

# THE ARTILLERY CLUB TAKE POST - NEWSLETTER 4/2016



# **INTRODUCTION**

Newsletter 3/2016 promulgated on 08 September, consisted of sections covering Governance, Activities, the Artillery Corps and Looking into the Past. The Newsletter was very well received, with favourable responses on the photographs from the collection of Brigadier-General Tom McDunphy (Retd).

Since the publication of Newsletter 3/2016, through the medium of emails, members were provided specific details regarding upcoming activities such as the Field Trip to Granada and Malaga, Colonel Conor Fitzsimon's "Last Round" and the Units' Commemoration Mass.

Particular issues within this Newsletter include Activity Reports, Planned Activities, and finally News from the Regiments.

Looking into the Past, consists of a selection of photographs kindly provided from the collection of Colonel Dave Betson (Retd).

Photographs are credited to the Defence Forces Press Office, Michael McDonnell (ONET) and Club Membership. The photograph on the front page of this Newsletter is of that of Colonel Conor Fitzsimons prior to firing his Last Round in the Glen on 08 November, is courtesy of a True Blue supporter of the Dubs.



The Club's final activity for 2016 is the Annual General Meeting, followed by St Barbara's Day Lunch, taking place on Wednesday, 30 November in Collins Barracks Cork, with the kind permission of GOC 1 Brigade.

The Acting School Commandant and Regimental Commanders are requested to circulate this Newsletter to all PDF and AR Artillery officers under their command, and are also, along with the Club's membership, encouraged to provide information for subsequent Newsletters.

Likewise, serving and retired personnel are encouraged to provide information, news and photographs, for publication in the Club's Newsletters.

# **GOVERNANCE**

# **Focus**

The Artillery Club's current focus remains on: executing appropriate activities, enhancing its Website, extending its Membership base and participating in appropriate ceremonial and commemorative events.

#### **Committee Outputs - 2016**

Since the 2015 AGM, the Committee convened on five occasions: on 28 January in McKee Barracks, on 25 February in Ceannt Barracks, on 28 April in Collins Barracks Dublin and on 30 June and 29 September in McKee Barracks. The Committee will reconvene on Wednesday, 30 November in Collins Barracks Cork, for a pre-AGM meeting. The first meeting in 2017 is scheduled for Thursday, 26 January 2017.

To-date, the Committee has populated the 2016 diary of events, conducted appropriate planning for the various activities, and successfully executed the visit to the Artillery School and Curragh Museum on 25 February, visit to Collins Barracks Dublin on 28 April, a Field Trip to Fort Dunree on 25/26 May, a visit to the Glen on 29 June, the Annual Golf Outing on 26 August in Blarney, Field Trip to Granada and Malaga on 02/06 October, Colonel Conor Fitzsimon's "Last Round" on 08 November and the Wreath Laying and Units' Annual Mass on 12 November. In addition, the Club was represented at appropriate national and military commemorations.

Currently, the Committee is finalising and preparing for the 2016 Annual General Meeting in Collins Barracks Cork and examining possible Club activities for 2017.

# **Communications**

The circulation of Newsletters, Activity Information, Calling Notices and Death Notices is primarily by means of email. Since the last Newsletter, the Club's Email Contact List has increased from 185 to 188 far exceeding the Membership strength of 147. Currently, 17 members are receiving Club information by means of normal post.



# **Membership**

Membership of the Artillery Club is open to all serving and retired commissioned Artillery officers of the Permanent Defence Force, An Fórsa Cosanta Áitiúil and the Army Reserve.

The current membership is 147, compared with 129 in October 2015, and 96 in October 2014 – an increase of 51 members in three years.

The preferred option of paying Membership Subscription (€10) is by Standing Order. The Committee is grateful to the 84 members who are currently paying their subscriptions by Standing Order.

Potential members are requested to contact the Membership Secretary Colonel McDermott (Retd), Woodenbridge, Ballybrittas, Co Laois, or email: seamus.mcdermott@gmail.com.

# **Annual Audit**

The Club's financial records for period ended 31 October have been provided to the Auditor and will be distributed in the context of the 2016 Annual General Meeting, taking place on Wednesday 30 November in Collins Barracks Cork.

Membership Subscriptions (€10) for the current year were due on 01 November.

