sea with a Daily Express columnist opining that the Glen tenants should be grateful for what they had been offered noting that "he who has lived all his life, on a clay floor, now gets a nice zinc and wood house, with a boarded floor, put up just outside the line of fire."

Such condescension aside, the way was now clear for the artillery arm to open fire and the Kildare Observer newspaper reported that there was excitement in the Baltinglass area when the first salvo was unleashed on the 23 May 1899 by a battery of the Royal Horse Artillery. Perhaps appropriately, the name of the officer in charge was a Major Guinness.

Identity Cards – Retired Commissioned Officers (PDF)



As a result of a number of requests from retired officers for information in relation to access to identity cards, I am including the following update on contact details in relation to the information which appeared in previous issues of the ARCO Newsletter - Issue No. 26 (2014) and Issue No. 40 (2021). (Editor)

The official Defence Force Identity Card is a very important document for all retired officers. As an official form of identification there is a requirement for these Defence Forces Identity Cards to be kept up to date and this is the personal responsibility of each retired officer.

Defence Force General Routine Order (GRO) 01/2012 provides the relevant information on

Identity Cards and it contains a provision for official Defence Forces Identity Cards to be available to retired Commissioned Officers of the Permanent Defence Force. The current arrangement for the issue of Defence Forces Identity Cards to retired officers is a matter for Records and Data Management Sections. These offices are located in Collins Barracks (Cork), Cathal Brugha Barracks (Dublin), Custume Barracks (Athlone), DFTC (Curragh Camp), AC HQ (Baldonnel) and NS HQ (Haulbowline).

To overcome any possibility of major delays arising from data access and/or other technical problems, retired officers wishing to get an ID card, or renew their Defence Forces Identity Cards, should make prior contact with the relevant Records and Data Management Section and arrange an appointment for their ID Card to be processed.

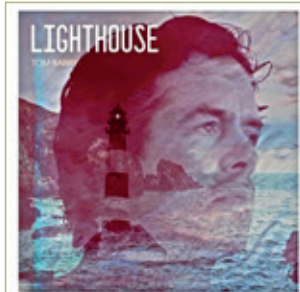
RECORDS & DATA MANAGEMENT SECTION - CONTACT INFORMATION

LOCATION	CONTACT PERSON	SECTION	PHONE
Collins Barracks, Cork	Sgt Sean O'Driscoll	Records & Data Management Section	(021) 4514143
Cathal Brugha Bks., Dublin	Sgt Jonathan Kennedy	Records & Data Management Section	(01) 8046314
Custume Barracks, Athlone	Cpl Mandy Ganly Sgt Jenny Prendergast	Records & Data Management Section	(01) 8041146 (01) 8041375
DFTC, Curragh Camp	Pte Dion Whelan-Moore	Records & Data Management Section	(045) 445036 (045) 445040
Air Corps HQ, Baldonnel	Cpl Terry Murray	Records & Data Management Section	(01) 4037826
Naval Service HQ, Haulbowline	PO Gearoid Hooley	Officers Records, Personnel Management Section	(021) 4864723



6th Inf Bn

Retired Officers' Association



The 6th Inf Bn Association organised a concert by Comdt Tom Barry (Retd) in the Officers Mess, Custume Bks., Athlone on 22 March 2024. Comdt. Fergal Joyce, 6 Inf Bn (on the right) is pictured making a presentation to Comdt Tom Barry, Retd in Custume Bks Officers Mess. Tom (ex-6 Bn and Engrs) gave a wonderful concert in the Mess and the large attendance enjoyed a splendid evening's entertainment.

Tom is now a Galway based singer songwriter. Tom served in the Defence Forces from 1994 until 2016, during which time he served in Custume Bks with the 6 Inf Bn and 2 Eng Gp. The first chapter of his career was in the Inf Corps, before gaining an engineering degree and moving to the Eng Corps. He served overseas in UNMIL, ISAF, KFOR X 2 and the 1st Nordic Battle Gp. Tom always had a strong interest in music, and regularly entertained those in Custume Bks with his guitar or piano playing to accompany his wide repertoire of songs.

Since leaving the DF Tom has continued to pursue this passion and in 2022 launched his debut Album 'Lighthouse'. It was recorded in Lettercollum studios in Timoleague, West Cork and features Luka Bloom, Jimmy Higgins (The Stunning), Tara Howley (Riverdance), Jon O'Connell (The Walls), Conor Byrne and Adam Shapiro (Fiddle Case).

His album 'Lighthouse' is a collection of 10 original tracks and one cover of the iconic folk song 'Little Musgrave', made famous by Christy Moore and Planxty.

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 (now known as X), 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, Declan Carbery at declancarbery@hotmail.com

Welcome to ARCO's New Members

Comdt Cillian MacDomhnaill	Col Brian Reade
Comdt Conor Furey	Comdt Robert Moriarty
Lt Col Laurence Devaney	Col Bernard Markey
Brig Gen Anthony Cudmore	Lt Col Dan Harvey
Col Denis Harrington	Capt Cathal Sweeney
Comdt Chris Kiernan	Lt Col Walter Hunt
Lt Col Paul Whelan	Comdt Valerie Ryall
Comdt Emmet Gardner	Capt Gearóid Brennan
Maj Gen Maureen O'Brien	Lt Col Raymond Lane
Comdt Eoghan McDermott	Lt Patrick Corr
Brig Gen Gerard Buckley	Comdt Larry Bracken

Deceased Officers

Ar dheis De go raibh A n-Anamacha

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

Capt Pdraig O'Carroll (Ó'Cearbhaill)	23 Dec '22
Capt Thomas (Tom) McDonald	09 Mar '23
Comdt Patrick (Paddy) Boyle	14 Nov '23
Capt Éamonn Draper	27 Dec '23
Col Francis (Frank) Blake	16 Jan '24
Comdt Aidan O'Reilly	27 Jan '24
Lt Col Charles (Charlie) Cunningham	06 Feb '24
Capt Donal Egan	29 Feb '24
Col Seán Quilty	03 Mar '24
Lt Cdr Aedh McGinn	09 Mar '24
Capt J.C. (Jerry) Healy	16 Mar '24
Comdt Derek Gaynor	17 Mar '24
Lt Cdr Martin Clifford	23 Apr '24
Fr Willie Walsh	28 Apr '24
Comdt Patrick (Paddy) Trears	28 Apr '24
Lt Conal Sheeran	30 Apr '24
Lt Col Aidan Martin	30 Apr '24
Lt Col Kenneth (Ken) Kelly	08 May '24
Capt Pat (K.P.) Griffin	26 May '24
Col Francis (Frank) Fleming	28 May '24
Capt Martin Reidy	06 Jun '24
Lt Col John Hughes	21 Jun '24

Important Notice: Texting Service Mobile Phone Number

ARCO's Texting Service is part of our aim at improving communications with our members. Thanks to all members who responded to this notice in previous Newsletters. Your details have been updated on our database, so you should now be receiving messages through the Texting Service. Any Members of ARCO who are still **NOT** 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