# **Web Site**

The Club's Website was formally launched at the AGM on 04 December 2015. Its status remains at the "under construction" phase. The website is accessible through www.artilleryclub.ie

# Perpetual Trophy - Comdt Dave Brown (Retd) RIP

Regretfully in July, the Committee advised of the unexpected death of our esteemed colleague Comdt Dave Brown (Retd).

Having received approval from Mrs Mary Brown, Col S. McDermott (Retd) assisted by Lt Col E. Fogarty (Retd), and in consultation with the Artillery School, is advancing the President's proposal that the Club will sponsor a Perpetual Trophy in the memory of Comdt Dave Brown (Retd) RIP which will be awarded to the first placed student on the Artillery School's Regimental Survey Courses. The next survey course is scheduled for 2017.

A native of Dublin, Commandant Dave Brown enlisted as a gunner in the 2 Field Artillery Regiment and was awarded a Cadetship in Óglaigh na hÉireann. Graduating as a member of the 51 Cadet Class, he was commissioned in 1975 and appointed to the 4 Field Artillery Regiment. Following his Artillery Young Officers' Course, Dave was posted to the Artillery School, where he was renowned for his technical and tactical knowledge. He was first in the Defence Forces to fire the Milan Anti-Tank Missile in Glen Imaal. As a Gunner Officer,



Commandant Dave Brown also served in the Depot Artillery, 3 Battery, 6 Field Artillery Regiment (FCA) and 1 Air Defence Regiment.

Serving his country in the cause of peace, Commandant Dave Brown's overseas tours of duty included UNIFIL in Lebanon, UNTAC in Cambodia and MINORSO in Western Sahara. He also served as a Staff Officer in Defence Forces Headquarters and HQ Curragh Command.

Commandant Dave Brown was an active and highly respected member of the Artillery Club, participated in the 2015 Field Trip to the Spanish Artillery School and intended to take part in the 2016 Field Trip to Granada and Malaga.

A Family Man, Soldier, Peacekeeper and Instructor of Gunnery, may Commandant Dave Brown Rest in Peace.

# Magee Barracks - Restoration and Relocation of Main Gate

The Artillery Club is actively supporting Regimental Sergeant-Major John Morris' notable initiative, in conjunction with like minded individuals, of preserving, restoring and relocating the gates of the former Magee Barracks, Kildare which garrisoned numerous Corps units over the years and, in particular, The Depot and School, The Artillery School.

The Club's Committee remains proactive in advancing this commendable project within its competencies and will brief the Club's membership as appropriate.



Magee Barracks was sold as a result of an auction in February 2016 at a reported price in the region of €8.2 million for the 51.4 acre site.

# **Committee's Short Term Priorities**

The Club's short term priorities are: 2016 Annual General Meeting, Perpetual Trophy, Main Gate Magee Barracks, Website, Membership (PDF and AR), 2017 Activity Programme, and interface with other Corps Clubs.

# **ACTIVITIES**

# **Diary of Events**





The Club's activities are of an Artillery nature, hopefully appealing to a large number of serving and retired members. Members are encouraged to offer recommendations for Club activities for 2017. The final version of the 2016 Diary of Events is attached as Annex A.

The Club acknowledges the support provided by the Director of Artillery, the Artillery School, Curragh Museum, DFHQ Officers' Mess, Ceannt Officers' Mess, the National Museum of Ireland – Collins Barracks, Officer Commanding Finner Camp, the Board of Directors Fort Dunree, the School Commandant, Artillery School and the Manager of the Blarney Hotel and Golf Resort, Officer Commanding Glen Imaal, GOC MADOC for the 2016 events.

Reports on Club's activities executed since the last Newsletter (3/2016) and information on future activities are outlined below.

# Annual Veterans' Day - 10 September



McKee Barracks Dublin was the location of the Defence Forces Annual Veterans' Day which took place on Saturday, 10 September and was well attended by members of the Club. The event incorporated a Wreath Laying Ceremony, Veterans' March Past and an extensive equipment display. 2 Artillery Regiment fired the Minute Gun. Club members availed of the hospitality of the Officers' Mess.

# <u>Inaugural Artillery Club's Decades' Reunion 14 September – Coordinator: Colonel Mick Smyth</u>





Having 18 participating, this inaugural event exceeded all expectations. With the exception of 1986 and 1996, all years from 1946 (Brig Gen Tom McDunphy Retd) through 2016 were represented. Apologies were received from all officers not in attendance.





The Club was formally received in the Cadets' Mess by the Mess President Dálta Diarmuid O'Céidigh, who was an excellent host for a most accommodating visit to his Mess, bringing back nostalgic memories to all. Club members took the opportunity of reviewing their respective class photograph albums, visited Cadets' accommodation and viewed the personal kit issued to Cadets.





Thereafter, attendees moved to Pearse Hall, where they received a comprehensive brief from Lieutenant-Colonel Byrne DSM - Commandant The Cadet School, on the prevailing issues relating to cadetship training and education.

The College Commandant Colonel Dave Dignam and Lieutenant-Colonel Ian Byrne DSM were the Club's guests at the lunch. The Club sponsored those Gunner Officers commissioned in 2016.





Once a Gunner - Always a Gunner





The Reunion was the ideal opportunity of inducting recently commissioned Gunner Officers into the extended Artillery family. The event provided a significant catalyst for extending the Club's membership.

We remain grateful to Lieutenant-Colonel Tom O'Callaghan who supported the concept from the start and to his successor Lieutenant-Colonel Ian Byrne DSM for making available the resources of the Cadet School throughout. Pending the approval of the appropriate authorities, it is envisaged that the 2017 Reunion will be held in The Military College on Wednesday, 13 September.

# 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Glen Imall Training Accident – 16 September 2016

On 16 September 1941, fifteen personnel drawn from 12 pdr Battery, 1 Anti-Aircraft Battalion, (three Lieutenants, one Battery-Sergeant, two Sergeants, five Corporals and four Gunners), along with a Lieutenant Engineer Instructor, were accidentally killed when a training mine exploded. May they Rest in Peace.

In 1958, a stained glass window was dedicated in the Church of the Most Holy Rosary, McKee Barracks, and in 1986, the Minister for Environment Mr John Boland T.D. unveiled a Monument at Seskin Bridge, honouring and commemorating the sixteen Defence Forces personnel who died on 16 September, 1941.

The 1941 accident remains the single tragedy with the greatest casualties in the history of Óglaigh na Éireann.

As previously advised, the Committee explored appropriate avenues to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of this tragic accident, including a submission to HQ Defence Forces Training Centre.





Brigadier-General Joe Mulligan, GOC Defence Forces Training Centre kindly invited members of the Artillery Club to attend a commemoration ceremony at the monument at Seskin Bridge on Thursday 16 September at 1200hrs. 2 Artillery Regiment provided the Honour Guard and the Minute Gun.





Once a Gunner - Always a Gunner



# <u>Field Trip – Granada and Malaga – 02 to 06 October – Coordinator: Commandant</u> Michael Flood (Retd)

The Club's 2016 overseas Field Trip took place from Sunday, 02 October through Thursday, 06 October visiting Granada and Malaga.





During the planning stage, and throughout the time we spent in Granada, the Spanish Training and Doctrine Command (MADOC) provided an effective liaison framework with the Artillery Club, which greatly assisted our endeavours. Of particular significance was the advice, guidance and support we received from Major Fernando Fuentesal from our arrival on 02 October through to our departure on 5 October for Malaga.

Under the auspices of MADOC, the Group experienced Granada's impressive architectural and religious heritage by visiting the palace and fortress complex of Alhambra, the notable Granada Cathedral and the impressive Royal Chapel. The Group also benefitted from transport provided by MADOC.





The Artillery Club was honoured to be accorded a formal reception in MADOC Headquarters at Calle San Matias, Granada. The Group was received by the Secretary-General's (Chief MADOC) representative: Major-General Arturo Garcia-Vaquero Pradal. An Artillery Officer, since 2013, he is in charge of the Directorate of Investigation Doctrine Structures and Materiel, Doctrine Command, Army.

Major-General García-Vaquero Pradal presented a copy of Hugo O'Donnell's all embracing publication "*The Irish Presence in the Spanish Military – 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*" to all attendees.





The Club's President presented an engraved Dublin Crystal Bowl to MADOC.





Major Fernando Fuentesal's wide-ranging brief on MADOC's impressive outputs supporting the Spanish Armed Forces, provided the Group with a comprehensive understanding of the extensive activities of MADOC – "*Leading our Army to Victory*". This was followed by refreshments.

During lunch in the Burlaero Restaurant, the President presented Major Fuentesal with the Club's plaque and Club tie.

The Club secured a special overnight rate at the NH-Hesperia Hotel in Granada. An elegant old building with an unbeatable location, right in the historic heart of Granada, the hotel was only a short walk to the city's most popular tourist spots.





On Wednesday 05 October, the Group relocated to Malaga for one overnight availing of special rates at the Hotel MS Maestranaza. MS Maestranaza Málaga is in central Málaga, just 100 metres from Malagueta Beach. The hotel is set next to the bullring and the Alameda Gardens. Members of the Group visited the Alcazaba and Gibralfaro Castle.

The Group's Hail and Farewell followed an enjoyable meal in El Pimpi Restaurant. The Committee remains grateful to Commandant Michael Flood (Retd) for the planning, coordination and execution of this memorable and most enjoyable Field Trip – next year Lisbon.



# ARCO's Wreath Laying Ceremony, Garden of Remembrance, 7 October





The Association of Retired Commissioned Officers (ARCO) conducted a formal and solemn Wreath Laying Ceremony in the Garden of Remembrance, on Friday, 7 October. The purpose of the ceremony was to remember, honour and commemorate the participants in the 1916 Easter Rising. The ceremony also recalled the involvement of members of the 39 and 40 Cadet Classes, in the commemorations marking the 50th Anniversary of the Easter Rising in 1966.

In the context of ARCO's ceremony, Colonel Bill Nott (Retd) advised that on the "morning of the of the 50th Anniversary of the 1916 Rising, 2 Field Artillery Regiment, under a Captain P. Ghent and a Lieutenant B. Nott fired a 21 gun salute from the cricket pitch of Trinity College (and broke no windows!)."

Colonel Dave Betson (Retd) and Lieutenant-Colonel Nick O' Connor (Retd) and Lieutenant Tony Power (Retd) were members of the 39 Cadet Class. (See photos in "Looking into the Past Section".) Members of the 40 Cadet Class included Colonel Enda Breslin (Retd), Lieutenant-Colonel Cormac Lalor (Retd), Lieutenant-Colonel Ray Twomey (Retd), Lieutenant-Colonel Brian Wickham (Retd), and Commandant Jack Burke (Retd).

# Annual General Meeting & Saint Barbara's Lunch- 30 November



With the kind permission of GOC 1 Brigade, the Club's Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday 30 November in the Conference Room, Brigade Training Centre,



Collins Barracks, Cork, followed by the Annual Saint Barbara's Lunch in the Officers' Mess. Attendees will be able to visit the Barracks Museum after lunch.

Formal Calling Notice and associated documentation was circulated on 08 November.

Please note coffee will be available in the Officers' Mess from 1030hrs. The Club's Saint Barbara's Lunch, costing €25 per person, including wine, will take place at 1315hrs.

Please notify the Club's Secretary Capt Lar Joye (<u>ljoye@museum.ie</u>) of your intention to attend, or otherwise, both the AGM and Lunch, NLT Friday, 25 November. Mobile: 086 8605678. Include the Club's President in associated emails.

To assist in transport to and from Kent Station / Collins Barracks, attendees availing of the train are requested to advise timings to the Event Coordinator, Lt Col Cormac Lalor (Retd), Mobile: 086 8138667. Email address: celalor@eircom.net.

For administrative purposes, those attending the Saint Barbara's Lunch are requested to pay the cost of the lunch (€25) directly to Colonel Ger Buckley NLT Friday, 25 November, by post to the following address: DFHQ, McKee Barracks, Blackhorse Avenue, Dublin 7. Mobile: 087 252 9335. Email address: buckleyger@eircom.net

Alternatively, those attending the lunch can SEPA transfer the €25, NLT 25 November, directly into The Artillery Club's Bank Account, Bank of Ireland Kildare Town. Please cross reference your SEPA transfer with your full name for ID purposes.

IBAN: IE70 BOFI 9011 6711 3871 91

BIC CODE: BOFIIE2D

# ARTILLERY CORPS

# **Promotions and Appointments**

The Club's membership congratulates the following officer who was promoted in the recent past:

• Colonel Paul Whelan, Strategic Planning Branch, Defence Forces Headquarters

### **Overseas Appointments**

The following officers have deployed, or in the process of deployment, for overseas service;

- Lieutenant-Colonel Shane Bradley, School Commandant The Artillery School deployed to Sector West UNIFIL on 08 November.
- Colonel Brian Cleary, Director Combat Support and ISTAR to Sector West UNIIFIL, November
- Colonel Paul Whelan to Assistant Military Representative (responsibility for NATO / PfP), Permanent Representative Staff, Brussels, January 2017.



# Minute Gun – Veterans' Day – 10 September

The 2 Artillery Regiment fired a Minute Gun during the State Ceremony associated with the Defence Forces Veterans' Day in McKee Barracks on 10 September.

### Ceremonial - Gun Salute - State Visit - 18 October

On Tuesday 18 October, the 2 Artillery Regiment provided a gun saluting battery on the occasion of the State Visit of President of Cyprus, H.E. Mr Nicos Anastasiades.



The Regimental Commander was Lieutenant-Colonel Dermot Hanifin, Battery Commanders were Commandants James Troy and Dave Clarke, the Gun Position Officer was Captain J. Barry and the OP Officer was Lieutenant Ross Wainer.

### Corps Concentration & Last Round - Colonel Conor Fitzsimons - 08 November

Under the auspices of the Artillery School, the Corps Annual Concentration took place in Glen Imaal between 07 and 10 November. Both the 1 Artillery Regiment and 2 Artillery Regiment participated in the training event. The 1 Artillery Regiment deployed a 105 Battery at the Pond Field with gunners from both Regiments on a Gunnery Course. The 2 Artillery Regiment was deployed with a Battery of 105s at Colliga and a Battery of 120s at Coan. The observers were drawn from both the School and Regiments attending a nine week Observers Course in the Artillery School.





Colonel Conor Fitzsimons, who recently returned from service as Military Adviser in the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations in New York, is retiring on 30 November after a long and distinguished career.





To mark his retirement, in the company of serving and retired gunners of all ranks, Colonel Fitzsimons fired his "Last Round" on Tuesday, 08 of November after a long and distinguished career serving the State and the Defence Forces both at home and overseas. The Number 1 on the gun was Corporal Eivers from the 2 Artillery Regiment.

Commissioned into the Artillery Corps, Colonel Fitzsimons distinguished career in the service of Óglaigh na hÉireann included appointments in the 2 Field Artillery Regiment, 4 Field Artillery Regiment, 5 Field Artillery Regiment (FCA), 7 Field Artillery Regiment (FCA), The Artillery School and Defence Forces Headquarters. His impressive overseas service included tours of duty with UNIFIL, UNTSO, UNPROFOR, ONUCI and ISAF. In addition to serving in New York, Colonel Fitzsimons also served as Assistant Military Representative in Brussels.





On behalf of all members of the Artillery Club, the Committee salutes the service of Colonel Conor Fitzsimons on his imminent retirement from the Permanent Defence Force and wishes both him and his wife Margaret, and Aisling, Michael, John and Grainne, all the best for the future.

#### **Units' Annual Mass and Wreath Laying – 12 November**

The Annual Commemorative Mass for deceased personnel of the 2 Field Artillery Regiment, 62 Field Artillery Regiment (FCA), 7 Field Artillery Regiment (FCA) and 2 Air Defence Battery (FCA), took place in the Garrison Church, McKee Barracks on Saturday 12 November. The celebrant was Rev Fr Pat Mernagh CF.

Following the Mass, a Wreath Laying Ceremony took place at the Flag Pole after which attendees adjourned to the Catering Complex for refreshments. Wreaths were laid by Col Conor Fitzsimons on behalf of the units, the President on behalf of the Artillery Club and by the 2 Field Artillery Regiment Association.







BQMS P. Glifford coordinated the ceremonial, musical honours were rendered by instrumentalists from the School of Music. Sgt Anto Byrne (Retd) played a Piper's Lament. As in previous years, the event was very well attended by both serving and retired personnel of the Artillery Corps and, in particular, by families with an Artillery connection.

# **Dedication of France - Ireland Memorial Glasnevin 13 November**



A memorial, a gift from France to the people of Ireland, honouring Irish men and women who fought for the freedom of France in the First World War was dedicated at a ceremony in Glasnevin Cemetery on Sunday 13 November. During the ceremony, Capt Kingston Artillery Corps, HQ 2 Brigade carried the National Colour.

### **Regimental Sergeants-Major**







Following the extensive deployment of all components of the Defence Forces in the 1916 Commemorative Events, Regimental Sergeant-Major Michael Dillon, Ceremonial Section Defence Forces deployed to South Lebanon, where he is currently serving with the 109 Infantry Battalion, UNIFIL.

Regimental Sergeant-Major Noel O'Callaghan, 2 Artillery Regiment, recently complete the Dublin City Marathon raising awareness and much needed funds for "*Hope Love and Cure Crohn's Disease* He also managed to "detail" Mel Gibson as a Layer in a Saluting Battery





drawn from the 2 Artillery Regiments. The photo opportunity in McKee Barracks on 17 October occurred during a break in the filming of an adaption of "*The Surgeon of Crowthrone*" written by Simon Winchester, which is due for release in 2018. The book was recently renamed "*The Professor and the Madman*". McKee Barracks is being used as the main entrance to Broadmoor Asylum and the area of the Equitation School depicts Oxford General Station.

# **LOOKING INTO THE PAST**

The Club is grateful for the provision of the following photographs from the collection of Colonel Dave Betson (Retd).

















Once a Gunner - Always a Gunner.

THE ARTILLERY CLUB

November 2016

**Annex A:** Diary of Events (V 15 Nov 16)



# **ARTILLERY CLUB's DIARY of Events – 2016**

# (Changes since previous iteration highlighted in yellow)

Date	Event	Coordinator	Remarks
28 January	Committee Meeting – McKee Barracks	Secretary	Minutes Circulated – 12 Feb 16
25 Feb	Arty Sch: H/O of COS's Portrait, Brief and Demo, Lunch & DFTC Museum	Col S. McDermott (Retd)	31 Attendees
25 February	Committee Meeting – Ceannt Officers' Mess – 0930hrs	Secretary	Minutes Circulated – 04 March
28 April	Lecture & 1916 Exhibition, NMI Collins Bks Dublin	Comdt Lar Joye	23 Attendees
28 April	Committee Meeting – Collins Barracks	Secretary	Minutes Circulated – 28 April
25/26 May	Field Trip - Fort Dunree & Derry. Travel Day, Tour Day, Return Day. Hotel Package Buncrana.	President	7 Attendees
29 June	Arty Shoot – Glen Imaal	Col S. McDermott (Retd)	14 Attendees with 1 Guest
30 June	Committee Meeting – McKee Barracks	Secretary	Minutes Circulated – 01 July
9 July	Commemoration – Battle of the Somme - Islandbridge	President	Club Represented
10 July	National Day of Commemoration - RHK	President	Club Represented
16 July	Club Wreath Laying, National Memorial, Merrion Sq	President	Honour Guard – 2 Arty Regt
26 August	Annual Golf Competition & Dinner – Blarney Hotel Golf Club	Comdt C. O'Flanagan (Retd) Comdt J. Burke (Retd)	27 Golfers + 8 Non- Golfers
10 September	Defence Forces Veterans' Day – McKee Barracks	Secretary	
14 September	Arty Decades' Reunion - Anniversary of PDF, FCA and AR Commissioning 1946-2016, Visit to Cadet School and Lunch in Mil Col	Col M. Smith (Retd)	18 Attendees
16	Defence Forces Commemoration 75 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Glen Explosion	Col M. Smyth (Retd)	6 Retired Members attended
September 29 September	Committee Meeting – McKee Barracks	Secretary	attenueu
2 – 6 Oct	Field Trip – Granada & Malaga	Comdt M. Flood (Retd)	23 Attendees, including spouses
08 November	Last Round – Col C. Fitzsimons – Glen Imaal	President	17 Attended Corps Concentration
12 November	Wreath Laying & Units' Annual Mass – McKee Bks	Secretary	
30 November	AGM and St Barbara's Day Lunch – Collins Bks Cork	Secretary	